Persuasion *(B06)*

The game of courtship. Exchange intimate letters to become familiar with potential suitors before deciding who to propose to, or if you'd rather go it alone!

Content Warning: This game presents marriage and independence as a win/lose scenario, and although the symbols are ambiguous, they can be interpreted as representing abusive relationships, desperate dependencies, and/or unhealthy power dynamics.

Players: 3-8   **Play time**: 15-30 Minutes
Components: 8 x Suitability Spreadsheet Boards
80 x Sealed Card Sleeves   60 x Trait Cards
    (10 for each of the 8 family crests)   40 x Symbol Markers
8 x Ring Sleeves   112 x Crest Trackers
8 x Letterbox Player Boards   *(14 for each of the 8 family crests)*

Number of Players	3	4	5	6	7	8
Number of Trait Cards	10	9	8	7	6	5

Count of each symbol's appearance as a desired symbol

+💎	−🗡️	−🌹	+👑	+🙏	−🙏	−👑	+🌹	+🗡️	−💎
18	17	15	14	12	12	10	9	7	6

How to Play

Each player starts with a ring sleeve and letterbox board with your own family's crest, one unsleeved card to treat as your desires, and a number of trait cards depending on the number of players (see table above), each sleeved with your family's crest. You may optionally take a suitability spreadsheet and three crest markers matching every other player's family crest *(excluding your own)*, placing them on your suitability spreadsheet however you like. *(Useful for keeping track of other player's traits!)* Place your letterbox on the receiving side in an accessible spot in front of you, you'll be expecting mail!

Your desires card dictates what you are looking for in your partner's hand. When you add all of a player's trait cards together, if their symbols align with the two underlined symbols on the top row of your desires card, you win if you marry them!

Start the game by mailing one trait card to the ❗ side of each player's letterbox until you run out of trait cards or have mailed one to everyone. Cards received on the ❗ side of your letterbox are free for you to take into your hand, while cards received on the ❓ side require your response first. When you are done reviewing your cards, return trait cards to the ❗ side of the owner's letterbox (as indicated by the card's sleeve). Once you've returned all cards, and have all of your own cards, flip your letterbox to the Ready side to indicate you're ready to begin the first round!

The game proceeds in rounds, with every player sharing intentions. Choose an available player and a trait card to share with them, flipping your letterbox to the receiving side when ready. Once all letterboxes are flipped, deliver your trait card to the ❔ side of your recipient's letterbox. Every recipient decides if they want to reject by simply returning the card *(without peeking)* to the ❗ side of the sender's letterbox, or if they want to accept by giving the sender one of their own trait cards to the ❗ side of the sender's letterbox. As long as you're holding someone else's trait card, you may talk about your cards or what you're looking for. When done, return trait cards to the ❗ side of the sender's letterbox. Once all of your own cards are returned, flip your letterbox to the Ready side, and prepare your next intention!

If you think someone's hand matches your desires, you can send a proposal by resleeving one of your trait cards into your ring sleeve before sending! Proposals are free to take into your hand, and are rejected by returning the card to the ❗ side of the sender's letterbox. If you accept a proposal, unsleeve one of your cards to give to the proposer so that they can sleeve it as their own, then resleeve the card in the ring sleeve you received as your own *(Effectively trading trait cards)*. Both players place the other's ring sleeve onto their own letterbox, then wait till the end of the game to reveal their trait cards to see if either wins!

If you suspect nobody aligns with your desires, instead of an invitation you can become independent by placing your empty ring sleeve face down on your letterbox to tell everyone you've got better things to do and reject all their advances. Wait until the end of the game when all cards are revealed. If you couldn't have won by marrying anyone, you win!

Need to change things up? Instead of mailing an intention, you may replace a trait card, drawing two from the deck and swapping one or neither with one of your own traits cards. You also get this option if you were ignored and rejected, receiving no cards belonging to other players for the entire round.

Keep sharing intentions until there are two or fewer available players. One last round is played if there are exactly two available players left, this is your last chance to propose or become independent! Determine winners afterwards by checking desires!

FAQ

What exactly am I doing here?
You want to find out what trait cards everyone else has, and who's cards most align with your desires card. So most of the game will be sending invitations to exchange hand information. Once you feel ready to make a decision, you'll propose or become independent.

