# UMBRA VIA

WELCOME

Just beyond the towering vines lies an ancient pathway into the unknown. Push back the thorn-riddled stalks to discover a clandestine garden, blooming with mysterious vigor. Vivid colors mark the way to intricate tiles zigging and zagging through the green. Within the flowers lies the key to greater meaning. An explanation for all things unknown...

In Umbra Via, players compete to control and complete the most cunning paths. Players will bid in secret to control the placement of the paths, but once placed they belong to whoever can take control of them. Umbra Via mixes blind bidding, area control and route-building in a delightfully simple-to-learn package. Experience the magic of Umbra Via and find out why this award-winning design belongs on any table.
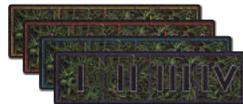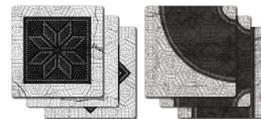
COMPONENTS
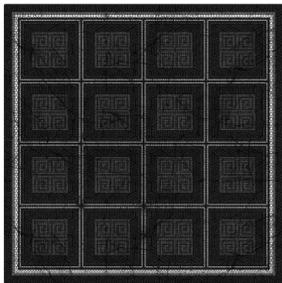
1 Main Board

4 Player Screens

4 Bidding Boards

1 Altar Board

4 Placement Order Counters

4 Bags

20 Path Tiles

4 Soul Tiles

132 Energy Flowers
(33 per player)

68 Soul Flowers
(17 per player)

GAME SETUP

1. **Place Boards:** Place the Main board in the center of the table, within reach of all players. Place the Altar board above it, as shown.

2. **Shuffle Path Tiles:** Shuffle the Path tiles and place them face-down in a single stack near the Altar. Place the 4 Placement Order counters nearby.

Special Tiles: *If this is your first game, we recommend removing the 3 Special Tiles described on page 10.*

3. **Take Player Pieces:** Each player chooses a color and takes the following pieces of that color:

   - 1 Bidding board
   - 1 Player screen
   - 1 Bag
   - 33 Energy flowers
   - 17 Soul flowers
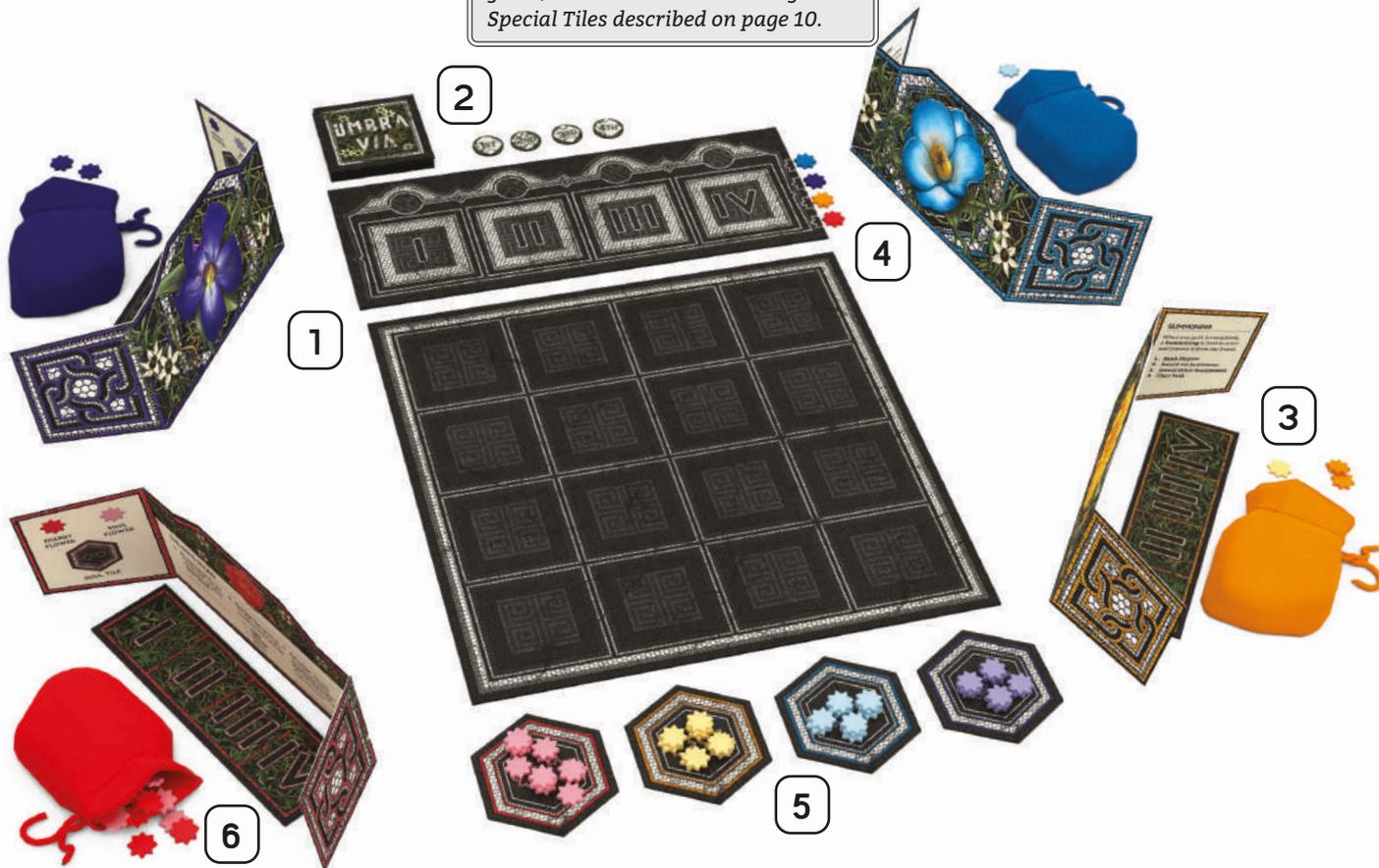
4. **Tiebreakers:** Each player sets aside **1 Energy flower** of their color to act as their **tiebreaker marker**. Place the flowers in a random order on the **Tiebreaker track** to the right of the Altar board.

