

Psychoquiller

A game of deadly calligraphy by Jeff Warrender

As women of society, send poison pen letters to your rivals to let them know your true feelings about them. But, have a care, one of you has taken things too far!

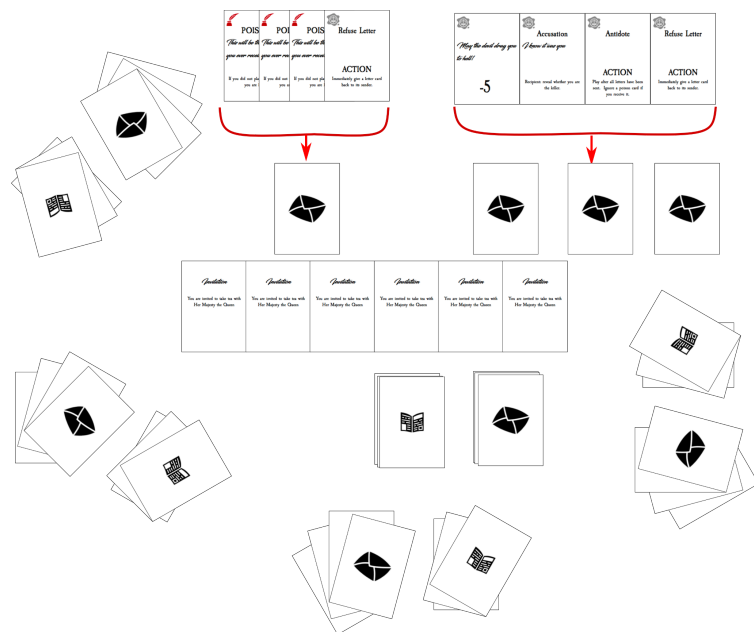
Game Equipment

72 letter cards
30 society cards
21 special cards

3 poison cards
6 invitation cards
1 score pad

Game Setup

1. Place the invitation cards in a row in the center of the table.
2. Shuffle together the society cards. Deal THREE to each player and place the deck on the table.
3. Shuffle together the letter cards. Deal FOUR to each player and place the deck on the table.
4. Notice that the special cards and poison cards have the same back-printing as the letter cards but have a grey “wax seal” or red quill on the front. Notice also there are four types of special cards.
5. Gather the three poison cards into one pile, and place a “refuse letter” special card on that pile.
6. Separate the remaining special cards into five sets, each set having one each of the four types of special cards. If {4 or 5} are playing, return {2, or 1} of these sets to the game box. Place the remaining piles, and the pile of poison cards, on the table, face-down. Move the piles around until no one can remember which is which. Leave the piles where they are for now.
7. Assign a stenographer.



Game Play

The game runs over three *chapters*: prologue, interlude, and main action.

Suggestion: If you are learning the game for the first time, just learn the rules for the prologue chapter and then play the prologue chapter. Don't learn/teach the rules for the interlude and main action chapters until after you've played the prologue. This enables you to get playing quickly and learn-as-you-go.

PROLOGUE

The prologue chapter lasts for two rounds. Each round follows a two-phase structure.

Society Phase

Each player: select a society card from your hand and place it face-down on the table. When all players are ready, reveal your chosen card and **read it aloud**. Note the number on each player's card; this is how many points that card will confer on that player.

Suggestion: If the group all agrees, use your best fake British accent while reading the society cards.

Letter Phase

In clockwise order beginning with the stenographer, each player chooses a letter card from their hand and places it face-down in front of one opponent. You may not play more than one card to each opponent and no opponent may receive more than three cards.

In the first round, players each play just one letter card in this way. In the second round, play passes around the table a second time.

After one/two rounds, each player shuffles together the letter cards they received and then reveals them and **reads them aloud** to the group.

