



A Kayenta Games publication
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Obsession

Rulebook

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Our Story

Changes are afoot in Derbyshire, England, where four families—all possessed of eligible young gentlemen and ladies—find themselves embroiled in romance and intrigue during a time of optimism. Fortune has recently smiled on these somewhat neglected estates, families with respectable histories that endured hard times in the late 18th century. Now, in the mid-19th, the families Asquith, Cavendish, Ponsonby, and York have coincidentally come into new sources of income and are intent on improving their country estates and restoring their failing reputations. The inflow of funds is modest, but there is a new optimism abroad in this part of Derbyshire!

The envy of this part of the county is Alderley Hall where Margaret, Dowager Countess Fairchild, and her sister-in-law, Ethel, reside with a joint income well in excess of £20,000 pa. Only their loneliness living on such a sprawling estate dampens the generous hearts of the two widowed and childless ladies.

Then, to their delight, they welcome new occupants: their dashing nephew Charles and lovely niece Elizabeth, sadly not far removed from tragedy. Their parents, returning from holiday in the south of France, perished crossing the Channel in suddenly ill weather. The death of Margaret's brother-in-law and his lady has brought Charles and Elizabeth permanently to the Fairchild residence, far from their childhood estate in Yorkshire. Of course, the irrepressible Fairchild ladies, now a year removed from the terrible accident, know precisely what is the best medicine for a sad heart: romance! And the surrounding hills are awash in prime matchmaking material. The nearby Derbyshire families all have marriageable children, and the Fairchild ladies have designs!

Glossary Info

This *Obsession* Rulebook enables rapid set up and gameplay. The game also comes with a separate alphabetised Glossary where detailed explanations can be found beyond the scope of this Rulebook.

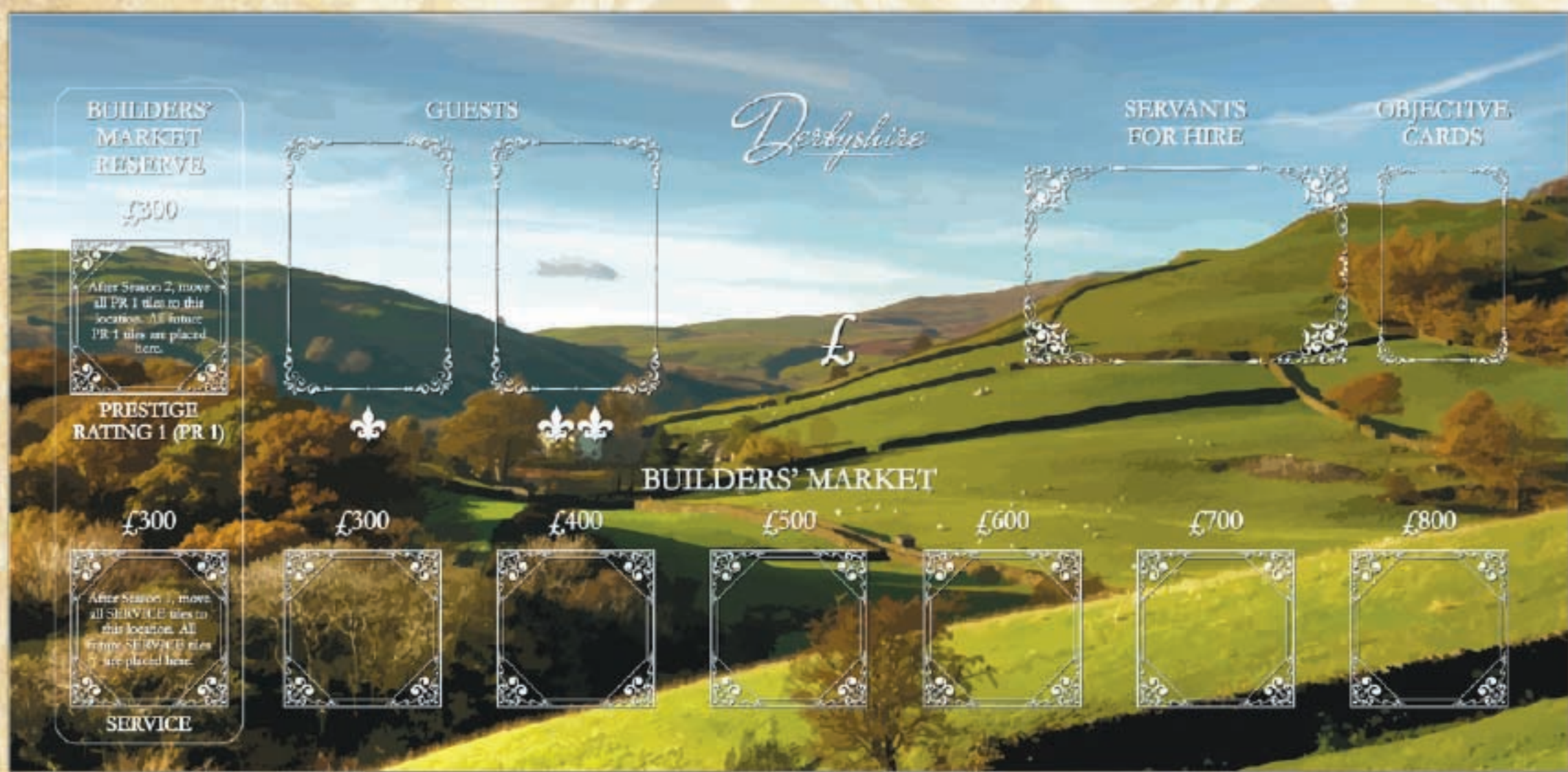
Every highlighted term in **Blue** the reader encounters in these pages has a corresponding Glossary entry.

The Glossary provides thematic content and should also be used whenever necessary to clarify rules described in brief here. Note that game variations are presented in the Glossary under **Variations**. The Glossary is a critical adjunct to this Rulebook if one is seeking to get the most out of the game of *Obsession*!

Skip the reading,
watch the tutorials!



Game Components



SUPPLY BOARD (1)



ROUND TRACK (1)



BUTLER (4)



VALET (8)



HOUSEKEEPER (4)



LADY'S MAID (8)



UNDERBUTLER (2)



FOOTMAN (13)



THEME CARDS (10)



PLAYER BOARDS (4)



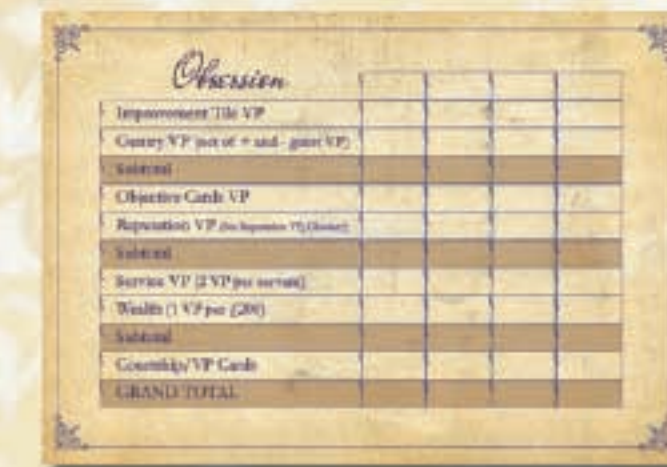
REPUTATION WHEEL COUNTERS (20)



LINEN DRAW BAG (1)



PAWNS (2)



SCOREPAD (1)



VICTORY POINT CARDS (30)



ORGANISERS (4)



£100 COINS (35)
£500 COINS (11)



REMINDER TILES (4)



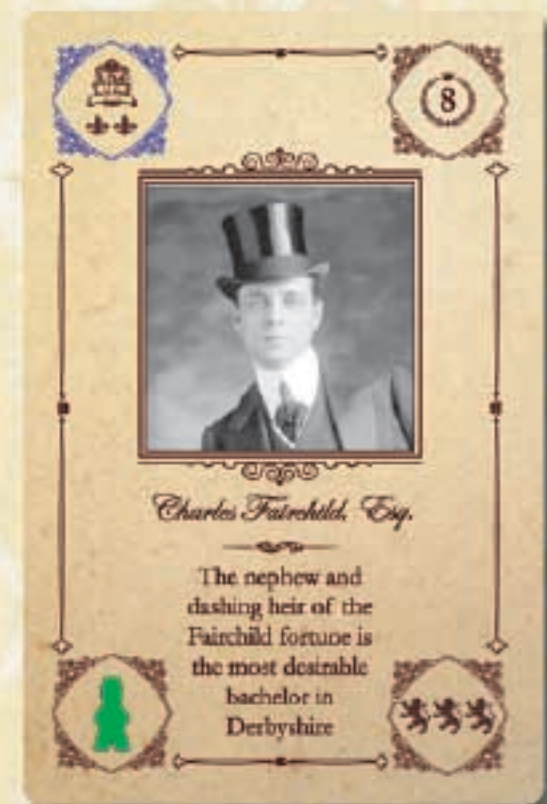
TWO-SIDED PLAYER AIDS (12)



OBJECTIVE CARDS (30)



FAMILY CARDS (17)



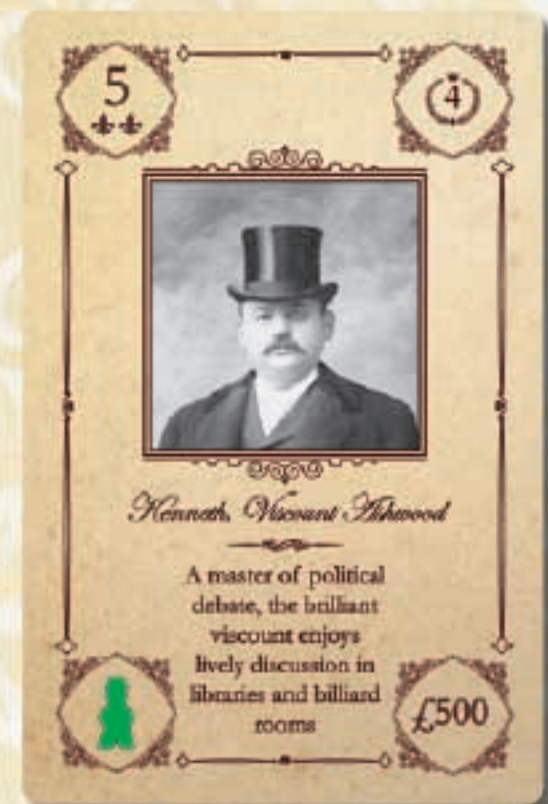
FAIRCHILD CARDS (2)



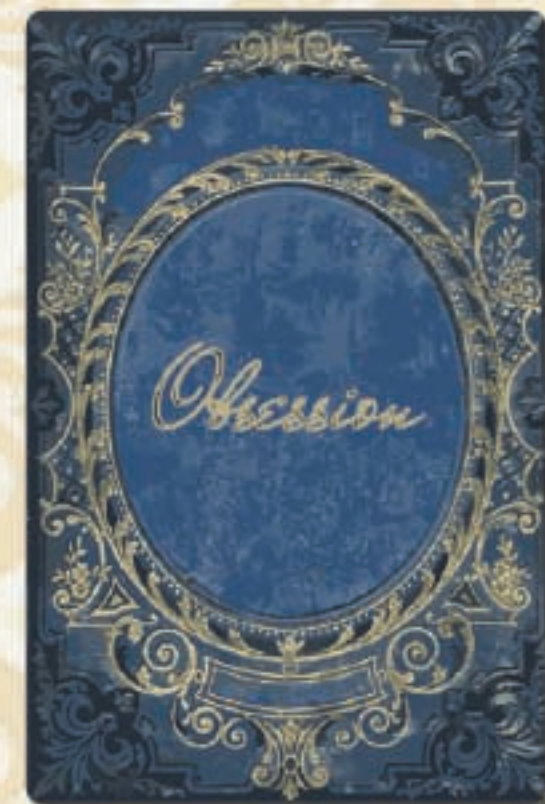
STARTER GUEST CARDS (15)



CASUAL GUEST CARDS (35)



PRESTIGE GUEST CARDS (26)



GENTRY CARDS (95)



SOLITAIRE OPPONENT CARDS (12)



SOLITAIRE AI CARD (1)



SOLITAIRE DICE (1)



ESSENTIALS TILES (13)



SERVICE TILES (14)



ESTATE TILES (14)



PRESTIGE TILES (13)



SPORTING TILES (15)



MONUMENT TILES (6)



SUITES EXPANSION AND HYBRID 2ND PRINTING TILES (5)

Player Area Setup (standard play)

Rules for four *Obsession* variants can be found in the Glossary under **Variations**



First Player Rules Summary

SETUP

A player is randomly assigned the 1st player marker. Starting with the person to the left of the 1st player and going clockwise, players choose a family board (the first player will get last choice).

