

# The Season

*Written by*

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*for Stockholm Scenario Festival 2025*

# Guide for Game The Season 2025

## Instructions for game masters

## The Season: Game master's Guide

The scenario must be played with an even number of players. 14-20 players is preferable, but if needed 12-26 is also possible.

The players are divided into 3-5 families:

12-14 players = 3 families

16-18 players = 4 families

20-26 players = 5 families.

If 3 or 4 families are used, use Strensham and Woodal, plus one or two of Abbingdon, Frankley or Membury

### Printing instruction:

Character types, Scandals The Season 2025: print x 1 and cut into pieces

Families Information The Season 2025: print x 1

The Season 2025 print out for families: print x 1

Guide for Game The Season 2025: print x 1 for each GM

### Physical props - must have

- Name badges/ stickers
- Material/ribbons - for sashes and necklaces. One colour per family - best if brightly coloured and different. To accommodate five players in each family, bring at least 7,5m ribbon of each colour.
- Black tape for black marks
- White tape for engagements
- Sharpie to write matching numbers on engagement tape
- Computer for projecting slideshow
- Projector for slides
- Printed copy of Guide for Game The Season 2025 for each GM
- Printed copies of handouts: Families information The Season 2025 + Character Types, Scandals The Season 2025
- Stopwatch/phone to time breaks/water cooler moments etc
- Plain paper for letters (at least 52 sheets)
- Pens - one for each player (up to 26)
- Scissors x1
- Character name stickers (players to write own name)(26)
- Bell for interrupting dances
- Speaker for music - needs to be loud!
- Phone/computer for music

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/5sHSksLua02aonbg5bxXpe?si=TylsgbGxQBqnxIBxqZZnxQ&pi=QA6DwWmvSIOzG>

*Guide for Game The Season 2025*

Ball	Dance	Type of dance	Song	Artist	Album	Time
1	1	Hole in the wall	Hole in the wall	Musica calamus	Medieval Dances, Vol. 1	3:00
1	2	Chain dance	Långdans efter Gustav Strutz	Väsen	Väsen	3:54
1	3	free dance	Cheap Thrills	Vitamin String Quartet	VSQ Performs the hits of 2016, Vol. 2	3:27
2	1	Hole in the wall	Hole in the wall (From Abdelazer)	Bjarte Eike, Barokksolistene	The Alehouse Sessions	2:46
2	2	Waltz	Serenade for Strings In C Major	Vienna Chamber Orchestra	Great Waltzes	3:59
3	1	Hole in the wall	Hole in the wall	Musica calamus	Medieval Dances, Vol. 1	3:00
3	2	Free dance	Castle on the Hill	2CELLOS	Dedicated (Extended Edition)	4:30
3	3	Waltz	Valse des mirages	Valentin Barray	Mirages	3:45
		Wedding march	Wedding March	The Violin Sisters	Wedding Music for Violin and Piano	



*Guide for Game The Season 2025*

	Scene time	Total time
<b>First ball</b>		
Entrance	5	5
Hole in the wall - leaders ask	5	10
Water cooler break	3	13
Chain dance - followers ask	6	19
Water cooler break	3	22
Free dance - no couples	4	26
<b>Letters</b>		
May I write to you? - followers ask	5	31
Writing letters	15	46
Reading letters	5	51
<b>Second ball</b>		
Introduction	3	54
Hole in the Wall - leaders ask	5	59
Water cooler break	3	62
Waltz - followers ask	6	68
<b>Visits</b>		
Introduction to visits	5	73
Family gathering	5	78
Leaders go to first visit	7	85
Family gathering	3	88
Leaders go to second visit	7	95
Family gathering	3	98
<b>Third ball</b>		
Introduction	3	101
Hole in the Wall - followers ask	5	106
Water cooler break	3	109
Free dance - no couples	5	114
Water cooler break	3	117
Waltz - leaders ask	6	123
<b>End</b>		
Engagements	10	133
Announcement of who will get to marry	5	138
Wedding March and farewell	10	148

## Workshop/introduction:

- **Thank players for coming. 5 mins**
  - Timings -
    - Practise dancing
    - Briefing
    - Character workshopping
    - Break
    - Play (2 hrs 30 minutes)
- **Brief explanation of the world**
  - This is a archaic pseudohistorical world in the milieu of Jane Austen and Bridgerton. Everyone knows their place and the social structure is very hierarchical. You are playing members of the “Society.” These are a small number of the premier families of the land. The families you are playing are at the lower end of ‘Society’ and desperately trying to keep their position there - think more Jane Austen than Bridgerton. In this social group, reputation is everything. Your reputation is also affected by the behaviour of your family.

