

Bryan Cash  
Game Design  
Project # 1 - Hopscotch

For an audience of: College age men and women.

Part 1A:

'Problems' with Hopscotch:

1. There is little sense of direct competition. (Examples: (indirect: a race), (direct: chess))
2. No real choices to make. Each turn, your decisions are made for you, and you just need to have the skill to execute them.
3. Hopping on one foot does not seem that difficult. It only gets hard with having to do it a lot and having to turn. More skill seems involved initially in just throwing the marker accurately.
4. Stigma of being seen as a kiddie game.
5. Requires a hopscotch board.

Part 1B:

Brainstorming ideas on attached sheets.

Part 2.1: brainstormed ideas that appealed for one reason or another.

## 2 – Domino Hopscotch

This basically adds an endurance element to the hopping. Twinning it with a domino board also requires the board to be drawn dynamically, so a square cut out and chalk would be needed. A lot more choices to add, but the risk is that this could just be dominos with an annoying jumping portion.

## 5 – Pictionary Hopscotch

The game board becomes a lot more difficult to maintain, but it creates a kind of fun creative element. Also, this would become a lot more team based. The real trouble is the board, as when you're done, it possibly will have taken up a lot of space, and you need to keep drawing each round.

## 10 – Musical/Visual Toy

This seems like a rather fun little toy. There is no competition though, as it's completely collaborative. It isn't even much of a game, as it is an instrument for music and color. It does seem pretty though.

## 11 – Story Hopscotch

Improv/Memory meets hopscotch. No direct competition, but choices are made in how the story goes. However, you'd have to play a lot of rounds of hopscotch to get a decent story, and that could get really repetitive.

## 24 – Tag hopscotch

Eliminates the marker and creates a lot of direct competition. Could get annoying in tracking whose foot has touched a line though. A bunch of people jumping around on one foot trying to tag one another could also get violent.

## 26 – Dodge ball hopscotch

Adds competition immediately. Also creates a choice for the person with the ball on when to throw it, or if they could fake the person out by pretending to throw it. Also need to consider about when the person is going back. Do they turn their back to the person with the ball?

### 32 – Rescue hopscotch

This is like a game of jumping sardines. Sounds vaguely like a team building exercise for work. Might be uncomfortable for a group of people who don't know each other too well.

### 34 – Holy Grail

Seems like it might be a fun activity, although competition seems minimal. Could be played one person. Also, it seems as though all the squares would vanish near the water cup and then it'd be pretty simple. Also, need to prevent people from just pouring out a little of the cup on purpose.

### 37 – Floor is Lava!

Simple, but it lacks competition or real choices to make. It's fun to crawl over furniture though.

### 42 – Emperor's Favor

Complicated. Oh so complicated. But, there's a lot of interesting decisions to make and there's a ton of direct competition. Has a very complicated board though.

### 46 – Pirates Dodge ball

Dodge ball, with an added twist of jumping around in it. Could be harder than I think it is. Choices to be made on will a person stay in the back trying to catch balls, or go out in the front to try to fire some off.

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## Part 2.2: Ideas I still like after thinking about it a bit

10 – Musical/Visual Toy

26 – Dodge ball Hopscotch

37 – Floor is Lava

42 – Emperor's Favor

46 – Pirate's Dodge ball

The others were eliminated because:

2 – Domino Hopscotch – Just seemed tedious.

5 – Pictionary Hopscotch – Didn't seem that much more fun and required a certain space. Might be able to be done on a kind of electronic touch sensor, but it still seems kind of troublesome.

11 – Story Hopscotch – Just seemed tedious.

24 – Tag hopscotch – Didn't seem viable without a person constantly watching feet. Also easy for accidents to happen.

32 – Rescue hopscotch – Worried about making people uncomfortable, also didn't seem that fun after a while.

34 – Holy Grail – Seemed fun, for all of the first 20 seconds. The rest would get kind of dull, and it'd be hard to prevent them from cheating.

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## Part 2.3: Lava goes bye-bye

While Floor is Lava is a time tested fun game from our youths, I find it difficult to quantify rules for it just because the charm of the old game was the lack of concrete rules. Plus now that we're older, there's a little bit more concern for breaking things. It also did not seem to solve many of the problems of hopscotch.

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## Part 2.4: Picking a dodge ball.

The Musical/Visual game is going through because I like the idea of the technology and the aesthetics of it. It still isn't that much of a game, but it is a rather enjoyable experience.

The Emperor's Favor game is going through because of the wealth of choices involved. I wanted to create a kind of board game you could play in real life with throwing things, and this seemed like it might be fun. Balancing it will be tricky though, as there's a lot of factors to take into account.

So now we have Dodge ball Hopscotch, and Pirate Dodge ball Hopscotch. Dodge ball hopscotch has the benefit of being a very simple addition to the game that can still be played with two people. Pirate Dodge ball Hopscotch requires a lot more people but it also has a lot more decisions to make. My intuition tells me that more enjoyment will be found in Pirate Dodge ball. There just seems to be more action going on, and the idea of manning the cannons is kind of cute and fun. The other Dodge ball game involves a person waiting for a ball to be thrown and a person waiting to throw a ball. Less interest.

So the three I've selected:

Musical/Visual Hopscotch

Pirate Dodge ball

Emperor's Favor

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## Part 2.5: The three expanded

### **Musical/Visual Hopscotch**

Note, much of this exploration is purely theoretical as it would require some technology I can't reproduce for the purposes of the class. As an intellectual exercise though, I like it.

The game requires:

*A floor that can sense certain signals.*

*Shoes that can release a different signal for each shoe.*

*A marker that can release a signal.*

*1 to any number of people*

As a toy, M/V has people walk out onto the game board. There is a constant pulse coming from the center of the floor. Whenever it reaches anything that gives a signal it will draw a circle of color on the floor and play a musical note. There are a number of different combinations that create different colors/notes.

LF = Left foot, RF = Right foot, BF= Both feet, M=Marker

LF, MLF, RF, MRF, BF, MBLF

This covers almost all the colors (Red, Yellow, Green, Blue, Purple), and most of the musical notes (Do, Re, Mi, Fa, So, La). When another player enters the gaming space, the computer notes their different signals, and makes it so when the two players are near, they will unlock the other musical notes (Ti, Do).