DURING THE GAME

At the end of each courtship season, the 1st player pawn is passed counterclockwise (to the player's right).



Place a **Country Estate Organiser** near the player board, either below as shown here or to one side (as shown on the next page).

Leave room below the organiser for additional tiles. Alternatively, players may use the back side of the player board, which has an integrated organiser.

Each family starts with the same 5 **Improvement Tiles**, which are distinguished by a building icon in the upper right-hand corner on only one side. Place the tiles as shown with the building icon visible.

Each family begins with the same four family members: a husband and wife, heir, and daughter. Frequently, estate names differ from the family's last name. Note, however, that each family member shares the same crest as on their player board, and above that crest is the 1st letter of the family name. Locate the family cards, which will be the first cards in the player's gentry deck. **Family bonus: Family Asquith begins with a fifth family member, a Dowager Countess aunt.**



1 Decide who will be the starting player and give him or her the purple 1st player pawn.

IMPORTANT: Player Area setup must take place before Central Play Area setup (detailed on pages 4 and 5).

Family Bonus: Family Ponsonby begins the game with £300. Place coins totaling £300 on or near the player board.



2 Beginning with the player to the left of the 1st player and moving clockwise, choose a family **Player Board**.

Note: The only gameplay difference between player boards is the starting **Family Bonus** (which is described in the lower right-hand corner of each board).

3 Each family gets four reputation wheel counters (two-sided circular chits). Players place the chit with the number 1 face up on the board as shown and set the rest nearby the player board for later use.

EXTENDED PLAY: If playing an **Extended Play** game, an additional 7/8 reputation wheel counter is used and set near the player board.

4 Place a reputation wheel marker on position 1 of the wheel. **Family Bonus: Family Cavendish starts on position 4.**

5 Each family acquires the 5 starting servant meeple (the blue **Butler**, red **Housekeeper**, green **Valet**, purple **Lady's Maid**, and white **Footman** and places them in Available Service on the player board as shown). **Family Bonus: Family York begins the game with an extra footman.**



9 The 15 **Starter Guests** have a crown in the upper left-hand corner of the card (♔).



Randomly deal two starter guests to each player. These two close family friends are combined with the four family cards to form the player's starting **Gentry Deck**.

Alternatively, players can use a Starter Guest card draft to choose these guests. See **Variations**, page 26 in the Glossary.

10 Each player is dealt five **Objective Cards**, keeping them all. Over the course of the game, players will discard objectives that are less desirable, finishing with and scoring three.



EXTENDED PLAY: Each player is dealt four **Objective Cards**, keeping them all. Over the course of the game, players will discard objectives that are less desirable, finishing with and scoring four.



Objective Cards (OC)

DISCARDING BAD OBJECTIVES DURING THE GAME
In standard play, players begin the game with five objective cards. In season one (first four rounds), players evaluate their objectives, discarding the worst card after the Season 1 courtship.

Early in Season 2 (round 6), players draw and keep two more cards. At the end of each of the next three courtships, players discard a card (getting rid of a total of four), settling on the three best scoring objectives after the final courtship.



Central Play Area Setup

Setup shown is for a two-player, standard length game

For each step below, locate the corresponding number icon in the layout graphic. Please recall that any term in **Blue** is a Glossary term (where additional detail is provided).

Place the supply board in the centre of the playing area where it will be easily accessible by all players. Populate the supply board as follows:

1 Servants for Hire: The Servants for Hire box on the supply board holds extra servants that may be hired during the game. The number of servants varies depending on the number of players. Populate servants on the supply board as follows:

- ▶ **2 Players:** 2 **Underbutlers**, 4 **Footmen**, 2 **Valets**, 2 **Lady's Maids**
- ▶ **3 Players:** 2 underbutlers, 6 footmen, 3 valets, 3 lady's maids
- ▶ **4 Players:** 2 underbutlers, 8 footmen, 4 valets, 4 lady's maids

IMPORTANT: The underbutler pawn(s) are 'stored' in the Servants for Hire area, but the underbutler is not acquired in the same fashion as footmen, valets, and lady's maids, who are hired by the butler in the **Butler's Room**. The underbutler is only hired when a **Butler's Pantry** service tile is purchased from the Builders' Market; then and only then is the underbutler taken from the Servants for Hire area.



Only way to hire an underbutler

2 Objective Cards: Each player was dealt objective cards during player setup. Place the remaining objective cards on the supply board as shown.

3 £100 and £500 Coins: Thirty-five (35) £100 coins and eleven (11) £500 coins come with the game. Place a sufficient supply of coins as indicated. This supply is the bank; favours are taken from here, and purchases are paid into here. Money is not limited; if players run out of coins, use a suitable substitute.

4 Casual Guests: The supply board holds two decks of **Gentry Cards**—casual guests and prestige guests. The symbol for casual guests is one **Fleur-de-lis** (♣) in the upper left-hand corner of the gentry card (below the prestige rating). Each player received two **Starter Guests** during player setup; these starter guests are a subset of casual guests and will be used during the game. Combine the remaining starter guests with the 35 regular casual guests, **thoroughly** shuffle, and place as shown.



5 Prestige Guests: The symbol for prestige guests is two **fleur-de-lis** (♣♣). Shuffle the 25 prestige guests and place as indicated.



6 Improvement Tiles: Except for monuments, place all improvement tiles in the purple tile bag. Monuments are then added based upon player count:

- 2 Players:** **Sculpture Garden** + 2 other tiles of choice
- 3 Players:** Sculpture Garden + 3 other tiles of choice
- 4 Players:** Five monument tiles of choice



Note: As an alternative to the high VP value of the Sculpture Garden, players can exclude it from the game or, if an Estate monument is desired, substitute the Garden Maze in its place.

7 Round Track: Place the round track near the supply board with the white pawn on the 1st square as shown. The side with 16 rounds is **Standard Play**. The side with 20 rounds is **Extended Play**.

Shuffle the **Victory Point Cards** and place them on the round track where indicated.



Central Play Area Setup

Setup shown is for a two player, standard length game



7 CONTINUED: Shuffle the **Theme Cards** thoroughly and place on the round track as shown. Place **Reminder Tiles** equal to the number of players nearby.

Place the cards representing **Charles and Elizabeth Fairchild** near the round track. These cards are easily identified either by name or by the purple frame (and unique crest) in the upper left-hand corner of both cards.

8 Builders' Market: For initial population of the market, only improvement tiles with a **Prestige Rating** of 1, 2, and 3 along with four of the service tiles can be used (Brushing Room, Barn, Butler's Pantry, and Servants' Quarters); these are the tiles that qualify for initial population.

Qualifying tiles are then drawn to fill the Builders' Market for the 1st time. Draw out six qualifying tiles, returning any excluded tiles to the bag.

TILES THAT QUALIFY FOR INITIAL POPULATION

- Tiles with a prestige rating of 1, 2, 3 (including the Heritage Guest Suite)
 - Brushing Room service tile
 - Barn service tile
 - Butler's Pantry service tile
 - Servants' Quarters service tile

TILES EXCLUDED FROM INITIAL POPULATION

- Tiles with a prestige rating of 4, 5, 6 (including the Queen's Suite and Lionheart Suite)
 - Servants' Hall service tile
 - All monuments

Every tile possesses a Tile Sorting Number (TSN) as shown to the right (the TSN is circled in yellow). Once six qualifying tiles have been drawn, place them in ascending TSN order, left to right, in the Builders' Market (if a duplicate qualifying tile is drawn, it is stacked on top of its matching tile in the market). Setup is now complete.



Tile Sorting Number

Prestige Rating

Tile Sorting Number

AN EXAMPLE OF THE TILE SORTING NUMBER SYSTEM

(below is an example of populating the market *after* initial population during a game when all tiles are in use)



Goal and Flow of the Game (round track and round track icons)

Goal of the Game

Each player is the head of a respected but troubled family estate in Victorian Britain. After several lean decades, family fortunes are looking up. The player's objective is to renovate a neglected country estate, rehabilitate the family's tarnished reputation, and improve the marriage prospects of eligible children. A primary goal will be to form an attachment with the wealthy and influential Fairchild family.

