

Persuasion (D01)

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, and depicts relationships with unhealthy power dynamics, desperate dependencies, and abusive partners, potentially asking you to play the role of the abuser or the victim. Cards that lean into this most have a  and are packaged separately to be optionally included in the game.

Players: 3-8

Play time: 15-30 Minutes

Components:

57 x Trait Cards 

9 x Desires Cards

1 x Matrimony  Reference Card

40 x Reusable Sticker Trait Seals
(5 for each family crest)

24 x Crest Heart  Tokens
(3 for each family crest)

8 x Action Cards

8 x Rings  (1 per crest)

8 x Letterbox Cards (1 per crest)

Number of players	3	4	5	6	7	8
Number of each suit to build trait deck from	7	10	12	14	17	19
Number of each suit to build desires deck from	2  2  1 	2  2  1 	3  2  1 	3  3  2 	4  3  2 	4  3  2 

Overview

Marry the suitor with a hand that matches your desires card! Once per round, mail a letter (*i.e. card*) to a suitor to try and catch their attention. When you receive letters, you can temporarily keep it by sending the suitor one of your heart tokens, otherwise return their card. **During matrimony, all cards are returned to their owners except your fiance's!** You may also give cards to your fiance! Hearts allow you to change up your hand, and also break ties! When ready, send a proposal to the one! The game ends once all (*but one*) player is engaged, or the deck is empty!

Setup

Start by separating trait and desires cards by suit. Form a trait deck and a desires decks with a number of cards of each suit depending on the number of players (see table above), returning the rest to the box. Shuffle these new trait and desires decks separately. Each player then performs the following:

1. Pick a family crest, taking the matching letterbox card, ring, 5 trait sticker seals, and 3 heart tokens.
2. Place your letterbox in an accessible location near you with your ring next to it.
3. Take an action card and place on the  side.
4. Draw 5 trait cards and place your trait sticker seals on the back of them, then draw a desires card.
5. If any of your trait cards say, "**At start**", take the cards' effects now.

Return any unused desires cards to the box.

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

Take a Morning ☀ Action

Each player performs one of the following:

- **Write Letter:** Deliver any one of the trait cards in your hand to a suitor's letterbox. While not obligatory, it is considered polite to send your first introductory letter to your left neighbor.
- **Reflection:** Return any suitor's heart token, then draw a card from the deck. You may replace one of your own traits, discarding what's unused.
- **Mail Proposal:** Deliver your own ring to a suitor's letterbox. (*Ideally one with your desired traits*)
- **Break Up:** Return your fiance's ring, then take your own ring back.
- **→☀ Action:** If your own held card has a →☀ action, you may take it.
- **🔒☀ Action:** If you hold a suitor's card with a 🔒☀ action, you may take it.

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

Perform Evening ☺ Correspondence

Wait until all action cards are on the ☺ side, then resolve all items on your letterbox in any order:

- **Scorned:** If your letterbox is empty at the beginning of evening, you may take the Reflection action without returning heart tokens.
- **Read Letters** (*i.e. Trait cards*): Read and respond to cards written to you:
 - **Resolve 🔒:** If the letter you received has a 🔒☺ line, resolve this first.
 - **Respond:** Unless indicated otherwise by 🔒☺ instructions, pick one of the following:
 - **Relate:** Deliver one of your heart tokens to the card owner's letterbox, keeping their trait.
 - **Attend:** Return the trait card to the owner's letterbox.
- **Proposals** (*i.e. Rings*): When you receive a ring, pick one of the following:
 - **Reject:** Return the ring to the owner's letterbox.
 - **Accept:** Deliver your own ring to the ring owner's letterbox. 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, they automatically accept.
- **Returns:** When your own card is returned to you, take it back into your hand. Keep suitor heart tokens delivered to you visibly nearby. Keep any rings next to your letterbox

Once you've resolved all your Evening ☺ Correspondence and you've received a response to your action (*if relevant*), flip your action card to the ☀ side. When all cards are on the ☀ side, check the following:

1. If the deck is empty, or all (*but one*) players are engaged, proceed to Matrimony 🏡 (*see below*).
2. Otherwise, proceed to the next day (*i.e. next round*) at Take a Morning ☀ Action (*see above*).

