

tower

a game of buying and building

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You love the smell of architecture in the morning. Of course, if there are two smells you love, the first is architecture and the second is a rich king who wants a tower to be built. Not that you go around sniffing rich kings, but when the opportunity presents itself, you don't see any reason to avoid breathing heavily through your nose.

Fortunately, a fragrant king has graced you with his presence and, as it so happens, he wants a tower. Thanks to your dynamic three-step tower building program, you have convinced the king that your tower is what he's looking for. After all, your family has been in the tower making business ever since that one guy did that one thing with columns.

Unfortunately, the king informs you that he has also hired other architects since they also have an easy three-step process—in fact, he's made something of a competition out of the whole thing. You know exactly who those “others” are and by gum you'll show the king you can build it faster. Heaven knows you can't build better than them since they “measure” and “use better materials,” but by your grandfather's drafting pencil, you can build fast.

Before leaving, the king pulls out a few gems and asks if it would be enough to get started. Mesmerized by the brilliance of the gems, you shake yourself and admit that they'll be enough for now. After all, you can ask for more later. Architecting is an expensive business, especially the way you do it. Finally, the king gives you directions to his land and departs.

Upon reaching the land in question, you behold all the kingdom has to offer. Boy does the kingdom behold a lot of sand. But you've made towers out of worse stuffs and as long as you can get a few crucial things, this tower will go up and you'll get paid before it has a chance to fall down. Hey, the king never asked for the tower to last.

object of the game:

Players race to beat their opponents to stores and buy the items they need before they are out of stock. The players then use their purchased items to construct segments of the tower. The first player to construct her third tower segment (the top of the tower), therefore leaving her cake-topping, architectural trademark for all to see, is the winner! Will you be the player whose mark is forever left on the tower?

components:

- ◆ 18 building material items
- ◆ 12 tower segments
- ◆ 4 builder pawns
- ◆ 1 bag
- ◆ 90 gems
- ◆ 10 black market passes
- ◆ 18 build cards
- ◆ 18 black market cards
- ◆ 6 market tiles
- ◆ 1 palace tile
- ◆ 1 Salil tile



Salil



market tile



palace tile



black market deck



build deck



setup:

- ◆ All players should be within reach of the cards, pieces, and markets. Randomly decide a start player.
- ◆ Take the 90 gems and the 10 black market passes and place them in the black bag. Shake well so that the contents are mixed up.
- ◆ Take the palace tile & the six market tiles and set them faceup on a table. It does not matter how they are laid out, so long as they are all completely visible—the layout has no bearing on the outcome of the game. These seven tiles constitute the kingdom. Refer to the image above for a possible setup of your kingdom.
- ◆ All 18 building materials and build cards will only be used in a 4-player game. If playing with three players, return all build cards that have **four player icons** at the bottom to the game box; on the market tiles, place a tower segment of an unclaimed color on each space that has **four player icons** and return the unused building materials to the box. If playing with two players, repeat the previous two steps for all build cards and spaces that also have **three player icons**.

If playing with four players, use all 18 build cards and 18 building materials.

If playing with 3 players, return all build cards with 4 player icons to the box, and place an unused tower segment on each market space with 4 player icons.



If playing with 2 players, return all build cards with 3 or 4 player icons to the box, and place an unused tower segment with 3 or 4 player icons.



- ◆ Now, take the building materials and place them in the appropriate spaces on each market tile; place one straw token in each yellow space, one lumber token in each brown space, one clay token in each red space, and one water barrel in each blue space.
- ◆ Shuffle the build deck and the black market deck, and set them facedown near your city.
- ◆ Place the Salil tile, faceup, near your city. It is explained in detail on page 10.
- ◆ Each player selects a colored builder pawn and couples it with the three like-colored tower segments.
- ◆ Finally, each player draws a build card, which shows what a player must collect in order to build a tower segment. Each player's build card should be placed faceup so that it is visible to all other players, unless you are playing a 2-player game; with 2 players, build cards should be placed facedown and kept secret.

how to play:

Your turn consists of three phases: the **draw phase**, the **action phase**, and the **build phase**. During the **draw phase**, the king's bookkeeper lackadaisically reaches into the reserves and provides you with funds for the day; simply reach into the black bag and randomly draw three gems. For the **action phase**, you may execute any or all of the following actions, in any order:

- ◆ Buy one or more items from a single store: if one or more of the items depicted on your build card are available in an unoccupied market, and you have the required gems to purchase it/them, you may set your builder pawn on top of the market tile and exchange your gems for the item(s). Whenever gems are spent, they are discarded next to Salil (p. 10). You may only visit one store per turn, and you can't buy resources you don't need.
- ◆ Make as many trades with Salil as you like (p. 10).
- ◆ Visit the Black Market **once** and/or use Black Market cards (p. 8).

As soon as you choose not to or cannot execute any more actions, move on to the **build phase**:

For the **build phase**: If you **have not** acquired all of the items depicted on your build card, then skip this phase; however, if you **have** acquired all of the items listed on your build card, then declare it to the other players, return the items to the markets (any available space is fine, so long as the space matches the item), set 1 of your 3 tower segments in the center of the palace tile, discard your build card, and finally, draw 3 new build cards—pick 1 to keep, and discard the other 2. If the build deck is exhausted, shuffle the discard pile to form a new deck. Subsequent tower segments built by any player are stacked on top of the original segment, forming a tower.

After the build phase, your turn ends immediately and play passes to the left. **If you did not execute any of the above actions during the action or build phases, then draw two more gems from the bag before ending your turn.**

build cards

The king has supplied each player with a team of builders who diligently work behind the scenes on the tower's construction—you didn't really think it would just be up to you to construct entire floors of the tower, did you? Using your own architectural plans, your construction team provides you with lists of supplies it needs in order to continue working.