Successful actions taken to restore the family's standing amongst the Derbyshire social elite are measured in victory points (VP). There are seven sources of these VPs, and they represent:

- ▶ An appealing country estate (26.7%)
- ▶ The best social connections (21.6%)
- ▶ Superior reputation in the county (16.6%)
- ▶ A large and well-trained domestic staff (13.3%)
- ▶ Private family achievements (11.1%)
- ▶ Successful courtship of a Fairchild (8.3%)
- ▶ Wealth (2.4%)



Courtship and Winning

GAME TIP

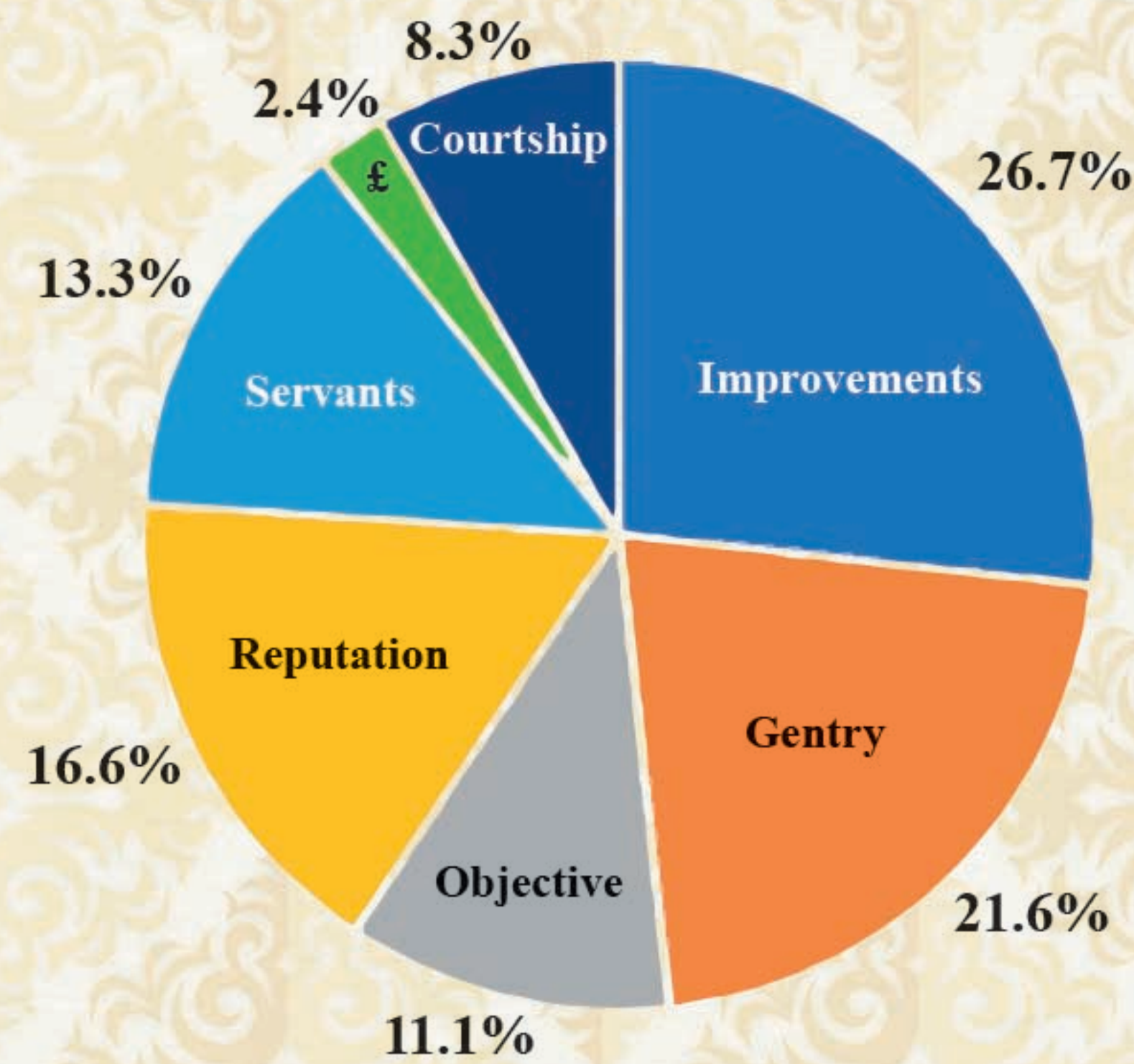
Courtship is the focus of each season in Obsession. It is unlikely you can successfully ignore courtship to focus on buying improvement tiles or building your deck.

*Yet winning the hand of a Fairchild counts for less than 15% of total victory points on average. This should remind everyone that if the courtship goes against you, you are wise to identify a strength (money, prestige guest invites, reachable objectives) and go 100% in that direction. **Chasing a courtship that is out of reach usually ensures defeat.***

If Charles or Elizabeth doesn't like your family, become a Warleggan! Build, cultivate friends, hoard money! You can still win...



VP Distribution



Distribution of Victory Points based upon 48 games see Glossary entry on page 27

It is recommended that players review page 15 of this Rulebook (end game scoring) to understand how VP are awarded for each of these sources.

Flow of the Game (Round Track)

The number of rounds is controlled by the **Round Track** (front and back pictured on page 7). There are two features to the round track that control gameplay: **Seasons** and Rounds.

Seasons



The standard and extended length games both encompass four seasons. In a standard length game, one season is three rounds (purple spaces) where **Activities** happen (such as hosting social events, hiring servants, and renovating your estate) ending in a courtship round showing an icon of a Victorian couple. No activities of any type occur during a courtship round; only courtship is evaluated.

Courtship is described in detail on page 13, but it is important to note that a **Theme Card** is revealed at the beginning of each season before any actions are taken (open courtship). That theme provides insight into the interests and passions of **Charles and Elizabeth Fairchild**, the objects of the competitive courtship.

In summary, each seasonal courtship is three things:

- 1) Players learn what interests the Fairchild siblings (theme card is revealed)
- 2) Players court Charles and Elizabeth by pursuing activities that will gain their attention (actions taken on purple spaces)
- 3) Courtship is then evaluated with the most successful player(s) being rewarded with favors and perhaps a visit from one of the Fairchilds for the next season (courtship is scored).



Standard Rounds (Purple Spaces)

When the white pawn is advanced to a new purple round space, two things can happen:

- 1) The round space *may* have a symbol showing a special event (village fair, national holiday, etc.). Players then follow specific rules for such special events:

Village Fair: Players who have flipped the Study tile receive two reputation and £300 at the start of this round. See **Study Tile**, Glossary page 23.

Courtship Event: Service is not refreshed and no activity takes place. Players who possess a **Servants' Hall** do not gossip. Players who possess **Monuments** do not gain reputation. Only a courtship event is resolved this round. See Rulebook page 13.

Objective Card Draw: At the beginning of each player's turn, two objective cards are drawn and added to the objectives already in hand. See **Objective Cards**, Glossary page 16.

Builders' Holiday: Players are permitted to purchase as many tiles from the market as resources allow. This includes tiles located in the **Builders' Market Reserve**. See **Builders' Holiday**, Glossary page 5.

National Holiday: Player reputation does not limit actions this round. Players are permitted to host any activity and any guests during the holiday (as if reputation were at Max). See **National Holiday**, Glossary page 16.

End Game Scoring: Using the scoring pad, players total their victory points by category and declare a winner. See Rulebook page 15.



- 2) The round space *requires* each player in turn order to either host one activity or pass. This is a standard player turn. Beginning on page 8, the standard player turn is described in great detail. After a player has hosted an activity or passed (see **Passing**), *the next player in clockwise order does the same*. When every player has hosted one activity or passed, the round track marker is advanced to the next space on the round track.

The Round Track (standard & extended play, beginning the game)

Standard Play vs. Extended Play

Before beginning a game, players must decide between **Standard Play** and **Extended Play**. *Obsession's* **Round Track** is two-sided and features a standard length 16-round game on one side and an extended length 20-round game on the reverse. The games differ by more than just four player rounds. Extended play contains two additional icons on the round track that impact gameplay: an extra village fair (see **Study Tile**) and an additional **Objective Card** draw.

Also, an additional reputation counter is used during extended play, allowing for significantly more **Reputation Victory Points**. The reputation wheel counters needed for standard play and extended play are shown next to each round track on this page. The counters showing 1, 3, 5, and 7 are two-sided with 2, 4, 6, and 8 on the reverse sides. The Max tile (with the flag) is the same on both sides and represents 7 in the standard game and 9 in the extended game. It is placed after the highest number as the final tile.

The impact on end game scoring is dramatic. This can be seen in the reputation victory point charts located next to each round track (the victory points accumulate in a triangular number sequence, meaning the numeric value of each level is added to all the previous levels to determine victory points).

In general, extended play allows for:

- ▶ Greater development of the country estate
- ▶ An opportunity to host more elaborate **Activities** with numerous guests
- ▶ Increased likelihood for completion of the most difficult **Objective Cards**
- ▶ Dramatically higher player reputations

Note: budget an extra 10 minutes per player for extended play.

Builders' Market Reserve and the Round Track

The round track is primarily used to track player turns and manage the seasonal **Courtship**. It is also used to remind players when the **Builders' Market Reserve** begins for both service tiles and tiles with a prestige rating of 1.

| Family Reputation Level | End Game Victory Points |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | 1 |
| 2 | 3 |
| 3 | 6 |
| 4 | 10 |
| 5 | 15 |
| 6 | 21 |
| 7 | 28 |
| 8 | 36 |
| Max | 45 |



Standard Play Side of the Round Track

| Family Reputation Level | End Game Victory Points |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | 1 |
| 2 | 3 |
| 3 | 6 |
| 4 | 10 |
| 5 | 15 |
| 6 | 21 |
| Max | 28 |



Extended Play Side of the Round Track

A reserve reminder, located beneath the second and third **Season** of both round tracks (example circled in yellow above), indicates when players should 'Begin Service Tile Reserve' and 'Begin PR 1 Tile Reserve.' These reserves are locations on the large supply board to hold all service tiles and tiles with a prestige rating of 1 at certain times in the game. For more detail on the **Builders' Market** in general and the tile reserves in particular, consult the Glossary pages 5 & 6. For now, it is important to note that at the beginning of Season 2 and for the remainder of the game, all service tiles are placed in the Service Tile Reserve on the main supply board; similarly, at the beginning of Season 3 and for the remainder of the game, all tiles that have a prestige rating of 1 are placed in the PR (prestige rating) 1 Tile Reserve on the main supply board.

Beginning the Game

The game begins with the white pawn on the round track's first space (labelled START). Every player completes one standard turn (see next page) **in clockwise order** before the round track pawn is advanced. Some round spaces have a labelled icon indicating an event (refer to page 6 of this rulebook for an explanation of these icons).

Reveal Courtship Theme: At the start of each season, a **Theme Card** located on the round track is revealed. This theme will be one of the five **Country Estate Organiser** categories; players will attempt to develop the revealed theme by playing and purchasing improvement tiles that fall into this courtship category.



Courtship Variations

OPEN COURTSHIP

The default courtship rules call for an 'open' courtship, which means that a theme card is revealed at the beginning of a season; players then develop their country estates with knowledge of the Fairchild siblings' preferences.

VARIATIONS

There are two main courtship variations (see the Glossary, pages 25 & 26) where the theme is either revealed at the end of the season (closed courtship) or as determined by the roll of a dice (variable courtship). Gameplay is **dramatically** impacted by these variations, and you are encouraged to explore them!



Playing the Game (rotating service, hosting an activity, inviting guests, providing service)

A Standard Turn

Starting with the 1st player, players follow the eight steps outlined on every player board (see board immediately below). In some circumstances, players will pass, which has unique rules. **Passing** will be discussed at the end of this 8-step section.

1 Rotate Service: Each player performs this action after turn 1 (on turn 1, no servants have yet been used, so this step is ignored):

- **FIRST:** Move servants residing in the Servants' Quarters area to the Available Service area (spaces located at the bottom of each player board). These servants are now available for the current turn.
- **SECOND:** Move servants in the Expanded Service area to the Servants' Quarters to rest. These servants are unavailable for the current turn.



2 Check Round Track, Monuments, and Servants' Hall: There are three types of game actions that need to be checked before a player begins her turn.

- Check the **Round Track** space for special events, which are discussed on page 6 of this rulebook. If a symbol is present, follow the instructions for the event.
- If the player owns **Monuments**, she immediately takes reputation equal to the number of Monuments on display in her organiser.
- If the player owns the **Servants' Hall**, she may deploy a servant to the hall located in the organiser; follow the Servants' Hall instructions on page 11.

3 Host Activity: Each **Improvement Tile** represents a room or outside space at your country estate. Listed on each tile in white print below the tile name is the **Activity** you can host in that space. Choose an activity to host by selecting an improvement tile from the **Country Estate Organiser**. Not sure which activity to choose? Consult the **Strategy Guide**. Place the improvement tile on your **Player Board** in the square labelled 'Activity.' **Note:** A servant hiring action in the **Butler's Room** is a unique option for an activity to host; see **Hiring Servant Activity** on page 10.