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  - The larp plays through the events of “The Season.” All of you are Coming of Age this season. This is your one chance to achieve a suitable match and remain within society. Not all players will be allowed to marry, only those with good enough reputation.

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  - You will be grouped into families and everyone in that family is eligible and related - you'll get to decide later if you are siblings, cousins or more distant relations.
  - You may not marry within your family
  - All players are Coming of Age, but your older relatives are also present in each scene. You will need to pretend that they are there, silent and acting in the background. Whenever we as game masters act, for example if someone misbehaves, we are the in game representation of the judgement of those adults, defending the rules of society.

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  - The genders within this society are defined as **leaders** and **followers**, which are also your dancing personas.
    - Leaders are addressed as “Mr Lastname” by other families
    - Followers are addressed as “Miss Lastname” by other families
    - First names are used by the family and between fiancées
  - The conventional relationship is a marriage between a leader and a follower.

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- If you do not get married this season, then you will not enter society. The Leaders will join the military, the followers will go into domestic service eg as companions or governesses. There is the possibility of marriage and partnership later, but you will be outside the ranks of "Society."
  - There are rules and consequences, but the point of the game is not to win or to focus on the threats. The consequences are there to mimic the reality of the society.
  - ***The goal of "The Season" is to get married. However, not all characters will be able to get married. This does not mean that you have 'lost.' There is no winning or losing and a tragic love story may be your win.***
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## The Rules of the game - 15 minutes!

### General rules:

- Opposite genders do not speak to each other
  - Except during dances
  - if introduced by a family member
  - during an arranged visit
  - if you are engaged
- Opposite genders do not touch
  - Except as instructed as part of a dance
  - if you are engaged
- Always act politely and with dignity
  - no shouting, no lewd remarks or gestures
- Flirting must be done discreetly

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### - Scandals

- Each family has scandalous secrets. Some of these will come out during the game.
  - When a scandal is revealed, both the family with the secret, and another family will receive a note with information about the scandal, at a time when the families are gathered at home.
  - You decide for yourselves how you want to play this. If the secret is about your family, did everyone in the family know, or is this news to some you? If you get information on another family's scandal, did you actually receive a note about it and if so from whom? Or was it whispered in someone's ear?
  - Improvise in the moment but make sure that everyone in the family gets to read the note, so that you all have the correct information. Misunderstandings about the scandals will make the play unnecessarily complicated.
  - If a scandal is revealed about your family it is true
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- **Black Marks**

- Black marks are a visible reminder of your social misdemeanours or scandals.
  - If you behave inappropriately e.g.
    - Touching someone in a way or at a time not denoted by the dance
    - Approaching the other gender's water cooler unchaperoned or sending an unagreed letter
    - Writing or saying something inappropriate
    - Repeatedly dancing with the same person at the same ball
    - Breaking off an engagement
    - If your proposal is rejected
    - Anything else the judges disapprove of
  - You will get a black mark
  - This is a black tape mark worn on your family ribbon
  - If you claim someone has behaved inappropriate and this is felt justified, then they get a black mark
  - If you cry foul repeatedly you may not get a black mark, but it will affect how people in the room see you
  - Other characters can defend you if you are challenged, but this will not turn into a long debate
  - The judges decision is final (and may feel unwarranted - this is a feature not a bug!)
- 
- If you have black marks, people with fewer black marks than you will be off limits for all interaction except for proposal.
  - This means that you cannot ask them to dance with you and cannot be introduced to them. You also cannot ask to write to or visit them
  - They can ask to dance with you and be introduced to you.
- 
- There are fewer marriage opportunities than there are couples. The number of black marks per couple will be added together. The couples with the largest number of black marks will not be allowed to marry.

