

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 southern 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: the Dowager's 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 sisters, a year now 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 all 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! Setup, Gameplay, Solitaire, and more.

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)



REPUTATION WHEEL MARKERS (4)



LINEN DRAW BAG (1)



PAWNS (2)



SCOREPAD (1)



VICTORY POINT CARDS (30)

ORGANISERS (4)



£100 COINS (30)
£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 (25)



GENTRY CARDS (89)



SOLITAIRE OPPONENT CARDS (12)



SOLITAIRE AI CARD (1)



SOLITAIRE DICE (1)



ESSENTIALS TILES (14)



SERVICE TILES (14)



ESTATE TILES (14)



PRESTIGE TILES (13)



SPORTING TILES (16)



MONUMENT TILES (6)



SUITES EXPANSION TILES (3)

Player Area Setup (Standard Play)

Rules for the four *Obsession* variant games are in the Glossary under **Variations**

1 

Decide who will be the starting player and give her the purple 1st player marker.

Beginning with the starting 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).

2

3 Each family gets 4 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 near the player board for later use (in **Extended Play**, players get a fifth chit—see the Glossary, page 11).





4 Locate a reputation wheel marker and place it on position 1 of the wheel. ***Family Bonus: Family Cavendish starts on position 4.***

5a Each family acquires the 5 starting servant meeples: the blue **Butler**, red **Housekeeper**, green **Valet**, purple **Lady's Maid**, and white **Footman** and places them as shown. ***Family Bonus: Family York begins the game with an extra footman.***

5b Ponsonby has a family bonus only loosely related to setup. ***Family Bonus: Family Ponsonby begins the game with £300. Place coins totalling £300 on or near the player board.***



6 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.

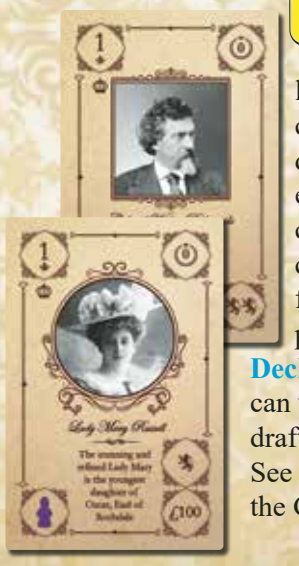


7 Each family starts with the same five **Improvement Tiles**, which are distinguished by a building icon in the upper right-hand corner. Place the tiles as shown with the building icon visible.

8 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 shares the same crest as on their player board and above that crest is the 1st letter of the family name. ***Family Bonus: The Asquiths begin with a fifth family member, a Dowager Countess aunt.***



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** and keeps two. The rejected cards are returned to the bottom of the objective card deck. Set the objective card deck aside for use when populating the supply board.



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, including the **Underbutler**, as follows:

- **2 Players**: 1 underbutler, 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

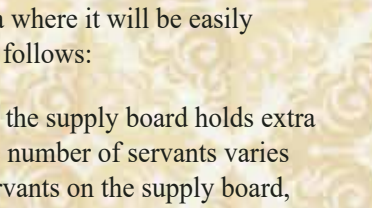
2 **Objective Cards**: Each player selected two objective cards during player setup, with the rejected cards being returned to the bottom of the objective card deck. Place this deck on the supply board as shown.

3 **£100 and £500 Coins**: Thirty (30) £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.

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*** (⚜). 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 30 regular casual guests, thoroughly shuffle, and place as shown.

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

6 **Improvement Tiles**: Improvement tiles with a black dot next to the **Prestige Rating** are used in every game, no matter the number of players (1, 2, 3, or 4). Gather these tiles now (it would be useful to store these tiles together for ease of setup in future games). These are called **Common Tiles**.



2 Players: Start with the common tiles and add one of each SERVICE Tile (there are 5: **Brushing Room, Barn, Servants' Quarters, Servants' Hall, Butler's Pantry**).

3 Players: Start with the common tiles and add those tiles that contain an open circle next to the prestige rating (these tiles only have a rating of 3). Also, include all service tiles (there are two of each type).

4 Players: All improvement tiles and all service tiles are used in a 4 player game.

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















7 **Continued**: Shuffle the **Victory Point Cards** and place them on the round track where indicated. 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 the card.