Critical Rule 1 (red arrow): At the beginning of Step 3, the largest number on the player board (reputation) must be \geq the largest number on the improvement tile chosen.

Note: Special Actions (more on these later) may be taken during a turn that cause reputation to fall below the large tile number (**Prestige Rating**). **Critical Rule 2 (yellow arrow):** The servant indicated by the servant icon on the tile **must** be in your Available Service box on your player board (unless the player has the **Servants' Quarters** tile or refreshes a

servant via special actions*). Announce the activity you are hosting to the other player(s); there are no secrets in Derbyshire society.



* This qualifier in parentheses will not be repeated, but it applies to similar situations.

4 Invite Guests: Your **Gentry Cards** represent the potential guests you may invite to your activity. **Note: Gentry** is a term that refers to 'people of good social position just below nobility'; **all large playing cards are gentry**.

The tile just placed on the player board tells what type of guests must be invited to the activity chosen. The player must supply the exact number and type of gentry indicated on the tile or the activity cannot be hosted (there are five possibilities: gentry, family, gentlemen, ladies, and a particular type of guest). The player chooses

cards from her **Active Hand** that satisfy this instruction (cards in her **Discard Pile** are unavailable until the player passes).

Critical Rule 1 (red arrows): At the beginning of Step 3, the largest number on your player board must be \geq the top left number on the gentry card; actions may be taken during a turn that cause reputation to fall below the card number (prestige rating). **Note:** Family and the Fairchilds may attend any activity—treat them as if they had a prestige rating of 1, although it would actually be much higher. **Critical Rule 2 (yellow arrows):** You must have the servant indicated by the servant icon on the card in the Available Service box on your player board. Place the cards below the player board.

5 Provide Service: There will always be a coloured icon of a servant on an improvement tile (that can be played) and frequently on a gentry card; take the matching servants from Available Service and place them on the improvement tile and gentry cards.

Critical Rule 1: All service is mandatory. If a servant is not available or acquired via special action (or the player does not possess the Servants' Quarters service tile), that activity or guest is not eligible.

Here, a footman is placed on the Tennis Court tile, a valet on the guest card of the Honourable Albert Plantagenet, and a lady's maid on the guest card of Miss Anne Harlow.



Playing the Game (special servant abilities, enjoying favours)

5 **Provide Service**, continued: There are three servants who can stand in for other servants under certain circumstances: the housekeeper, underbutler, and footman.

Housekeeper: Every player begins the game with a **Housekeeper**; there are several tiles and a few elite guests where she is the required servant.
Ability: The housekeeper may also stand in for a lady's maid *when there are no lady's maids available*. This is an innate ability and does not require a service tile.

Underbutler: There are at most only two **Underbutlers** in any game of *Obsession*, and they are kept in the **Servants for Hire** section of the supply board along with the extra valets, lady's maids, and footmen. The underbutler can only be hired if a player acquires the **Butler's Pantry** service tile from the **Builders' Market**. When that tile is purchased, it is placed into the player's country estate organiser; the player also takes an underbutler from the supply and puts him in the Expended Service area on his player board. **Ability:** The underbutler may serve in the capacity of any male servant (**Butler**, valet, or footman) at any time, even if the other servant is available. (Note: The Butler's Pantry service tile has been standardised for use with the *Upstairs, Downstairs* expansion, which has two new male servants: the hall boy and useful man. The underbutler may stand in for the hall boy, but not the useful man, who is a specialised servant.)



Footman: Every player begins the game with a **Footman**, and more are available from the supply. The footman is the required servant on several tiles and for a few guests. **Ability:** A footman may also stand in for a **Valet** when there are no valets available, *if the player has acquired the Brushing Room service tile from the Builders' Market*. Once the **Brushing Room** is acquired and placed in the player's organiser, all current and future footmen have this ability. Unlike the Butler's Pantry tile, the Brushing Room tile does *not* grant the player a footman; footmen are hired from the supply using a standard hiring action (see next page).



6 **Enjoy Favours:** Successfully hosting an **Activity** at one's country estate benefits the family. Consider the following example:

Mabel, Countess of Ponsonby, received three distinguished visitors in the beautifully renovated Ponsonby drawing room: the stern Caroline, Viscountess Abernathy; the mysterious Istvan, Count Hoyos; and Anne-Marie, Comtesse de Vitry, the wife of a French noble and a new acquaintance. The conversation was lively and wide-ranging: the Ponsonby family learned of key investment opportunities in France and Eastern Europe; Count Istvan fell in love with the estate grounds and enthusiastically accepted a return invitation to hunt when the weather turned, promising to bring along two close friends from London; and the neighbouring estates took notice of the fine carriages that visited.



The benefits resulting from an afternoon receiving distinguished visitors at the Ponsonby estate are called favours; most **Improvement Tiles** and all **Gentry Cards** yield them. These favours are of three types: money in pounds (£), reputation (♁), and invitations to new guests (♣).

6. Enjoy Favours (♁, ♁, ♁, ♁) The player acquires these favours in the following order:

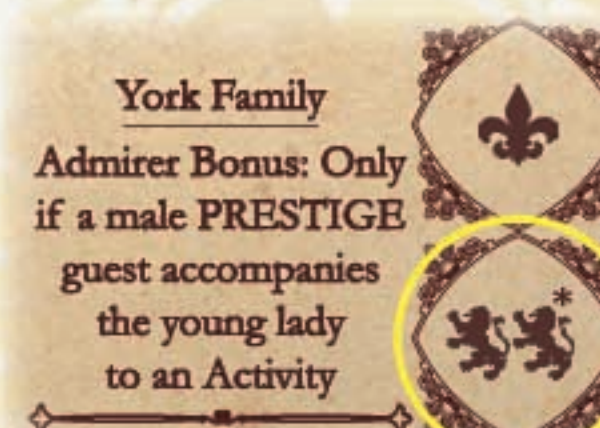
1) Total the pounds listed on all sources (tiles and gentry cards) and take coins from the supply representing that total. In the example at the lower left, the player would take coins from the supply totaling £400.

Note: There are a class of guests called 'paupers,' who cost the hosting family £100 or £200 if they attend an activity. A player must be able to pay this amount of money to the bank in order to invite a pauper. The money is paid during the **Enjoy Favours** step, so a player may either use other pound favours from the activity to account for the pauper or use a **Special Action** to acquire the necessary pounds. If the player cannot generate pounds to cover the £ penalty, the pauper cannot attend.

2) Total the reputation listed on all sources and add this total to the family's reputation (each lion rampant ♁ is worth one space on the reputation wheel). **Note:** Once a player crosses over top from 5 to 1, find the circular chit with the next highest number in sequence and flip/replace the current chit.



In the example, the player would gain 5 reputation, and she would move the reputation wheel marker in a clockwise direction around the circular chit showing her current reputation level. She would move from the 3 to the 4 to the 5—at which time she would cross over top and return to the 1, flipping the reputation wheel counter to a 4—before continuing two more positions for a total of five reputation added. She would finish at a reputation of level 4 (the large number), position 3 (the small number), one complete revolution around the wheel.



Young Lady Admirer Bonus: The young lady of each family possesses a reputation favour that is only taken when she attends an activity along with a male prestige guest; see the Glossary page 4 for details.

Note: There are guests who impose a reputation penalty. When paying a penalty, the player moves *counterclockwise* on the reputation wheel; if, in doing this, the player would 'cross over' the top of the wheel (from number 1 back to number 5), then she must flip/replace the counter to show the next lowest reputation level. **Exception:** If the player has no reputation (level 1, position 1), she may invite guests with negative reputation without paying the penalty; being so disreputable themselves, the family is free to consort with other unsavory characters. If it is possible to pay a **partial penalty** (i.e., player is at level 1, position 2 with Miss Hawkins above attending an activity), the player must pay whatever penalty is possible until they reach the lowest reputation level.



3) Invite/dismiss gentry as indicated on all sources. Cards taken from the supply (prestige or **Casual Guests**) are placed into the player's **Active Hand**. In this example, the successful activity has captured the interest of two casual guests (♣) and one **Prestige Guest** (♁♁). The player takes the top prestige guest and the top casual guest (the friends of Count Hoyos), and then, using the Countess's ability, looks at the next two casual guests, keeping one and returning the rejected guest to the bottom of the casual guest deck. The player shows her new connections to the other players (there are no secrets in Derbyshire society), and puts them into her active hand.

Playing the Game (unusual favours, buying from Builders' Market)

6 **Enjoy Favours**, continued: The lady of the house has unique icons. When this card is used, the player has a choice between two actions: either look at two casual guests, keeping one (circled in red, the favour used on the previous page) or dismiss any guest (circled in yellow). On cards, only the lady of each family has this ability, but the favour is found on most estate improvement tiles. *The dismiss guest favour is the only favour that is not mandatory*; when a dismiss guest favour is available, the player may optionally use that favour if there is a guest they wish to remove from their gentry deck. See **Dismiss Guest** in the Glossary page 9).



Unusual Favours (VP Card, Gossip)

A few select guests have favours that do not fall into the three main categories (money, reputation, invitations/dismissals).

Victory Point Card Favour: Elite guests can have such an impact on the family's quest to restore their social standing that a VP Card (normally used in courtship) is awarded. VP Cards offer a choice between a favour and end game victory points. Players take a VP Card from the supply on the round track and use it in the same way they would a courtship VP Card (see **Courtship** page 13).



Gossip: Some casual guests of questionable reputation tend to gossip. On those cards is seen a favour that uses the word 'attack.' This favour allows the player to choose another player about whom to spread damaging gossip. The targeted player decreases the reputation on his player board by the amount shown in the attack favour, but the gossiping player does *not* increase her reputation. **Note:** Some gossips are so unsavory that they also damage the family's reputation (as seen here with Miss Oliver), while others do not (they are not yet widely known to be a gossip).

Hiring Servant Activity (and Favour)

The Enjoy Favours step in the Order of Play on every player board references a fourth favour in the shape of a servant. This favour is only available through the use of one tile, the **Butler's Room** START tile.

Instead of hosting a social activity in Step 3, a player can hire servants by selecting the Butler's Room tile. The **Butler** is the required servant (although the **Underbutler** may serve in this role), and the action is to take two servants of choice from the supply (the



Are Favours Mandatory?

There are three main favours: money in pounds, reputation, and invitations to new guests.

All these favours are mandatory, with one exception: dismissal (a subset of 'invitations'). The opposite of an invitation is a dismissal, and this is the one favour that is optional. Only one gentry card possesses this favour (the lady of each house), but most Estate improvement tiles have it.

The rules governing dismissals are involved (see Glossary, page 9), but three important ones stand out:

- ▶ Any guest (no family) may be dismissed.
- ▶ One can dismiss a guest who attended the activity that granted the dismissal favour.
- ▶ One can dismiss a guest in your active hand or discard pile.



Servants for Hire area). Any combination of **Valets**, **Lady's Maids**, or **Footmen** may be taken (this excludes the underbutler, who can only be acquired with the purchase of the **Butler's Pantry** service tile).

