



by Walter Obert
A word and betting game for 5 - 12 clever sultans, aged 10 and up

Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves are in front of the cave containing fabulous treasures. "Open... sesame?! Crocodile?! Admiral?!". Of the magic word that opens the riches... they remember only the consonants! Who will ever bet on them?!

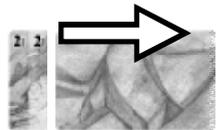
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- 21 consonants
- 5 gold coin cards (1 coin, 2 coins, 3 coins, 3 coins, crossed swords that has no coin);

Thieves (that is, all the other players excluding Alice and David) are awarded three points each.

The dealer keeps track of the scores.

The turn is now over. The dealer puts the five consonants back in the consonants deck and shuffles it. Then he draws five new consonants: he puts these consonants face down one for each of the coins and the swords, as described above. The dealer also moves the Sesame card one column to the right.



Finally, the dealer discards the Style card used, turns the topmost card of the Style pack face up and announces the new category. A new turn starts.

Eighth and final turn

In the eighth and final turn of the game, game play is slightly different. After the usual preparation,

- 15 Style cards
- 1 Sesame card and 1 cave
- 12 betting cards Ali Baba (front) / Thieves (back)
- 1 20 second sand timer
- these rules.

OVERVIEW AND AIM OF THE GAME

Each player is a sultan trying to open the treasure cave. Each turn, players will try to find a word that scores the most points by cleverly using the few consonants they are given. But be careful! Not all the words are good ones! Players' research is always bound by a Style card. The player with the most points at the end of the game will be the winner.

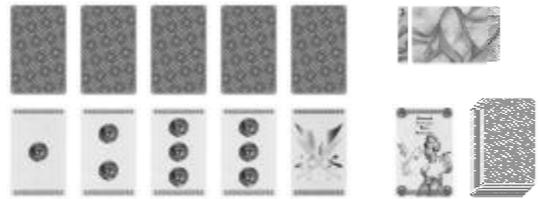
PREPARATION

Take pencil and paper to keep track of the scores. The owner of the game chooses a dealer, or you

each player must secretly turn their betting cards either to Ali Baba or the Thieves. Then, each player thinks about a valid word. Once a player wants to say his word, he must say "Open Sesame!" Then, he says his word out loud: coins are tallied for the word, and the sand timer is started. After the sand timer runs out, all players reveal their betting cards. Starting with the player sitting to the left of the player that said "Open Sesame!" and proceeding clockwise, each player has two possibilities: he may pass or he may say the word he has thought of, but only if his word scores more coins than all the words spoken so far by players who have made the same bet (either Ali Baba or the Thieves). After each player has had his chance to say his word, the player with the most valuable word given by a player showing Ali Baba gets 6 points. The player with the best word among the players who chose the Thieves gets 4 points.

Example. Style card is "Fictional characters". Gillian declares "SHERLOCK HOLMES", which is worth 11 gold coins. The sand timer is started: when it runs out, all bets are revealed. Bill and Gillian are Thieves. Alice says "ARSÈNE LUPIN", which is worth 9 gold coins: since she chose Ali Baba, on this turn she

can just choose randomly. Each player gets an Ali Baba / Thieves betting card: put the remaining cards back in the box. The dealer places the coin cards near one another in the following order: 1 - 2 - 3 - 3 - crossed swords. Then he puts five consonants, face down, one above each of the coin cards. The dealer shuffles the Style cards, and places them in a face down stack beside the other cards. Then he turns the top card face up and reads the category aloud. Lastly, the dealer takes the cave, he partially covers it with the Sesame card so that only the last column is visible (the one with "2/1").



THE GAME

A game of Word Jam lasts eight turns. The dealer turns the five consonants face up. Each player now thinks of a word whose consonants



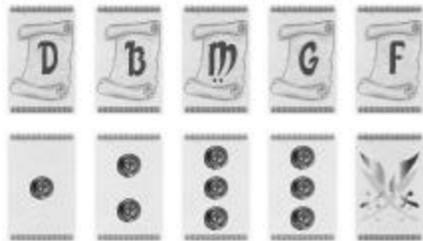
may declare a word which is worth less than the one given by a Thief. Bill does not declare a word scoring higher than Gillian; Clarissa does not say a word scoring more than Alice, but David does, saying "FRANKENSTEIN" which is worth 13 gold coins. Eric and Francis do not say a word scoring more than David's. David, the best among the Ali Babas, scores 6 points; Gillian, the best among the Thieves, scores 4 points.