5. **Place Soul Tiles:** Each player places the **Soul Tile** of their color near the board, with the "x2" side face-down. They then place **11 Soul flowers** of their color on it. *(The order the tiles are arranged in does not matter.)*

6. **Player Bags:** Each player places their Bidding board behind their screen. Each player puts all of their remaining Soul flowers and Energy flowers into their bag *(6 Soul, 32 Energy)*.

GAME OVERVIEW

Each round, you will bid on 4 randomly drawn **Path tiles**. The winning bidders place their tiles on the Main board to form **paths**. Each time a path is **completed**, the players who contributed to it earn **Soul flowers**.

Your goal is to claim **13 Soul flowers**, including your **Soul Tile** *(which counts as your final 2 flowers)*. If you are first to empty your Soul Tile **and** claim it, you **win!**

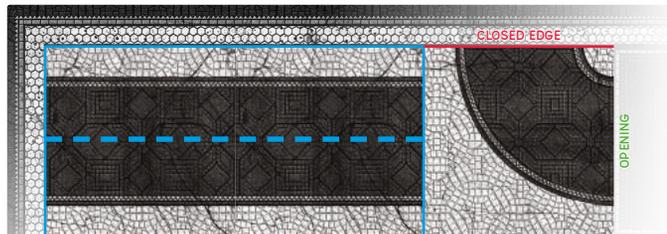*(See "Game End" on page 9 for more detail.)*

BUILDING AND COMPLETING PATHS

Each **Path tile** shows a section of path with 2 or more **openings**.

When an opening on a tile is placed next to an opening on another tile, they connect to form a **single path**. When an opening is placed next to a **closed edge** of another tile, or a **board edge**, the path is **closed off**.

When a path has **no** unconnected openings remaining, it is **complete**. Completing a path triggers a **Summoning**, which earns players **Soul flowers** *(see "Summoning" on page 8)*.
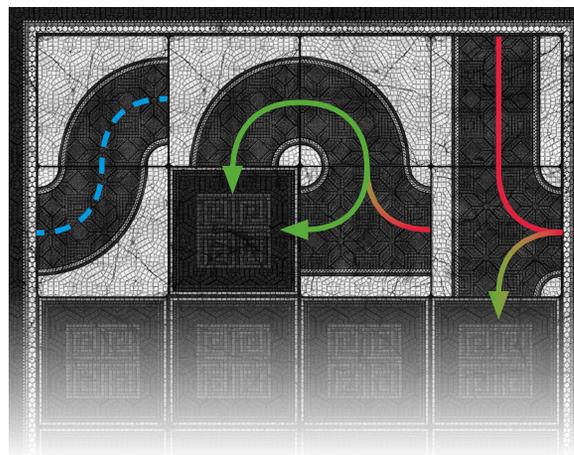
The lines mark the paths and the arrow heads mark the open edges of the paths. The far left path in this example is complete.
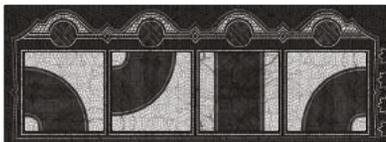
> **1-Tile Paths:** *It is possible to form a complete path with only 1 Path tile.*

THE GAME ROUND

Umbra Via is played in Rounds. Each Round is made up of **3 Phases**:

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1. Round Setup:
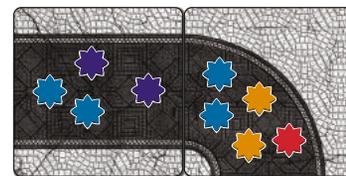Reveal Path tiles to fill the Altar.