Players can also use the back side of the Butler's Room tile (pictured here, showing the rose in the upper right corner) to recruit one servant from another player; the player takes one valet, lady's maid, or footman from any location on another player's board. The loyal butler, underbutler, and **Housekeeper** cannot be recruited as they would never consider such an offer. The Butler's Room is the only tile used for an activity (i.e., placed on the player board) where no gentry cards are played.



Critical Rule: Hired/recruited servants must be placed in Expended Service on the player board with the butler or underbutler (whoever did the hiring) to be oriented to their new household.

7 **Buy from the Builders' Market.** The Builders' Market is the eight spaces on the central supply board where improvement tiles available for purchase are located (six spaces in the active market, two spaces in the reserve). These tiles represent potential capital additions or renovations to a country house and its surrounding grounds. In a standard round (excluding courtship rounds), each player is permitted to purchase one improvement tile from the market using pounds saved or acquired as part of a current activity (on the **Builders' Holiday**, players can purchase as many improvements as they can afford).



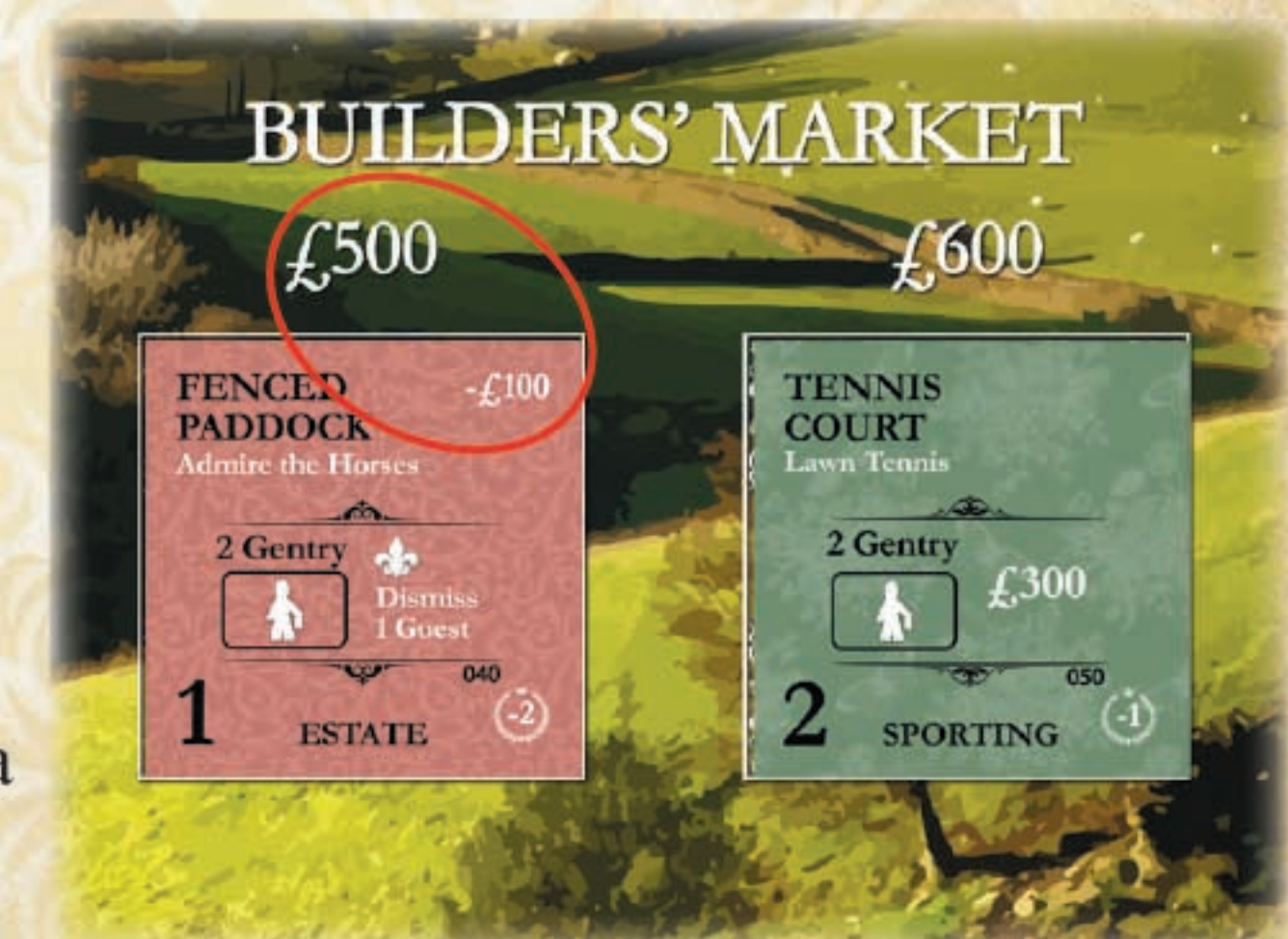
One does not have to buy from the market and can instead choose to save coins (pounds) on their **Player Board** for future purchases.

Market rules are as follows:

Rule 1: Only one purchase per turn. The exception is the Builders' Holiday on the round track (round 11 in **Standard Play** and round 13 in **Extended Play**). During this holiday, a player can purchase as many tiles as she can afford.

Rule 2: Players cannot purchase duplicate improvement tiles.

Rule 3: Pay the bank (£ supply pile on the supply board) the amount fixed in the Builder's Market above the tile as well as any +/- modifier on the tiles themselves located in the upper right-hand corner. Tiles that represent a more modest capital improvement are discounted (-£) and tiles that represent a significant capital improvement show a premium pound amount (+£).



Playing the Game (more buying from the builders' market, unique tiles)

7 Buy from the Builders' Market, continued.

Rule 4: Place newly purchased tiles in the **Country Estate Organiser** in the proper column (by colour/type) face-up (the back side of the tile contains a rose in the upper right-hand corner; no rose should be visible). **Note:** Service and **Monument Tiles** are the same on both sides and never removed from the country estate organiser. If the **Servants' Hall** or a monument is purchased, take a **Reminder Tile** if you do not already have one and place it on the player board; it serves to remind players to take the reputation bonus on future turns. Players are also reminded by the Order of Play on each player board.

Rule 5: After purchasing a tile, slide the remaining tiles to the left, exposing the rightmost spot in the **Builders' Market**. Draw a tile from the tile bag and place it there. If during the **Builders' Holiday** more than one tile is purchased, populate only the open spaces in **Tile Sorting Number** order, lowest to the left, highest to the right. Tiles that belong in the Builders' Market Reserve should be handled according to market population rules discussed on the next page.

Rule 6: If a duplicate tile is drawn, it is stacked on top of the same tile already in the market. If a player purchases one of the tiles, the duplicate remains available for another player to purchase. If the market is refreshed, both tiles are removed from the market to make room for new tiles.

Rule 7: Players are permitted to purchase any tile they can afford, even if the **Prestige Rating** is above the family's reputation.

Tile Types

There are four types of tiles that will appear in the market: standard **Improvement Tiles**, **Suites Expansion Tiles**, service tiles, and monument tiles. All are capital improvements of the country estate, but each functions differently.

Improvement Tile: A tile used to **Host Activities** on subsequent turns. Hosting activities involves removing the tile from the organiser and placing it on the player board. These tiles are the most common and contain the physical location, the activity that can be hosted, guests to invite, a graphic icon of the servant required, and the favours to be enjoyed. Once used for the first time, the tile is flipped (showing a rose). Once flipped, the tile is never flipped again (unless it is a **Hybrid Tile**, see Rulebook page 12).

Suites Expansion Tile: These tiles are a hybrid of an improvement tile (front side) and a monument tile (back side, except for the Heritage Suite). They are unique in that one guest can be invited to stay overnight at the country estate with enhanced favours. See the next page and the Glossary entry on page 23 for details.

Service Tile: A tile placed in the organiser and never moved from there (the **Butler's Room**, which is played, is a START tile). All five service tiles grant service-related, permanent benefits that the player enjoys for the rest of the game (indicated by the circular arrow icon).

Monument Tile: A tile placed in the organiser and never moved from there. These tiles represent prestigious decorative improvements of the player's estate that increase reputation over time. For each subsequent turn, the player increases her reputation by one step on the reputation wheel for each monument in her organiser.

Unique Tile Rules

There are several tiles that possess unique rules and are worth reviewing here:



Barn: On all future turns when a tile from the ESTATE category is played (same color/pattern as the Fenced Paddock here), the player increases his reputation by one on his player board reputation wheel. This reputation increase is taken during the **Enjoy Favours** step.



Servants' Hall: At the beginning of a turn during Step 2, the player with the Hall may place any available servant—the source of rumours—onto the tile. The targeted player reduces her reputation by one, while the player with the Hall increases his reputation by one. The gossiping servant is then placed into Expended Service and rotated normally in future turns. Once Step 3 (**Host Activity**) begins, the player cannot use the Hall.



Private Study: The study is a location where family members gather to plan and manage the estate. One such effort is planning for the annual fair in the village located on family property. The tile is played on a standard turn, and the activity that is hosted is Village Fair Planning.



If a family plans for successful fairs, then at the beginning of the turn (Step 2) featuring the village fair icon, the player's reputation increases by two (the reputation wheel marker is incremented by 2) and revenue of £300 is gained. Fairs take place twice during a standard game and three times during an extended play game. The Study tile can be used once; when the activity is hosted, the Study tile is flipped to reveal this permanent benefit, which applies to all future fairs.

If the Village Fair Planning activity does not take place, no added revenues are enjoyed by the family and their reputation in the local community is not enhanced; however, the player retains the 3 victory points showing on the front side of the tile, which reflect the family's dedication to high society rather than village stewardship.



Main Library: Essentials tiles have a powerful benefit—number of guests. This can be seen in parties of 5, 6, 7, and more, a direct path to hugely favourable events. The **Main Library**, however, is a unique tile in that it is reserved for family and generates two unique favours: an objective card draw on the front side, and a victory point card draw on the back.



The Main Library objective card draw differs from the draw(s) on the round track in that the player only takes the top objective card from the supply. **This card is an additional scoring objective;** in a standard game, players score three objective cards (four in an extended game). A Main Library objective is in addition to these totals. On the back of the tile, the favour is a victory point card draw from the top of the VP card deck.

Playing the Game (more unique tiles, market reserve, special actions)

7 Buy from the **Builders' Market** (continuing with market tiles that possess unique rules).

Unique Tile Rules (continued)

Hybrid Tiles: Hybrid tiles are a unique 2nd printing bonus tile. The tile refers to a room or outdoor space that is multi-purpose. As a result, the type of the tile changes with the activity (the front is a different colour/category than the back).



These are the unique hybrid tile rules:

- ▶ The white flower icon with the line underneath is the front side of the tile; this is the side that will be face-up in the market and the side that will be placed into the organiser when purchased (under the appropriate tile category). The front-side VP would count, if needed, towards a courtship in that category.
- ▶ The colour on the opposite side is previewed as the pattern behind the servant icon.
- ▶ After the tile is used to host an activity (played onto the player board), it flips and is placed into the new tile category (for example, the Green Room above starts out as an ESSENTIALS tile and, after being used to host a Philanthropy Meeting, it is flipped and placed under the PRESTIGE category in the organiser; the Green Room then counts towards a PRESTIGE courtship, if needed).
- ▶ If a tile is used to host an activity a second time, it is again flipped and relocates under the original tile category. Thus the hybrid tile mechanism allows it to be flipped back and forth between two categories in response to courtship developments.

