

Persuasion (C01)

The game of Victorian courtship. Mail intimate letters to woo potential suitors, discover who fulfills your desires, then propose to the one!

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

Players: 3-8

Play time: 15-30 Minutes

Components:

60 x Trait Cards

14 x Desires Cards

8 x Action Markers

80 x Trait Card Sleeves

168 x Crest Trackers

8 x Rings

(10 for each family crest)

(21 for each family crest)

8 x Letterbox Cards

8 x Propriety Charts

Number of players	3	4	5	6	7	8
Number of trait cards	10	9	8	7	6	5
Discards during setup	24	16	10	6	4	4

Overview

Once per round, mail a letter (*i.e. card*) to a suitor to try and catch their attention, and watch how they react to your letter! When you receive letters, try to figure out who fulfills your needs (from your desires card). When ready, send them a proposal, swapping trait cards! If you are ignored, take the opportunity to replace a trait with one from the deck, you might be able to fulfill your desires on your own! Once you're ready to settle, start making arrangements to run down the clock by discarding cards from the deck. The game ends once all but one player is engaged, or the deck is empty!

Setup

Each player sets up by doing the following:

1. Choose a family crest, taking the matching ring, trait card sleeves, & letterbox card.
2. Take an action marker, and place on the ☀ side. Place your letterbox card in front of you.
3. Draw a desires card and a number of trait cards depending on the number of players (*see table above*). Sleeve your trait cards, then return any remaining sleeves to the box.
4. Take a propriety chart, 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.*)
Place one of each crest tracker in the 0 column of any row, and keep the other two however you like. It's recommended you use these to mark which symbols you suspect they desire.

Finally, discard a number of cards facedown, depending on the number of players (*see table above*). Keep these discards distinct from the draw deck, such as in the box.

Playing a Round

Take Action

Each player performs one of the following:

- **Mail Letter:** Deliver one of your trait cards to a player's letterbox. While not obligatory, it's proper etiquette to send your first letter to your left neighbor.
- **Mail Proposal:** If you feel confident a player's trait cards have your needed symbol, deliver one of your trait cards to that player's letterbox with your ring on top, saying, "Will you marry me?"
- **Arrange:** Discard a card from the deck. (*The game ends when the deck runs out!*)
- **Break Up:** Reveal then discard a trait with a + symbol from your desires card, or any trait if none exist, then return its sleeve to the box. Return your fiance's ring, and take your ring back.

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

Correspondence

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

- **Proposals:** Take the proposer's card into your hand then choose one of the following:
 - **Reject:** Adjust the owner's crest markers as you see fit on your propriety chart, then return the trait card with their ring to the owner's letterbox, saying, "No..."
 - **Accept:** Swap the trait card they sent with one of your own (resleeving them) before returning with your own ring, announcing "**Yes!**" Both you and the proposer are now engaged. Place your fiance's ring next to your letterbox. You two are now engaged.
 - **Mutual Proposals:** If two players send proposals to each other, then they must both accept the proposals, swapping two unique cards instead of just one.
- **Letters:** Take into your hand, and adjust the owner's crest markers as you see fit on your propriety chart. Return to the owner's letterbox when done.
- **Returns:** When your own card is returned to you, take it back into your hand.

Await Postman

Once all action markers are on the ☺ side, check the following:

1. **Reflection:** If you didn't receive a letter from anyone (*excluding returns*), then you may draw a card from the deck (*if any remain*), then you may replace one of your traits with it, discarding what you don't keep.
2. Make sure you've resolved all your Correspondence and that your card has been returned.

Flip your action marker to the ☺ side when done. When all are on the ☺ side, check availability.

Check Availability

- If the deck is empty, or there are one or fewer unengaged players, proceed directly to Matrimony (*see page 3*).
- Otherwise, play another round at Mail Intentions (*see above*).

Matrimony (*Ending the Game*)

1. All players reveal their trait cards and desires card, lining up their trait cards to make it easy to add up their symbols.
2. If engaged, add up the symbols on your fiancé's cards to determine if you have a prim victory.
3. Add up the symbols on your own trait cards to determine if you have a proper victory.

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

Etiquette

Suitor's Secrets: Your cards and the discards are private 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*), resolve actions clockwise starting with the host of the game.

FAQ

What exactly am I doing here?

Your desires card tells you what symbol you're looking for in a partner's hand, as well as what you'd need in your own hand to win. Most of the game, you'll be trying to convince other players to send you letters so you can look for your desired symbol, proposing to them when you're convinced they're the one. Pay attention to how they adjust their charts in response to your letters, using your own chart to mark what they might be looking for. Use that information to court them with matching symbols! You can also sneak peeks at other players' propriety charts, but careful, they could be wrong or lying!