So my own cards don't mean anything to me?
That's mostly right. However, on page 1, you can see how often a certain symbols appear as a desired trait. You could use that to determine that your +💎 symbols would more likely be desired than say +🗡️. Also, when you propose, you get to give your fiance one trait card from your hand, so you'll probably want to give them one that aligns with your desires card to up the chances of a match, especially since they'll be giving you one of their cards.

What's the deal with the ❗ and ❓ sides of the letterbox board*? *And the Ready side?
Cards on the ❓ side require some action on your part, accepting trait cards by mailing the sender a card before looking at them, or accepting/rejecting a marriage proposal. ❗ side cards are free to look at, as they are responses to your invitations, or your own returned cards to take back into your hand at the end of your turn. Flipping the board to the Ready side indicates that you're done with your mail and are thinking about your next move. Once all boards are Ready, flip again to indicate you've planned your next intention.

Since you don't know what others have or are even looking for, it seems like you're just randomly sharing card information, right?
If you don't communicate or perceive any information out of the game, then yeah. Once your invitation is accepted, you could verbally share the details of your desires and other trait cards, but nothing is binding in this exchange of information, so be wary! Even outside of directly sharing information, you could intuit that if someone keeps inviting you, there was something they liked among the symbols shared in your first exchange.

Can't someone just share the same card over and over to screw me over?
They certainly could, and then you should be wary to accept an invitation from them again!

Aren't we just going to trade information with everyone until we know all the cards in their hand and know we find a match?
You could do that, but if you lay all your cards out, your perfect match may find that you don't have what they're looking for, so you might consider putting the pressure on before then, especially if you can get a feel for what they're looking for and only show them your good side. Also, someone may propose to them while you're agonizing over their last cards!

What if the player I send an invitation to sends me an invitation?
You both still have the option to accept or reject, you can effectively exchange two cards worth of information in this situation, good deal!

Wait, if I propose to someone, and someone else proposes to me, can both proposals be accepted and I'd have two fiances?
No, once a proposal is accepted, both the proposer and the accepting player cannot accept anymore intentions. If two players want to accept proposals that involve the same player, resolve proposals per the stalemate etiquette rules, clockwise starting from the host.

If I proposed to someone, or if I'm proposed to, can I… still accept invitations?
You may resolve your intentions in any order, until a proposal is accepted you're free to shop around.

Are there no turns?
There are no turns, you wait till everyone is ready to send intentions so they can all be sent at the same time, but those intentions can be resolved asynchronously. Once you have all 5 of your own trait cards back in your hand, hold out your next intention to signal to the others you're ready for the next round!

I don't understand how matching desires with another player works.