The basic idea for the experience is for people to come out onto the gaming board and basically dance about in all matter of weird ways to create different musical notes and colors. They may be hopping on one foot for a bit, then the other foot, then tossing their marker to the floor, running around a bit, then picking it up again. When another person enters the space, then we can play with proximity and make it so two people can run around, tossing their markers out, and doing all manner of things. If we were to ever increase the complexity, we could even add sensor gloves.

The musical markers/notes could stay on the floor so that whenever the pulse hits them, it'll play the music again, creating a room filled with lights and music for every beat. Speed of the pulse could also be increased as desired.

As it stands, the M/V hopscotch would get rid of most competition and make the choices all aesthetic. The overall goal would be just the creation of a visual/audio display that was pleasing to the guest. However, one big question exists. Is this a game? I am reminded a bit of Electropunkton for the Nintendo DS and how it was more about creating music than a set goal and path. There is no real problem to be solved in M/V,

unless you consider the lack of any visual/auditory presence on the board a problem, and you solve it by filling things in. Which you may very well.

A possible way to add a slightly game oriented problem to it is pattern matching. At the beginning of the game, and whenever you wish to rehear it, you hear a stream of notes. It is then up to you to recreate those notes in the proper order on the game board. This involves maneuvering yourself in the correct position, and placing down the correct signalers to create the sound. This might also need another marker to erase notes that were seen as incorrect.

That certainly adds a more solid game quality to the experience, but I have a hunch that the sandbox dance and flail musically would be more satisfying. Then again, the toy probably would not appeal to everyone. Probably more to dancers/musicians who like to free their body and flail around with music and color than a perhaps slightly awkward science/engineering major (nothing against them, seeing as I am one, but I think they'd be less likely to enjoy the toy).

### **Pirate Dodge ball**

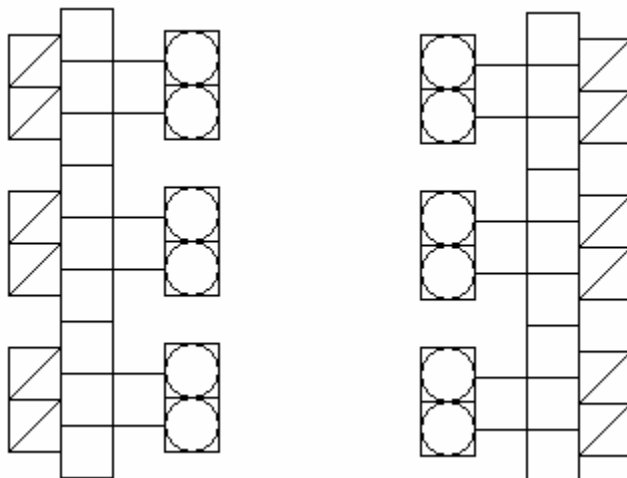
The game requires:

*Chalk to draw the game board.*

*Four dodge balls*

*4 to any number of people (although a max would be needed based on how many squares there were)*

*The board:*



In this version, you take the role of pirates on opposing ships attempting to sink the other ship by killing off all of its crew. Players are divided up between the two ships (left and right). Each ship has three different types of squares on it.

Note: Only one player can occupy a square at a time. In squares that allow two feet down, another possible strategy is having one person occupying each square, each with one foot down.

Peg leg poop deck – The blank squares on the diagram. Players in these squares must be on one foot. While in these squares, a player may catch the ball, but may not throw it at the opposing ship. They can, however, pass the ball between teammates.

The brig – The squares with a diagonal line on the diagram. Players in these squares may have both feet down (one foot in each square). Players in the brig cannot catch or throw the ball. If the ball is passed to them, they cannot pass it to another person while they are still in the brig.

The cannons – The squares with circles on the diagram. Players in these squares may have both feet down (one foot in each square). Players here can catch, throw, and pass balls.

Players who step out onto open water drown and are out of the game!

Stepping on lines will happen, but as long as people are pretty good about it, they shouldn't be penalized. This is an "On Good Faith" rule.

Players on the poop deck who place their other foot down, if caught are removed from the game for being less than able sailors. Alternative rule is being banished to the brig for 30 seconds (shackled in leg irons).



If all balls are stuck in the middle and cannot be reached by players, then the balls are redistributed onto the poop deck of each ship.

The basic idea of how the game will play is as follows. Players will dash around on the poop deck on one foot, using the brig to help them pass one another (or rest if their legs are getting tired). A few may also venture out onto the cannons for a more secure position. These areas are out in the open though and are prime targets for being hit. Balls that get thrown are caught by those on the poop deck and passed to the cannoneers who then throw them at the opposing team.

I think this game could be quite fun, but care needs to be taken in things like how many balls there are (to avoid mass chaos), and how close the ships are to one another (to avoid making it too dangerous/safe to be on the cannons. Another important factor is how many players there are to avoid massive clogs on the poop decks of each ship.

I like the basic idea of this game as it creates a natural choice in, “Where am I going to stand?” The poop deck enables you a bit of safety (although I may need to make them further back to make them viable), travel, and the ability to catch balls. The brig is good for resting your feet before you go back in the action. The place of glory though, is the cannons where you fire off balls and avoid those being thrown at you.

For added complexity, perhaps make it so that balls caught by poop deck minions will cause the opposing cannon to explode, rendering it useless. This may make the poop deck (with its one legged hopping) more appealing.

This game addresses the indirect competition and the lack of choices for hopscotch. Plus, dodge ball is a pretty enjoyable game that can be played by anyone, kid or not.

### **The Emperor's Favor**

The game requires:

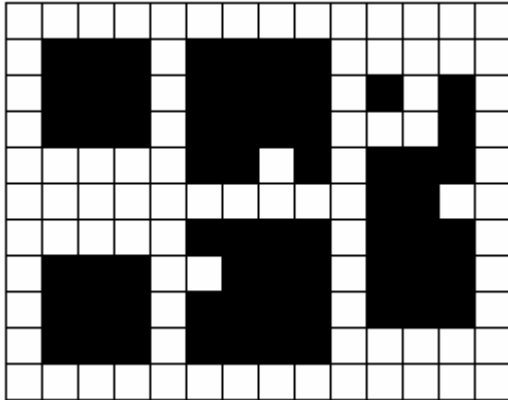
*Chalk/tape to draw the game board.*

*Four markers (beanbags)*

*Pack of playing cards (no jokers)*

*2-4 people*

The image here is the game board.