If I propose to someone, and someone else proposes to me, can both 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.

Are there no turns?

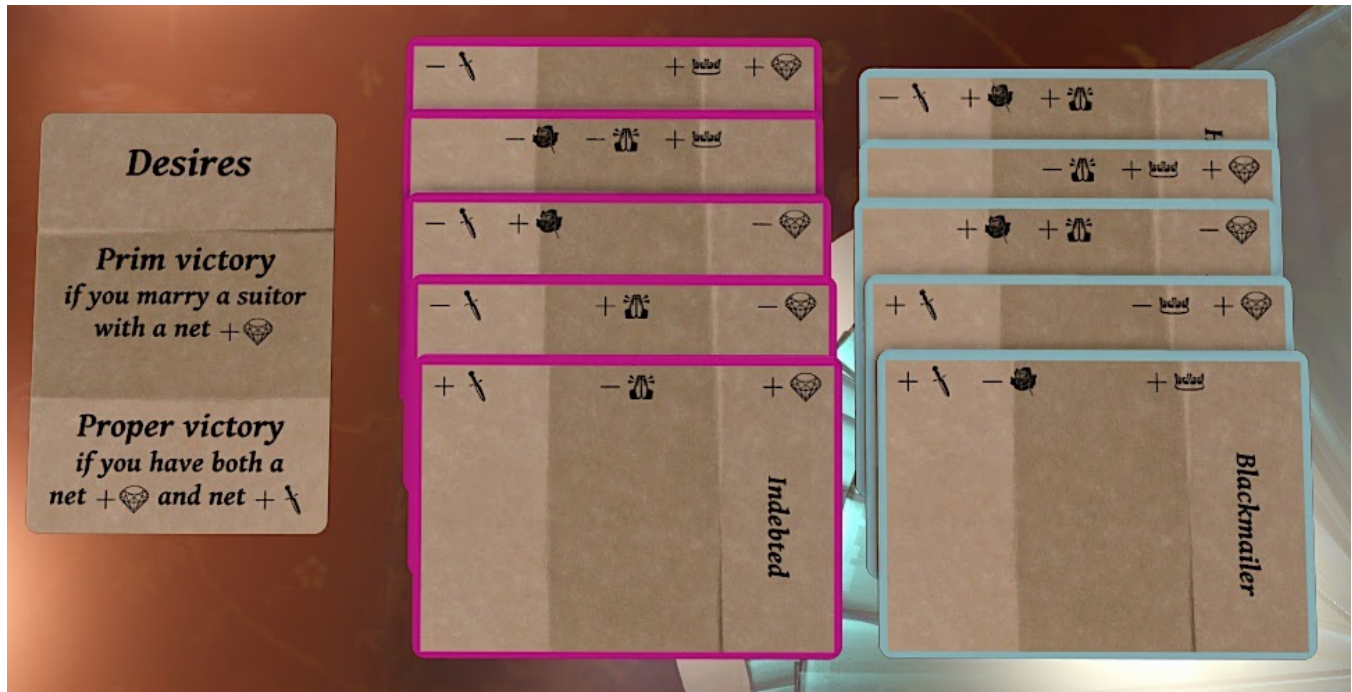
While there are no turns, you can only take one action per round, so make sure you pay attention to everyone's action marker. If players are waiting for others to act, follow the Stalemates etiquette above.

What if I run out of trait cards from breaking up?

Your reputation is ruined, you lose my distinguished guest. Exercise some discretion next time.

I don't understand how desires cards work.

Let's look at an example, let's say Purple married Cyan, and this is what their hands looked like after exchanging trait cards during the proposal, with the leftmost card being Purple's desires card.



Add up your fiancée's (Cyan's in this example) symbols like so:

$$+\text{diamond} - \text{diamond} + \text{diamond} = +1 \text{ diamond}.$$

With this hand, Cyan helps Purple achieve the Prim victory condition! Now let's check for a Proper victory by checking Purple's hand:

$$+\text{diamond} - \text{diamond} - \text{diamond} + \text{diamond} = 0 \text{ diamonds}$$

$$-\text{axe} + \text{axe} + \text{axe} = +1 \text{ axes}$$

While Purple has enough $+\text{axe}$ with this hand, they do not have enough $+\text{diamond}$, so they do not achieve a Proper victory, so close! Now Cyan would still need to check Purple's symbols to see if they 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 and desire card 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>