

Harem

Harem means “the forbidden place” and “sanctum.” Regarding the Turkish harem, it was an honor for girls to be accepted by the Sultan and many parents even encouraged their beautiful daughters to enter concubinage through slavery. The women within the harem held different ranks: odalisques (serving girls); concubines (one night stands); ikbals (elevated concubines and favorites of the Sultan); and Kadines (essentially, wives numbering no more than four). Life in the harem could occasionally be dangerous (an angry Sultan or a jealous harem rival were two such dangers) but for the most part, the women within found a safe harbor from the world, a place where their physical needs were taken care of and where they learned the arts of dancing, allure, erotic play, poetry reading, and musical instrument playing.

Welcome to Harem, the exotic card game where you attempt to create the most envied harem in the lands. Players take the role of a Sultan and play gold and gems to eventually buy harem concubines. But watch out for opponents who hire thieves to threaten your treasury. Once in the harem, concubines can train in the arts of dancing and seduction and adorn themselves with expensive jewelry. The player with the best harem in the end is the winner!

Objective

To create a certain number of “perfect concubines” by elevating them to the status of *Kadines* OR to have the most points when the “Game Over” card surfaces.

The number of *Kadines* to win is dictated by the number of players:

- 2 Players: 4 *Kadines*
- 3 Players: 3 *Kadines*
- 4 Players: 2 *Kadines*

Components

- 1 Master Deck (81 cards)
- 1 Harem Deck (20 cards)
- 4 Gem Reference cards
- 4 purple *Kadine* coins
- 2 six-sided dice

Setup

1. Shuffle the Harem Deck and set in the middle of the table.
2. Find a Guard for each player and place it in play.
3. Divide the Master deck into two halves.
4. Insert the “Shuffle the Deck” card into the bottom half of the Master Deck and shuffle. Set in the middle of the table.
5. Shuffle the top half of the Master Deck and place on top of the other half of the Master Deck.
6. Deal 7 cards (in addition to the starting Guard) to each player from the Master Deck.
7. Roll 2 dice to determine who goes first – highest number goes first, then turns proceed clockwise.

Play Sequence

Players may play up to three cards each turn. They may play ONE “Kismet” card and up to TWO other cards per turn including “Gems,” “Gold,” “Sultan’s Wrath,” “Enhancements,” “Guards,” “Concubines,” and “Jewelry.” Players who cannot play a card, or do not wish to, may at the beginning of their turn decide to forfeit their *entire* turn to draw up to three cards from either deck.

When finished, players fill their hands to 7 by drawing from any combination of the Harem Deck or the Master Deck. If by chance, he has more than 7 cards in his hand, he does not draw any, but he does NOT have to discard down to 7. Play then passes to the next player.

When a player draws the “Play Now! Shuffle the

Deck” card, the player immediately suspends his turn. He sets the “Shuffle the Deck” card aside, inserts the “Play Now! Game Over” card into the Master Deck *as well as the discard-pile cards*, shuffles and resumes his turn.

When a player either has the required number of *Kadines* or when he draws the “Play Now! Game Over,” card, the game is immediately over.

If at any time the Harem Deck runs out of cards, simply reshuffle any concubines in the concubine discard pile to form a new Harem Deck.

The Cards

The following are explanations of each type of card.

Gold

Gold is the basis of your treasury and reflects the amount of money and prestige you have. The more gold you have, the easier it is to acquire concubines. Gold comes in denominations of 1, 2, and 3 gold pieces per card. To play a Gold, simply place it in your treasury (see diagram later in the rulebook).

Gems

Gems can provide a huge boost to your treasury when wishing to play a concubine card. To play a gem, place it in your treasury (see diagram later in the rulebook). When you wish to cash in your Gem card for the purchase of a concubine, roll 2 dice and consult the Gem Reference Card to see what value your gems equal. Once you have determined its value, you *must* use the gem card to purchase a concubine. If you do not get the roll you want or even *need* to equal your concubine’s value, you lose the gem card anyway. All Gem cards that are used or that equal zero, must be discarded.