2. Bidding:
Players bid on the Altar tiles through 2 rounds of secret bidding.

3. Placement:
The winning bidders place their Path tiles on the Main board and score completed paths.

PHASE 1: ROUND SETUP

Reveal **4 Path tiles** from the top of the stack and place them face-up in the 4 slots on the **Altar board**.

Place each tile in the **random orientation** that it is revealed in. Do not rotate any tiles!

> **Empty Stack:** *If the Path tile stack is ever empty, shuffle the tile discard pile to create a new stack.*
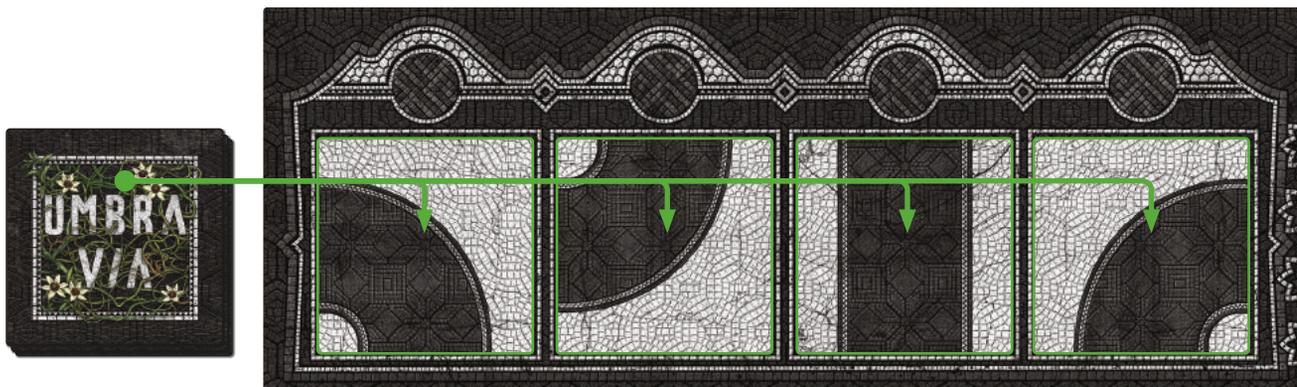
PHASE 2: BIDDING

In this phase, a **secret auction** is held to decide who will place each of the 4 Altar tiles on the Main board.

Each player bids by secretly drawing and placing flowers on the numbered spaces on their **Bidding board** that correspond to the numbered Altar tile slots.

After **2 rounds** of bidding, players proceed to the Placement Phase, when each tile is placed by the player with the **winning bid** *(see next page)*.

ENERGY FLOWERS   SOUL FLOWERS

AUCTION IN DETAIL

To resolve the auction, all players simultaneously perform these steps:

1. **Draw:** Secretly draw **3 flowers** from your bag and place them behind your screen.

2. **Allocate:** Arrange the flowers you drew on your **Bidding board** to show which **tiles** you are bidding on. Each **Soul flower** you place counts as **2** flowers towards your bid.

> *Must Spend Flowers: In each round of bidding, you **must** bid all 3 flowers you drew. You cannot "save" flowers for the next bid.*
>
> *No Bidding Limit: You may bid as many flowers as you like (even all your flowers) on a single tile.*

3. **Reveal:** Once all players have finished allocating, they **reveal** their Bidding boards and **move** the flowers they bid onto the corresponding tiles on the Altar board.

4. **Repeat:** Hold a **2nd round** of bidding by repeating steps 1-3. The bids revealed in the 2nd round are added to those placed on the Altar in the 1st round.

5. **Next Phase:** Once the 2nd round of bidding is over, move on to the Placement Phase.

> *Hint: The 1st round of bidding gives you some information about which tiles players are interested in, but the final bids at the end of the 2nd round are what determine the winners (see next page).*

Auction Example: Kylie (Purple), Jevin (Blue), and Harvey (Red) are playing a 3-player game. In the first round of bidding, Kylie draws 2 Energy and 1 Soul flower. She decides to bid 1 Energy on tile II, and her remaining flowers on tile III (a total bid of 3, since her Soul flower is worth 2.)
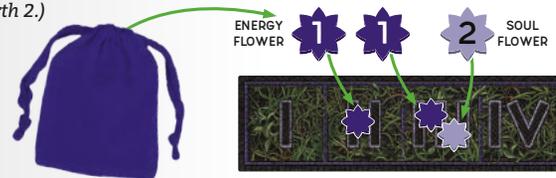

Once all 3 players are finished deciding, they reveal their bids and place them on the Altar. Kylie sees that Jevin also bid on tile III, but he only placed 2 energy flowers.

