

Persuasion (B08)

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 as a win/lose scenario and frames independence as potentially unobtainable. Although the symbols are ambiguous, they can be interpreted as representing abusive relationships, desperate dependencies, and/or unhealthy power dynamics.

Players: 3-8

Components:

80 x Trait Card Sleeves

(10 for each of the 8 family crests)

8 x Ring Sleeves

8 x Letterbox Player Boards

Play time: 15-30 Minutes

8 x Suitability Spreadsheet Boards

60 x Cards

40 x Symbol Markers

112 x Crest Trackers

(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
Discards during setup	21	12	5	0	0	0

Count of each symbol's appearance as an underlined 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. Discard a number of cards from the deck depending on the number of players (see table above). 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 ? side in an accessible spot in front of you, you'll be expecting mail!

Your desires card dictates what you are looking for. 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! Alternatively, you can win via independence if your own trait cards align with all three symbols on your desires card.

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 ✓ 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 ? 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. 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 ✓ 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!

Need to change things up? Instead of mailing an intention, you may draw a card from the deck and decide if you want to swap it with one of your own traits, discarding whatever you don't use. You also get this option if you received no cards from other players for the entire round.

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

FAQ

What exactly am I doing here?

You need a hand of cards that aligns with all three symbols on your desires card, or to marry someone who's cards align with just the top two symbols. So if you are lucky and almost have what you need, you'll be searching the deck to try to get those symbols aligned. Otherwise, most of the game will be sending invitations to exchange hand information, proposing once you feel ready to make a decision.

Can't I just keep using reflection for an independent victory?

You can, but once the deck is empty, the game ends. You're banking on finding what you need in the remaining cards before the others get engaged.

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!

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!

What if most of the available players have met the independence win condition? The game still keeps going?

You can set your ring sleeve face down at any time to signal you're ready for the game to end, although you're still able to send and respond to intentions until Matrimony. If all available players have done this, the game proceeds to Matrimony. If one player is holding out for love, the independent players can use reflection to run out the clock!

Since you don't know what others have or are even looking for, it seems like you're just randomly sharing card information, right?

Firstly, note the distribution of desired symbols, a + is more likely to be desired than a +! Also, if you don't communicate or perceive any information out of the game, then it will seem random. 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.

What's the deal with the  and  sides of the letterbox board? And the  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  side indicates that you're done with your mail and are thinking about your next move. Once all boards are on the  side, flip again to indicate you've planned your next intention.

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!

Wait, if I propose to someone, and someone else proposes to me, can both proposals be accepted and I'd have two fiancés?

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?

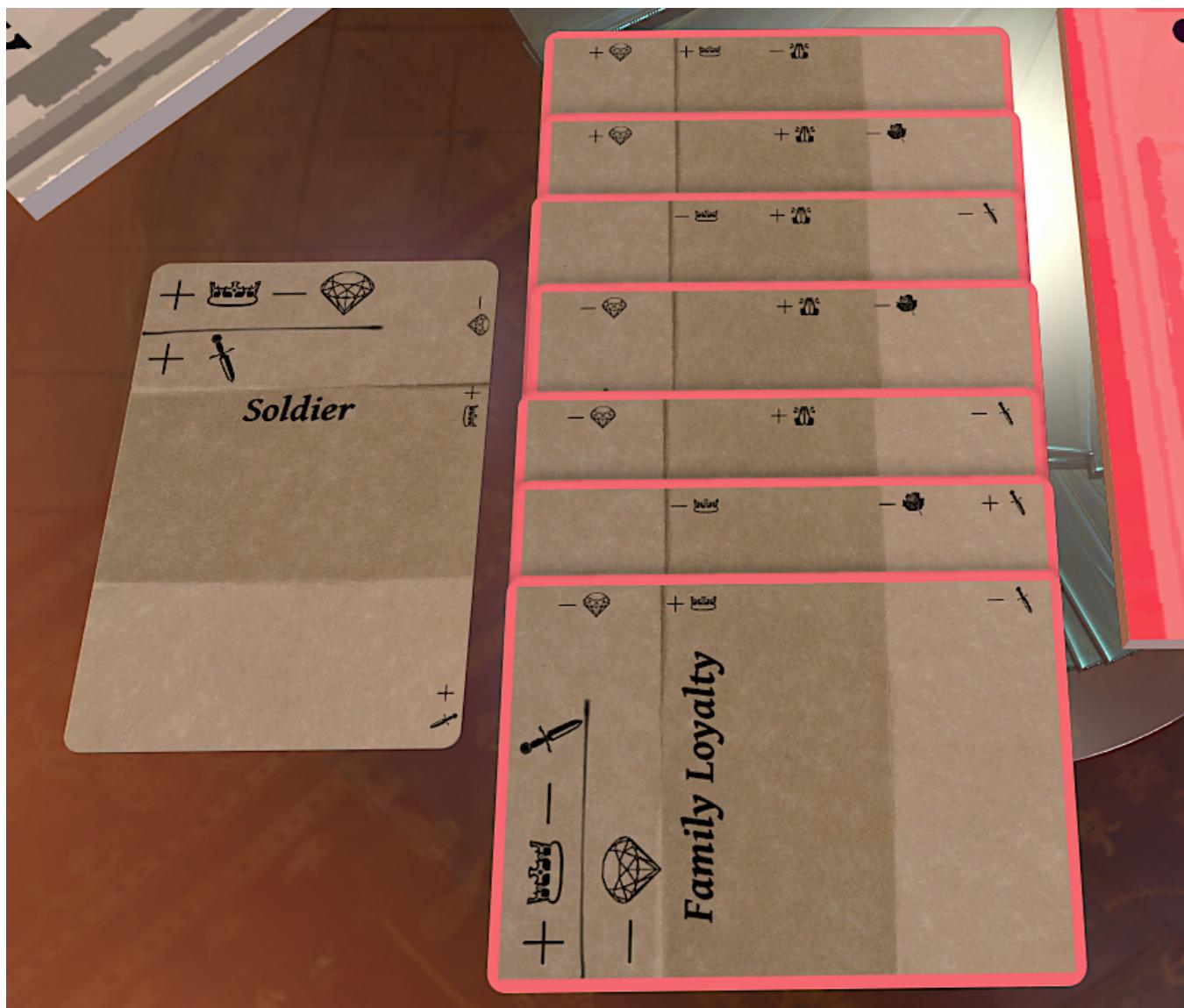
You may resolve your intentions in any order, until a proposal is accepted you're free to shop around.

