

Persuasion (C02)

The game of Victorian courtship. Mail intimate letters to woo and marry your perfect match!

Content Warning: This game presents marriage as a win/lose scenario. Although not explicit, cards can be interpreted as representing desperate dependencies and/or unhealthy power dynamics.

Players: 3-8

Play time: 15-30 Minutes

Components:

57 x Trait Cards

56 x Trait Card Sleeves

(7 for each family crest)

1 x Gossip Circle mat

9 x Desires Cards

80 x Crest Stamps

(10 for each family crest)

8 x Action Cards

8 x Rings

8 x Letterbox Cards

8 x Heart Tokens

Number of players	3	4	5	6	7	8
Number of trait cards	7	7	6	6	5	5
Discards during setup	30	21	17	9	8	1
Resulting deck size	6	8	10	12	14	16

Overview

Once per round, mail a letter (*i.e. card*) to a suitor to try and catch their attention! When you receive letters, take stamps from players who match your desires to note who would make a good fiance.

Observe how a player reacts when you send a card. If they take a stamp, you know what they desire, and can track (and share) this on the gossip circle with their heart token. When ready, send a proposal to the one, swapping trait cards with them! If you are ignored, take the opportunity to replace a trait with one from the deck, you might be able to fulfill your desires on your own! Once you're ready to settle, start making arrangements to end the game by discarding cards from the deck. The game ends once all (*but one*) player is engaged, or the deck is empty!

Setup

Setup by shuffling the trait cards, then separately shuffling the desires cards. Place the gossip circle mat in the center of the play area. Each player then performs the following:

1. Take a letterbox card and the matching ring, heart token, 7 trait sleeves, and 10 stamps.
2. Place your heart token in the center  of the gossip circle.
3. Place your letterbox and stamps in an accessible location near you.
4. Take an action card and place on the  side.
5. Draw a desires card and a number of trait cards depending on the number of players (*see table above*). Sleeve your trait cards, then return any remaining sleeves to the box.

Finally, discard a number of cards facedown, depending on the number of players (*see table above*). Keep these discards distinct from the draw deck, such as in the box.

Conducting a Day (*i.e. Playing a round*)

Take a Morning ☀ Action

Each player performs one of the following:

- **Write Letter:** Deliver one of your trait cards to a player's letterbox. While not obligatory, it is considered polite to send your first introductory letter to your left neighbor.
- **Mail Proposal:** If you feel confident that enough of a player's trait cards match your desires, deliver one of your trait cards to that player's letterbox with your ring.
- **Arrange:** Discard a card from the deck. (*The game ends when the deck runs out.*)
- **Break Up:** Reveal then discard a trait card matching your desires card, or any trait if none match, then return its sleeve to the box. Return your fiance's ring, and take your ring back.

Flip your action card to the ☺ side once you've taken your action.

Perform Evening ☺ Correspondence

Resolve all cards on your letterbox in any order:

- **Letters** (*i.e. Trait cards, including cards with rings*): Take into your hand. If the card matches your desires, you may take a stamp from the sender (if any remain) to track how many of their cards match your desires. Return letters to the owner's letterbox when done.
The sender may adjust your heart token once on the gossip circle depending on your response.
- **Proposals** (*i.e. Rings*): When you receive a ring, choose one of the following:
 - **Reject:** Return the trait card with their ring to the owner's letterbox.
 - **Accept:** Swap the trait card they sent with one of your own (resleeving them) before returning with your own ring. Both you and the proposer are now engaged and each place your fiance's ring next to your letterbox.
 - **Mutual Proposals:** If two players send proposals to each other, then they must both accept the proposals, swapping two unique cards instead of just one.
- **Returns:** When your own card is returned to you, take it back into your hand.

Await Postman

Once all action cards are on the ☺ side, check the following:

1. **Reflection:** If you didn't receive a letter from anyone (*excluding returns*), then you may draw a card from the deck (*if any remain*), then you may replace one of your traits with it, discarding what you don't keep.
2. Make sure you've resolved all your ☺ Correspondence and that your card has been returned.

Flip your action card to the ☀ side when done. When all cards are on the ☀ side, check availability.

Check Availability

- If the deck is empty, or all (*but one*) players are engaged, proceed to Matrimony (*see page 3*).
- Otherwise, play another round at Mail Intentions (*see above*).

Matrimony (*Ending the Game*)

1. All players reveal their trait cards and desires cards.
2. If engaged, win a **prim** victory if your fiance has three trait cards matching your desires card.
3. Win a **proper** victory if your personal hand has four trait cards matching your desires card.

Multiple players may enjoy victory. If a prim **and** proper victory is achieved, give them modest applause.

Etiquette

Suitor's Secrets: Your cards and the discards are private information.

All's Fair: Any agreements outside the rules defined here are non-binding.

Stalemates: If multiple players are waiting for others to take action (*like waiting to see a player's recipient before mailing their own letter*), or wish to take the same action simultaneously (*like wanting to adjust the same heart token*) resolve actions clockwise starting with the host of the game. Note that this doesn't apply if one player clearly acted first.

Sharing: Each player may only adjust one heart token on the gossip circle once per round. If there is contention over the heart tokens, resolve following the Stalemate etiquette above.

FAQ

If I propose to someone, and someone else proposes to me, can both proposals be accepted?

You can't accept a proposal without sending the proposer your ring, which is being held by the one you proposed to! If they accept your proposal, you'd have to break up with them before accepting any new proposals, otherwise you'd have to wait for them to reject your proposal and return your ring before you can accept the proposal sent to you.

What if we all proposed to different players, like our left neighbor, in the same round?

Someone would have to reject a proposal since no one has a ring to accept. If nobody wants to, the host would be forced to reject per Stalemate etiquette.

Are there no turns?

While there are no turns, you can only take one action per round, so make sure you pay attention to everyone's action card. If players are waiting for others to act, follow the Stalemates etiquette above.

What if I run out of trait cards from breaking up?

Your reputation is ruined, you lose my distinguished guest. Exercise some discretion next time.

Developer Notes

This is an early stage prototype to vet the rules, base mechanics, and interactions of the game. If these mechanics function effectively on their own, I can introduce trait and desire card effects to give the cards emergent storytelling potential and introduce interesting player interactions and conflicts.

If you played the game, I would love to hear what you thought of the experience here!

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