Love Letter™

The guard looked Bartolemew Kaiss up and down for a moment and then frowned. "I'm sorry, Master Kaiss, but the princess is not seeing visitors at this time. She is, of course, in despair over the arrest of her mother."

"Of course," the young composer said, nodding and looking appropriately sympathetic. "But I am not just visiting, you see. Her Highness requested my instruction. We are to practice her singing."

"The princess already has a vocal maestro," the gruff woman replied, raising an eyebrow.

"I'm sure he knows that, Odette," said a kind voice echoing down the hall that connected the residence to the palace. The two turned to see Susannah, one of Princess Annette's handmaids, walking toward them. "What the good composer means to say is that Annette requested his work for their practice." The young woman smiled at the guard and gave Bartolemew a conspiratorial wink.

From his satchel, Bartolemew produced a sealed tube. "If you will be so kind as to deliver these sheets of music, my dear Susannah," he said with a smile and a genteel nod.

The guard took the tube from him, but as it changed hands, something with a little weight shifted inside the tube. "What's this, then?" the guard asked, jostling it next to her ear.

Certainly not a small statue of a bird the Princess is so fond of, Bartolemew thought. "The... quill and ink I used to pen the music, in case she or the maestro wish to make any changes. I always deliver some with a new composition."

Susannah gently took the case from the suspicious guard. "Oh, would you stop, Odette? It's just some music," she chided playfully.

"I'll see to it that milady gets these," she added with a hand on Bartolemew's arm. "I'm sure she'll be eager to see the contents."

OBJECT

In the wake of the arrest of Queen Marianna for high treason, none was more heartbroken than her daughter, Princess Annette.

Suitors throughout the City-State of Tempest sought to ease Annette's sorrow by courting her to bring some joy into her life.

You are one of these suitors, trying to get your love letter to the princess. Unfortunately, she has locked herself in the palace, so you must rely on intermediaries to carry your message.

During the game, you hold one secret card in your hand. This is who currently carries your message of love for the princess.

Make sure that the person closest to the princess holds your love letter at the end of the day, so it reaches her first!

COMPONENTS

Your game of Love Letter should include the following. If it does not, contact customerservice@alderac.com for assistance.

- 16 game cards
- 4 reference cards
- tokens of affection

GAME CARDS

The game has 16 cards. Each different card name represents someone at the royal residence.

Each card has a value in the upper left corner—the higher the number,

the closer that person is to the princess. At the bottom of each card, a text box describes the effect when the card is discarded.

REFERENCE CARDS

These list the various cards in the game, as well as their effects and how many copies are in the deck. They are not used in the game, but are provided as a memory aid.

TOKENS OF AFFECTION

Red tokens are also included. These are used to track Princess Annette's ever-growing affection for those suitors whose letters reach her.

SETUP

Shuffle the 16 cards to form a face-down draw deck. Remove the top card of the deck from the game without looking at it.

If you are playing a two-player game, take three more cards from the top of the deck and place them to the side, face up. They will not be used during this round.

Each player draws one card from the deck. This is the player's hand, and is kept secret from the others.

Whoever was most recently on a date goes first (if tied, the younger player wins the tie).

HOW TO PLAY

LOVE LETTER is played in a series of rounds. Each round represents one day. At the end of each round, one player's letter reaches Princess Annette, and she reads it.

When she reads enough letters from one suitor, she becomes enamored and grants that suitor permission to court her. That player wins the princess's heart and the game.

TAKING A TURN

On your turn, draw the top card from the deck and add it to your hand. Then choose one of the two cards in your hand and discard it

face up in front of you. Apply any effect on the card you discarded. You must apply its effect, even if it is bad for you.

See page 15 for the effects of each individual card. Likewise, if you have any questions about special cases regarding the card, you'll find the answer there.

All discarded cards remain in front of the player who discarded them. Overlap the cards so that it's clear in which order they were discarded. This helps players to figure out which cards other players might be holding.

Once you finish applying the card's effect, the turn passes to the player on your left.

OUT OF THE ROUND

If a player is knocked out of the round, that player discards the card in his or her hand face up (do not apply the card's effect) and takes no more turns until next round.

HONESTY

A player could cheat when chosen with the Guard, or fail to discard the Countess when that player has the King or Prince in hand. We suggest that you don't play with knaves who cheat at fun, light games.

END OF A ROUND

A round ends if the deck is empty at the end of a turn. The royal residence closes for the evening, the person closest to the princess delivers the love letter, and Princess Annette retires to her chambers to read it.

All players still in the round reveal their hands. The player with the highest ranked person wins the round. In case of a tie, the player who discarded the highest total value of cards wins.

A round also ends if all players but one are out of the round, in which case the remaining player wins.