Card value is calculated like in blackjack. Ace is worth 1 for duels, and 11 for slander and saving your life (see below). Face cards are worth 10.

In this game, the players take the role of cutthroat courtiers in the palace of the Majestic Emperor. Each player has a hand of cards that represents their own strength of will and political acumen. The maximum size of their hand represents their political clout. Each player also has a direction they are facing (north, south, east or west). Players perform their actions one after the other.

At the beginning of a turn, a player draws a card if they are carrying fewer cards than their maximum.

A player may then do one of the following:

- Toss the marker and move to the square marked in as few squares as possible. Note the player must keep their direction facing while they throw the marker. If the marker lands on an area where they player cannot go, they must discard

their highest (non-Ace) card to represent the Emperor's disapproval at their clumsiness.

- Attempt to assassinate an opponent. The marker must be thrown so that it hits the back of an opponent. Markers cannot be thrown through the black space on the board to assassinate. If it hits the target, the defender must randomly discard two cards. A duel then begins between the defender and the attacker. If the marker misses its target, the maximum hand size of the attacker is reduced by 2, to a minimum of three.
- Attempt to duel an opponent. The marker must be thrown so that it hits the front of an opponent. Markers cannot be thrown through the black space on the board to duel. If it hits the opponent, the defender and the attacker engage in a duel (as described below). If the marker misses its target, the maximum hand size of the attacker is reduced by 1, to a minimum of 3.
- Slander an opponent. Discard 50 points worth of cards to reduce a target's maximum hand size by 1.
- Draw a card.

At the end of a turn, a player must discard cards to get equal to or less than their maximum hand size. A player may discard more cards than necessary if they so choose. After discarding, a player may change their direction.

Dueling is done as follows.

1. The attacker lays a card face down on his 'attack stack.'
2. A card from the deck is dealt face up on the defender's attack stack.
3. The defender then chooses to strike or to lay a card face down on his stack.
4. If the defender lays a card down, the attacker then decides whether to strike or lay a card face down.
5. This laying of cards/strike continues until one person chooses to strike.
6. At this point, each player counts the point value of their attack. The player with the highest number of points wins the duel.
7. The loser may pay 50 points of cards to survive the duel, discard and refill their hand, and then go anywhere on the board.

8. The winner draws cards from the deck to refill the cards they used in the duel.

The winner of the game is the last one standing. Only you are worthy of the Emperor!

The goal of this game was to create a board game that could be played in real life. The dueling mechanic is inspired from the card game 'Legend of the Five Rings' that involves Focus cards and the personal Chi of a character to win. I liked the idea of this back-story of political power being represented by a hand of cards that other players could manipulate the maximum size of.

This is not a simple game, and as such, balancing it seems rather difficult as there are a lot of things to take into account. That said, I like the complexity of it. I like the idea of players having to make a lot of difficult choices and needing to maneuver around the board and literally watch their backs.

Dueling is the real meat of this game. I will need to test it separately, because if it doesn't work well, the rest of the game won't work well.

I also have a small prediction. It would appear to behoove players to join up. Two players easily have an advantage over one and can out maneuver the one. Hence, in games of three one person may find themselves out of the game quickly. The two remaining courtiers must then fight amongst themselves. Likewise in a game of four, there's a chance the four will become two teams that fight one another while still looking for ways of stabbing their own 'teammates' in the back. I like the way this really seems to add to the political bloodbath mood. Having now thought about this, perhaps players should have the ability to gift cards to opponents to get the promise of protection for a limited time.

For the real game, I'd really like to see players trying to use the psychology of the other players against them.

### Part 3a: Expanding the Emperor's Favor

I have decided to move ahead with fleshing out the Emperor's Favor. The M/V game is pretty, but I'm not sure how I can play test it at the moment and I feel that while it has a lot more on aesthetics than the other two, it lacks in complexity and problem solving. Pirate's Dodge ball had a lot more action to it than Emperor's Favor, but in the end I went with EF because I liked the complexity and the back story to the game and I felt it would be easier to play test.

#### **Emperor's Favor (Rule set): Version 1.1**

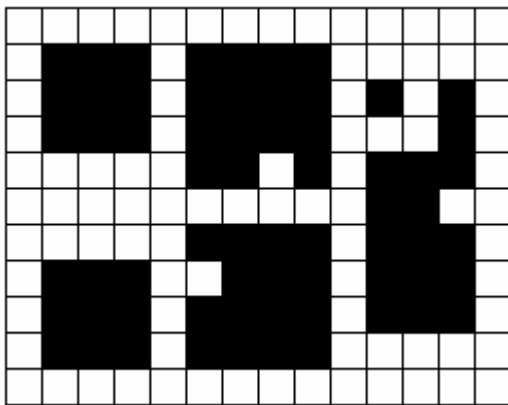
The game requires:

*Chalk/tape to draw the game board.*

*Four markers.*

*Pack of playing cards*

*2 to 4 people*



In this game, the players take the role of cutthroat courtiers in the palace of the Majestic Emperor. Each player has a hand of cards that represents their own strength of will and political acumen. The maximum size of their hand represents their political clout. Each player also has a direction they are facing (north, south, east or west). Players perform

their actions one after the other. The initial maximum hand size is seven. Deal seven random cards to each player.

Determine the order of the players as such. Each player draws a card from the deck. The players are then numbered in the order of card worth (A->K), (Spades->Hearts). This is the order they will perform their actions throughout the game (note to self, watch this in game. See if players who perform first/last have an advantage over all the others).

At the beginning of a turn, a player draws a card if they are carrying fewer cards than their maximum.

The player now has the option to make a gift to an opponent. This involves passing any number of cards from the current player to an opponent.

*(note: after finding the average value of a hand is roughly 49, I've reduced the point cost of a couple things to 30 and added a max and minimum hand size. Also added 'Praise the Emperor' as a way to increase one's hand size)*

A player may then do one of the following:

- Toss the marker and move to the square marked in as few squares as possible. Note: the player must keep their direction facing while they throw the marker. If the marker lands on an area where they player cannot go, they must discard their highest (non-Ace) card to represent the Emperor's disapproval at their clumsiness.
- Attempt to assassinate an opponent. The marker must be thrown so that it hits the back of an opponent. Markers cannot be thrown through the black space on the board to assassinate. If it hits the target, the defender must randomly discard two cards. A duel then begins between the defender and the attacker. If the marker misses its target, the maximum hand size of the attacker is reduced by 2, to a minimum of three.