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- Following the rules are important, but it is equally important to be able to break them - discreetly and at the right time
  - To risk breaking a rule to show your interest is considered a sign of passion
  - a person who isn't prepared to take that risk is considered a bore, or a gold digger
  - true love is considered to be worth the risk of not marrying at all
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- **Areas**

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- **Dance floor**

- To ask someone for a dance - approach them when directed and ask

- ***“May I have this dance?”***
  - You can reply yes or no and explain why.
  - If you have agree to dance, then take your partner's hand and walk out onto the dance floor
- 
- You do not need to dance, but if you do not dance, you remain at your own water cooler and cannot speak to anyone of the opposite gender.
  - There will be two 'excuse me' dances where you can cut in when the bell rings.
  - We will have some dances where the leaders ask followers to dance and some where followers ask leaders. Free dances allow you to take the floor with no partner. We will announce who is asking before each dance.
  - ***Practise asking other characters to dance***
- 

- During balls there is a water cooler area for leaders and a separate area for followers. This is where you return to between dances. You may only visit the other area if chaperoned or proposing.
  - **Being introduced**  
during water cooler breaks if introduced and accompanied by a family member or friend.
    - As a follower, your follower friend could introduce you to their leader sibling or your leader sibling could introduce you to their leader friend.
    - The family member/friend comes with you to the water cooler area of the other gender, and stays during the short conversation, so the conversation is chaperoned.
    - You may only talk for a minute or you risk a black mark.
    - So you must cross the floor in pairs, or risk being penalised.
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- In interludes between balls each family will return to their own houses (a different area)
  - There will be other family members and staff in the house, but those are not part of the game and you will need to imagine that they are there, silent in the background - making sure you are following the rules of society
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At home: Letters and visits

- During the game, there will be one interlude when you get to send letters.
  - Each follower gets to ask up to two people if they may exchange letters.
  - Followers may only ask characters with the same number or more black marks as they have
  - Each person may accept any number of requests, but can only write 2 letters. Not writing to someone you have promised a letter to may cause a scandal.
  - During the next interlude, leaders may go on visits to followers in their homes
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- Marriage
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- **Proposals**

- Only leaders can propose and only on their own behalf
- They may propose to followers with any number of black marks
- You may only propose at any time except during a dance
- Due to time constraints this is performed in a very scripted way. You ask **"Full name, will you marry me?"** whilst going down on one knee and holding out a hand.  
The reply is yes and you take their hand, or no (perhaps with a reason) and walk away.  
If your proposal is rejected, you get a black mark.
- If you are engaged, we add a white tape mark to your ribbon. We will also write a number to help us keep check on who is engaged to whom.
- You cannot be engaged to more than 1 person at a time.

***Please practise proposing now***

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- **Breaking off an engagement**

- Breaking off an engagement can take place any time except during a dance
- At other times, anyone can break up an engagement at any time, by asking a game master to stop the proceedings.
- The couple stand in the middle of the floor with their family behind them and the person breaking up proclaims it, "Full name, I wish to break off our engagement because..."
- The character being rejected has the right to give a short reply
- The couple and their families react to the break up for a short time (2-3 minutes) until the game masters ring the bell.
- Both parties get a black mark each for being in a break up.
- Then everyone in Society chooses sides and goes stand behind the person they believe is the injured/righteous party. The family may switch sides if they wish. If more than  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the voters choose the same side, the other party will get an extra black mark for being considered at fault.

***Call out 2 people to break off an engagement now***

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- **Weddings**

- Remember there is a limit on the number of weddings in a season. The number of black marks per couple will be added up. The couple(s) with the most black marks will not be permitted to get married.
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- - Structure of the larp
    - The larp takes place over a season. This consists of
      - 3 balls. There are two or three dances in each ball, with watercooler moments between.
      - An interlude between the first and second ball where you can write short letters to other characters.
      - An interlude between the second and third balls where you can arrange to visit other characters.
      - A final scene once we know who has become engaged to whom
    - Leaders and followers are only allowed to speak to each other during dances and brief, planned social situations.
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## ● Guide to the game

- We understand that this is a lot of rules
  - They are done to create a game world and mimic a social structure, but we do not want you to think about them too hard
  - Don't get lost in the numbers - this a larp, not a number puzzle or a board game.
  - Play your character and relax.
  - We will explain what you need to do at each stage and tell you when you have committed a misdemeanour
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## ● Practise dances - 10 minutes

- We will use 4 dances repeatedly during the larp. Your dancing does not need to be good. Your character's dancing does not need to be good.
- Hole in the Wall - no touching when they come together  
*go to next slide for visuals!*
- Chain Dance - only holding hands with those next to you in the chain
- Waltz - waltz position - bell rings three times, you have to change partners each time
- Free Dance - do whatever you want

- You can talk to anyone on the dance floor, not just your partner, although that might be considered rude.