8 **Builders' Market**: The appropriate number of tiles for the chosen player count were acquired in Step 6. Some of the more expensive tiles will now be set aside and added back after the first market is created.

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 (for now, exclude the **Servants' Hall**) are placed in the tile bag and mixed; the remaining tiles, along with all monument tiles (see step 9) are added to the bag after initial population.

Six improvement tiles will then be drawn out to fill the builders' market for the 1st time. The tiles are placed in prestige rating order, lowest to the left, highest to the right. ***Note***: All service tiles have an effective prestige rating of 0 (and all monument tiles have an effective prestige rating of 7).

There will frequently be tiles with the same prestige rating; the rules for ties are as follows:



1) There are five improvement categories (as seen on the **Country Estate Organiser** above): Essentials, Service, Estate, Prestige, and Sporting. Order the tiles with the same prestige rating from lowest category rank to highest category rank, left to right. The lowest is Service, then Sporting, Essentials, Estate, and then the highest, Prestige.
2) When two or more service tiles are drawn, place them in this order (lowest to highest, left to right): **Brushing Room**, **Butler's Pantry**, **Barn**, **Servants' Quarters** (Servants' Hall was excluded from initial population).

Please reference the Glossary entry for the **Builders' Market** for greater detail and a graphical representation of the tiebreaker rules.

Now that the market is filled for the 1st time, add the remaining improvement tiles to the bag and mix.

9 **Monument Tiles**: Monument tiles were excluded from the initial population of the market. After initial population, add monument tiles to the tile bag as follows:

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



You are ready to play Obsession

Before Starting the Game

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 prospects of eligible children. The ultimate 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 VP, and they represent:

- An appealing country estate
- The best social connections
- Private family achievements
- Superior reputation in the county
- A large and well-trained domestic staff
- Wealth
- Successful courtship of a Fairchild

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

Round Track Terms, Courtship, and Seasons

In a standard length game, there are 16 rounds divided into four seasons. A "season" lasts several months, which allows for complex renovation projects and the slow pace of **Courtship** in 19th century England.

Specific instructions following the order of play begin on page 7, but players should note the following:

- Each season is four rounds—three standard rounds where **Activities** are hosted followed by one courtship event to close the season.
- Before a season begins and the first player has acted (round spaces 1, 5, 9, and 13), a courtship **Theme Card** is revealed (***open courtship***).
- Players will attempt to win the seasonal courtship by scoring the most VP on tiles of the same theme category. For more on the link between a successful courtship and estate renovation, see the courtship Glossary entry, page 9.
- Each player executes one standard turn in a round. A standard turn follows the order of play described on each **Player Board** (see right).
- The pawn is moved along the round track after each player has hosted an activity or **Passed**.
- When the pawn reaches the white courtship space, no activity is hosted; players use this round to determine who wins the courtship (see Rulebook, page 10).
- The starting player marker is then passed clockwise and a new theme card revealed.



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 counters needed for standard play and extended play are seen to the left side of each round track. The counters showing 1, 3, 5, and 7 are two-sided with 2, 4, 6, and 8 on the reverse side. 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; both are 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 points chart, Glossary page 18 (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 grand **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.

Playing the Game

Moving on the Round Track: The game begins with the round track marker on the **Round Track's** first space. Each player will complete one standard turn (described below) before the round track marker is advanced. Some round spaces have a labelled icon; refer to the player aids or to the detailed round track Glossary entry 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 category by playing and purchasing the appropriate improvement tiles.

A Standard Turn

Starting with the 1st player, competitors either pass (**Passing**) or follow the six steps outlined below (and on every player board). Since passing never happens on the 1st turn, it will be discussed at the end of this 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):

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

2 **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**. Take the improvement tile and place it on your **Player Board** in the square labelled "Activity." ***Critical Rule 1 (red arrow)***: At the beginning of a turn, the largest number on your player board (reputation) must be ≥ the largest number on the improvement tile. ***Note***: **Special Actions** 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 (or acquired via special actions). Announce the activity you will be hosting to the other player(s).