END OF THE GAME

At the end of the eighth turn the player with the most points is the winner, and will ultimately be the owner of the fabulous treasure in the cave! In case of a tie, tied players play an additional round.

score the most points, based on the value in gold coins. Each consonant is worth the number of coins shown on the card below it; other consonants and vowels are worth zero. Players **may not** use the consonant above the crossed swords, as it is banned. It is not necessary to use all four consonants in the same word. Also, consonants may be repeated as many times as players wish.

Example.



With these letters, one can form the word ARMAGEDDON, which is worth 8 gold coins: M (3) + G (3) + D (1) + D (1). The consonants R and N, as well as vowels, do not score any points. Note that the letter B has not been used, and that the F is banned. Another valid word could be STREET,

STYLE CARD

Style cards restrict the choices of words players may think of. During each turn, only words that relate to the current Style card are valid. Some Style cards have an asterisk: in case of discussion, these can be checked against a dictionary, that will ultimately define whether a word is correct or not. Dialect words, foreign terms and names are always invalid, unless the Style card specifically calls for them. Words already used during the game cannot be re-used. Word Jam is a funny game and it shall not be problematic to determine whether a word is valid or not. However, if you can't decide, all players vote: the word is accepted with at least three favourable votes.

The Style cards have the following categories:

- Free:** All words in the dictionary. Names and conjugated verbs are not valid.
- Sports and Games:** names of games, toys and sports.

but it is worth zero points! FACTORY is an example of invalid word, as it contains the F, which is banned.

When a player thinks he has thought of a good word, he says aloud "Open Sesame!" and raises his betting card showing the Ali Baba side. For the current turn, he will be Ali Baba. The game stops, and Ali Baba says out loud the word he has thought of, and the score of the word is calculated as described above.

The betting

Once the coin value of the word has been tallied and announced, the **other players** have two possibilities:

- trust Ali Baba and turn their betting cards to his side; **or**
- turn their card over to the Thieves side (and think of a better word in about 20 seconds).

Players secretly choose their side, by covering their betting card with their hands. When everyone has chosen, all cards are revealed at the same time. Also in this case there are two possibilities:

1. all players chose Ali Baba. Good, all players agree! The game moves on to the scoring phase (see below).

2. one or more players have chosen the Thieves. In this case, the sand timer is started: within 20 seconds, all the Thieves must think about a word that could score **more coins** than Ali Baba's word (a tie is not enough). As soon as time runs out, starting from the first Thief to the left of Ali Baba, and proceeding clockwise, all the Thieves in turn can say aloud their word; the **first one** to say a word worth more coins than Ali Baba's one, becomes the Head Thief for the turn.

Example.



The Style card is Cinema: Alice says "Open Sesame!", she shows Ali Baba and declares the word "GODARD", which is worth 10 gold coins. All other players select their side: only David chooses Ali Baba, so the sand-timer is started. When time runs out, the Thieves may declare their words. Bill says "REDFORD", which is not enough, as it is also

worth 10 gold coins. Clarissa does not say a word, and passes. David is on Ali Baba's side; Eric says "REDGRAVE" but alas! The V is banned and the word is not valid. Francis says "SCHWARZENEGGER", a word worth a total of 13 gold coins! Since Francis is the first Thief to say a word worth more than Ali Baba's, the round stops, and Francis becomes Head Thief for this turn.

Scoring

If there were no Thieves, or if they couldn't outscore the word of Ali Baba, then Ali Baba scores a number of points equal to the highest red score visible in the cave. Each of the other players who bet on Ali Baba gains the highest yellow score. If Ali Baba's word has been outscored, then the Head Thief earns the highest red score visible, while all the other Thieves earn the highest yellow score.

Example. At the end of the first turn, Ali Baba or the Head Thief will score two points; their followers, one point each. In the preceding example, the cave is on the sixth turn: Francis would score five points, all the other

- Fictional characters:** characters of movies, books, comic books, etc.
- Objects*:** non-living things you can touch, not abstracts ideas.
- Verbs and Adjectives*:** verbs, but **only** the infinitive tense and adjectives.
- The Body*:** parts of the human body.
- Things you see** from where you are*: visible non-living things players can see from where they are playing.
- Animals*:** animal types (not generic ones: "ant" = yes, "insect" = no).
- Singers:** last names of singers or names of bands (excluding articles like "the" and "a").

- Cinema:** surnames of actors, actresses and directors.
- Flora*:** plants, flowers, fruits and related words.
- Food*:** stuff to eat and drink.
- 8 Letters** words*: dictionary words of exactly 8 letters.
- Words that start with the letter worth **1 gold coin*:** dictionary words starting with the consonant that is worth 1 gold coin.
- Geography*:** names of States, cities, rivers, lakes, regions, countries, etc.

Word Jam
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The author, together with the publishing house, would like to dedicate this game to the memory of Alex Randolph.

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