Suites Expansion Tiles: There are three suites tiles, two of which have unique rules: the Queen's Suite and the Lionheart Suite. These tiles double favours and convert into a monument after they have been used one time.



The **Queen's Suite** permits the invitation of one prestige guest from the player's Active Hand and has the effect of doubling one favour of that guest (player's choice). Service is required for the guest. Once played, the tile flips and converts into a monument.



The **Lionheart Suite** allows the player to invite a prestige guest not currently in her gentry deck to stay at the estate. The player selects the top prestige guest from the supply, who immediately stays in the Lionheart Suite; all favours of this guest are doubled. The player does NOT provide service to this guest; the butler coordinates perfect hospitality for this visitor. This tile can be used for this action only one time, as it converts to a monument tile once used. This new guest then is placed into the player's discard pile.



Builders' Market Reserve

During a game, the **Builders' Market Reserve** will activate twice. The purpose of the reserve is to remove low-value tiles from the market as player reputations rise.

Service Tile Reserve: After the 1st courtship is over, the Service Tile Reserve activates, and the following steps are then taken:

- ▶ Move all SERVICE tiles currently in the market to the Service Tile Reserve space.
- ▶ Refill the market as needed. If any additional SERVICE tiles are drawn, they are moved to the reserve and additional tiles are drawn to fill the market.
- ▶ For the remainder of the game, all SERVICE tiles drawn are moved to the reserve and replacement tiles are drawn to fill the market.
- ▶ Players may review the tiles in the reserve at any time and make purchases from there. Players may make multiple purchases from the reserve on a builders' holiday.

Prestige Rating 1 (PR1) Tile Reserve: After the 2nd courtship is concluded, the PR1 Tile Reserve activates, and the following steps are then taken:

- ▶ Move all tiles with a PR1 in the market to the PR1 Tile Reserve space.
- ▶ Refill the market as needed. If any additional PR1 tiles are drawn, they are moved to the reserve and replacement tiles are drawn.
- ▶ For the remainder of the game, any PR1 tiles drawn are moved to the reserve and replacement tiles are drawn.
- ▶ Players may review the tiles in either reserve at any time and make purchases from there. Players may make multiple purchases from both reserves on a builders' holiday.

Special Actions

Special Actions (SA) refer to a class of actions where a player may trade reputation for pounds, refreshed servants, or new choices in the Builder's Market. Each player board lists these actions (see Glossary page 21). The three SA are:

- ▶ **Borrow Pounds (£):** Anytime during a player's turn, she may borrow an unlimited amount of money as long as reputation is available. The cost of this action is a decrease in reputation by 2 per £100 borrowed.
- ▶ **Service Help:** Anytime during a player's turn, he may refresh as many servants as desired as long as reputation is available. The cost of this action is a decrease in reputation by 3 per servant refreshed.
- ▶ **Refresh Builders' Market:** Anytime during a player's turn, she may refresh the Builders' Market *only once* as long as reputation is available. The cost of this action is a decrease in reputation by 4 when the market is refreshed.

How to Refresh the Market: The tiles in the market are removed and set aside (tiles in the SERVICE or PR1 reserve are never affected by a market refresh action). Six new tiles are drawn and placed in the market in **Tile Sorting Number** order; duplicate tiles are stacked, and the reserve is used if in effect (see **Builders' Market Reserve** above). The tiles that were removed from the market and set aside are then added back to the bag. The market is refreshed.



Courtship and Passing

8 Clear Player Board: Move servants who participated in the activity to the Expended Service box on the player board. Return the improvement tile just used to the country estate organiser. If it is the 1st time the activity has been hosted, flip it over to the side showing the rose in the upper right-hand corner. If it has already been flipped, do NOT flip it again (tiles used in activities are only flipped once, except for hybrid tiles). Place gentry who attended the activity into the discard pile, face-up. The player's turn is over, and the next player in clockwise order takes his turn (turn order is clockwise, but the 1st player marker is passed counterclockwise *after each season*, which happens three times per game).

Passing

If a player chooses to Pass, Step 2 of a Standard Turn (see page 8) still applies—he is impacted by any special events showing on the Round Track (as described on page 6, right side), he still collects any monument reputation, and he still may use a Servants' Hall (if he has one). In addition, passing accomplishes the following:



- ▶ The player *takes back his Discard Pile*, creating an **Active Hand** consisting of all his **Gentry** cards. All gentry are again available to attend activities.
- ▶ The player *refreshes service*, placing all servants in the Available Service box on his **Player Board**.
- ▶ Next, the player chooses between two options:
 - 1) *Collecting £200 in tenant rents*, taking £200 from the supply, or
 - 2) Declining the £200 in tenant rents in favour of *refreshing the Builders' Market* (see **Special Actions**, previous page, for refreshing instructions).
- ▶ The player then has the option of purchasing from the **Builders' Market**. It is an unwise strategy to refresh the market without a reserve of pounds to spend; such an action only benefits the next player in the turn order.

Courtship

The arrival of Charles and Elizabeth Fairchild—both eligible, refined, and substantially wealthy—into a relatively modest corner of Derbyshire engages the minds, hearts, and conversation of every member of the social elite within a day's ride by carriage.

Players represent families emerging from an extended period of economic hardship with a goal of rehabilitating their standing. A most effective way to improve family fortunes is to secure a connection (via marriage) with a reputable, wealthy family. In *Obsession*, **Charles and Elizabeth Fairchild** represent the best of connections and are the focus of the game's seasonal **Courtship** event.

In **Standard Play**, a courtship event takes place on **Round Track** spaces 4, 8, 12, and 16. In **Extended Play**, courtship events occur on round track spaces 5, 10, 15, and 20 (the reverse side). These spaces feature the word Courtship and show an icon of a Victorian couple.

For an open courtship (which is the default courtship), a **Theme Card** is revealed at the start of the season. The first three courtship events are scored for the single theme card revealed in that season. The last courtship event is scored for the cumulative total of all four theme cards.



The 1st Three Courtship Events

The theme card is revealed at the start of the season, showing a category of improvement the Fairchild siblings highly value (i.e., ESSENTIALS, SERVICE,

ESTATE, PRESTIGE, or SPORTING). Players then play three standard, activity-based rounds. At the end of that season, players total the victory points (VP) on the **Improvement Tiles** in their organisers under the revealed category. In the example below, this player nets 3 VP for a PRESTIGE courtship (the total of the two tiles in the prestige theme category).

| ESSENTIALS | SERVICE | ESTATE | PRESTIGE | SPORTING |
|--|--|--|---|---|
| PRIVATE STUDY Village Fair Planning 2 Family 1 ESSENTIALS | BUTLER'S ROOM Servant Hiring Butler Hire Two or More Butlers (See How Many Phases) 1 SERVICE | MAIN GAZEBO Afternoon Tea 2 Gentry (See 2 Tiles) 1 ESTATE | FRONT PARLOUR Cakes 3 Ladies 1 PRESTIGE | BOWLING GREEN Book 2 Gentry £200 1 SPORTING |
| | | FENCED Paddock Activate the Horses 2 Gentry (Dishes) (Grant) 1 ESTATE | SMOKING ROOM Cigars and Pipes 2 Gentlemen 2 PRESTIGE | TENNIS COURT Lawn Tennis 2 Gentry £300 2 SPORTING |

The player with the highest total gets a courtship visit from the Fairchild of their choice. The card representing the desired Fairchild is taken from the round track and put into the winning player's **Active Hand**. This player keeps the card for the next season, inviting the Fairchild to activities as desired, normal guest rules applying.

Note: In standard play, the **first** action on courtship rounds 8, 12, and 16 is for the player who won the previous courtship to locate the Fairchild card in their **Active Hand** or **Discard Pile** and return Charles or Elizabeth to the round track area. This does not apply during the first courtship (round 4) because, being the first courtship, no player is yet holding a Fairchild card. It also does not apply if a previous courtship was a tie (discussed below) because no one holds a Fairchild card.

The winner also takes one **Victory Point Card** from the round track, examines the favour, and sets the card, face down, near the player board. A victory point card offers players a choice between the number of VP indicated on the card (3, 4, or 5) and a benefit that players may take at any time during their turn (if they surrender the VP). To the right is a card that offers the player a choice between 4 VP or 3 reputation. The player does not have to make that choice when acquiring the card; at any time during her turn right up until end game scoring begins, she may take the favour by revealing the card and surrendering the VP.



Courtship Tie: If there is a tie between players in the theme category, each player takes a VP card, but the Fairchild suitor does not spend the next season with any of the contenders; the love interest cannot decide which family to visit!

The Final Courtship Event

On round 16 in standard play (round 20 in extended play), players total the VP on the improvement tiles in their organisers **under ALL revealed categories**. If a theme appears twice, the VP in that column are counted twice, reflecting the love interest's consuming passion for the lifestyle associated with that doubled improvement type. For example, the courtship combo seen above would reflect a love of the outdoors, gardens, animals, and riding, attended by a fine staff of footmen—a formal picnic in the French Garden might be a favourite activity. This courtship would be very different from one that featured two Essentials, one Prestige, and one Service theme. That courtship would reflect a love of libraries and an appreciation for formal dining, galleries, and other indoor activities.



The player with the highest total puts a Fairchild card of her choice into her card deck for end game scoring. The winner also takes one VP card from the round track. **Note:** If the card has a favour, the player may use it before final scoring if she chooses.

Tiebreakers: If there is a tie among players in the total for all four theme categories, the player with the highest player board reputation wins the final courtship. If still tied, no one wins the card of either **Charles or Elizabeth Fairchild**, but all tied players draw a VP card.

Solitaire

The central gameplay mechanic of *Obsession* is the hosting of events, which is an action that takes place independent of one's competitors. As a result, *Obsession* naturally lends itself to solo play.

Setup

Pages 3, 4, and 5 of this Rulebook describe setup. For Solitaire, observe the following small differences:

- ▶ **Starting Player:** The Solitaire Player (SP) is always the starting player.
- ▶ **Player Board Selection:** The SP may choose any family board.
- ▶ **Remaining Player Area Setup:** The procedures for acquiring family cards, servants, **Starter Guests**, and **Objective Cards**, as well as for setting up the reputation wheel and **Country Estate Organiser**, are identical to page 3 of the Rulebook.
- ▶ **Round Track** and Supply Board Setup: Set up for a two-player game.
- ▶ Closed courtship is used (see Jane Austen variant, Glossary page 25).

Choose an Opponent

Obsession comes with twelve opponents for Solitaire: four expert, four intermediate, and four beginner. Locate the Solitaire opponent cards, which are packaged with the gentry deck when *Obsession* is unboxed for the first time. Each card has the name and icon of the opponent, the difficulty, the opponent's base score in large black print, and a chart showing the development of their country estate over time, which is used to determine **Courtship** winners. The SP chooses an opponent from amongst these twelve cards and places it next to her player board.

| Season | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--------------|---|---|---|----|---|
| Season 1 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| Season 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| Season 3 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 11 | 5 |
| Final Season | 5 | 2 | 2 | 14 | 5 |

Locate the 20-sided dice and the Solitaire card that contains the **Builders' Market** AI, which provides for the competitive purchase of **Improvement Tiles** from the market, with **Monuments** being aggressively targeted. Place the Solitaire AI card and dice next to the opponent card.

