

Persuasion (B05)

The game of courtship. Invite others to dances, walks, and dinners to become familiar with them 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	168 x Crest Trackers
8 x Letterbox Player Boards	(21 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

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!*)

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 at least two of their totaled symbols align with your desires card, you win if you marry them! Your letterbox should be in an accessible spot in front of you, you'll be expecting mail!

The game is played in rounds, with every player sharing intentions. Choose an available player and a trait card to share with them, then wait until everyone is ready. Simultaneously deliver your trait cards to the ♀ side of your intended 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. Return trait cards to the ♂ side of the sender's letterbox before setting 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! When you receive proposals, you get to look at each proposal's trait card before accepting one of them. To reject, return the card to the ♂ side of the

sender's letterbox. When 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 waits 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!

Were you ignored and rejected? You may replace one of your trait cards with a new one from the deck.

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. 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 board?

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.

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!

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

Let's look at an example, let's say the top card is your desires, and the bottom cards 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	-2	+1	-1	-1	0
Dominant symbol	-🔹	+👑	-🔪	-👑	n/a

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

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!

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.

Limited Correspondence: 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. Try not to ruin any real life relationships.

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.
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 to keep separate from your trait cards.
5. Take a suitability spreadsheet, and 3 crest trackers for each other player's crest.
(*e.g. In a 4 player game, each player would have 9 crest trackers, 3 for each other player.*)
These are for tracking other player's trait symbols, and may be used however you like. It's recommended you use the 3 trackers for the 3 symbols on your desires card.

Playing a Round

Persuasion is played in rounds in the following order:

Prepare Intentions

Each player performs one of the following, hidden from other players:

- **Invite:** Pick one of your trait cards to be revealed to another player, and hold it out face down in front of you. (*The goal is to share what symbols you have to the prospect, in hopes that they reciprocate and reveal theirs. If they do not, perhaps that may be a sign*)
- **Propose:** Pick one of your trait cards to be revealed and given to another player, and resleeve it into your ring sleeve. Hold it out face down in front of you. (*This is for when you feel confident that they will fulfill your desires, and are ready to commit to them for the win*)
- **Claim Independence:** Hold out your empty ring sleeve face down in front of you. (*This is for when you think no one has what you're looking for, and declare yourself above such things, potentially winning, if you are correct*)

Check Availability (You can skip this stage on your first round)

Once all players have prepared their intentions, check availability.

- If there are at least three available players, keep playing.
- If there are exactly 2 available players, finish this round, then proceed to Matrimony (*to propose or become independent*).
- If no players are available, or only one available player remains, skip directly to Matrimony. (*They missed their chance!*)

Mail Intentions

Simultaneously, everyone delivers their facedown card to the ? side of the intended recipient's letterbox. If you're declaring independence, place your facedown ring sleeve on your own board.

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 (*Most 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 peek at all trait cards in ring sleeves on your letterbox freely.

 - **Reject:** Return the trait card to the 🔗 side of the owner's letterbox.
 - **Accept:** Take one of your own trait cards out of its sleeve and give directly to the proposer, saying "I do!" The proposer must sleeve 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 instead of one. You cannot send a card you received this turn.
- **🔗 Side Cards:** Cards belonging to other players here have accepted your invitation and you may freely take them into your hand.
- **Independence:** Reject all invitations and proposals. (*Wait for everyone to make up their minds*)

Reflection

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 cards have been returned to you.
2. Return all cards in your hand to the 🔗 side of the owner's letterbox.
3. If you received no intentions, and your own intention was rejected, (*i.e. No one else's cards touch your letterbox this round*) then you may draw a new trait card, then you may replace one of your sleeved trait cards, discarding the old trait card.
4. You may prepare your next intention while you wait for everyone to finish their correspondence.

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.
3. If engaged, check your fiancé's dominant symbols and compare against your desires. If at least two symbols match, you win!
4. If independent, check the dominant symbols of all other players. If nobody has at least two matching symbols, 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.

Key Terminology

Desires: The unsleeved card kept separately for comparing with other player's dominant symbols. This card is only shared at the end of the game.

Own Trait Cards: A player's hand of cards sleeved with their family crest.

Trait Card Owner: The player with the letterbox that matches the family crest on the card's sleeve.

Intentions: An invitation, proposal, or declaration of independence.

Independent: A player who has placed their ring sleeve face down is considered independent. Independent characters are not available and can no longer share or accept intentions.

Engaged: A player who has accepted a proposal and the player who proposed are engaged, indicated by placing the other's ring sleeves next to each other. Engaged characters are not available and can no longer share or accept intentions.

Fiance: If you are engaged, the owner of the ring sleeve next to your own is your fiancé.

Available: A player is considered available if they aren't engaged or independent.

Symbols: This refers to the symbols on the trait cards.

Dominant Symbols: If there are more +s than -s next to a symbol among another player's current traits, the dominant symbol is +. If there are more -s than +s next to a symbol among another player's current traits, the dominant symbol is -.

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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