

Persuasion (C05)

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

9 x Desires Cards

8 x Action Cards

40 x Reusable Sticker Trait Seals

24 x Crest Heart Tokens

8 x Rings (*1 per crest*)

(*5 for each family crest*)

(*3 for each family 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. Hearts allow you to change up your hand, but also give you some power over that suitors' cards! 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.

Return any unused desires cards to the box.

Key Terms

- **Replace:** Moving your sticker seal from one card to another to mark the new card as yours.
- **Suitor:** Any other player besides yourself.
- **Owner:** The player with the letterbox that has a matching family crest to said component.
- **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.

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.
- **Influence:** Return any suitor's heart token, then draw a card from the deck. You may replace one of your own traits or one of the heart owner's traits in your hand, 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.

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:

- **Reflection:** If your letterbox is empty at the beginning of evening, you may draw a card from the deck, then you may replace one of your own traits in your hand, discarding what's unused.
- **Read Letters** (*i.e. Trait cards*): When you receive a suitor's trait card, 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. If engaged, for each fiance heart token you return to your fiance, pick one of the following:
 - a. Place one of your fiance's cards from your hand face up in front of you.
 - b. Place one of your own cards from your hand face up in front of your fiance.
2. Each player places all suitors' cards still in their hand face up in front of their owners.
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.

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

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.

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.

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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