Playing the Game

The game is set up and the opponent chosen; it is time to play! Follow normal gameplay as described on pages 8–13 of the Rulebook, which is divided into eight steps. Once the SP ends her turn by shopping in the Builders' Market and clearing her board, she rolls the d20 dice to see if the opponent will scavenge a tile (remove a tile from the market).

Note the positions of the Builders' Market spaces (in yellow) as it relates to the solo AI; these positions will be referenced every AI turn.



Builders' Market Reserve Note: Even though the management of the Builders' Market has changed from the 1st printing of *Obsession* to the 2nd printing, solo play can be played with either market system. Early playtesting with the market reserves (see page 12) reveals that service courtships are easier to win and objectives are easier to complete (helping the solo player), but that the scavenging action, which ignores the reserves, is more consequential (stealing tiles of greater value on average).
New Market Solo Rule: If the AI scavenges a duplicate tile, both tiles are removed from the game.

If no monument is on display in the market, use the **Standard Turn** column on the AI card.

After the dice is rolled, remove the tile from the appropriate position (or not at all, if a 16–19 is rolled; refresh the market if a 20 is rolled). The tile is removed from the game. Next, slide the tiles to the left and add a new tile drawn from the tile bag to the right-most position.

| Roll | Standard Turn Purchase | Monument Turn Purchase |
|-------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1-4 | Position 1 | Monument |
| 5-7 | Position 2 | Monument |
| 8-10 | Position 3 | Position 1 |
| 11-12 | Position 4 | Position 2 |
| 13-14 | Position 5 | Position 3 |
| 15 | Position 6 | Position 4 |
| 16-19 | No Purchase | No Purchase |
| 20 | Refresh | Refresh |

If no purchase, next turn -5 from roll

If a monument is on display, use the **Monument Turn** column on the AI card. (If there is more than one monument, the AI targets the least expensive one.)

If a 16–19 is rolled (no purchase), subtract 5 from the dice value on the next turn (there cannot be two consecutive 'no purchase' dice rolls). If a 20 is rolled and the market is refreshed, the opponent does not make a purchase and will have its dice roll modified next round (-5 from dice value next turn). Move the round track marker ahead one space and begin the next round.

Courtship

When the round track marker is advanced to a courtship space, a theme card is revealed. Courtship proceeds normally as described on page 13 of the Rulebook, except that the SP compares her VP total for the revealed theme to the appropriate theme value on the opponent's card chart. For example (playing against Eden, seen on left), if PRESTIGE is the theme revealed in Season 2, the SP compares her PRESTIGE total to the value 3, which is Eden's PRESTIGE total in Season 2. If the SP wins, she secures the VP card and Fairchild card per normal. If she loses, the top VP card is placed face-down (no looking) next to the Solitaire opponent's card. Those points will be added to the base score in large black print on the Solitaire opponent's card during end game scoring. If the courtship is a tie, both the SP and the opponent receive a VP card.

For the final courtship, the opponent, if it wins, not only secures a VP card but the Fairchild card as well (all to be used in end game scoring).

End Game Scoring

After the final courtship event, the SP totals her VP normally using the scorepad. This total is compared to the total of the opponent's large black base score on the card and any VP cards won during courtship, as well as the 8 VP for the Fairchild card, if applicable. High score wins! The Solitaire player wins all ties.

Rule Exceptions

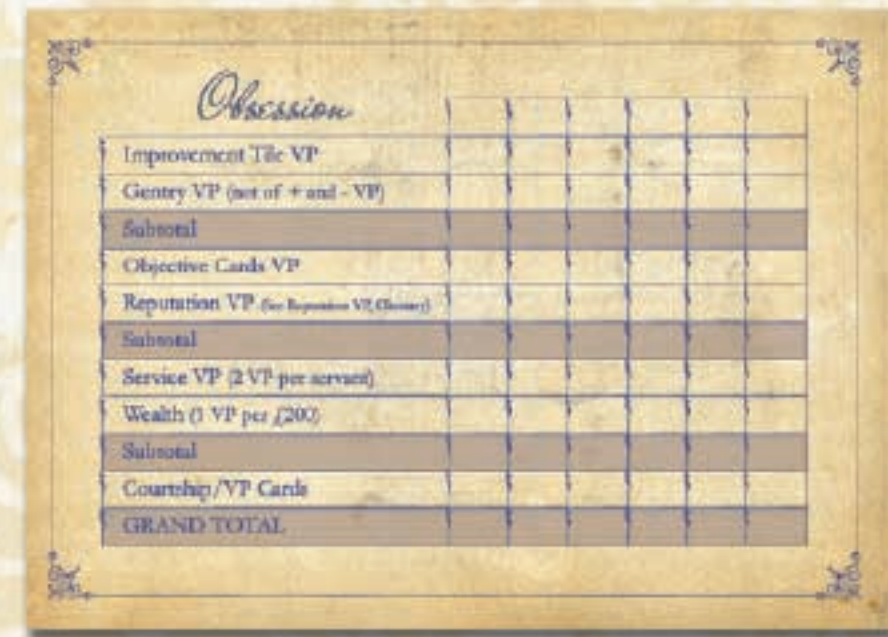
- ▶ **Butler's Room:** The SP can only hire servants; they cannot recruit.
- ▶ **Servants' Hall:** The SP action is to simply increase reputation by one (no action impacts the opponent), much as with a **Monument**.
- ▶ **Gentry Cards:** If gentry cards have an attack element (gossip), no attack takes place; such cards are simply treated as undesirable guests (with negative VP counting during end game scoring, unless the guest is dismissed).

Challenging Mode—Monuments Variant: For an extreme upgrade in the AI challenge, add the VPs for all monuments scavenged by the AI to the base score, in addition to courtship VP cards and Fairchild card VP, if any.

End Game Scoring

End Game Scoring

After the last **Courtship** event, the round track pawn is moved to the centre space with the wedding bells icon; it is time to see who wins the overall competition and the game! For end game scoring, use the included scorepad to total the victory points for the seven categories described below.



1. Improvement Tile VP

Total all VP showing on each improvement tile (lower right-hand corner) in your organiser, monuments included.

EXAMPLE: In the country estate organiser to the right, the player finished the game with thirteen **Improvement Tiles**.

| Country Estate Improvements | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| ESSENTIALS | SERVICE | ESTATE | PRESTIGE | SPORTING |
| PRIVATE STUDY Village Fair Future village fairs produce £300 and 3 1 ESSENTIALS 0 | BUTLER'S ROOM Servant Hiring Butler Hire Two or Recruit One Servant from Any Player 1 SERVICE 1 | MAIN GAZEBO Afternoon Tea 2 Gentry 1 ESTATE 2 | FRONT PARLOUR Gaming 3 Ladies 1 PRESTIGE 2 | BOWLING GREEN Bowls 2 Gentry £200 1 SPORTING 2 |
| NORTH LIBRARY Colonial News 5 Gentry 4 ESSENTIALS 4 | BRUSHING ROOM Footman Ability Footmen on staff now trained to serve as valets when needed SERVICE 005 1 | FENCED Paddock A New Street Acquired 2 Gentry See 3, Take 2 1 ESTATE 2 | GREEN ROOM Dramatic Performance Gentleman and Lady 3 PRESTIGE 3 | TENNIS COURT Lawn Tennis 2 Gentry £300 2w SPORTING 4 |
| | BARN £100 Proper Grounds Groundskeeping staff is expanded; all Estate activities generate one SERVICE 020 2 | GABLED CONSERVATORY Indoor Constitutional 3 Ladies See 3, Take 2 District 1 3 ESTATE 4 | LIONHEART SUITE MONUMENT 6 | |

He adds together the white numbers in the wreaths located in the lower right-hand corner of each tile for a total of 24 VP.

2. Gentry Card VP

Total VP in the upper right-hand corner of all the cards in your gentry deck, positive and negative.

EXAMPLE: The cards below represent scoring cards from a player's **Gentry** deck (positive and negative VP) other than his family members. This player had a large deck, but most **Casual Guests** do not grant victory points. The player adds the 8 VP for his family (this total is the same for all families except the Asquiths; the dowager countess adds an additional VP for a total of 9) to the VP values for the five guests below for a total of 21 VP.



3. Objective Card VP

Total the VP for each completed objective.

EXAMPLE: This player finished with 3 **Objective Cards**. He reached maximum reputation (as indicated by the circular Max tile with the British flag on his player board). He also succeeded in purchasing both the North Library and the Conservatory, achieving a difficult group objective. He did not finish the game with three lady's maids. This player earned 19 victory points for completing two of his three objectives.



4. Reputation VP

Calculate the VP for reputation showing on the player board.

EXAMPLE: The VP earned for reputation is the total of the numbers representing each level achieved added together. This is a triangular number sequence; the next level is always worth one more VP than the previous, making the highest level worth the most (standard play and extended play VP charts to the right).

Standard Play, 16 Rounds

| Family Reputation Level | End Game Victory Points |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | 1 |
| 2 | 3 |
| 3 | 6 |
| 4 | 10 |
| 5 | 15 |
| 6 | 21 |
| 7 | 28 |

Extended Play, 20 Rounds

| Family Reputation Level | End Game Victory Points |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | 1 |
| 2 | 3 |
| 3 | 6 |
| 4 | 10 |
| 5 | 15 |
| 6 | 21 |
| 7 | 28 |
| 8 | 36 |
| 9 | 45 |

5. Service VP

Award 2 VP per servant present on the player board, regardless of type (butlers, underbutlers, and housekeepers are worth the same 2 VP as valets, lady's maids, and footmen).

6. Wealth VP

Award 1 VP for every £200 remaining on the player board, rounding down. Extra coins have no VP value. For example, £500 rounds down to £400 for 2 VP; the extra £100 is not counted.

7. Courtship VP

Expose and total the Courtship/Victory Point cards.



EXAMPLE: This player won two courtships, chose not to trade the VP for either favour, and therefore adds 9 victory points to his total.

Calculate the **GRAND TOTAL** and announce the winner.

TIEBREAKERS: If there is a tie, the player with the Fairchild card in his gentry deck is the winner. If tied players do not have the Fairchild card, the highest **Player Board** reputation wins. If it is still a tie, players share the victory. **Critical Note:** Total VP wins; a player does not need the Fairchild card in hand to win the game.

Thematic Background of Favours

What Is an Activity?

Obsession's engine is the hosting of social activities, and while all the trappings of such gatherings need to be thematically sound (history, titles, location, people, etc.), the **favours** that flow from these activities are what powers the game along. If theme is queen in *Obsession*, then favours must make thematic sense.

To begin, when you host a social activity (i.e., a game of bowls on the Bowling Green), that is the focal point of a visit usually spanning several days. Travelling around the countryside in 1860s England was neither quick nor entirely comfortable, and guests from some distance away would enjoy an extended stay. Furthermore, the family is always present, regardless of whether any family members were featured at the activity itself.

It is important to realise that the activity is not concurrent with the favours. It is in gameplay, but not in the 'real' world of our setting. You are hosting two, maybe three, social events at your country estate per season, a time which spans many months.