- Attempt to duel an opponent. The marker must be thrown so that it hits the front of an opponent. Markers cannot be thrown through the black space on the board to duel. If it hits the opponent, the defender and the attacker engage in a duel (as described below). If the marker misses its target, the maximum hand size of the attacker is reduced by 1, to a minimum of 3.
- Slander an opponent. Discard 30 points worth of cards to reduce a target's maximum hand size by 1, to a minimum of 3.
- Praise the Emperor. Discard 30 points worth of cards to increase your maximum hand size by 1, to a maximum of 10.
- Draw a card.

At the end of a turn, a player must discard cards to get equal to or less than their maximum hand size. A player may discard more cards than necessary if they so choose. After discarding, a player may change their direction.

*(note: I didn't like the face up card business, but I wanted to have a way for a defender to not just always get creamed. The random element makes it so that an opponent needs to ensure they have a high advantage if they want to duel. Of course, that may be a bad thing. Now though, the maximum hand size of a player is taken into account, so a player with a high hand size may have an advantage.)*

Dueling is done as follows.

1. The attacker lays a card face down on his 'attack stack.'
2. A card is drawn from the deck and laid face up on the defender's 'attack stack.'
3. The defender then chooses to strike or to lay a card face down.
4. If the defender lays a card down, the attacker then decides whether to strike or lay a card face down.
5. This laying of cards/strike continues until one person chooses to strike.
6. At this point, each player counts the point value of their attack stack and adds their maximum hand size. The player with the highest number of points wins the duel.

7. The loser may pay 30 points of cards to survive the duel, discard and refill their hand, and then go anywhere on the board. Their maximum hand size, however, is reduced by 1 to a minimum of three.
8. The winner draws cards from the deck to refill half (rounding up) of the cards they used in the duel.

The winner of the game is the last one standing. Only you are worthy of the Emperor!

*Math done to determine average card values:*

Average value of a card in a duel is:

$$(4/52)*1 + (4/52)*2 + (4/52)*3 + (4/52)*4 + (4/52)*5 + (4/52)*6 + (4/52)*7 + (4/52)*8 + (4/52)*9 + (15/52)*10 = .0769 + .1538 + .2307 + .3076 + .3846 + .4614 + .5383 + .6152 + .6921 + 2.885 = 6.3456$$

Average value of a card in slander/saving your life is:

$$(4/52)*11 + (4/52)*2 + (4/52)*3 + (4/52)*4 + (4/52)*5 + (4/52)*6 + (4/52)*7 + (4/52)*8 + (4/52)*9 + (15/52)*10 = .8461 + .1538 + .2307 + .3076 + .3846 + .4614 + .5383 + .6152 + .6921 + 2.885 = 7.1148$$

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### Part 3b: Testing Emperor's Favor 1.1

Players initial hands:

Red

Q, K, A, A, 2, 9, 5

Yellow

J, 7, 6, K, 6, 2, A

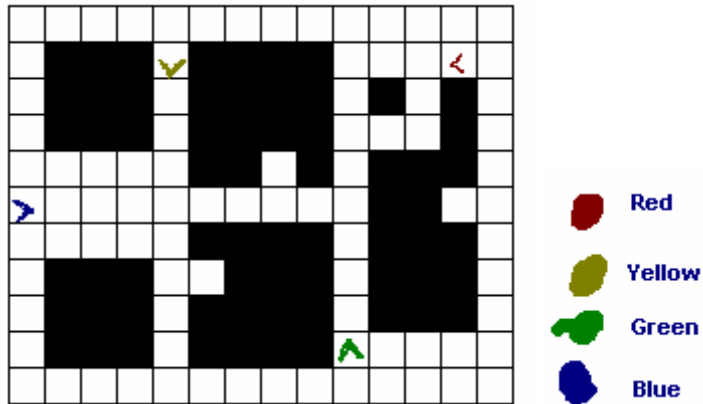
Green

10, 10, 4, 7, 9, 7, 4

Blue

5, 10, Q, K, 6, 4, 9





Turn 1 (Red):

Red allied with Green.

Blue and Yellow allied out of necessity.

Red spends two A's and a 9 to slander Yellow (**should I make them discard cards now?**)

Turn 1 (Yellow):

Yellow tosses their marker behind them and to the left.

Yellow discards a 2.

Yellow turns East.

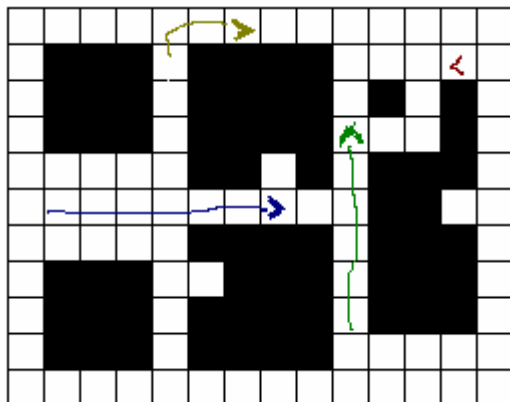
Turn 1 (Green):

Green moves upwards.

Turn 1 (Blue):

Blue moves in seeming pursuit of Green. **Slides their marker in a most ungraceful manner along the floor (should require it to be in the air?)**

Blue discards 4.



Turn 2 (Red):

Red draws a 3.

Red chooses to draw another card, a 2.

Turn 2 (Yellow):

Yellow lobes their marker and manages to hit Red. Duel begins.

Duel (Red vs. Yellow):

Yellow starts with a J.

The random card for Red is a three. Red lays down a K.

Yellow lays down a K.

Red lays down a Q.

Yellow strikes.

Red (3+10+10+7) vs. Yellow (10 + 10 + 6)

Yellow is defeated.

Yellow spends  $7 + 6 + 6 + A = 30$  to resurrect and loses one maximum hand size.

Redraws 8, 4, 7, 10, 9, and reappears South of Green.

Red draws a 3.

Turn 2 (Green):

Green spends  $4 + 4 + 7 + 7 + 9$  to slander Blue.