Concubine

Concubines have a base value number printed in the upper-right corner of her card. Note that her Dancing, Seduction and Comeliness attributes, (printed at the top of her card as “D:# S:# C:#”) each ranging from 1 to 4,

add up to comprise her base value. The base value number is the cost to add her to your harem. The cost can be paid for with any combination of gold, jewelry, or gems. A concubine with all three skills at a four is a “perfect” concubine, a *Kadine*, and gets a bonus of +3 points, bringing her modified value up to 15, and bringing the player one *Kadine* closer to winning. Players train their concubines towards perfection by adding “Enhancement” cards to them (see below). Once concubines become *Kadines*, discard Enhancement cards from them and stack your *Kadines* under a purple *Kadine* token to signify their perfected status.

To play a concubine, discard at least her base value in gold, jewelry, and/or gems from your treasury. Example: A player has previously played a “Gold 2” card and a “Gold 3” card into his treasury. He has in his hand another “Gold 2” card and a Harem Concubine with a value 6. On his turn, he plays his “Gold 2” card into his treasury, giving him 7 gold total in his treasury, he then discards all of his gold from his treasury and plays his second card, the Concubine 6. Note that the extra gold (7 Gold – 6 Concubine cost) he had is wasted.

When playing a Concubine card, be sure to read if her power should be activated. The concubines’ powers are located on their cards. The majority of concubines either have a one-time power when played, or they have a once-per-turn power.

Enhancement

Once a concubine is played into the harem (see the example above), players can add Enhancement Cards to add points to her base score. For example, a player might wish to play a “Seduction +1” card to one of his harem girls who has a Seduction score of three or less. Note that Enhancement Cards cannot bring a concubine's skill above four. If a +2 Enhancement card is played on a concubine with a skill of three, that concubine does receive a +1 bonus moving the skill to four, but loses the extra point that enhancement card gives. Multi-Talent cards are special enhancement cards that give a concubine bonuses in two areas. But like regular enhancement cards, any bonuses that send a skill

above four are wasted. As noted above, when a concubine becomes a *Kadine*, discard all of her Enhancement cards and place a *Kadine* coin on her card.

Jewelry

Jewelry cards are played into the treasury, just like Gold or Gem cards, but unlike the latter two, Jewelry cards may be used at any time during your turn either to add gold to your treasury, or to add Comeliness to a concubine. To add gold, simply discard the Jewelry card and add the number of gold indicated on the card. Of course, this gold must be spent on the turn you discard the Jewelry card. To add Comeliness, simply move the card from your treasury to the target concubine. Note that after the Jewelry card is transferred to the concubine, it cannot be used for gold thereafter.

Guards

Guards provide extra protection against “Sultan’s Wrath” (see below). Everyone starts with one guard in play in addition to the starting hand of 7. Here’s the breakdown of guard effects:

- If you have no guards: 2 dice but you lose ties.
- If you have 1 guard: 2 dice, +1, and win ties.
- If you have 2 guards (the max allowed): 2 dice, +2, and win ties.

Note that if your guards lose the combat roll, “Sultan’s Wrath” has the option of executing its text or eliminating all your guards.

Sultan’s Wrath

The Sultan has hired thieves! “Sultan’s Wrath” cards allow you to steal gold, gems, or jewelry from your opponents’ treasuries. To play a “Sultan’s Wrath” card, simply discard it and execute its text against a chosen opponent. Any gold, jewelry, or gems stolen go directly to the thieving player's treasury, not his hand! However, if your chosen opponent has Guards on the table, combat ensues.

The attacking player rolls 2 dice and adds his combat modifier printed at the bottom of the “Sultan’s Wrath” card. Note that some combat modifiers are negative. The defensive player also rolls 2 dice and adds any applicable modifiers (see “Guards” above). The player whose modified roll is the highest is the winner. Guards win ties. If the guards win, the guards remain in the palace. If the thieving player wins, either the guards in the target palace are discarded or the “Sultan’s Wrath” executes his card text, attacking player’s choice. A player may choose to use his two-card-per-turn limit to play two “Sultan’s Wraths,” but each “Sultan’s Wrath” and its combat modifier is handled separately. “Sultan’s Wrath” cannot steal more gold than the text reads. Therefore, if a “Sultan’s Wrath” can only steal 2 gold, and the target player only has a “Gold 3” card, the thieving player would gain no gold (go for the cards in that case!).