A visit is planned, provisions purchased, and the estate made ready, then guests arrive and enjoy some notable activity. Conversations begun on the Bowling Green carry over to the Drawing Room and the dinner table. After a stay of several days, your guests slowly depart at their convenience.

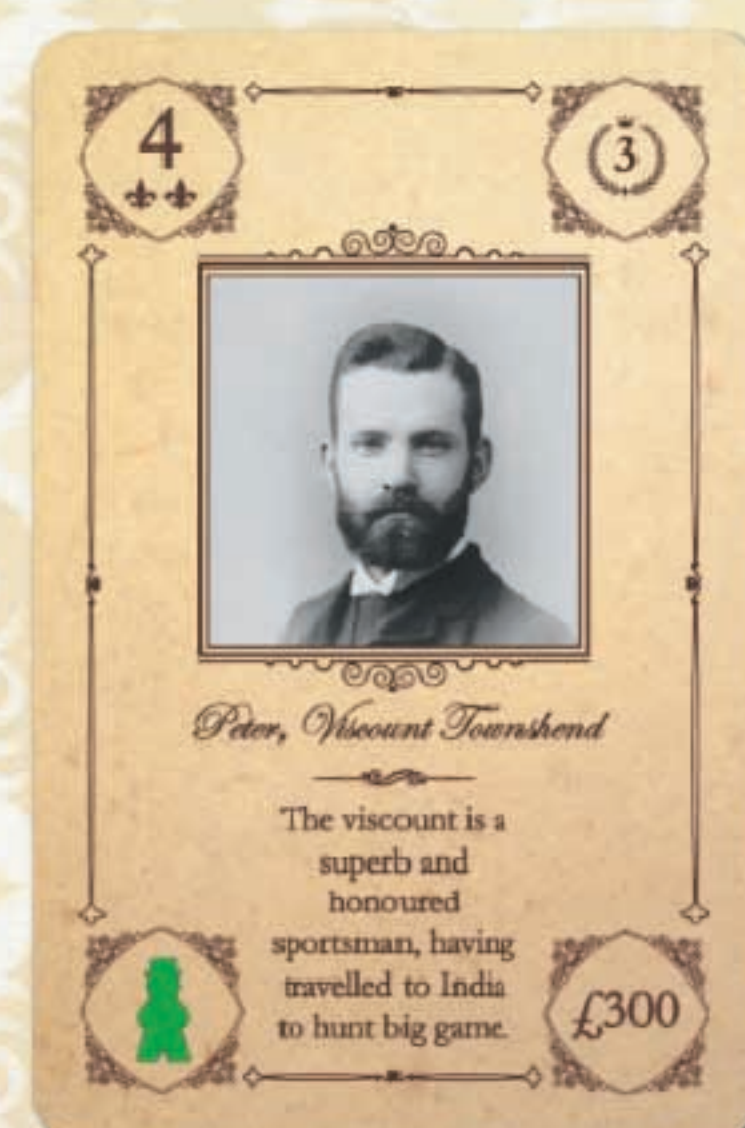
No pounds change hands, no new connections have yet been made, no local attitudes about your family have evolved, for no one is yet aware. 'Get out of the house!' dismissals, while perhaps possible, are highly improbable. There was a visit of some days with certain activities standing out (i.e., the one you hosted) that slowly sends out ripples through local society. During the weeks following the visit, the consequences of your foray into high society come to fruition:

- ▶ *At the market, our housekeeper proudly mentions the name of a distinguished visitor from London to Lady York's maid, who carries the news back to her viscountess.*
- ▶ *Lady Cavendish learns that the older sister of her dear friend who had visited will be in town, and she immediately pens an invitation to both ladies for a game of Cassino in the Parlour.*
- ▶ *The earl's instructions to his banker based upon a whispered word from a well-connected parliamentarian about international tensions permits the earl to protect a foreign investment.*

Thus are favours born.

The Timing of Favours

Let's examine the three main favours more closely.



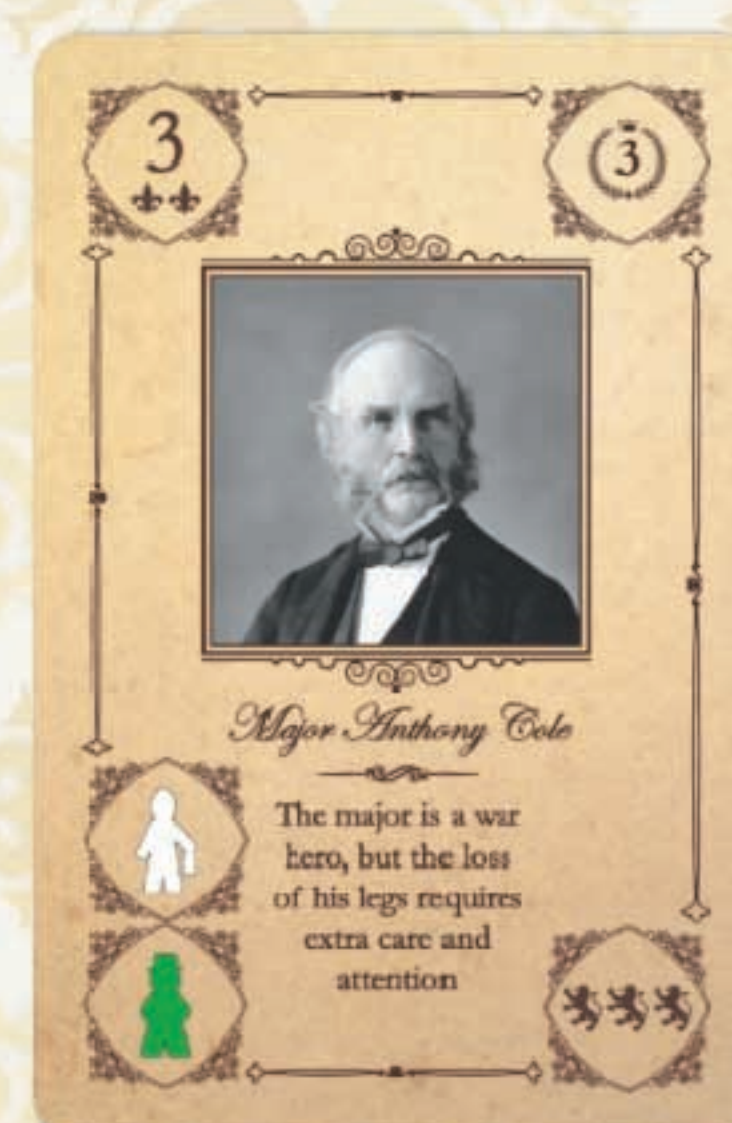
Peter, Viscount Townshend (£300): A guest who grants a financial favour usually has flavour text describing extensive travels or connections in political society (where government laws and favouritism will likely benefit the aristocracy).

Viscount Townshend, an expert in horseflesh, visits Earl

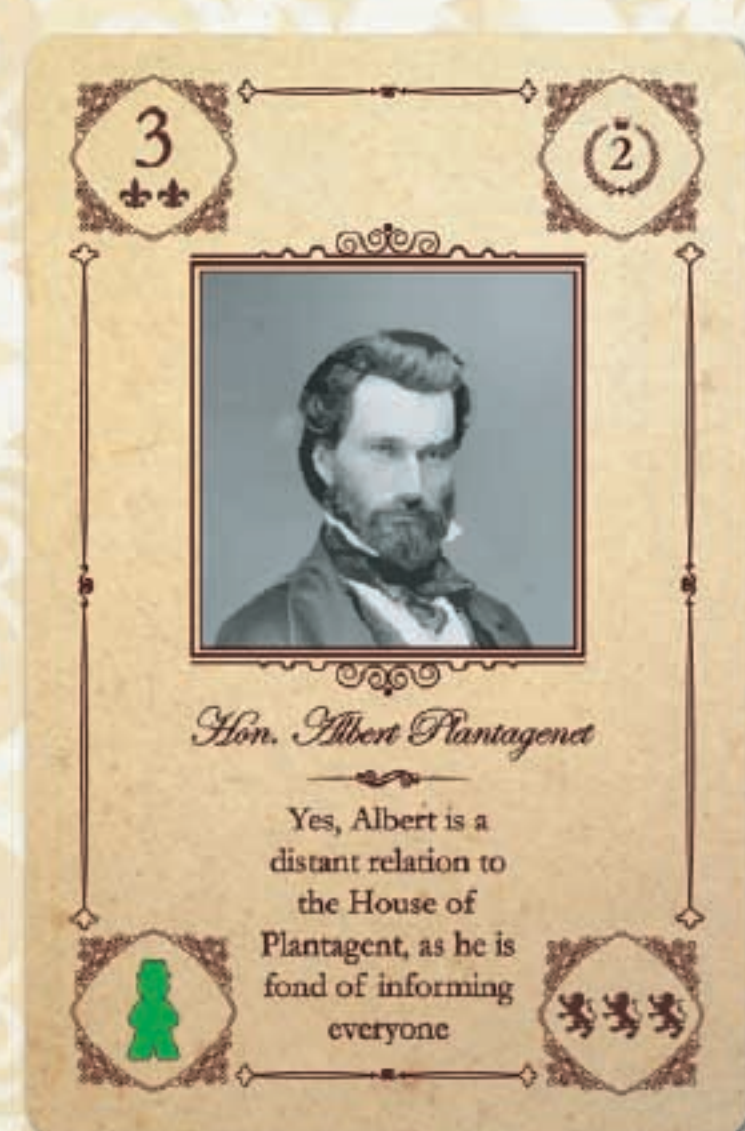
Asquith to see his new horses. The viscount stays only a short while due to pressing matters in London and departs on day three after a morning ride to hounds. During this visit, the earl learns that the tea crop in India was poor and, several days later, his banker makes a move in tea futures.

Major Anthony Cole and the Hon. Albert Plantagenet

(both 3 reputation): A guest who grants a reputation favour either has a high prestige rating, reputable connections, or an element of impressive personal history that reflects well on the hosting family; perhaps an admired military man who is respected everywhere, a woman who is accomplished, or a man with a noble lineage.



The Asquiths enjoy an afternoon in the Drawing Room with the Hon. Albert Plantagenet and Major Anthony Cole. The family has a strong military tradition, and Major Cole's heroism on the Continent is of great interest. And all know the story of the Plantagenets (and, if you do not, Albert will tell you).



Later that week, after the guests have departed, servants running errands in town describe in glowing terms the proper and impressive guests. It gets back to the valet for Viscount Ponsonby, who discusses (with a bit of envy) the visitors with his friends. Word spreads. People, some graciously, some enviously, acknowledge that the Asquiths are doing rather well.

Hon. Regina Washburn (1 reputation, prestige invite): A guest who grants an invitation favour usually has flavour text describing social connections.

After visiting the Asquith estate and spending time in their new English Garden, Regina Washburn returns home and raves to her mother about the exquisite glory of the Countess's floggloves; Viscountess Hampton (her mother)



suggests Regina take her friend, Lady Suffolk, to see them as she is a lover of flowers of all types. The following month at a Ball, Regina connects with Lady Suffolk, and they agree she simply must see the garden. Regina sends a note to Lady Asquith the following day. A new connection is made.



In the game of *Obsession*, you embrace the gentle pace of 19th-century English life. The improving of your country estate, courtship of the Fairchilds, and rehabilitation of your family's reputation unfold gradually, thematically, historically.

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