Viking Game Prototype

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1 Pitch

Get The Dragon Egg is a fast paced free-for-all multiplayer tabletop mind game, where you must steal an egg from the dragon's nest, and return it to one of the designated villages.
But beware! There are not enough eggs for all of you. If you do not get an egg, you have but only one choice; catch up to someone else and steal their egg, or you will lose the game.
Stealing an egg will not be an easy task. Only by outsmarting your opponent and staying one step ahead, can you succeed in your endeavor.

2 Introduction

Get The Dragon Egg is a fast paced board game for up to four players where there is always only one loser. The game functions around a hexagonal board made up of a collection of hexagonal tiles (see figure 1). The game functions through a simultaneous turn system, where each player plans his turn ahead of time, and then the round is executed for all players at the same time. This is done through a "time" system, where each round every player has five hour points. These hour points are then used to traverse the tiles where each tile has its own hour cost to traverse. There are three different kind of tiles, roads, rivers and bandit camps. Roads only cost one hour to traverse, while rivers take three and bandit tiles cost two. But if the player is holding an egg, then the bandit tile will cost the remainder of the players hours instead. Using ones hours each player is tasked to travel to the middle of the board, take an egg, and return it to its designated village (each egg has its own colour which corresponds to its village). When there is only one egg left, that egg is removed from the game, effectively leaving one player without an egg. It is then the task of this one player to try and outsmart his opponents and steal an egg, by landing on the same tile as a player who has one. This way a game of catch usually develops between two or more players, where each player has to try and predict the others movements using the knowledge of the surrounding tiles, and the location of the goal of the corresponding egg.

Figure 1: Image of prototype game board. Orange/red sticks are roads, blue are rivers and black round pieces are bandit camps

3   Gameplay Example

- **1st round**
  Turn:
  All players get's to the middle in the same turn and roll a dice to see in which order they have to choose an egg. Player 1 does not get an egg.

- **2nd round**
  Turn:
  Player 2 chooses a "slow" path by entering the robber tile ending her turn after one move. Player 3 goes for the direct path to the exit and is intercepted by player 1 on her way to the goal their turns ends in the first move. Player 1 steals player 3's egg.

- **3rd round**
  Turn:
  Player 1 (now carrying the final egg) chooses to wait in the first move tricking player 2 to move to towards the goal. Player 2 moves towards goal *Turn:*
  Player 1 goes to the same tile as Player 2 Player 2 waits Their turns ends Player 2 get steals the egg. Player 2 reach her goal (with the final two moves she has left).

- **4th round**

Turn:
Both players wait Their turns ends Player 1 get steals the egg.

- **5th round**
  Turn:
  Player 1 goes directly for the goal Player 2 waits *Turn:*
  Player 1 gets to the exit Player 2 loses the game

4 Challenges

Each player is met with two main challenges. First each round he must manage his hour points to plot out his movement. This is important as this is his main way of interacting with the game, and also his main way of interacting with other players. Through his movement, he is met with another challenge, which is that of stealing (or avoiding getting stolen from) the other players eggs. This is done mainly by the idea of outsmarting your opponents, only by predicting the movement of your opponent can you hope to land on the same tile as him, and thus steal his egg.

5 Game Board

The setup of the board is one that dictates the game to a large degree. Since the board is made through random placement of the three different tile types, it simply means that one or more players may simply be unlucky. This introduction of randomization and luck is not without thought though. The game in itself does not fully support the notion of a symmetrical board. While this would indeed have made an equally fair board, this would also introduce the concept of the "best"route, and thus the best play. One or several routes to the center, may simply just be the quickest, and this would often introduce the situation where all players reach the center at the same time, in which case the game would be more or less decided on a die toss. In many ways the race to the center is part of the setup of the game. It is this part that decides which player gets to be the one without an egg, and thus who gets to play as the first thief. A good player in this situation would then early on realise that he is the one who would end without an egg, and instead of going for the center, position himself in a way that would allow him to steal from another player. The idea of the different tile types were meant to support the notion of one player outsmarting another. Here the concept would be that by knowing the cost of the different tiles, a player would be able to predict the best course of action for another player, and thus possible also what action that player may take. This is helped by the fact that each player knows the goal of the other players by the colour of their chosen eggs, and the town which corresponds to the colour.

6 Player Count

The game is designed to be played by 3-4 people, but is also possible to play between only two. It is even arguable that the game is best designed to be played by only two people as this eliminates one of the key problems with the games design. A player can only realistically try and steal from one other player, though a good player may try and leave other options open, the size of the board simply means that sooner or later only one option would be left. This often leads to the situation where three players have eggs, and while the fourth player tries to steal from one of the three, the two others get a free pass to their goal. This effectively means that the game is only truly played between two people, even though the game includes four.

The size of the board, means that a game session usually only lasts from between 5-15 minutes. This means that after the thief has chosen his target, the rest of the players effectively wait out the remainder of the game. One way of this could have been solved was to only have one goal instead of one for each egg. This would have effectively meant that all players would be heading in the same direction, thus leaving multiple options open for the egg thief, instead of only one. This would also have allowed for the game board to be larger, (and thus the game to be longer) as this would open up for more chances for the thief without excluding the other players for longer amounts of time.

6.1 Dealing With Luck

In some ways the bandit camp tile is designed to alleviate the luck of the draw of other players. Here on this tile the thief has an advantage as the cost of going through one for players with eggs are higher. Furthermore it may have been proven beneficial to have given the egg thief further advantage. If players with eggs would have been awarded lesser hour points per round, it would have meant for a better balance of the game, since the strategy of stealing an egg instead of taking one, would have been much more likely.

One issue that the game has is that, while a good player may be able to predict the movements of another player, this is inherently very hard to do, and in most cases, the stealing of an egg may simply be down to dumb luck or coincidence. One player may simply just by luck of chance, have landed on the same tile as another with an egg.

7 Conclusion

Throughout this document, the game of Get The Dragon Egg, was introduced and discussed. It was here found that several problems with the game were present. Here including the concept of luck, as well as the problem of the game focusing on the interaction between two players out of four. Solutions were proposed for both problems, one focusing on the resources of each player, the other focusing on the structure of the board, and the amount of physical goals

present in the game.