The winner receives a token of affection. Shuffle all 16 cards together, and play a new round following all of the setup rules.

The winner of the previous round goes first, because the princess speaks kindly of him or her at breakfast.

WINNING

A player wins the game after winning a number of tokens based on the number of players:

- 2 Players — 7 tokens
- 3 Players — 5 tokens
- 4 players — 4 tokens

THE PEOPLE

The events of this game take place between the events of COURTIER and DOMINARE, two other games in the Tempest line. Here are brief profiles of the people in the game.

8: PRINCESS ANNETTE

Hampered only by the naïveté of youth, Princess Annette is elegant, charming, and beautiful. Obviously, you want the princess to carry your letter. However, she is self-conscious about matters of the heart, and if confronted, will toss your letter in the fire and deny ever seeing it.

If you discard the Princess—no matter how or why—she has tossed

your letter into the fire. You are knocked out of the round.

7: COUNTESS WILHELMINA

Always on the prowl for a handsome man or juicy gossip, Wilhelmina's age and noble blood make her one of Princess Annette's friends. While she has great influence over the princess, she makes herself scarce whenever the king or prince are around.

Unlike other cards, which take effect when discarded, the text on the Countess applies while she is in your hand. In fact, she has no effect when you discard her.

If you ever have the Countess and either the King or Prince in your hand, you must discard the Countess. You do not have to reveal the other card in your hand. Of course, you can also discard the Countess even if you do not have a royal family member in your hand. She likes to play mind games....

6: KING ARNAUD IV

The undisputed ruler of Tempest... for the moment. Because of his role in the arrest of Queen Marianna, he does not rate as highly with Princess Annette as a father should. He hopes to work himself back into her graces.

When you discard King Arnaud IV, trade the card in your hand with the card held by another player of your choice. You cannot trade with a player who is out of the round, nor with someone protected by the Handmaid. If all other players still in the round are protected by the Handmaid, this card does nothing.

5: PRINCE ARNAUD

As a social gadfly, Prince Arnaud was not as distressed over his mother's arrest as one would suppose. Since many women clamor for his attention, he hopes to help his sister find the same banal happiness by playing the matchmaker.

When you discard Prince Arnaud, choose one player still in the round (including yourself). That player discards his or her hand (do not apply its effect) and draws a new card. If the deck is empty, that player draws the card that was removed at the start of the round.

If all other players are protected by the Handmaid, you must choose yourself.

4: HANDMAID SUSANNAH

Few would trust a handmaid with a letter of importance. Fewer still understand Susannah's cleverness, or her skilled ability at playing the foolish

handmaid. That the queen's confidante and loyal servant escaped any attention after the queen's arrest is a testament to her clever mind.

When you discard the Handmaid, you are immune to the effects of other players' cards until the start of your next turn. If all players other than the player whose turn it is are protected by Susannah, the player must choose him- or herself if possible.

3: BARON TALUS

The scion of an esteemed house that has long been a close ally of the royal family, Baron Talus has a quiet and gentle

demeanor that conceals a man used to being obeyed. His suggestions are treated as if they came from the king himself.

When discarded, choose one other player still in the round. You and that player secretly compare your hands. The player with the lower rank is knocked out of the round. In case of a tie, nothing happens. If all other players still in the round are protected by the Handmaid, this card does nothing.

2: PRIEST TOMAS

Open, honest, and uplifting, Father Tomas always seeks out the opportunity to do good. With the arrest of the queen,

he is often seen about the palace, acting as confessor, counselor, and friend.

When you discard the Priest, you can look at one other player's hand. Do not reveal the hand to all players.

1: GUARD ODETTE

Charged with seeing to the security of the royal family, Odette follows her orders with persistence and diligence... even though her mentor is said to have drowned while fleeing arrest for complicity in the queen's treason.

When you discard the Guard, choose a player and name a card

(other than Guard). If that player has that card, that player is knocked out of the round. If all other players still in the round are protected by the Handmaid, this card does nothing.

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For more information, visit:

www.alderac.com/tempest and
www.alderac.com/forum

Questions? CustomerService@alderac.com

CREDITS

LOVE LETTER

Design: Seiji Kanai

Development: Edward Bolme

Graphic Design: Kalissa Fitzgerald

Art: Andrew Hepworth, Jeffrey Himmelman

Writing: Edward Bolme, Seth Mason

Editing: Nicolas Bongiu, Jeff Quick

Layout: Kalissa Fitzgerald

Typesetting: Edward Bolme, Kalissa Fitzgerald

Production: Dave Lepore

Playtesting: Rachel Bolme, Talon Bolme, Jeff Plummer, Courtney Shelton, Lee Shelton

TEMPEST

Original Concept: Mark Wootton, John Zinser

Brand Management: Edward Bolme

Fiction: Seth Mason