Green turns South.

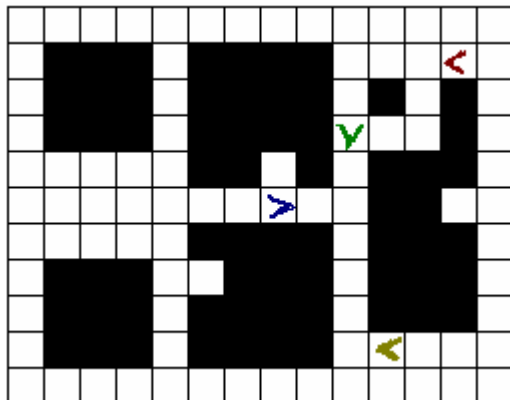
Turn 2 (Blue):

Blue draws Q.

**Blue admits he's not sure what to do. Buddy is weak; he's facing two guys, even though he has a powerful hand.**

Chooses to gift Yellow with Q.

Chooses to draw a card (6).



Turn 3 (Red):

Red draws Jack.

**Note Red has a very poor hand (2,5,3,2,3,J) and can't do a lot about it.**

Red chooses to draw a card (5).

Red discards a 2.

Turn 3 (Yellow):

Yellow leans in and throws his marker to hit Green.

Duel occurs.

Duel 2 (Yellow vs. Green)

Yellow lays down 10.

Green gets random King. Ouch.

Green strikes.

Yellow (10 + 5) vs. Green (10 + 7)

Green wins and draws 8.

Yellow dies but saves self by spending 10 + 4 + 7 + 9

Yellow draws 8, 8, Q, 3, appears in same place.

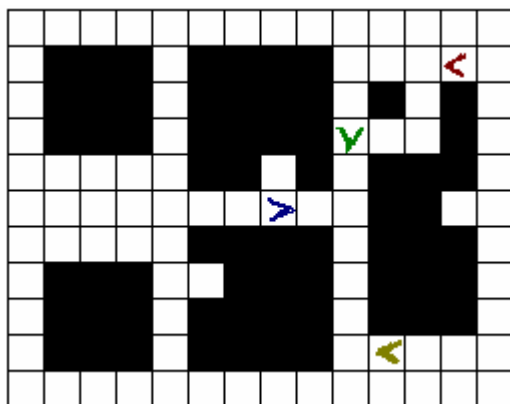
Turn 3 (Green):

Chooses to draw a card (J)

Turn 3 (Blue):

Blue draws A.

Blue leans in to peg Green, passes through black. He is forced to discard K. (he has an A, but it's determined that is lower for these purposes)



**Red and Green discuss Green ‘tanking’ while Red stays back and slanders.**

Turn 4 (Red):

Red draws a card (J)

Turn 4 (Yellow):

Yellow chooses to draw a card (9)

Yellow forced to discard 3.

Turn 4 (Green):

**Comment made how it always seems better to be the defender in a duel because of the extra card. That needs to be reworked.**

Green draws a card (2)

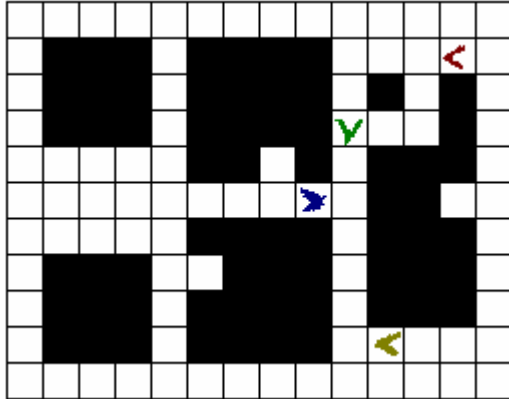
Turn 4 (Blue):

Blue draws a card, A.

**Blue notes slandering not really that effective. Now has two A's but would rather use them to save himself from death.**

**Blue also notes no one is really moving now because everyone is at an impasse.**

Blue chooses to move forward one and discards 6.



Turn 5 (Red):

Red draws A.

Red slanders Yellow with J, A, 5, 3, 2. Yellow now has a max hand size of 3.

Turn 5 (Yellow):

Yellow duels Green.

Duel 3 (Yellow vs. Green)

Yellow lays Q down. (13 | 7)

Green gets random card (2). (13 | 9)

Green uses 10. (13 | 19)

Yellow uses 9. (22 | 19)

Green uses 10 (22 | 29)

Yellow uses 8 (30 | 29)

Green uses J (30 | 39)

Yellow uses 8 (39 | 39)

Green uses 8 (39 | 47)

Yellow must strike for their hand is empty.

Green wins. Yellow dies.

Green draws A and J.

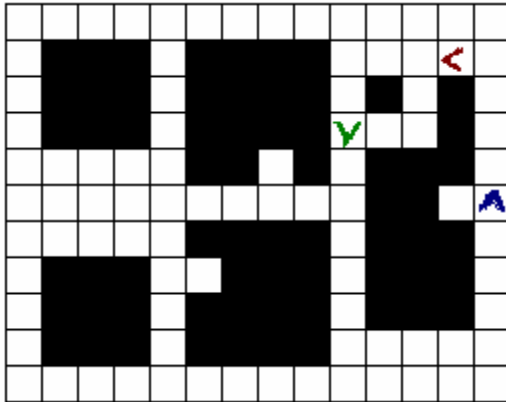
**(note, fight was kind of long and slogging here. The dueling system really needs to be looked at)**

Turn 5 (Blue):

Blue draws 6.

Blue throws marker through building and ends near little room to the East.

Blue discards 6 and faces North.



Turn 5 (Red):

Red draws 3 and then gets out of there.

Tosses marker into the nook and faces North.

Turn 5 (Green):

Green draws K.

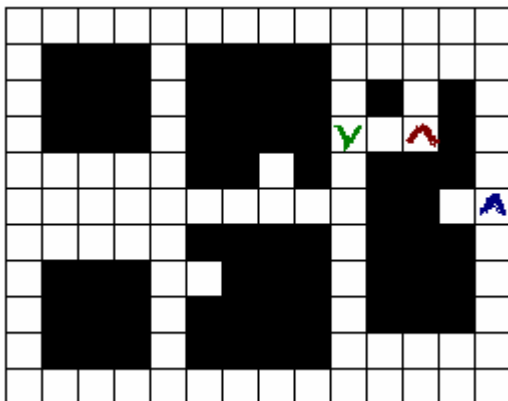
Green tries to throw marker to where Blue is but misses. Discards K.