- Sort players into families 20 minutes

- Ask people to move into followers or leaders at different end of the room. Persuade people to move, so that these groups are as even as possible.
- Hand out the character types randomly to all players

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- Repeat instructions for leaders/followers:

- Leaders:

- “Mr Lastname”
- Go to military if not married
- Can propose
- Ask to dance:
  - First dance at the first ball
  - First dance at the second ball
  - Third/last dance at the third ball
- Can ask one or two to visit (second interlude)

- Followers:

- “Miss Lastname”
- Go into service if not married
- Ask to dance:
  - Second dance at the first ball
  - Second/last dance at the second ball
  - Third/last dance at the third ball
- Can ask one or two to exchange letters (first interlude)

- Everyone:

- First name between family members and fiancées
- Introduce a friend to a relative
- Can break up an engagement

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- Number each player 1,2,3,4 1,2,3,4 etc so there are approximately even numbers in each family and each family contains both followers and leaders
- Move the players into their family groups in their designated areas.
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- Give out

- Read out the “Everyone knows” section about each family on the Families information-pages, handing each family the page about their family plus one page with bar charts about all families.
- Also hand out The Season 2025 print out for families to each family.
- Family ribbons of a particular colour. Leaders wear theirs as a sash, followers as a necklace



- Tell the players to choose their own first names and write them on the stickers, putting them visibly on their body.
- 

- The families get a few minutes to work out their dynamics and then play a short scene which introduces them to each other.
    - This scene is each family receiving invitations to the balls of the season (7 minutes to play)
- 

- Split the players back up into their genders.
  - The leaders are at their club.
  - The followers are in a tea house.
  - You will have known most (perhaps not all) of these characters for years - at school, at social events etc.
  - This meeting takes place a few days before the balls of the season start. Gossip, decide who is your friend, or perhaps a rival
  - (7 minutes to play)

- **Break for fika**

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The first ball:

1. Introduction by game master: set the scene and explain the rules for the first ball
    - Introduce members of the family as they enter the room - give them a family corner/area
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2. **First dance: Hole in the wall. Leaders ask**

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3. Leaders and followers gather at the water coolers.
4. **Second dance: Chain dance. Followers ask**
5. Leaders and followers gather at the water coolers.
6. **Third dance: free dance - no one asks. No touching**
7. Asking for permission to write.
  - Each follower gets to ask up to two people if they may exchange letters.
  - Followers may only ask characters with the same number or more black marks as they have

- Each person may accept any number of requests, but can only write 2 letters. Not writing to someone you have promised a letter to may cause a scandal.
- 

The first intermission:

8. Return to family areas.
  9. Instructions from game master - both the initiator and the recipient write a letter to each other
  10. Draft a letter, which the games master will collect
  11. Game masters count the letters for each family and note which family has received the most letters (top), and which has received the least letters (bottom). Take the two copies of one of the scandals about the top family and hand one copy to the top family and one to the bottom family.
  12. The letter is handed to the character you have written to.
    - The recipient will have a short time to read it, at their family home
    - If someone has seen the letter and announces publicly that it contained something inappropriate, then the sender will receive a black mark.
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The second ball:

13. Introduction from game master: set the scene and explain rules for the ball
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#### **14. Fourth dance: Hole in the wall - leaders ask**

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15. Water cooler break

#### **16. Fifth dance: Waltz - followers ask**

- After a certain amount of time (GM rings the bell), you can steal another's partner
17. Asking for permission to visit.
    - Each leader gets to ask up to two people if they may visit them.
    - Leaders may only ask characters with the same number or more black marks as they have
    - Followers may accept as many requests as they like
- 

The second intermission:

18. Instructions from game master - there are 2 visiting periods.
  - Sit down with family
  - Leaders go out to visit x 2
  - Followers stay at home and receive visitors
19. Visits.
  - Each family gathers at their home and the leaders who arranged to do so go out to visit.
  - There are 2 visiting periods. Leaders return home between each.