3 **Invite Guests**: Your **Gentry Cards** represent the potential guests you'll 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 whom to invite. The player chooses cards from their **Active Hand** that satisfy this instruction (not their **Discard Pile**). ***Critical Rule 1 (red arrows)***: At the beginning of a turn, the largest number on your player board must be ≥ 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** (or acquired via special action). Place the cards below the player board.

4 **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***: All service is mandatory. If a servant is not available or acquired via special action, 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

5 **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 (⚜).

The player acquires the favours associated with the improvement tile and gentry cards in the following order:

1) Total the pounds listed on all sources; take coins from the supply representing that total and set them near the Player Board. In the above example, the player would take coins from the supply totalling £400.

2) Total the reputation listed on all sources and add this total to the family's reputation (each ⚜ is worth one space on the reputation wheel; once one 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 this 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. 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—1, 2, 3— for a total of five prestige added. She would finish at a reputation of level 4 (the large number), position 3 (the small number), one complete revolution around the wheel.

3) Befriend/dismiss gentry as indicated on all sources. Cards taken from the supply (prestige or **Casual Guests**) are placed into the player's **Active Hand**. (***Note***: The lady of the house has unique actions/icons; when this card is played, the player has a choice between two actions: either look at two casual guests, keeping one (circled above) or dismiss any guest. See **Dismiss Guest** in the Glossary.



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 the best one. The player shows these guest cards to the other players (there are no secrets in Derbyshire society), and puts them into her **Active Hand**.

Sidebar—Hire Servants Favour: Instead of hosting an activity like described, 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 or to recruit one 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 are placed in "Expended Service" on the player board with the butler or underbutler (whoever did the hiring) to be oriented to their new household.



4) Buy from the Builders' Market. A player can purchase any improvement or **Monument Tile** she can afford. One does not have to buy from the market and can instead choose to save coins for future purchases.

Rule 1: Only one purchase per turn. The exception is the **Builders' Holiday** on the round track (round 11 in **Standard Play** and round 12 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

5 **Enjoy Favours**, continued.

Rule 4: Place newly purchased tiles in the **Country Estate Organiser** in the proper column (by colour/type) face-up (the backside of the tile contains a rose in the upper right-hand corner; no rose should be visible). Service and **Monument Tiles** are the same on both sides; these tiles are never "played" on the **Player Board** during the game. If the **Servants' Hall** or a monument is purchased, take a **Reminder Tile** and place it on the player board. The reminder tile is simply a tool to remind players to take the reputation bonus at the beginning of every future turn.

Rule 5: After purchasing a tile, slide the remaining tiles to the left, exposing the rightmost (most expensive) 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 **Prestige Rating** order, lowest to the left, highest to the right. If there are ties, follow the tiebreaker rules in the Glossary, page 5 & 6.

Note: There are 4 types of tiles that will appear in the market—standard **Improvement Tiles**, **Suites Tiles**, service tiles, and monument tiles. All are capital improvements of the country estate, but each functions differently.



Improvement Tile: A tile placed in the country estate organiser and 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, activity that can be hosted, the guests to invite, a graphic icon of the servant required, and the favours to be enjoyed.



Suites Expansion Tile: These tiles are a hybrid between 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. See the Glossary entry, page 23 for detail.



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 or abilities 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.*** This reputation benefit is cumulative if the player acquires additional monuments.

6 **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 over, do NOT flip it again (tiles used in activities are only flipped once). Place gentry who attended the activity into the discard pile, face-up. The player's turn is over.

Passing

Why Pass? If a player does not have the necessary guests or servants to attend an activity, or if he wishes to "reset" his gentry deck by reclaiming cards already played, he will pass (i.e., not host an activity), which accomplishes four things:

1) The player ***takes back his discard pile***, creating an active hand consisting of all his gentry cards. All gentry are now available again to attend future activities.
2) The player ***refreshes service***, placing all servants in the "Available Service" box.
3) Next, the player has two options—
   - ► He can ***collect £200 in tenant rents***, taking two £100 coins from the supply, or
   - ► He may decline the £200 in tenant rents in favour of ***refreshing the builders' market***. Note that this is a powerful tool that avoids a penalty of four reputation to refresh the builders' market via **Special Action**. The rules for refreshing the entire builders' market in the middle of a game are covered extensively in the builders' market Glossary entry on pages 5 & 6.
4) 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.