Kismet (Turkish for “Fate”)

A player may wish to play a Kismet card in addition to the one or two other cards on his turn. Kismet cards, like all cards, can only be played on your turn; however, you may play the Kismet card at any time during your turn. To play a Kismet card, simply read and execute the text and discard the card.

Play Now!

“Play Now!” cards are executed immediately upon drawing. (Any “Play Now! cards drawn in your first hand are placed into the discard pile and replacement cards drawn). *Because execution of such cards is immediate, it is important for players to draw their cards one at a time.* When such a card is drawn, the player's turn is suspended, the “Play Now!” card is executed, then the player's turn is resumed. “Play Now!” cards do not count against the number of cards a player can play on a turn, nor do they count against the number of cards the player draws.

For example, a player plays a “Treasure” Kismet card allowing him to draw three cards from either deck. He chooses to draw all three cards from the Master Deck. He

draws a “Play Now! Lack of Resources” card on his second draw. The “Lack of Resources” card is executed. Afterward, the player takes his second and third draws from his “Treasure” card, again suspending his turn if he draws any more “Play Now!” cards.

Winning the Game

The moment a player has four *Kadines*, (three in a 3- or two in a 4-player game) the game is over and he has won; however, if the “Play Now! Game Over” card surfaces before a player has accomplished that, then points are tallied to see who wins.

Points are determined by adding up Concubine Points (derived from *modified* concubine points in harem) and Cash Points (derived from gold, gems, and jewels in treasuries).

Players receive points for every concubine and *Kadine* in their harem. Add up the *modified* points for each harem concubine. Remember, perfect 12's gain a bonus of +3 so they are actually 15 points. Players also get ½ credit for any Gold, Jewelry, and Gem cards in treasuries called Cash Points. Roll for any Gems on the table. Add the gem values to the played gold and jewelry values and divide by two rounded down. Add this number to the Concubine Points.

For example: Player one has a 12 Concubine, an 8 Concubine, and two 6 Concubines (all *modified* values, not base values), so 12+3 (*Kadine* bonus) +8 +6 +6=35 Concubine Points. He also has 5 gold, 1 gem and 1 piece of Jewelry worth 4. He rolls for the gem and gets a value of 4. He adds this to his gold and jewelry for a sub-total of 13, divided by two rounded down gives him 6 Cash Points. He adds these points to his Concubine Points (35+6) for a total of 41 points.

In the unlikely event of a tie, the player with the most *Kadines* wins. If that is a tie, then the player with the greatest value of Gold, Gems and Jewels is the winner.

Alternate Play Versions

To expand the length of the game, take out the “Shuffle the Deck” card and play until the Master Deck runs out of cards. Then place the “Game Over” card into the deck and shuffle as normal. You can shorten the game by taking out the “Shuffle the Deck” card and shuffling the “Game Over” card into the bottom half of the Master Deck. Finally, you can say that the *only* way to win is either by *Kadines* OR points. Experiment and have fun with it!

Sample Layout

The following is the recommended layout for Harem:



F.A.Q.s

1. *What if I draw a “Play Now!” card while filling my hand to 7, and it causes me to have 7 or more cards when I’m done?* Then your turn is done, and no more cards are to be drawn and the play passes to the next player.
2. *It’s the end of my turn, and I draw “Play Now! Lack of Resources.” Do I discard down to three and draw back up to 7?* Yes. Always follow “Play Now!” cards to the letter.
3. *I roll for two gems and don’t have enough to play*

my concubine. I notice an unguarded gold in my opponent’s treasury and I have a “Sultan’s Wrath” card. I haven’t played any cards yet. Can I steal the gold to play my concubine before I lose the gems? Yes. Nothing exists in the rules that determines play order (except dealing with “Play Now!” cards immediately). Of course, the gems must be discarded before your turn ends.

4. *Does moving a Jewelry Card to a concubine from my treasury count as one of my two plays?* No. Neither does transferring an Enchantment Card from one concubine to another as per one of the concubine’s powers. A “play” is using a card from your hand.
5. *If I don’t need some cards in my hand, can I forfeit my turn and discard them to draw new ones?* No. A player may not willingly discard cards, unless directed by a “Play Now!” You may, however, decide to forfeit your turn to draw three new cards.

Credits

The following people made this game possible:

Game Concept and Design: Wesley Connally
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