- Leaders must visit the families they asked to visit. If they only asked one follower then they can visit them twice or stay at home to oversee who visits their family
  - If the person they wanted to visit was not at home, they go back home and wait for the next round.
  - The Game masters will ring a bell when time is up.
  - Only 2 visits may take place.
  - If two leaders visit a follower at the same time, they are all there simultaneously and social awkwardness ensues.
  -
20. Game masters count how many visitors each family receives and note which family has received the most visitors (top), and which has received the least visitors (bottom). Take the two copies of one of the scandals about the top family and hand one copy to the top family and one to the bottom family.
21. Family gathering: deciding how to strategise for the final ball
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The third ball:

22. Introduction from game master: set the scene and explain rules for the ball
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### **23. Sixth dance: Hole in the wall - followers ask**

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24. Water cooler break

### **25. Seventh dance: Free dance**

26. Water cooler break

### **27. Eight dance: Waltz - leaders ask**

28. Final opportunity to get engaged - only leaders can propose

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The end

29. Ask the players to form a line, the couples with the least black marks at the front, those with the most black marks at the back.
30. GMs announce who will get married - those with fewest black marks.
- a. 12-16 players: 4 players do not get married
  - b. 18-22 players: 6 players do not get married
  - c. 24-26 players: 8 players do not get married
  - d. If there are several couples with the same number of black marks at the cut off, count the combined number of black marks of their entire families and sort:
31. Procession to a wedding march. Those who will not marry form arches for the marrying couples to walk through and then go off to war or into service (or back home if they are heads of family)
32. Final scenes - goodbyes and resolution if an engagement does not lead to a wedding

Character types, Scandals  
The Season 2025

Print and cut into separate notes

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**Risk taker**

**Risk taker**

**Free Spirit**

**Free Spirit**

**Afraid of  
being alone**

**Afraid of  
being alone**

**Party animal**

**Party animal**

**Dislikes small  
talk**

**Dislikes small  
talk**

**Social climber**

**Social climber**

**Rule follower**

**Rule follower**

**Judgemental**

**Judgemental**

Print and cut into separate notes

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## Scandals

### **Abbington**

Uncle Jonathan has a secret family with a servant and has been creeping away to play happy families with them

### **Abbington**

Uncle Richard is known not to have made the family's traditional charity alms donation to the poor this year.

### **Frankley**

Uncle George has been embezzling money from investors, for his own unsuccessful trade deals

### **Frankley**

A ship which was financed by the investments of many society families has sunk, meaning there will be no return on their investment.

### **Membury**

General Membury has deserted from the army

### **Membury**

Colonel Membury has lost a battle due to his cowardice and not engaging the enemy

### **Strensham**

The bank has foreclosed on a loan, so money to repay it will need to be found in a hurry

Print and cut into separate notes

### **Strensham**

A boiler in a factory has blown up, injuring workers and damaging other machinery. Productivity will be affected. Their machines may not be as safe and dependable as they claim.

### **Woodal**

Duke Woodal has been banned from court over something scandalous he said to the Queen

### **Woodal**

The Queen has take back a grant of land (and title of Earl) which was given to the family several generations ago



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## Families information The Season 2025

To print.

See Guide for Game for instructions on how to  
distribute to players.

## Abbingdon Family

### First names begin with A

#### Everyone knows

- pious, god-fearing family
- the moral compass of society for many generations.
- frugal- make do and mend; but charitable
- support their employees, even in old age
- large cold house in the middle of the country



#### Family knows

- Your family are held up as moral paragons in society, but you know that is not true for all your relatives, they just conceal it well. Your relatives hold you to higher moral standards than they keep themselves. Not to marry because of black marks would be incredibly scandalous in the Abbingdon family and the behaviour of the rest of your generation may tarnish you.
- The Abbingdons do not get invited to the best parties as others think they are stuffy and dull. If you can make a marriage with good connections, life will immediately become more interesting!
- Your family is rich. Due to sensible financial investments you will all have a large income when you marry. There is no need to scrimp and save. Your older relatives have chosen to do so, but will this continue for your generation? or do you plan to be less frugal and more fun?
- You have looked after your employees, almost as if they are family members. Do you want to continue this or should you just give them the most basic pension, or even make it their responsibility to save for their retirement?