Special Actions

Special Actions (SA) refer to a class of actions enabling a player to trade reputation for pounds, refreshed servants, and new choices in the builder's market. Each player board lists these actions. See the Glossary entry for thematic material and greater detail. The three SA are:

- ► **Borrow Pounds (£)**: Anytime during a turn, a player 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 turn, a player 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 Builder's Market**: Anytime during a turn, a player may refresh the builders' market once and 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.

Courtship

What Is Courtship?

The dramatic arrival of Charles and Elizabeth Fairchild—both eligible, refined, and substantially wealthy—into a relatively modest corner of Derbyshire would engage 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** (the reverse side), courtship events occur on round track spaces 5, 10, 15, and 20. These spaces are white, feature the word Courtship, and show an icon of a Victorian couple.

For an open courtship (which is the default courtship), a **Theme Card** was 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 was revealed before 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, each player totals the victory points (VP) on the **Improvement Tiles** in their organiser under that revealed category. In the example below, this player nets 2VP for this ESTATE courtship (the total of the three tiles in the estate theme category).



The player with the highest total gets a courtship visit from a Fairchild of their choice. A 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: 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 either contains 6, 7, or 8 VP for use in end game scoring or it offers players a choice between 3, 4, 5, and 6 VP and a benefit that players can take at any time (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.

Tiebreaker: 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), each player totals the VP on the improvement tiles in their organiser ***under ALL revealed categories.*** If a theme appears twice, the VP in that column are counted twice, reflecting a consuming Fairchild passion for the lifestyle associated with that doubled improvement type. For example, the courtship combo seen to the right would reflect a love of the outdoors, gardens, animals, riding, attended by the fine staff of footmen—a formal picnic in the French Garden would 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 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, a 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 solitary play.

SET UP FOR SOLITAIRE

On page 3 of the Rulebook, player setup is described. 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 Setup: The procedure for acquiring family cards, servants, **Starter Guests**, and **Objective Cards** as well as for setting up the reputation wheel and **Country Estate Organiser** is identical to page 3 of the Rulebook.
- **Round Track** and Supply Board Setup: Set up for a two player game.
- **Courtship**: Closed Courtship is used.

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.

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.

PLAY SOLITAIRE

The game is set up and the opponent chosen; it is time to play! Follow normal gameplay as described on pages 7-9 of the Rulebook, which is divided into six steps. Once the SP ends her turn by shopping in the builders' market and clearing her board, the d20 dice is then rolled to see if the opponent will purchase a tile from the market.

Note the positions of the builders' market spaces (in yellow) as it relates to the Solitaire AI; these positions will be referred to every Solitaire turn.





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.

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, courtship proceeds normally as described on page 10 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 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 opponent's large black base score on the card after adding 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).

End Game Scoring

End Game Scoring

After the last courtship event, the round track marker 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, obtain the scorepad from the box and total the victory points for the seven categories described below. Examples are provided as needed.

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 example to the right, the player finished the game with nine **Improvement Tiles** and one suites tile. He adds together the white numbers in the wreaths located in the lower right hand corner of each tile for a total of 22.

2. Gentry Card VP

Total VP in the upper right-hand corner of all your 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). This player had a much larger deck, but most lower-ranked guests do not grant victory points. The player adds together VP values for five guests for a total of 13 VP.



3. Objective Card VP

Total the VP for each completed objective.

EXAMPLE: This player acquired 3 **Objective Cards** during the course of the game. 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 victory points earned for reputation are equal to the numbers representing each level achieved added together. This is a triangular number sequence; the next level is always worth one more victory point 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
🇬🇧	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
🇬🇧	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.

7. Courtship VP

Expose and total the Courtship/Victory Point cards.



EXAMPLE: This player won two **Courtships**, chose not to trade the 4 VP for three reputation, and therefore adds 12 victory points to his total.

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

If there is a tie, the player with the Fairchild card in his deck is the winner. If tied players do not have the Fairchild card, highest **Player Board** reputation wins. If it is still a tie, players share the victory.

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