KYLIE = 3 | JEVIN = 2
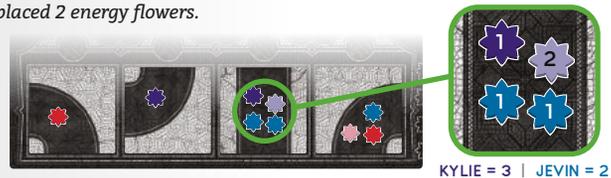
Now the players bid again. This time Kylie draws 3 Energy flowers. She doesn't think Jevin will double down on tile III, but to be safe she places 1 Energy there. She uses her other 2 to try and contest Harvey on tile I.
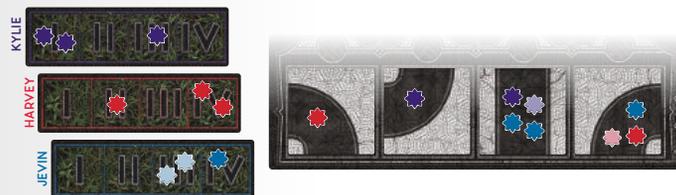
The second bid is revealed. Jevin bid 2 Soul flowers on tile III! This means his final bid is 6, compared to Kylie's 4. At least she managed to win the bid on tile I...
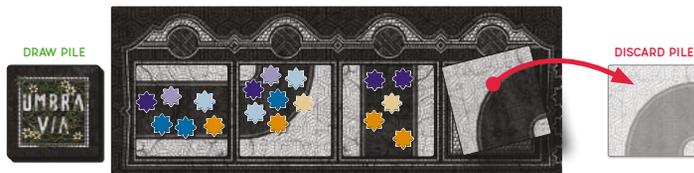

| KYLIE = 2 | HARVEY = 1 | JEVIN = 6 | HARVEY = 5 |
| HARVEY = 1 | KYLIE = 1 | KYLIE = 4 | JEVIN = 2 |
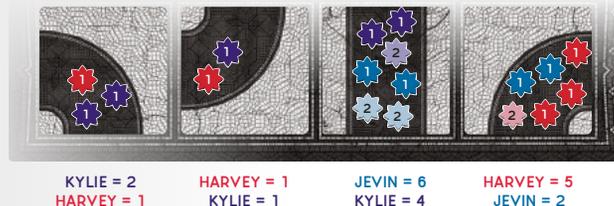
PHASE 3: PLACEMENT

In this phase, the players determine who "won" the bid on each tile. The winners get to place their tiles on the Main board to build and potentially **complete** paths.
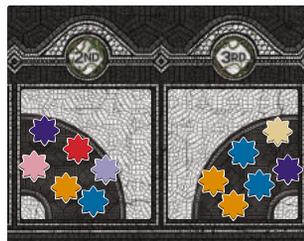
PLACEMENT ORDER

First, place any Altar tiles with **no bids** in a face-up **discard pile** next to the Altar.

Then assign a **Placement Order counter** to each of the remaining tiles. Assign the "**1st**" counter to the tile with the **fewest total flowers** on it *(counting ALL players)*. Then assign the "2nd" counter to the tile with the 2nd-fewest flowers, and so on, until each tile has a counter.
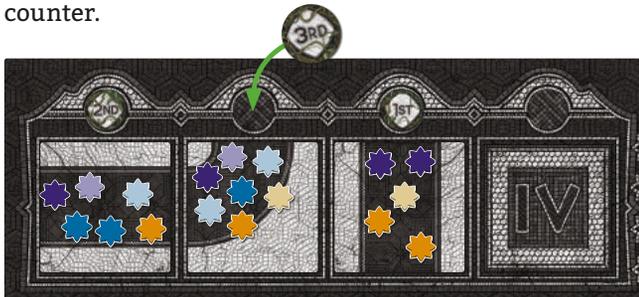
If two or more tiles have the same number of flowers, place the Placement Order counters on them from left to right. *(For example, if tile II and tile III each have 6 flowers, tile II gets the lower-numbered counter.)*

PLACING TILES

The tiles are now ready to be placed. Starting with the tile that is "**1st**" and proceeding in Placement Order, follow these steps for **each** tile:

1. **Determine Winner:** Count each player's **total bid** on the tile, counting each **Soul flower** as 2. The player with the **highest bid** is the winner.

   Tiebreaker: In the case of a tie, refer to the Tiebreaker track (see next page).

   YELLOW = 4 | PURPLE = 2

2. **Remove Soul Flowers:** Remove ALL players' **Soul flowers** from the tile and permanently discard them from play by returning them to the game box. *(Do NOT remove any Energy flowers!)*

3. **Place Tile:** The winner picks up the tile from the Altar and places it in an empty space of their choice on the Main board, with **ALL Energy flowers** still on top of it. They must respect the following placement rules:

- A new tile must be placed in the **same orientation** that it had on the Altar board. It may **not** be **rotated**.

