

Die Verboten Stadt (The Forbidden City)

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Assembly of the Game Pieces:

Place the hats on the pawns as shown in the illustration in the German rules. There should be 1 pawn of each color combination out of the 25 pieces.

The Story:

The Chinese emperor has been powerless for a long time. Intrigue, corruption and bribery prevail within the walls of the Forbidden City - the former capital of the mighty empire. The only use for the palace during this time is for the impending wedding of the Emperor. And then the incomprehensible happens: the ceremonial garments of the emperor are stolen shortly before the very important event!

How it happened is clear: A band of corrupt officials, who are the secret sovereigns of the Forbidden City, have exploited the waning power of the emperor for themselves. Only the officials know the mysterious ways of the Forbidden City, and the pavilions where the garments must be.

The emperor calls in his last faithful advisors (the players) and tells them, "Return the garments to me - no matter what it takes!"

Contents: (see German rules for illustration)

- * 4 Confidential Bribe Selectors
- * 25 pawns (officials) on the starting spaces
- * Pavilion
- * Sprint spaces
- * Obstacles
- * The board shows a part of the Forbidden City

- * 1 8-sided blue pavilion die
- * 3 fate dice
- * 15 spaces of the Terrace of Exile
- * 24 garment cards (3 different types in 8 colors)

Object of the Game:

The players heed the desperate cries of the emperor and try, with the help of the corrupt officials, which they dominate through bribes, to find as many garment cards as possible. They also try to find cards of matching colors since two garment cards of the same color are worth 4 times the value of a single card. Three cards (a complete set of clothing: hat, coat, pants) in different colors are worth 6 times as much as a single card. And all three cards of a color are worth 10 times as much (see also End of the Game).

The player who collects the most points in garment cards by the end of the game wins.

Preparation:

1. The 25 officials are put on the 25 yellow starting spaces in the middle of the board. The 4 gray / yellow fields are left empty (see illustration on page 4 of the German rules).
2. The garment cards are sorted by color. In each of the 8 colors there are 3 different cards: hat - coat - pants. Each clothing set is mixed and placed face down on the pavilion of the same color.
3. Each player gets a Confidential Bribe Selector. With it, a player can designate exactly any of the 25 officials by dialing the appropriate hat and clothing color with the two different wheels. This selection of color combination is called bribing an official.

The selection is kept secret from the other players. The selection can be changed only after an official has entered a pavilion.

4. The 3 fate dice and the blue pavilion die are put beside the board close to hand.

Start of the Game:

1. Each player secretly selects an official that they wish to send to get the first garment card. After deciding, the player designates their selection with the Confidential Bribe Selector by setting the appropriate color combination (see illustration in the German rules, page 7).
2. Now a start player is determined. Whoever first rolls red on the large fate die goes first. Play continues in clockwise order.
3. The start player rolls the blue pavilion die which designates the first pavilion from which garment cards can be taken. This is the only pavilion from which cards may be retrieved. To show this, the die is placed on the pavilion corresponding to the number rolled.
4. The player to the left of the start player takes the 3 fate die and waits for his action.

Movement of Officials: (see illustrations, German rules, p. 8)

On a player's turn, they may move any of the officials that they like, not only the one they chose on their Selector. The official is moved as far as possible either vertically or horizontally until an obstacle is encountered. Obstacles are walls, roofs, and other officials. An official must be moved during the player's turn and may not end in the same place.

The player may end their turn at this point or move the same official at a right angle to its previous move to the next obstacle. When a player ends their turn, the official is left on the space in front of the obstacle which stopped its move.

Attention: If a piece is moved into a dead end, then the movement of that official stops immediately.

During a turn, the starting spaces may be crossed just as normal spaces.

Important for the end of the game: As long as an

official is still on a yellow starting field (including the 4 gray / yellow spaces), it may be moved one space horizontally or vertically. Such a move, however, is considered the official's entire move.

The Fate Dice:

A player may get more than one turn in a row, depending on the fate dice, wielded by the player to his left.

The procedure for determining the active player's fate is as follows:

After the player's first turn, the player with the fate dice rolls the smallest die. If a black dot is rolled, the player's turn is over and play proceeds clockwise. The fate dice are also passed clockwise. If a red side is rolled (regardless of whether a symbol is present), the player takes another turn.

After the second turn, the middle-sized die is rolled. And after the third turn, the largest of the 3 fate dice is rolled.

Some of the red sides on the fate dice have symbols printed on them (either a dragon or a pavilion):

When a pavilion is rolled, the active player rolls the blue die before his turn to designate a new pavilion from which garment cards can be taken. (And with luck, it will be the same as the previous pavilion.)