## Frankley Family - First names begin with F

### Everyone knows

- Part of society for generations
- Traders; travel widely
- Bring delicacies, exotic objects and fascinating stories
- Small house, crammed with fascinating objects, south of the country, near the coast.



### Family knows

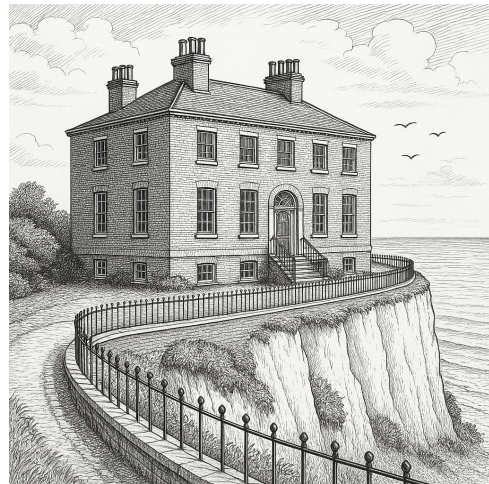
- The Frankleys are rich in trade goods and stock, but do not have that much spare cash. It's all tied up in the business. This means that towards the end of the trade cycle money is tight. Wouldn't it be nice to marry into a family with more available money?
- You have travelled since you were young and you have always enjoyed a slightly bohemian lifestyle with fewer rigid rules than normal society. This has led to the family attitude that rules are generally flexible if you look hard enough. There are always opportunities for novel experiences. Many of these are found by talking to other people and seeing what they can offer.
- You have been educated to fit-in to any social group and know how to make people like you, even if you don't actually like them.
- Some see the Frankley family as bohemian and unsettled; too peripatetic to be dependable. Associating with a family with more history at court would get rid of some of these unsavoury views.
- Trade is so variable and if prices were to fall, or a ship was to go down, then you could find yourself in financial peril. Land or manufacturing could give a more dependable income.
- Some of your family have picked up attitudes from other lands which would be found scandalous here. You hope no one hears about Uncle George's two wives, for example.
- If things get difficult, perhaps you can distract or impress people by talking about what you have seen in other lands.

## Membury Family

### First names begin with M

#### Everyone knows

- Military family
- An ancestor 4 generations ago was raised up by the king after heroically storming a castle.
- From peasant stock
- Have made good marriage choices in past
- Large house on a cliff top, overlooking the sea in the east of the country.



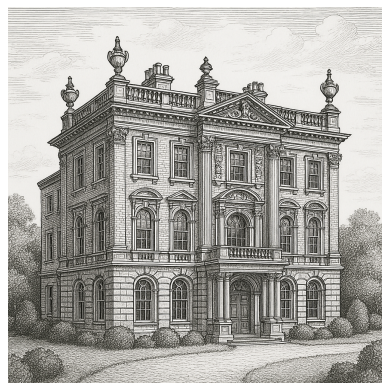
#### Family knows

- The Memburys are patriotic and support the royal family and the idea that there is an upper tier of society which they belong to. Your family does not have so many generations in society as you would like and allying with an older, established family would give you the gravitas you seek.
- You are well off, due to previous generations making sensible investments, but are not rich. Some in the family are considering investing in manufacturing or trading to increase the family wealth, but these risky investments could mean that you lose more than you can afford. A marriage union with a more wealthy family would make the future more secure for you.
- It would not be seen as shameful by your relatives if you did not marry, as long as some of your relatives remain in society to carry the family name, although you may think differently.
- One's honour and integrity are everything and it would be seen as below the family to lie or cheat especially in order to get the match you want (but it doesn't mean that you as an individual might not do it).
- You have always been taught the proper behaviour for a situation and your family judges others harshly when they are not as refined or as well versed in social norms. Will you choose a partner to be proud of?