- If there are **no** tiles on the board, a new tile may be placed in any of the 4 central spaces that do not touch the edges of the board. If there **are** tiles on the board, a new tile must be placed next to an **already placed tile** *(so that the 2 tiles share an edge)*.

- A new tile does **not** need to continue the path on the tile*(s)* it is placed next to.

- A new tile may be placed in a way that **closes off** a path *(see next page)*. That is, a **path opening** can be placed next to a **closed tile edge**, or vice versa.

4. **Check for Complete Paths:** Once the tile is placed, check if any paths have been **completed** *(i.e. all of a path's openings are closed off - see page 3)*. If a path has been completed, a **Summoning** immediately occurs *(see next page)*.

Tile Placement Example:
Continuing the example from page 5, Kylie, Jevin, and Harvey place the Placement Order counters on the Altar tiles like so:
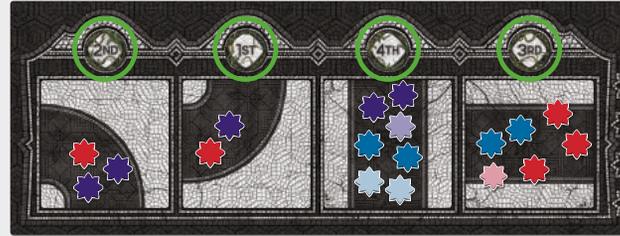
Tile III has the most flowers, so it is last to be placed. Once all 3 other tiles have been placed by their winners, the players count their flowers on Tile III and find Jevin has the highest bid (6 total). He first removes both of his Soul flowers, as well as Kylie's Soul flower, and returns them to the box.

*He then places the tile on the board, without rotating it. It connects to an opening on an existing path, and in fact closes off its only opening. This triggers an immediate Summoning (see continued example on next page).*
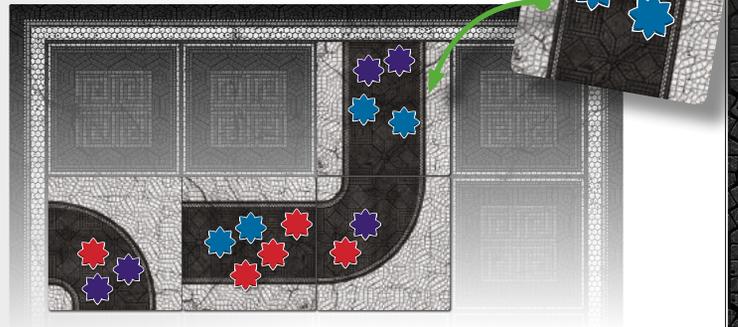
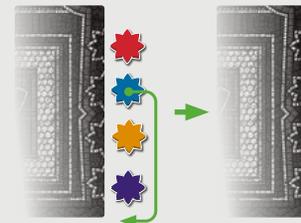

Tiebreaker Track:
*When 2 or more players have bid the same amount on a tile, the tied player whose Tiebreaker marker is **higher** on the Tiebreaker track wins the tie.*
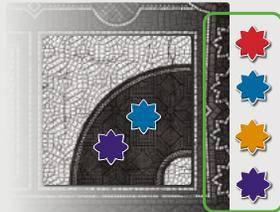
After you win a tie you must immediately move your marker to the bottom of the track (meaning all players will beat you in the next tie you're involved in).

SUMMONING

When any path is completed, a **Summoning** is held to score and remove it from the board. Follow these steps:

1. **Rank Players:** Count the total number of **Energy flowers** each player has on the path. Make sure to count flowers on **all** tiles that make up the completed path. Then **rank** the players from most Energy *(1st)* to least Energy *(last)*.

   > *Ties:* If 2 or more players have the same number of flowers, they receive the **same rank**. The player with the next-most flowers is assigned **one rank lower** than the tied players (see example right).

   > *No Flowers:* Players who have **no** flowers on a path do not receive a rank.

2. **Award 1st Summoner:** The player who is ranked 1st earns **1 Soul flower per tile** in the path. *(For example, 3 Soul flowers for a path 3 tiles long.)* They take the Soul flowers they've earned from their **Soul Tile** and place them in their **bag**.

3. **Award Other Summoners:** Counting down the ranking, each other player earns **half** the number of Soul flowers that the **player above them** earned *(rounded down)*, placing them in their bag. Players who are not ranked earn no Soul flowers.

4. **Clear Path:** Each player takes all of their **Energy flowers** from the completed path and returns them to their bag. Then all tiles in the path are **removed** from the board and placed in the **discard pile** next to the Altar.

END OF THE ROUND

Once all tiles on the Altar have been placed or discarded, and all completed paths have been resolved, a new round begins with the Round Setup Phase.

