

Persuasion (C04)

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

40 x Trait Card Sleeves

(5 for each family crest)

9 x Desires Cards

40 x Crest Heart Tokens

(5 for each family crest)

8 x Action Cards

8 x Rings (1 per crest)

8 x Letterbox Cards (1 per crest)

Number of players	3	4	5	6	7	8
Cards of Each Suit to Add	7	10	12	14	17	19

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 cards by suit and shuffling them. Form a new deck with a number of cards of each suit depending on the number of players (see *table above*), returning the rest to the box. Shuffle this new deck of trait cards, then separately shuffle all the desires cards.

Each player then performs the following:

1. Pick a family crest, taking the matching letterbox card, ring, 5 trait sleeves, and 5 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 sleeve them, then draw a desires card.

Return any unused desires cards to the box.

Key Terms

- **Replace:** Removing a card from a sleeve and placing another card into the vacant sleeve.
- **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.
- **Withdraw:** Return a suitor's heart token to take one of your own trait cards back from the heart owner's hand. If there are multiple, you may look at your own cards to pick one to take back.
- **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 your card has been returned (*if you mailed any*), 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 their cards in your hand face up in front of you.
 - b. Place one of your own cards in 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 round, so make sure you pay attention to everyone's action card. 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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