Let's look at an example, let's say the left card is your desires, and the stacked cards on the right are your fiance's hand of trait cards after you've exchanged proposal trait cards.
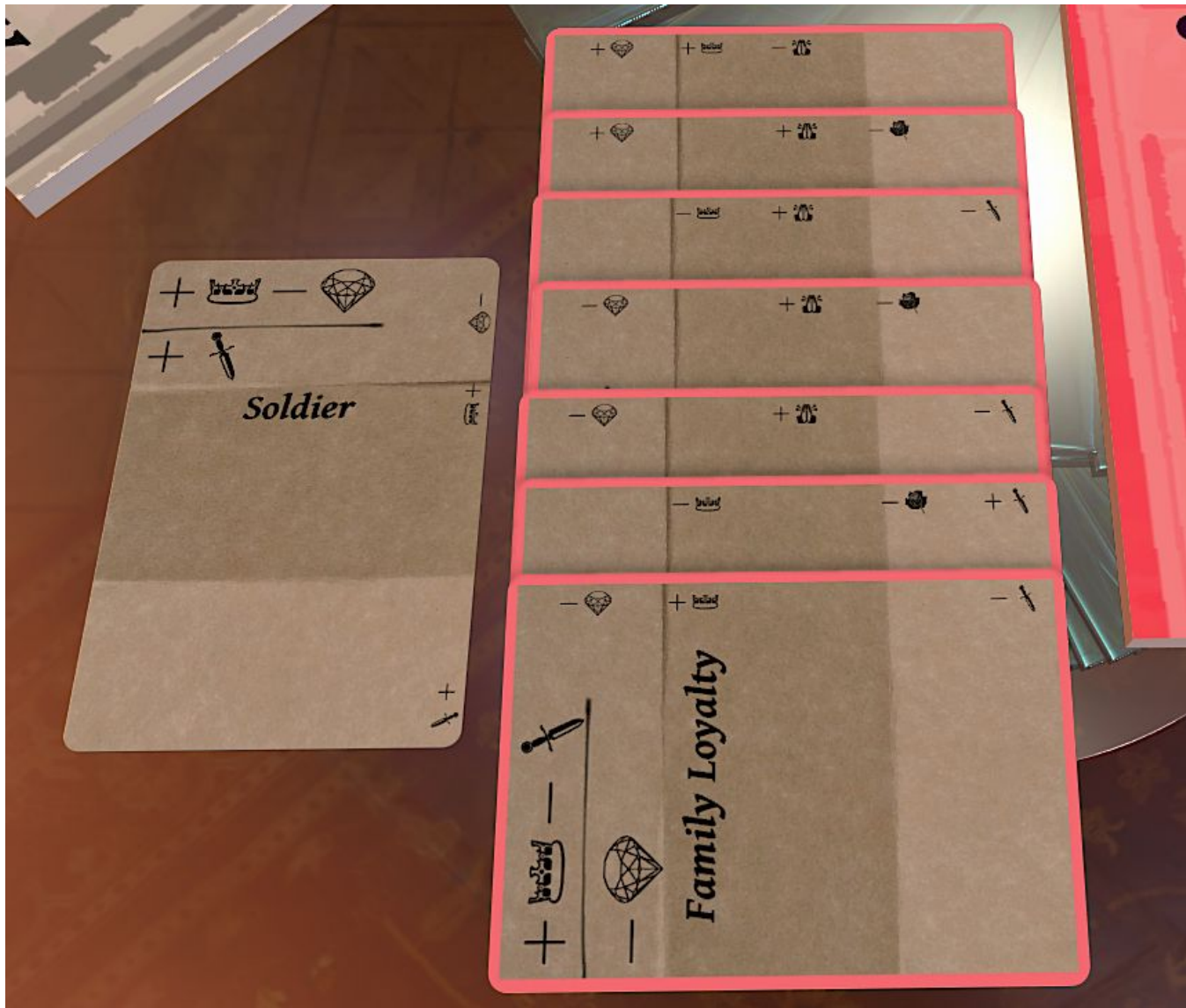
Add up your fiance's matching symbols like so to determine dominant symbols:

Symbol	💎	👑	🙏	🌹	🗡️
Total	-1	0	+3	-3	-2
Dominant symbol	-💎	n/a	+🙏	-🌹	-🗡️

With this desires card, you'd be looking for +👑 and -💎. -💎 would be a match, but with no 👑, it would be insufficient to win with. Your fiance would still check your hand though to see if they win!

Rules

Etiquette

Suitor's Secrets: Your cards are private information, and should only be revealed during invitations and proposals to the involved player, and at the end of the game to determine winners.

Mail Bound: You may only discuss strategy with a player while you are holding one of their trait cards, or while they are holding one of yours. *(For example, as a result of accepting an invitation.)*

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

Stalemates: If multiple players are waiting for others to make a decision *(Like waiting to see if a proposal is accepted before accepting their own)*, or if two players declare they want to do something simultaneously *(If one player clearly decided first, they get to go first)*, resolve actions clockwise starting with the host of the game.

Setup

Each player sets up by doing the following:
1. Choose a family crest, taking the matching ring sleeve, sealed card sleeves, & letterbox board.
2. Place the letterbox board in front of you in an accessible location on the receiving side *(The side with the ❗ and ❓)*.
3. Draw a number of cards depending on the number of players *(see page 1)* to keep as trait cards, sleeving them into the sealed card sleeves, returning remaining sleeves to the box.
4. Draw 1 final card as your desires card to keep separate from your trait cards.
5. Take a suitability spreadsheet, and 2 crest trackers for each other player's crest.
   (e.g. In a 4 player game, each player would have 6 crest trackers, 2 for each other player.)
   These are for tracking other player's trait symbols, and may be used however you like. It's recommended to use the 2 trackers for the 2 underlined topmost symbols on your desires card.