Completing a Path Example:
Continuing the example from page 7, Jevin has just placed a tile on the board and completed a 3-tile path. It is now time to see who earns Soul flowers. Each player counts their Energy flowers on the path.
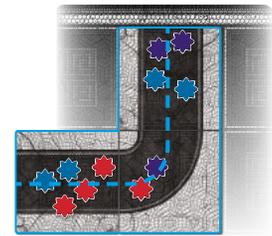
Harvey and Jevin are tied for the most Energy, so they each earn 3 Soul flowers (1 for each tile in the path). Kylie also has Energy on the path, so she earns 1 Soul flower (half the number Harvey and Jevin earned, rounded down). If Kylie did not have any flowers on the path, she would earn no Soul flowers.

PLAYERS	FLOWERS	RANK	SOULS
🌺 Harvey	4	1st	3
🌸 Jevin	4	1st	3
🌼 Kylie	3	2nd	1
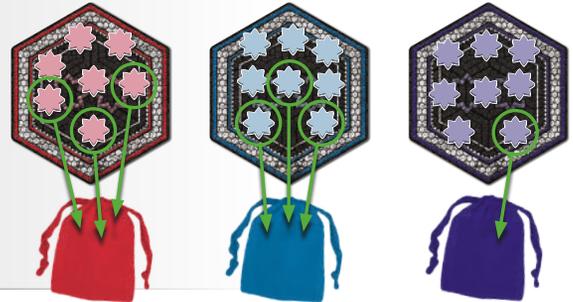
Completing Multiple Paths: If placing a single tile completes multiple paths, a separate Summoning is held for each path, and the player who placed the tile chooses what order they resolve in.

*Each path that is complete **at the time the tile is placed** always triggers a Summoning, even if clearing one of the completed paths "re-opens" another completed path.*
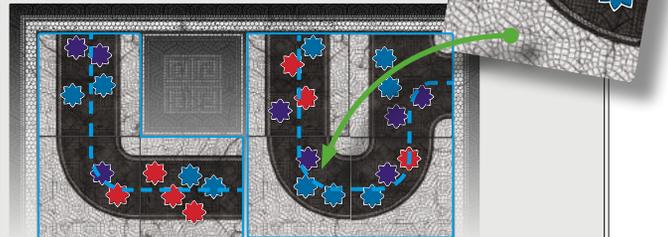
If the path on the right is scored and cleared first, it will "re-open" the path on the left, but the path on the left will still be scored.

GAME END

Your **Soul Tile** is the final piece you must claim to win the game. If you are the **first** to claim your Soul Tile, the game immediately ends, and **you win**!

CLAIMING YOUR SOUL TILE

Your Soul Tile counts as **2 Soul flowers**, and may be claimed as **part or all** of your reward when a path is completed.

However, in order to claim your Soul Tile as a reward, **ALL** of the following conditions must be met:

- You have claimed **all other Soul flowers** from your Soul Tile *(it is empty)*.

- You are ranked 1st *(have the most Energy flowers)* on the completed path.

- The completed path is at least **2 tiles long**.

> *Ties: Since multiple players can be ranked 1st on a completed path, it is possible for multiple players to claim their Soul Tiles as rewards for the same path. On this rare occasion, the players share victory!*

> *Unable to take Soul Tile: If you would earn Soul flowers, but your Soul Tile is empty and you do not meet the conditions to take it, you do not receive any further Soul flowers. The player(s) ranked below you still earn half of the full number of Soul flowers you could have taken.*

Claiming a Soul Tile Example:
Kylie places a Path tile that completes a 4-tile path, triggering a Summoning. The players count their Energy flowers on the path and determine that Kylie has the most.
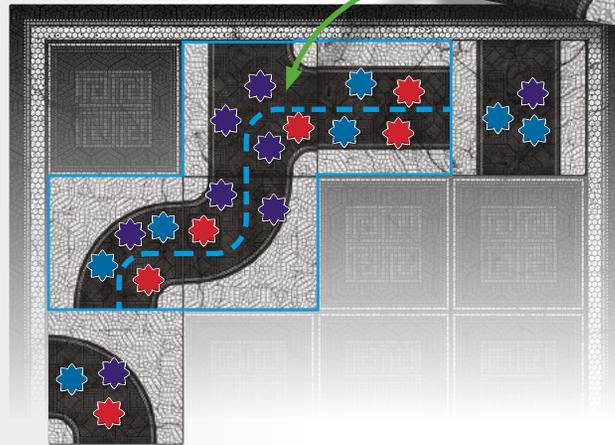
Kylie has only 1 Soul flower remaining on her Soul Tile, but the path is 4 tiles long, so her reward is 4 Soul flowers. Because the completed path was at least 2 tiles long, and she was ranked 1st, she is also able to claim her Soul Tile as her 2nd and 3rd flowers. This means she wins the game!