Turn 5 (Blue):

**Blue complains that it's hard to maneuver and get a strike on as it's a lot easier to move places and not do anything than move places and do something.**

**Notes how now it can become a waiting game with him jumping back and forth between the walls unless the two people split up. So now we'll be in a stockpiling game.**

Blue draws 5. Blue slanders Red with A, A, 9



Turn 6 (Red):

Red draws 5.

Red chooses to draw a card (5).

Turn 6 (Green):

Green draws 3.

Green is able to move to in front of Blue.

Turn 6 (Blue):

Blue draws K.

Blue duels Green.

Duel 4 (Blue vs. Green)

Blue puts K down. Green gets free 4. (17 | 11)

Green puts J down. (17 | 21)

Blue puts Q down (27 | 21)

Green puts J down (27 | 31)

Blue puts 10 down (37 | 31)

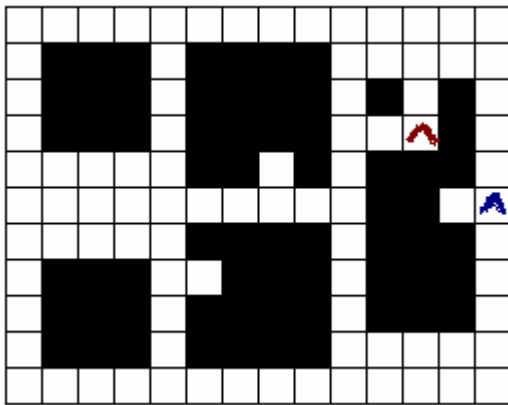
Green puts 8 down (37 | 39)

Blue puts 10 down (47 | 39)

Green puts 3 down (47 | 42)

Blue strikes.

Blue wins and draws 2 cards, 7 and 9.



Turn 7 (Red):

Red draws Q.

Red chooses to draw another card. 10

Red discards 3.

Turn 7 (Blue):

Blue draws Q.

Blue chooses to draw another card. J

Turn 8 (Red):

Red draws K.

Red moves upwards and turns South.

Turn 9 (Blue):

Blue concedes.

### **Part 3c:**

Observations:

Okay, there were a lot of problems.

- Dueling doesn't seem that interesting. It either sloughs on or feels unfair.
- People aren't moving much. No assassination attempts were made because most movement was abandoned just for stockpiling. I think people need to be able to move and do actions.
- Slander really is not that worthwhile for the cost.
- Praise never was used.
- Yellow kept resurrecting. Perhaps the full hand is too much to respawn with.
- After a duel, the card recovery may be a bit much.
- Movement is odd, on account of being able to toss the movement piece through black walls yet for dueling you cannot.
- It can be really hard to get your hand refilled, especially when it's been emptied. Maybe add an option to lose 1 from your max hand size to discard and redraw your hand?
- Wow. There are a LOT of face cards. A crazy amount. That means 10 was a really common number.

Good things.

- Alliances did happen.
- Card gifts did occur within the alliances.
- One team formed into a tank warrior and a back seat slanderer. In that instance, slandering worked all right.
- People having to toss their marker behind them.
- The A being either 1 or 11 worked pretty well. People kept it in their hand because it would help them for some things, even though it hindered them for dueling.

### Weird things:

- People leaning over to toss their markers, while still maintaining direction
- People sliding their marker to go far distances.
- From what I saw, turn order didn't matter *too* much. The last player I think gets some advantage because by then some players have exhausted their hands.

### Thoughts

- Make them discard cards as soon as they are slandered?
- People with a really crappy hand can't do too much. At most they're recovering two cards a turn.

I attempted to add choices to the game, but the end result had terribly unbalanced choices that did not seem very useful. Direction didn't really come into play as no one moved. Everyone simply decided to stockpile or long-distance slander. I now feel movement and actions both need to happen to add a lot more interest to the game. Additionally, the dueling mechanic was slow, tedious, and boring. It needs to, at the very least, be quickened to make it more appealing.

In the weird things section, I listed things that seemed like they might be unfair. I did not like the sniping aspect and think, at least for dueling/assassinating, the attacker would need line of sight to their opponent.

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## Part 3d and 3e

### Emperor's Favor 2.0

Okay, for the next iteration I want to try a few things and see what they solve. I would like to try and fix motion and dueling.



*Motion solution:*

Players can only move like Chess rooks. Forget about throwing the marker for now; just have them move in straight lines. Additionally, following motion, a player can perform any other action (choosing to get a card, dueling, etc).

*Slander solution:*

Slandering reduces the maximum hand of a player by 2 (to a minimum of 3).

Likewise, Praise raises the maximum hand of a player by 2 (to a maximum of 9).

*Dueling solution:*

In the beginning of a duel, players construct their 'dueling hand.' This involves selecting two cards from their hand and drawing a random card from the deck. Order goes:

Attacker lays a card down.

Defender lays a card down or strikes.

Attack lays a card down or strikes.

Etc until a strike, then tabulate as before, including maximum hand size.

This should hopefully shorten duels a bit.

Also, cards are counted in the form of 2-10 being their number, J = 11, Q = 12, K = 13.

Ace is still 1 for dueling and 11 for slandering/praising/saving one's life. This should partially prevent the glut of 10's.

**Results:**

That game was very fast. Two turns in fact. On turn 1, two of the players slandered one other. The other two players then proceeded to kill both of them (as their hands were greatly weakened). The remaining two players then dueled and one lost.

**Analysis:**

Player's can move too far. Will need to restrict it somehow. Corridors are death ways.

Slander is now powerful and worth it, but it leaves you too vulnerable. Perhaps weaken it again, but make the cost a lot less.

Duels are working pretty well now, but the random card is not used as players tend to have their own cards to depend on.

---

### **Emperor's Favor 2.1**

Changes for this iteration:

Starting hand size is reduced to 5 from 7.

Slander and Praise both cost 15 and decrease/increase hand size by 1.

Max movement in a straight line is 5.