## Strensham Family - First name begin with S

### Everyone knows

- Newly arrived in Society and nouveau Riche
- Industrialists - invent new machines for manufacturing and own factories
- Progressive
- Grand, newly built house, close to an industrial city in the north of the country



### Family knows

- The Strenshams are only newly arrived in Society and some are upset by this addition. You bought your way into society by paying off the Prince Regent's debts and would be prepared to buy more influence by paying off a poorer family (in return for a marriage of course).
- Some resent that you have taken jobs from the poor, but you see progress and hope for the future.
- Your house has every embellishment you could buy. Some call it tacky privately or publicly, but you enjoy luxury and comfort.
- Due to your working origins, you are looked down upon by other members of society. You understand how difficult life is outside Society. Marriages allying you to traditional or well connected families would help cement your place in society.
- You know your position is precarious. Loss of wealth or confidence in your company could see you back in the lower classes.
- This does not mean that your family does not exploit your workers; you have risen by virtue of your actions. The workers could better themselves too.
- A liaison or friendship with a well connected family would be advantageous.
- Your family believes that life is what you make it. There are opportunities for everyone and you should make the best of what you are given and try to improve your situation at every opportunity. If you don't, you are a fool.



## Woodal Family- First name begin with W

### Everyone knows

- Related to the royal family
- Like the old ways and the status quo
- Old money and dislike 'upstarts'
- Believe everyone should do their duty
- No longer filthy rich, they are not poor either and have never gone without.
- Crumbling, sprawling rural house in the west of the country



### Family knows

- The Woodal income comes from your estate land and you are not as rich as you once were. There are also discussions about whether your family should do the unthinkable and sell some land, as land is all you have.
- You will inherit land when you marry, but your income will be moderate. A marriage to a family with more available money would benefit you and your family.
- The estates employ a lot of people, which your older relatives see as your duty to help the local community. Other family members think they are inefficient and need to modernise. Should you feel a responsibility to servants and others?
- Your family has been in society for so long you felt your position was unchallenged, but recently the family has got a reputation for boorish and bad behaviour. Unions with refined society members might improve your reputation. One significant scandal could mean that you are thrown out of society.
- Your family is judgemental against those who work or trade for a living.
- All the best people have titles. It marks your family out as above all others



## Abbingdon

### First names begin with A

Pious, god-fearing family  
Moral compass of society for years  
Frugal- make do and mend  
Charitable  
Support their employees, even in old age  
Large cold house in the Midlands

Connections

History

Wealth

Refinement

## Frankley

### First names begin with F

Part of society for generations  
Traders; travel widely  
Bring delicacies, exotic objects and fascinating stories  
Small house, crammed with fascinating objects, south of the country, near the coast.

Connections

History

Wealth

Refinement

## Membury

### First names begin with M

Military family  
Ancestor 4 generations ago was raised up by the king after heroically storming a castle.  
From peasant stock  
Have made good marriage choices in past  
Large house on a cliff top, overlooking the sea in the east of the country

Connections

History

Wealth

Refinement

## Strensham

### First names begin with S

Newly arrived in Society and nouveau Riche  
Industrialists - invent new machines for manufacturing and own factories  
Progressive  
Grand, newly built house, close to an industrial city in the north of the country

Connections

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Print out for families  
The Season 2025

To print.  
See Guide for Game for instructions on  
when to hand out to each family



# *The Season*

Stockholm Scenario Festival 2025

# The world we are in

- Archaic, pseudohistorical world - think Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* or *Sense and Sensibility*
- You are all part of "Society", but in the lower end, desperately trying to keep your position
- The only way to stay in Society is to marry within Society
- Reputation is everything



# The Season

- All players are coming of age this season
- This season is your only chance to marry into Society
- Not all players will be allowed to marry, only those with good enough reputation

# Family

- In game families consist of siblings or cousins
- All players are eligible to marry
- You may not marry within your family
- All other family members are also here - but not part of the game.