| PLAYERS	FLOWERS	RANK	SOULS
✹ *Kylie*	6	1st	4
✹ *Harvey*	5	2nd	2
✹ *Jevin*	4	3rd	1
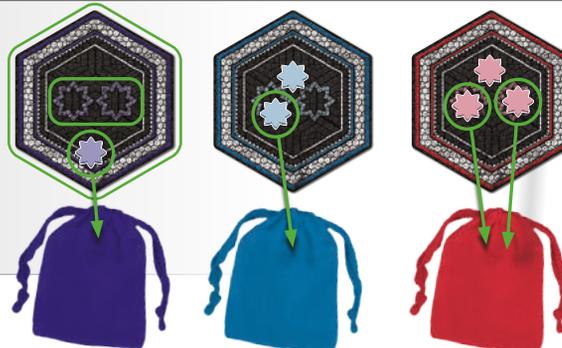
SPECIAL TILES

Once you're familiar with the game, you can add in the following Special Path tiles to mix things up. Shuffle these tiles into the Path tile stack at the start of the game.

FOUR POINT TILE

When a player places this tile, they immediately move **all Energy flowers** on it to an **adjacent tile** of their choice.
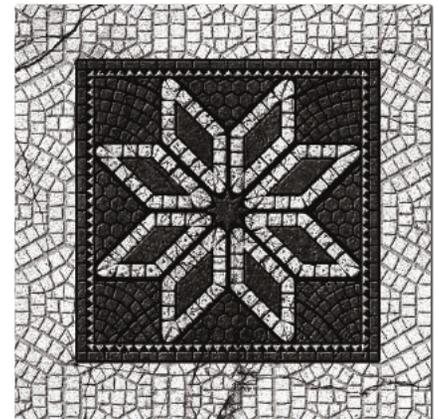
This tile has no openings and does not connect to any paths. When any path adjacent to it is completed and **cleared**, it is removed as well.
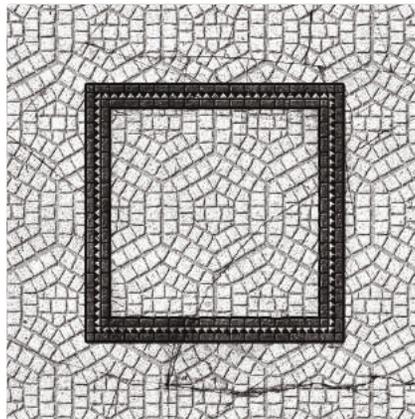
VOID TILE

When a player would place this tile, they instead **discard** it and place **all Energy flowers** on it on any **empty** space on the board. When a tile is placed on that space, the flowers there are immediately **added to the tile**.

BLOCK TILE

Players **cannot** bid on this tile. It occupies a slot on the Altar board, **reducing** the number of tiles that will be auctioned this round.

At the start of the Placement Phase, this tile is discarded along with all other tiles that do not have any bids.

No Adjacent Tile: If there are no other tiles on the board when the Four Point tile is placed, its Energy flowers remain on it. As soon as another tile is placed next to it, all flowers are immediately moved onto that tile.

2 PLAYER VARIANT

When playing with 2 players, we recommend using the following alternate rules.

SETUP CHANGES

After choosing your colors, choose a 3rd **neutral color**.

When adding flowers to your bags, each of you adds **3 neutral Soul flowers** and **16 neutral Energy flowers** along with the flowers of your color. *(Shake your bags well to mix up the colors.)*

Place the neutral color **Soul Tile** above the Altar and place **11 neutral Soul flowers** on it, just as a player would. Do not include a neutral Tiebreaker marker on the Tiebreaker track.

BIDDING PHASE

You will perform 2 rounds of secret bidding as in the standard game.

If you draw **neutral** flowers, you may place them as normal on your Bidding board. They count towards **your** bid, as if they were flowers of your own color. Neutral Soul flowers still count as 2.

When bids are **revealed**, each of you places **all** flowers that you bid on each tile in a **line** along the **edge of the tile** that is closest to you. *(This is to separate your neutral flowers from your opponent's).*

To determine who wins each tile, count **both** the flowers of your color **and** the flowers you placed of the neutral color.

PLACEMENT PHASE

Placement Order is determined by counting **all** flowers on a tile, including neutral flowers.

The winner of each tile places it normally, discarding all **Soul flowers** on the tile from the game *(including neutral Soul flowers)* and leaving all **Energy flowers** in place.

Once the winner of a tile has been determined, you no longer need to keep the bids separated, as the neutral flowers no longer belong to either player *(see next page)*.


KYLIE   JORDAN   NEUTRAL

2-Player Bidding Phase Example:
Jordan is playing red and sitting on the left side of the board. Kylie is playing purple and is sitting on the right side of the board. Yellow is their neutral color.

After two rounds of bidding, the Altar board looks like this:

Jordan's bids are lined up to the left side of each tile, while Kylie's are lined up to the right. Jordan wins Tiles I and II, and Kylie wins Tile III.