Each build card has five building materials depicted on it. In order to build a tower segment and move forward in the game, collect all of the materials on your build card.



the markets

A quick tour of the city's markets seems to suggest that there is no consensus on the value of the local currency. Whether it be ignorance, confusion, or good old fashioned price-gouging, you'll find very little consistency in the way of prices... except for Hesham's general store--you can always expect that crook to fatten the markup!

No haggling:

The prices in each market are what they are! You must pay in exact change, and there are no substitutions!

Maximum Occupancy of One:

A shopkeeper can only tend to one customer at a time. If your pawn is on a market tile, that market is inaccessible to everyone else until you leave.

No loitering:

You may only end your turn with your pawn on a market tile if you purchased something from that market earlier in the same turn.



the black market:

Following the announcement of the competition, a small black market emerged from the back alleys of the city streets. Hoping to capitalize on the scarcity of materials throughout the markets, this group has smuggled in foreign building materials and attracted some very seedy individuals. Savvy shoppers will notice the **black market passes**—gems painted jet-black—that have already begun circulating throughout the kingdom. These defaced gems serve as an invitation to those who know how to use them.

When looking for a competitive edge, players can visit the black market. There are ten black market passes in the black bag which grant immediate access, but players may also buy their way in with gems (to the tune of either 6 **green**, 4 **blue**, or 2 **red** gems). The black market always benefits the buyer, and sometimes at the expense of other players. Some cards grant access to occupied markets, some cards act as wild cards for building materials, some cards allow items to be stolen from opponents, etc. **Remember, though**, that the money spent on a black market card only grants access to the card; when the time comes that you choose to use the card, **you must also pay whatever amount is indicated on face of each card, near the bottom.**



For example, after gaining entry to the black market, Erin chooses a **Common Thief** card. To use this particular card, Erin must first pay the thief three gems, as indicated at the bottom of the card. These can be gems of any type; the hired thug just wants some gems!

When you enter the black market, whether with a black market pass or normal gems, three thugs will be ushered before you for you to choose from—draw 3 cards and choose 1 that you want to keep. Then take the remaining 2 cards and place them back **on the top** of the deck. If hiring 1-3 thugs at one time, you still only draw 3 cards; you are limited to having no more than 3 black market cards at any time. You may use as many of your black market cards as you like on your turn, so long as you are able to pay their hiring fee at the time of use. Used black market cards are discarded next to the deck. If the black market deck is exhausted, shuffle the discard pile to form a new deck.

NOTE: You can only visit the black market once per turn, so make it count!

1 **red** gem
 or
 2 **blue** gems = Any 1 gem
 or
 3 **green** gems

1 **black market pass** = Any 2 gems



Salil, the Tax Collector:

Salil is the kingdom's devious tax collector, who often carries copious amounts of gems on his person that he collects from the local markets. He's been known to make trades with those interested, but his terms are anything but fair. Still, when in need, Salil can be a powerful friend.

Whenever gems or **black market passes** are spent, they are discarded wherever the Salil tile is placed. If you need a specific gem, you can trade your gems for one of the discarded gems. The transfer rates are listed next to Salil: 3 **green** gems for any gem in the discard pile, 2 **blue** gems for any gem in the discard pile, one **red** gem for any gem in the discard pile, or one **black market pass** for any *two* gems in the discard pile. Players are even permitted to trade with Salil in the same turn that they spend gems. For example, Daniel spent two **blue** gems on an item, and then traded a **red** gem to reclaim one of the **blue** gems that he had just spent.

Black market passes cannot be obtained from Salil, even with an *Experienced Thief* card (Apparently, he is rewarded handsomely for turning these in to the authorities); they remain there until the gem

bag becomes empty. When/if the gem bag becomes empty, all of the gems and passes with Salil are put back into the bag.

NOTE: Remember, you can only exchange your gems for another gem if it is currently with Salil. At the beginning of the game—and each time that Salil returns his funds to the bookkeeper (the bag)—he has nothing to offer.

endgame:

The first player to build three tower segments is the winner!

notes:

- ◆ Although **red** gems are more rare and, therefore, technically more valuable than **blue** or **green** gems, note that prices marked below each building material token are non-alterable, and shopkeepers do not provide "change." In other words, a **blue** gem cannot be used in lieu of a **green** gem, and a **red** gem cannot be used in lieu of either a **blue** or **green** gem. Instead, players must trade with Salil if they wish to obtain gems different than what they draw from the black bag.
- ◆ It is not crucial to the game that the tower be built in a single column in the middle of the palace tile. If it becomes difficult to keep the tower standing, it is fine to build multiple towers, or even simply let each tower segment stand alone on the palace tile.
- ◆ For a **less-aggressive and more friendly variant**, try playing with the build cards facedown (just like in a 2-player game), so that the contents of each player's build card is kept secret.
- ◆ For a *more* aggressive variant, players can buy whatever items they want, whether or not they're on their build cards. But, all items must still be returned when building!

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turn summary

Draw Phase:

Draw three gems from the bag.

Action Phase:

You may execute any or all of the following actions:

- ◆ Purchase one or more items from a single store.
 - ◆ Make trades with Salil.
 - ◆ Enter black market once and/or use black market card(s).
-

Build Phase:

If you have all of the building materials listed on your build card:

- ◆ Discard build card.
- ◆ Return building material items to markets.
- ◆ Place tower segment on palace tile.
- ◆ Draw three new build cards; pick one, discard the other two.

... otherwise, skip the build phase.

(If you do not execute any actions during the action or build phases,
draw an additional two gems from the bag)

End your turn, pass play to the left.

The game ends immediately after a player builds
her third tower segment.