A dragon allows the player who is rolling the fate dice (the active player's left hand neighbor), to immediately take a garment card from any player. [Translator's note: I don't see any indication of whether the card is kept by the die roller or returned to the pavilion.]

After resolving any symbols, the active player then takes their next turn.

Example of a Turn: (see illustrations, German rules, pp. 10-11)

The active player has designated official "C" to be bribed.

First Turn: Official "A" is moved as in the illustration. The left neighbor rolls a red side on the fate die. The player gets another turn.

Second Turn: Official "B" is moved as in the illustration. The left neighbor again rolls a red side on the fate die, so the active player goes again.

Third Turn: Now the active player can move their bribed official into the pavilion as shown in the illustration. The player with the fate die need not roll the large die.

Entering a Pavilion:

Normally, if a player moves an official into a pavilion the following happens (although there are exceptions):

1. The player shows his Confidential Bribe Selector and proves that they entered the pavilion with their bribed official.

2. The player then takes the topmost garment card from the pavilion and puts it face up in front of themselves.

The player does not get the garment card if the official in the pavilion is not the one on their Selector.

3. The official is removed from the game and placed on a space in the Terrace of Exile.

4. The active player then picks a new color combination on his Selector. Each of the other players may also change their selections at this time, if they so choose.

5. Then the player rolls the blue die and places it on the corresponding pavilion. This could be the same pavilion as before.

6. The next player then takes their turn.

Multiple Bribes to an Official:

It could happen during the game, that several players chose the same color combination.

If more than one player has bribed the same official, then all players who chose that official reveal their selection and the player who is farthest away from the active player in the turn order gets the garment card, instead of the active player.

(Example: see the illustration, German rules, p. 12 - Player 1 has moved the official, but player 4 gets the garment card.)

Bluffing:

At the beginning of the game, an official may be moved into a pavilion only if the moving player has designated it on their Selector. However, as soon as a player has one garment card and at least one other player also has one garment card, then the active player may bluff.

Bluffing: A player may choose (if he has the courage) to move an official that they have not bribed into a pavilion. In this event, the player does not reveal what is on his Confidential Bribe Selector. Instead, each other player in turn is asked if they believe that the official is the correct one. After all players have answered, the Selector is revealed. This leads to 4 possible situations:

1. If all players believe and the active player did not bluff, then they receive the topmost garment card and the game continues in the usual manner.

2. Successful Bluff. If all players believe and the active player bluffed, then they are rewarded for their courage. The active player gets the topmost garment card and immediately takes another turn.

3. If a player (one who already has at least one

garment card) does not believe, and the active player was not bluffing, then the doubter is punished. The active player gets the topmost card from the pavilion and, additionally, one card of their choice from the doubter!

4. Failed Bluff. If a player doubts the active player, and they were indeed bluffing, then the bluffer is punished. The doubter gets the topmost card from the pavilion and one card of their choice from the bluffer!

If there are several doubters, then only the first doubting player in clockwise order receives the penalty or reward as applicable.

Empty Pavilions:

It could happen, that the pavilion rolled on the blue die has no garment cards. In this case, the player who moves an official into the empty pavilion may take a garment card that came from the empty pavilion from any other player. Naturally, players may bluff with the empty pavilions just as with those that still hold garment cards.

The Terrace of Exile:

As soon as 10 officials are on the Terrace of Exile, then game changes and the tension increases.

From this point forward, a player takes all of the garment cards remaining in a pavilion, instead of only the topmost one. If a pavilion is empty, then the active player may take all three garment cards that came from the pavilion from the other players.

End of the Game:

The game ends when the fifteenth official enters the Terrace of Exile. All effects of the last turn are still performed (aside from a successful bluffer receiving an extra turn).

The players then assess their scores. Each card may only be scored in one way.

The garment cards score as follows:

- * A single garment card - 1 point
- * Two garment cards of the same color - 4 points
- * Three garment cards of the same color - 10 points
- * Three garment cards in different colors that form a set (hat + coat + pants) - 6 points

The player who has the most points wins the game.

Variant for 4 Players:

With 4 players, The Forbidden City becomes even more exciting if the players on opposite sides of the board form teams. The players then plan their turns together and their scores are totaled at the end and the team with the most points wins.

A Riddle: (see illustration, German rules, pp.15-16)

We are in the end phase of a game. 14 Officials are already on the Terrace of Exile.

Your bribed official is marked as "A".

The next player that moves an official into the green pavilion (number 7) wins the game.

Can you do it with your official?

The Solution:

Yes, you can clearly do so. The illustration shows the interesting turns that the game frequently results in.

Additional question: How many of the other officials could get to the green pavilion in a single turn?

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