Tile IV is a tie, which Kylie wins because her tiebreaker marker is higher (even though she played a neutral flower).

JORDAN'S BID   KYLIE'S BID

JORDAN WINS   JORDAN WINS   KYLIE WINS   TIE (KYLIE WINS)
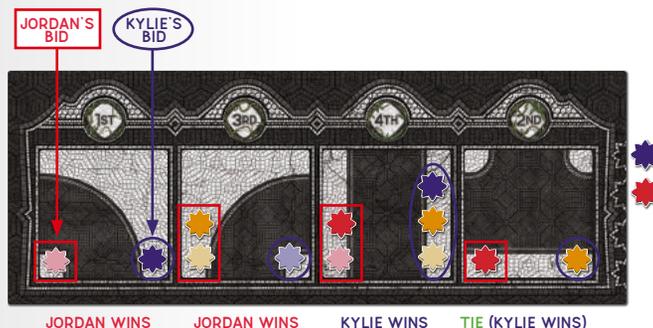
Bidding with Neutral Flowers: *During the Bidding Phase, all neutral flowers on a tile are treated as if they were the color of the player that placed them. A player may win a bid using only neutral flowers. Tiles can only be awarded to players, never to the neutral color.*

SUMMONING

When a path is completed and scored, count the **neutral Energy** on the path separately from each of the players. The neutral color is **ranked** just like a player would be *(and can even be 1st)*. It earns **Soul flowers** from its Soul Tile according to its rank.

After players earn Soul flowers and take back their Energy flowers, **one** player takes **all** of the **neutral flowers** and adds them to their bag. This includes both the **neutral Soul flowers** that were awarded and the **neutral Energy flowers** on the path.

- **Player Ranked 1st:** If a player is ranked 1st, they take the neutral flowers.

- **Neutral Ranked 1st:** If the neutral color is ranked 1st, the player who **completed** the path takes the neutral flowers.

NEUTRAL SOUL TILE & SUDDEN DEATH

It is possible for the neutral Soul Tile to be "claimed" if the neutral color runs out of Soul flowers and is ranked 1st on a path that is 2 or more tiles in length. If this happens, the neutral Soul Tile is **flipped over**, revealing the "X2", and **Sudden Death** is triggered.

While **Sudden Death** is active, each Path tile is counted as **2 tiles** during Summonings. This means paths award twice the number of Soul flowers, and a player can claim their Soul Tile by ranking 1st on a path that is only **1 tile long**.

The neutral color no longer earns Soul flowers when paths are completed, but neutral Energy flowers still go to the 1st-ranked player's bag *(or the completing player's bag, if the neutral color is 1st)*.
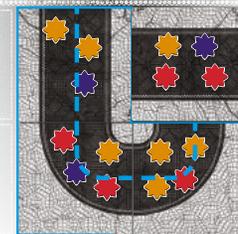
Sudden Death Example:
Jordan (red) places the 3rd tile in Placement Order and completes a 3-tile path. He and Kylie (purple) are ranked as follows:
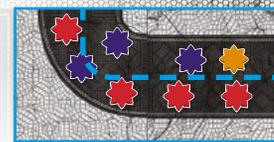
PLAYERS	FLOWERS	RANK	SOULS
✹ Neutral	6	1st	3
✹ Jordan	3	2nd	1
✹ Kylie	2	3rd	0
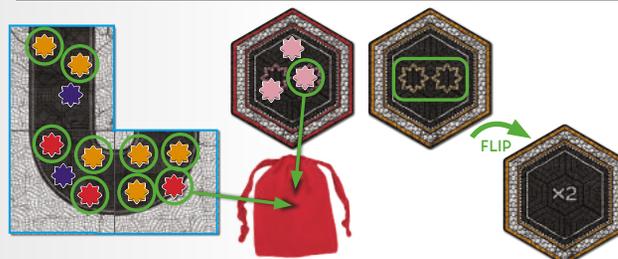
Since the neutral color was ranked 1st, Jordan must take all 6 neutral Energy flowers and 3 neutral Soul flowers, along with his own 3 Energy and 1 Soul flower. However, their are only 2 neutral Soul flowers remaining, which means the Soul Tile is flipped and Sudden Death begins!

Jordan also won the 4th tile in Placement Order, so he places again. This time he completes a 2-tile path. But because it is Sudden Death, this is scored as if it was a 4-tile path.

PLAYERS	FLOWERS	RANK	SOULS
✹ Jordan	4	1st	4
✹ Kylie	3	2nd	2
✹ Neutral	1	3rd	1

Jordan has only 2 Soul flowers remaining on his Soul Tile, so he claims his Tile and wins the game! (Note that if this tile had been scored without the bonus from Sudden Death, Jordan would have only earned 2 Soul flowers, which was not enough to win.)