

Persuasion (B02)

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: ???

Components:

40 x Sealed Card Sleeves
56 x Emblazoned Mailbox Cards
(7 for each of the 8 family crests)

60 x Trait Cards
40 x Symbol Markers
8 x Ring Sleeves

How to Play

Each player starts with 5 trait cards sleeved with your own family's crest, one unsleeved card to treat as your desires, a ring sleeve with your own family's crest, and mailbox cards matching each other players' family crest (*Not including their own*). 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!

The game is played in rounds, with every player sharing intentions. Choose an available player, and place their mailbox cards face down over one of the trait cards from your hand in front of you. Once everyone has set out their cards, all mailboxes are flipped to reveal each player's recipients, and the trait cards are passed to said recipients. Every recipient decides if they want to reject by simply returning the card to its owner without peeking, or if they want to accept by giving the sender one of their own trait cards to look at. 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 their owner and your mailbox card to your hand when done.

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. When you accept a proposal, unsleeve one of your cards to give to the proposer, and resleeve the card in the ring sleeve you received as your own. Place your ring sleeves next to each other, and wait till the end of the game to reveal your trait cards to see if either of you win!

If you suspect nobody aligns with your desires, instead of an invitation you can become independent by placing any mailbox card facedown with nothing underneath. Once everyone reveals their intentions, place your empty ring sleeve face down 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 nobody could satisfy you, you win!

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

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 gather 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.

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 5 times until 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!

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 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.

Are there no turns?

There are no turns, you wait for everyone sets their mailbox cards before revealing them, but those intentions can be resolved asynchronously. Once you're ready to send your next intention, set your next mailbox card and wait for the others to do the same!

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 who has accepted an invitation, and only until your trait cards are returned. You can try to do this discretely if you wish, but be respectful of the other players' time.

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), 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 and sealed card sleeves.
2. Draws 5 cards to keep as trait cards, sleeving them into the sealed card sleeves.
3. Draw 1 final card as your desires to keep separate from your trait cards.
4. After all players have chosen a family crest, take a mailbox card matching everyone else's family crest (e.g. *In a 4 player game, each player would have 3 mailbox cards, one for each other player*).

Playing a Round

Persuasion is played in rounds in the following order:

Set 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 place it face down under that player's face down mailbox card 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 place it with your ring sleeve under that player's face down mailbox card 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:** Place any mailbox card face down in front of you.
(It doesn't matter who's mailbox card. 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 set their mailbox cards in front of them, 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!*)

Share Intentions

Everyone flips their mailbox cards to reveal all recipients at once. Immediately perform the following depending on your intention:

- **Invite:** Hand the face down trait card placed under the mailbox to the mailbox's crest owner.
- **Propose:** Resleeve the trait card placed under the mailbox into the ring sleeve, and hand it to the mailbox's crest owner.
- **Claim Independence:** If you chose independence, place your ring sleeve face down in front of you. You are no longer available, rejecting all invitations and proposals sent to you.

Resolve Intentions

If you received any intentions, resolve them immediately:

1. **Invitations:**

- **Reject:** Without peeking, return the trait card to its owner.
- **Accept:** Pick one of your own trait cards in your hand, and hand it to the inviter. While you hold another player's trait card (*as a result of invitations*), you may discuss game related details. Return trait cards to their original owners afterwards

2. **Proposals:**

You may look at all trait cards in ring sleeves before deciding which one, if any, to accept. (*You can only accept one proposal!!*)

- **Reject:** Return the trait card to its owner, they must resleeve the trait card into their vacant sealed card sleeve.
- **Accept:** Take one of your own trait cards out of its sleeve to give to the proposer, they 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 your ring sleeves next to each other. You and the proposer are no longer available, rejecting all invitations and proposals sent to either of you.

3. **Independence:** Reject any intentions. *Wait for everyone to make up their minds.*

Reflection

If a player receives no intentions, and their intention is rejected, then they may draw a new trait card, then they may replace one of their own sleeved trait cards, discarding the old trait card.

Once you've addressed all intentions, take your played mailbox card back into your hand, and set your next intention.

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 fiance'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 determining satisfaction. 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 possessing the ring sleeve 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 fiance.

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 -.

Satisfies: If another player has at least two dominant symbols that match the symbols on your desires card, the player satisfies you.

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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