Results:

Players: (as we've reduced the importance of throwing for testing purposes, I was able to try this out board game style)

Quarter

Penny

Dime

Dirty Penny

*Turn 1:*

Dime and Quarter ally.

Pennies ally.

Dime slanders Penny.

Dirty Penny slanders Dime.

*Turn 2:*

Quarter and Penny duel. They both have a King in hand and play it then strike. The result is a tie.

Penny and Quarter duel. They both have a Queen in hand and play it then strike. The result is again a tie.

Dime slanders Penny.

Dirty Penny praises Penny.

*Turn 3:*

Quarter slanders Penny.

Penny duels Quarter and kills him.

Quarter resurrects, and appears in a new spot. **(MUST FIND A WAY OF RESTRICTING THIS TO PREVENT SUDDEN ASSASSINATIONS)**

Dime slanders Dirty Penny.

Dirty Penny praises self.

*Turn 4:*

Quarter duels and kills Penny.

Dime assassinates (!!!) Quarter and kills him.

Penny flees to draw some cards.

Dime moves after Penny and draws a King.

*Turn 4:*

Penny duels Dime.

In this duel, one of the random cards is a King. This ends up saving Penny and enabling him to beat Dime.

*Analysis:*

This game was a lot more fun. Players were dueling and slandering one another everywhere. Praise was used for the first time, as was assassinate (against one's own 'team member' of all things!). The assassination worked perfectly though, as Quarter was momentarily weak and Dime was able to take the upper hand because he was hiding behind Quarter. Penny was already weak, so it would have worked perfectly had Penny not gotten that King in the last duel.

Slander and Praise seem to be working well now. I still wonder what it will be like if I make Slander cause the target to discard a card. Same thing for praise, except for drawing a card.

Instead of moving like rooks, I think I will just restrict the movement to five spaces total and seeing how that works. It may add a little bit more freedom of motion.

Resurrection is expensive, and rightfully so. Currently it takes 30. The average value of 5 cards is 35. 28 for 4 cards and 21 for 3 cards. I may try reducing it just a shade.

A new rule will be added stating that during the resurrectee's next turn, they are not able to perform duels or assassinations. This should prevent a resurrectee appearing behind his killer and stabbing him in the back.

Ace is still a nice decision to make on the 1 or 11. With the smaller hand size it makes the decision a lot more immediate too.

Assassination is powerful, but not completely fatal. It is possible to survive it, but you've got to be really careful.

I'm not sure how I feel about a number of factors in duels. Currently you get one champion card and then the luck of the draw for two of them, which works pretty well if you've got a good champion card and a high hand size. It is also nice for someone taking a bold chance with average cards and hoping for something good. I feel like I should add something to defeat King though, as having him adds a lot of swagger to one's step. I could put all face cards to 10 again, but then that just leads to a lot of ties like in the previous game. So you'd go into the battle with a good chance of a 10 as your champion card. The average value of drawn cards would be 6.3. I think I will keep the King as the regular value and choose to reduce the cost of resurrection.

---

## Emperor's Favor 2.2

Changes:

Slander also causes the target to discard a card.

Praise also causes the target to draw a card.

When resurrecting from death, during your next turn you cannot assassinate or duel.

Resurrection cost decreased to 25 from 30.

Results:

It's weird how seemingly small changes can affect things so much. The new Praise rule makes Praise quite useful, but Slander's ability has swung into too powerful territory. I found I enjoyed the game more without the card loss, so I'm reverting the change. The new resurrection cost was interesting and I think it's a fairly decent cost at the moment. Twenty five means a person reduced to three cards will be able to survive with a Queen and a King in hand. That seems a little unfortunate, but that may be one of the risks of having your hand size reduced so much. As it stands, a person with four cards in their hand will probably be able to resurrect, meaning someone about average (five cards, one use for duel, four saved for resurrecting) will be able to survive a disastrous duel. And a person with three cards in hand (with luck) will survive.

$$\begin{aligned} & (4/52)*2 + (4/52)*3 + (4/52)*4 + (4/52)*5 + (4/52)*6 + (4/52)*7 + (4/52)*8 + (4/52)*9 \\ & + (8/52)*10 + (4/52)*11 + (4/52)*12 + (4/52)*13 \\ & .0769+.1538+.2307+.3076+.3846+.4614+.5383+.6152+.6921+1.538+.8459+.9228+.999 \\ & 7=7.767 \text{ (average value of a card to save one's life)} \end{aligned}$$

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## Emperor's Favor 2.3 (for turn in)

Changes:

Slander has been reverted to not causing a discard.

Analysis

There are a number of problems we wanted to solve for with this new game.

- Lack of direct competition  
~ This has been solved in this case. The game is completely about direct competition with your peers.
- No real choices to make.  
~ This solution is quite good for that, as there are a number of choices on each turn. What to do in each phase? Where to move? Who to trust? I really think some of the most interesting choices involve dealing with your ‘teammate.’
- Hopping does not seem that challenging in hopscotch. More skill in throwing.  
~ Hopping has been eliminated from this version. I feel a bit edgy about that, as the original game is called, ‘hop scotch,’ but I think at its heart it was more a game about aiming and watching how you step. In Emperor’s Favor, watching where you step has become more metaphorical as it describes the care that needs to be taken about the ‘court.’ Tossing a marker is still involved, and careful aim is crucial for that.
- Stigma of being seen as a kids game  
~ Emperor’s Favor is more complex than hopscotch and uses words like “Emperor,” “assassination,” and “slander,” to create the illusion of maturity. Naturally, at its heart it’s just another game of numbers and tossing a bag around, but it looks a bit more mature.
- Requires a hopscotch board  
~ Emperor’s Favor does not solve this at all. It actually requires a much more complicated board. However, there is a quasi-bonus of allowing the players to design their own ‘court’ to play on. Still, it does require a board to be created.