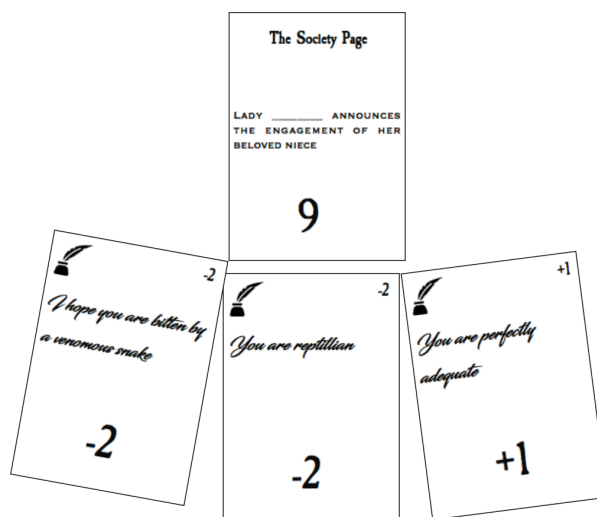
Scoring and Cleanup

Add together the positive points from your society card and the positive and negative points from letter cards you received. The stenographer adds this number to your score on the score pad.

Note: It is possible for a player to end up with a negative score for the round.

Example: Caroline played a “9” society card. She received letter cards worth -2, -2, and +1, respectively. Her score for the round is 6.

The player with the highest score *for this round* receives the leftmost invitation card. If there is a tie, the invitation card is placed on top of the next invitation card: next round, *both* of those cards will be awarded to the player with the highest score in the next round.



Players each draw a new society card and two letter cards.

INTERLUDE

In this chapter, players gain special cards and one player becomes the killer.

In clockwise order beginning with the stenographer, take a pile of special cards from the center of the table and add them to your hand. Keep them secret.

If you received the poison cards, you are the *killer*.

MAIN ACTION

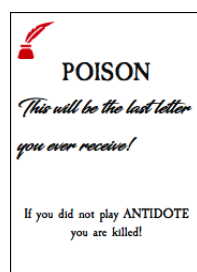
This chapter lasts for *four* rounds.

Each round follows the same structure as the rounds in the Prologue chapter (society phase, letter phase, scoring/cleanup phase), with two changes:

The first player in the letter phase is the player who had the highest score in the last round (tie goes to the player closest to the previous first player’s left).

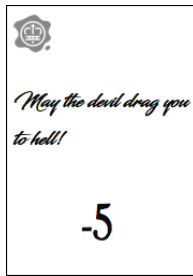
In the letter phase, play passes around the table *three* times.

Now players have access to their special cards, which are used as follows:

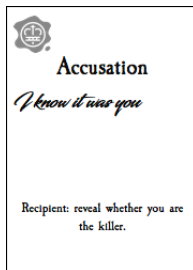


Poison (killer): Played as a letter in the usual way. When revealing letters, the player revealing this card is “killed”. They score no points from their society card or from letter cards they received this round.

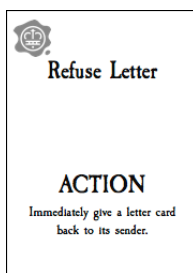
The other players have the following cards:



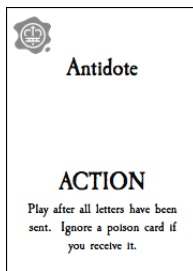
Played as a letter in the usual way.



Played as a letter in the usual way. When revealed, the recipient must announce (truthfully) if they are the killer. If they are, at the end of the round, after scoring and invitations are assessed, the killer incurs a scoring penalty equal to the number of poison cards they have played so far in the game (including in this round). The accusing player(s) identify themselves and receive a scoring bonus in the same amount. The killer discards all remaining poison cards. They may not be accused again in a future round.



Play immediately when an opponent gives you a letter card. The letter card you received is placed in the pile of letter cards received by the sending player; it "backfires" onto them! It does not count against the three-cards-per-player limit. You may not pass another letter to a player who played "refuse letter" against you.



After all players have passed three letters, you may play your Antidote card. If you received a poison card, it has no effect.

The player with the highest score receives an invitation card as usual. If the round ended in a tie and there are already two invitation cards in a pile, discard one of them.

Players still receive one society card and two letter cards at the end of the round. If either pile is empty, reshuffle the discard pile.

Game End

If any player acquires three invitation cards, that player wins the game immediately. Otherwise, after the 6th round, the game ends, and the player with the highest score is the winner!

Acknowledgements

Playtesters and helpful suggestions: Millie Beeswax, Liz Ford, Kyle Rogers, Beatrice Marple, Anna Marple, Kate Marple, Leonardo Kammer, Tim Orcutt, Richard McQueen

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