Introductions

1. Each player delivers a face down trait card to the ❗ side of the each other players' letterbox, until you've delivered a trait card to everyone, or you've run out of trait cards.
2. Take all trait cards on your letterbox into your hand for review. When done, return them to the ❗ side of the owner's letterbox, as indicated by the trait card's sleeve.
3. Once you've returned all trait cards, and all of your own trait cards have been returned to you, flip your letterbox to the Ready side and wait until everyone else is also ready.

Playing a Round

Persuasion is played in rounds in the following order:

Mail Intentions

Once all letterboxes have been flipped back to the receiving side, each player will perform one of the following simultaneously. Flip your letterbox to the receiving side once you're ready to mail.

- **Invite**: Deliver one of your trait cards to the ❓ side of an available player's letterbox, in hopes that the recipient mails you one of theirs.
- **Propose**: If you feel confident a player's trait card symbols align with your desires card underlined symbols, resleeve a trait card into your ring sleeve for their consideration, then deliver it to the ❓ side of that available player's letterbox.
- **Claim Independence**: If you suspect nobody's traits card symbols align with your desires card underlined symbols, place your empty ring sleeve face down on your letterbox. You are now unavailable and must reject all intentions until Matrimony.
- **Reflection**: If you suspect a promising prospect is uninterested in your traits, draw 2 traits from the deck, then you may replace one of your own trait card with one of them, discarding the rest when done. Do not move on to Correspondence until you discard.

Correspondence

You may resolve all cards on your letterbox in any order:

- **Sort Mail:** Set aside any of your own cards on your letterbox until you've resolved all other cards.
- ❓ **Side Cards:** You may accept or reject these intentions received.
  - **Invitations** *(Sealed trait cards)***:**
    - **Reject**: Without peeking, return the trait card to the ❗ side of the owner's letterbox.
    - **Accept**: Pick one of your own trait cards in your hand, and send it to the ❗ side of the owner's letterbox before taking this invitation into your hand.
  - **Proposals** *(Cards in ring sleeves)*:
    You may take all proposals into your hand freely.
    - **Reject**: Return the trait card to the ❗ side of the owner's letterbox when done reviewing.
    - **Accept**: Resleeve one of your own trait cards into your own ring sleeve and deliver to the ❗ side of the proposer's letterbox, announcing ***"I do!"*** The proposer must resleeve this card into their vacant sealed card sleeve. Resleeve the trait card in the ring sleeve received into your own vacant sealed card sleeve. Both you and the proposer are now engaged. Place the other's empty ring sleeve on your letterbox. You and the proposer are no longer available and must reject all invitations and proposals sent to either of you.
      - **Mutual Proposals:** If two players send proposals to each other, then they may both accept the proposals *(with both saying, "I do!")*, exchanging two unique cards directly with each other instead of just one. You cannot send a card you received this turn.
- ❗ **Side Cards:** Cards belonging to other players here have accepted your intention and you may freely take them into your hand.

Await Postman

Return all other players' trait cards in your hand to the ⬇ side of the owner's letterbox when finished reviewing.

1. Once your letterbox only has your own cards, take your cards back into your hand. If you proposed and were rejected, resleeve the trait card in the ring sleeve back into your vacant sealed card sleeve now. Wait until all of your trait cards have been returned to you.
2. If you never received a card from another player this turn, then you may take the Reflection *(page 5)* action now *(Even if you already performed Reflection this round)*.
3. Consider your next intention while you wait for everyone to finish their Correspondence. Once all of your cards have been returned to you, flip your letterbox to the Ready side.
4. Once all letterboxes are on the Ready side, check availability.

Check Availability

- If there are at least three available players, play another round at Mail Intentions *(page 5)*.
- If there are exactly 2 available players, play one final round at Mail Intentions *(page 5)*, then proceed to Matrimony *(Last chance to propose or become independent)*.
- If no players are available, or only one available player remains, proceed directly to Matrimony. (*They missed their chance!*)

Matrimony *(Ending the Game)*

1. All players reveal their trait cards and desires card.
2. Each player calculates their dominant symbols. If there are more **+**s than **-**s next to a symbol among your trait cards, the dominant symbol is **+**. If there are more -s than **+**s next to a symbol among your trait cards, the dominant symbol is **-**. (*If both **+**s and **-**s cancel out, you don't have it as a dominant symbol.*) Place symbol markers to display your dominant symbols, if any. The right border of each card has these symbols aligned so you can stack and count them up easier.
3. If engaged, you win if your fiance has both dominant symbols that are underlined at the top of your desires card!
4. If independent, check the dominant symbols of all other players. If nobody has both dominant symbols underlined at the top of your desires card, you win!
5. Any remaining available players cannot win.