Are there no turns?

There are no turns, you wait till everyone's letterbox is flipped to the   side to send intentions so they can all be sent at the same time, but those intentions can be resolved asynchronously. Once you have all of your own trait cards back in your hand, flip your letterbox to the  side 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 when mailed to a player's letterbox, and at the end of the game to determine winners. The discards are also private information, and should be kept facedown.

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, trait card sleeves, & letterbox board.
2. Place the letterbox board in front of you in an accessible location on the  side.
3. Draw a number of cards depending on the number of players (see page 1) to keep as trait cards, sleeving them into the trait 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. Discard a number of cards facedown, depending on the number of players (see page 1). Keep these discards distinct from the draw deck, such as in the box.
6. 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  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 \heartsuit side, each player will perform one of the following simultaneously. Flip your letterbox to the \heartsuit side once you're ready to mail.

- **Invite:** Deliver one of your trait cards to the \heartsuit 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 \heartsuit side of that available player's letterbox.
- **Reflection:** If you are seeking independence, or are trying for a more desirable hand, draw 1 card from the deck, then you may replace one of your own trait cards with it, discarding the other facedown when done. Do not proceed with Correspondence until you finish discarding.
 - **Exhaustion:** If there aren't enough cards in the deck for all players using Reflection (*and only if*), then players also have the option of taking a card randomly from the discards. (*Resolve in clockwise order starting from the host, per stalemate rules.*)

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.
- **\heartsuit Side Cards:** You may accept or reject these intentions received.
 - **Invitations (Trait cards):**
 - **Reject:** Without peeking, return the trait card to the \heartsuit side of the owner's letterbox.
 - **Accept:** Pick one of your own trait cards in your hand, and send it to the \heartsuit 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 \heartsuit 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 \heartsuit side of the proposer's letterbox, announcing "*I do!*" The proposer must resleeve this card into their vacant trait card sleeve. Resleeve the trait card in the ring sleeve received into your own vacant trait card sleeve. Both you and the proposer are now engaged. Place your fiance's empty ring sleeve on your letterbox on the \checkmark side. 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.
- **\clubsuit 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 trait 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  side.
4. Once all letterboxes are on the  side, check availability.

Check Availability

- If the deck is empty, proceed directly to Matrimony.
- If you've met the conditions for independence, you can set your ring sleeve face down at any time to indicate that you're content. If **all** available players have done this, proceed to Matrimony.
- 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 for proposals or reflection*).
- If no players are available, or only one available player remains, proceed directly to Matrimony.

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. Any remaining players can still win if they possess all three dominant symbols on their desires card!

It is possible for multiple players to win, or for no one to win.

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!

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