Matrimony 🏡 (*Ending the Game*)

1. Return all cards to their owners **except** your fiance's.
2. If engaged, decide which of your cards to give to your fiance.
3. Each player places their own trait and desires cards face up in front of themselves.
4. If engaged, win a **prim** victory if your fiance has 3 traits matching your desires in front of them.
5. Win a **proper** victory if you have 4 trait cards matching your desires card in front of you.
6. Check to see if you accomplished the **unique** victory on your desires card.
7. Each victory is worth 3 points each, and each **suitors** heart counts as 1.
8. Player with the most points wins!

Etiquette

Suitor's Secrets: All your cards and cards returned to the box during setup are private information. Discards, heart tokens, rings, and the back of cards in your hand are public information. If you must explain your actions due to a letter power, reveal the card while covering the suit of the card, if able.

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 use Influence when only one card remains in the deck*) resolve actions clockwise starting with the host of the game. Note that this doesn't apply if one player clearly acted first.

Letter Powers

Letters can include a variety of powers and rules modifications. Here are some general guidelines:

- **Pronouns:** Letters are written from the card owner's point of view, so **I, me, my, myself** refer to the card's owner, and **you, your, yourself** refer to the letter holder, or the target of a power. For example, if a letter requires you to return a , **you, your, yourself** refers to the 's owner. If a letter impacts a third party, this party will be referred to as **they, them, theirs, themselves**.
- **Actions:** The following symbols denote alternative or extra actions that can be taken.
 - : This is an action the card's owner can take as their 1 action, provided they hold it.
 - : This is an action any holder other than the card's owner can take as their 1 action.
 - : When this letter is received by anyone but the card's owner, resolve this prompt before relating or attending.
 - : This is an action that can be taken as soon as the conditions are met. It does not count as your 1 action if taken during the morning phase.
- **Leverage:** You can only pick letters in your own hand, unless otherwise specified (*Even if referencing a suitor's card, you must be holding their card to target it*).
- **Rewards:** When **rewarding** a to a suitor, you must deliver one from your own supply of s. You cannot perform the action if you have no remaining s to give.
- **Returns:** Items that are **returned** must be delivered to their owner's letterbox.
- **The Box:** Powers that reference the box refer to cards removed from the game during setup. If there are no cards remaining there, take from the discards if any are available.
- **Drawing:** When drawing letters, draw the top card of the traits deck. You cannot perform the action if the deck is empty.
- **Intervention:** A power **affects** a player if it allows another player to peek or touch another player's items. Powers that **prevent** such powers will prevent the peeking if possible, and the items used to activate the power (including the letter with the power, any s returned to activate the power) are returned to their owners, even if not normally part of the power.
- **Changes:** Letters with a change the rules for the letter owner, even if another suitor holds it (unless specified otherwise). These rules no longer apply when the letter is discarded. If the owner forgets the rule while you hold their letter, gently remind them.
- **At start Prefaces:** Letters that begin with **At start** take effect after setup, after all players have drawn their letters and desires, before the first morning phase. If drawn later (e.g. through *Influence*), disregard this power.
- **Commitments:** Letters added to your **commitments** are kept in front of a player for matrimony only, disregarding letter powers.

Key Terminology

- **Item:** Refers to any heart token, trait letter card, or ring.
- **Suitor:** Any other player besides yourself.
- **Own, Owner:** The player with a letterbox with a matching family crest to said item.
- //: If a power calls for a //, it means a letter of that suit.
- **Commit:** Adding a card to a player's commitments.
- **Replace:** Moving your sticker seal from one card to another to mark the new card as yours.
- **Fiance:** The player with your ring next to their letterbox after a proposal is accepted.
- **Engaged:** A player with another player's ring next to their letterbox.
- **Must:** Rules with "must" override other rules.
- **Cannot:** Rules with "cannot" override other rules, even "must" rules.

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 Stalemates etiquette.

Are there no turns?

While there are no turns, you can only take one action per , and also cannot proceed to the next phase until all action cards are on the same side, so make sure to flip your action card when you're done and to check others' action cards before proceeding. If players are waiting for others to act, follow the Stalemates etiquette above.

Can I mail someone else's card to another player?

Yes! But if they kept it, they would give a heart token to that card's owner, not you.

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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