It is possible for multiple players to win, or for no one to win, there are no tie breakers.

Developer Notes

This is an early stage prototype, mostly interested in vetting the rules and base mechanics and interactions of the game. The hope is that if these mechanics play well on their own, I can introduce trait effects to spice up the game and give the cards more character and flavor.

If you played the game, I would love to hear what you thought of the experience here!
https://forms.gle/uP7Mf9DeVrRr476P7

Like, the Really REAL Developer Notes (Read at your own risk)

These rules are proposed as a base prototype to hopefully test the foundational mechanics of the system.

Feedback
1. Script for counting up symbols?
2. Multiple suitability trackers and see what people pick up
3. Playtest instructions

Pseudocode

Crests
      White
            Crown = 'guid for dominant symbol tracker'

Change symbol map into
symbolMap = {
        {   Crown = 1,

For each player
      playerCount = {
            A = "",
            B = ""
      }
      For each card in hand:
            For each symbol for card[cardId % 100]
                  If symbol[1] = +
                      playerCount[symbol[2]] = playerCount[symbol[2]] + 1

      For each symbol:
            If playerCount[symbol] > 0:
                  Move tracker to here on this side (use rotation to set side?)
            If playerCount[symbol] > 1:
                  Move tracker to here on this side (use rotation to set side?)
            Else:
                DELETE

Spawn tablet to table center floating locked in the air facing the first player (or host?)

Version C Changes

Add the following rule to Etiquettes:

- If you must reveal a card to discuss an effect or explain your actions, then cover the symbols of the card when doing so.

Add to mailing intention section
- 🤚 actions: Instead of mailing and invitation or proposal, you can take the 🤚 action described on one of your own trait cards. If the action requires you to mail this card to another player as part of that action, play it **face up** to the ❔ side of their letterbox.

Add "Face Down" to the resolve mail section

Will need a reveal section maybe?

Feedback:
1. What happens when we invite each other?
2. Can I still accept invitations when I've proposed?

Todo:
1. Create Player Boards with place to receive intentions, another for responses, and slots for trait cards (So you can mark who you've sent cards to)
2. Give it a spreadsheet with 3 markers of each color.
3. Automation for setup and proposals.

Future consideration (Playtest more first):
1. Put the outgoing spot on the table, and change the backs to return addresses?
2. Maybe a mechanism for keeping track of cards and stuff is needed? Abacuses!?!? 6. Unlabeled trackers may be all that's needed really.
3. Have address cards that slide over front of trait, and have these cards put in a central mailbox that they get delivered from, the ring sleeve would be replaced with a ring card that is also put into the same sleeve. Perhaps too much strain on sleeves.

Concerns
I worry that the game may become trivial with out-of-game communication.
I am also afraid of presenting an offensive depiction of courtship, although I feel like this is never a concern with violence.
I am also not confident in the different symbols I've defined, I wanted them to be ambiguous, but suggestive enough of things that often influence a relationship.
I also worry that some scenarios will be too unrealistic and immersion breaking. Or possibly just too upsetting, imagining a scenario where you wish for your partner to have less wealth and title probably suggests an abusive power dynamic.
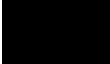
Future Ambitions

The hope is to give each trait a name and some additional effects, with this added etiquette:
- If you must reveal a card to discuss an effect or explain your actions, then cover the symbols of the card.

See this sheet if you want to see a very work in progress list of ideas I've had.

Family Crests

Color	Name	Code
	Black Dog	000000
	Blue Lion	332288
	Green Tree	117733
	Cyan Shield	88CCEE
	Yellow Sun	DDCC77
	Pink Horn	FF7C92
	Purple Clover	BD1CA3
	White Horse	FFFFFF