Here are the current final rules:

### **Emperor’s Favor (Rule set): Version 2.3**

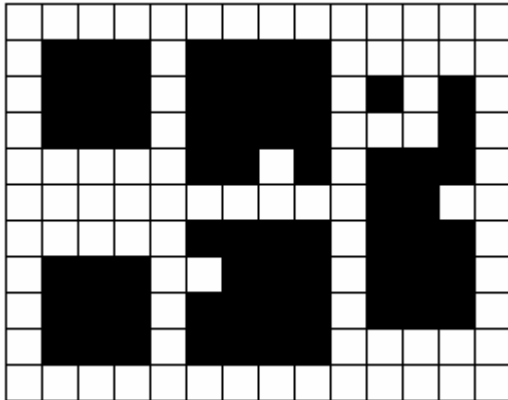
The game requires:

*Chalk/tape to draw the game board.*

*Four markers (bean bags)*

*Pack of playing cards*

*2 to 4 people*



In this game, the players take the role of cutthroat courtiers in the palace of the Majestic Emperor. Each player has a hand of cards that represents their own strength of will and political acumen. Each player has a personal Honor that determines the maximum amount of cards they can have in their hand. Each player also has a direction they are facing (north, south, east or west). Players perform their actions one after the other. The initial Honor of each player is five. At the beginning of the game, deal five cards to each player.

White squares on the game board are passable, black squares represent walls that you cannot pass/see through. Feel free to come up with your own boards to play the game on.

Determine the order of the players as such. Each player draws a card from the deck. The players are then numbered in the order of card worth (Ace->King), (Spades->Clubs->Diamonds->Hearts). This is the order they will perform their actions throughout the game.

At the beginning of a turn, a player draws a card if they are carrying fewer cards than their Honor.

The player now has the option to make a gift to an opponent. This involves passing any number of cards from the current player to an opponent.

The next step is movement. A player may move to any square that they can reach in five squares or less. A player may not skip squares, and must step on each to reach the goal square.

A player may then do one of the following:

- Attempt to assassinate an opponent. The opponent must be within the line of sight of the player (meaning, a straight line between the player and the opponent must not intersect any black squares on the game board). The marker must be thrown so that it hits the back of an opponent. If it hits the target, the opponent must randomly discard two cards. A duel then begins between the opponent and the player. If the marker misses its target, the Honor of the player is reduced by 2, to a minimum of three, and they must discard their highest value (non-Ace) card.
- Attempt to duel an opponent. The opponent must be within the line of sight of the player (meaning, a straight line between the player and the opponent must not intersect any black squares on the game board). The marker must be thrown so that it hits the front of an opponent. If it hits the target, the opponent and the player engage in a duel (as described below). If the marker misses its target, the Honor of the player is reduced by 1, to a minimum of 3, and they must discard their highest value (non-Ace) card.
- Slander an opponent. Discard 15 points worth of cards to reduce a target's Honor by 1, to a minimum of 3. (Optional rule, the player must actually insult their target)



- Praise. Discard 15 points worth of cards to increase a target's Honor by 1, to a maximum of 10. The target then draws a card. You may target yourself. (Optional rule, the player must actually praise their target)
- Draw a card.

At the end of a turn, a player must discard cards so that the number of cards in their hand is equal to or less than their personal Honor. A player may discard more cards than necessary if they so choose.

After discarding, a player may change the direction they are facing.

Dueling is done as follows.

1. Each player selects one card from their hand and is then dealt two random cards from the deck. These three cards represent their dueling hand.
2. The attacker lays a card from his dueling hand face down onto his 'attack stack.'
3. The defender then chooses to strike or to lay a card face from his dueling hand face down onto his 'attack stack.'
4. If the defender lays a card down, the attacker then decides whether to strike or lay a card from his dueling hand face down again.
5. This laying of cards/strike continues until one person chooses to strike or must strike because their dueling hand is empty.
6. At this point, each player counts the point value of their attack stack and adds their Honor. The player with the highest number of points wins the duel.
7. The loser may pay 25 points of cards to survive the duel by petitioning the emperor. Reduce the player's personal Honor by one to a minimum of three. Their entire hand is discarded and they must redraw from the deck. They may then go anywhere on the board, but cannot duel or assassinate in their next turn. (Optional rule: before the player comes back to life, they must recite a haiku about their situation. If the haiku is considered lackluster or not proper, the player is dead for good. You cannot be a courtier if you cannot even do basic poetry).

8. The winner of the duel return all unused cards from their dueling hand to their actual hand and draws cards from the deck to refill half (rounding down) of the cards they used in the duel.

The winner of the game is the last one standing. Only you are worthy of the Emperor!

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One thing that I think worked quite well in the game is the need for alliances. In playing the game a number of times, I found the most dull of games is when there were two people (and it became stockpiling/slandering and then moments of dueling), and the most exciting for when there were four people. That interaction of bonding for a time to later on turn on one another creates some fun tension. One of the best moments is when the Dueler was protecting the Slanderer, and the Slanderer assassinated the Dueler and went on to try and win the game.

Also interesting is how one of the initial problems (how hard it was to refill your hand) was solved not by adding a mechanic for refilling the hand, but by the change of allowing motion and an action and by restricting the initial hand size to five.

The markers were an interesting part of the game, but I am not sure just how much they add. One good thing about them is that they prevented people from attempting duels and assassinations when people are incredibly far away down a long hall. For movement though, as that was just for squares of five away, they really were more annoying and were thus cut.

The game really bears little resemblance to hopscotch, but as I mentioned earlier I think it retains some similar elements. Aim and care are necessary, and I have added more choices to make and a little bit of a back-story.

It actually is amazing what a back-story can do. Not only does it make designing the game more interesting, but it gives players information to latch onto. Turning the phrase ‘maximum hand size’ to ‘personal Honor’ and using such fun words as ‘Slander’ and ‘Assassinate’ add a little bit of fun to the game mechanics. I am reminded of the card game Mafia that is a simple game that uses crime drama words to spice it up. A lot of fun can be had when players sink a bit into their roles, hence the addition of the optional

haiku rule. All just window dressing to add a bit of juice to a game about numbers and cards.

I am not completely satisfied with the balance of the game. I think to understand it a lot better, I would just need to see it played and play it a bunch of other times. I was fairly surprised how terrible the first and second iterations were. I suppose, foolishly, I had hoped I would have chanced on something enjoyable on the first pass. I do believe I had a good base though, as by changing a number of the core concepts a bit, a rather fun (albeit unbalanced) game emerged. From that, numbers were tweaked to make things a bit more balanced. Basically, iteration was very much my friend throughout this project.

In the end, I feel I have created a game that stands up fairly well. It causes the players to make some interesting choices, including one's not explicitly spelled out in the game mechanics, and can become even more enjoyable when the players get a bit into the 'role-playing' of it.