# Gender

- Two genders: leaders and followers
  - A conventional marriage is between a leader and a follower
  - Leaders who do not marry go into the military
  - Followers who do not marry go into household service
- 
- Leaders are addressed as “Mr Lastname” by other families
  - Followers are addressed as “Miss Lastname” by other families
  - First names are used by the family and between fiancées

# Marriage

- The goal is to get married at the end of the season
- Not all characters will be allowed to marry
- If you do not marry you will go into service (followers) or to war (leaders)



# The Rules of the Game

# The etiquette of The Season

## *Silence is golden*

Opposite genders do not speak to each other, except  
... during dances  
... if introduced by a family member  
... during an arranged visit  
... if you are engaged

## *Keep hands to oneself*

Opposite genders do not touch, except  
... as instructed as part of a dance  
... if you are engaged

## *Dignity is the mark of society*

Always act politely and with dignity – no shouting, no lewd remarks or gestures

## *Only fools and ruffians wink with half their face*

Flirting must be done discreetly

# Scandals

- You do not know your family's secrets in advance.
- Scandals are revealed to an entire family, not to an individual.
- You will receive a note on a piece of paper. Make sure that everyone in the family reads it.
- If another family receives a scandal about your family, your family will receive an identical note at the same time. Make sure that everyone in the family reads it. You do not know your family's secrets in advance.
- Scandals are true.

# Breaking the social rules gives you a black mark

- Speaking to or touching the opposite gender outside of the approved exceptions
- Behaving in an unbecoming way
- Approaching the other gender's water cooler area unchaperoned
- Writing letters or visiting without previous arrangement
- If an engagement is broken off
- If a scandal about your family is revealed publicly
- If you are accused of breaking the social rules (at the game masters' discretion)
- Anything else the game masters disapprove of

**Black marks are denoted by black tape on your family ribbon**



# You may only approach those who have *the same or more black marks*

- This means that you **cannot**
  - ask them to dance
  - be introduced to them
  - ask them if you can write to them
  - ask them if you can visit them.
- If **they** ask you to dance, write or visit, you may do so.
- **Exception: proposals**  
(leaders only)

Whether a couple will be allowed to marry at the end of the season, is affected by their combined number of black marks

*One must look to one's betters  
and hope to be seen!*

## Breaking the rules - discreetly

- Discreetly breaking a rule is a way to show passion
- Would you rather risk a black mark or risk your loved one not knowing your true feelings?
- A person who would never take a risk is a bore - or a gold digger

*A coward's love is never true*



# Areas

# The dance floor

- Before each dance, the game masters will announce if it is the leaders' or the followers' turn to ask for a dance.
- To ask someone for a dance:
  - Walk up to them
  - Ask "May I have this dance"
  - If they say yes, take their hand and lead them onto the dance floor
- When the music stops, return to the water cooler area of your gender.

# Water cooler area

- Water cooler moments - a few minutes break between dances
- One area for each gender
- Drink water and gossip
- Opportunity to introduce someone or get introduced
- Always stay in the water cooler area for your gender unless being introduced

# Water cooler area - being introduced

You can introduce a friend to a relative of the opposite gender. Introductions can only take place in the water cooler areas

- Bring your friend to the other water cooler area.
- You must cross the floor together, and you may only bring one friend.
- You and your friend may only talk to one person: the relative you are introducing them to. Conversation must be brief.
- Walk back to your own water cooler area afterwards.

***An introduction  
is not the time to  
introduce oneself!***

# Family home

- Interludes at home between the balls
- Other family members and staff also live in the house

# At home: Letters

- Followers will get to ask one or two leaders to exchange letters
- Only leaders with the same or fewer black marks can be asked
- Each person may accept any number of requests, but can only write 2 letters.
- Not writing to someone you have promised a letter to may cause a scandal.
- You may write to anyone
- Both leaders and followers write letters:
  - Write letters to one or two people
  - Receive and read letters

*One letter good  
Two letters better  
Three letters a scandal!*



# At home: Visits

- Each leader will get to ask one or two people if they may visit them.
- Only followers with the same or fewer black marks can be asked
- Followers may accept as many requests as they like
- Leaders must go on the promised visits
- You may not go on unplanned visits
- There will be two rounds visits, with a family gathering at home in between
- If you ask only one person, you may visit them twice, or stay at home to chaperone your relatives for one of the rounds

*A missed visit is  
a missed reputation*

The image features decorative corner patterns in the top-left and top-right corners. These patterns consist of intricate, dark grey scrollwork and floral motifs that curve along the edges of the page.

# Getting married

# Proposing

- Only leaders may propose
- At any time, except during dances
- To anyone, even those with fewer black marks
- White tape = engaged

Go down on one knee, hold out your hand and say:

***“Full name, will you marry me?”***

Reply:

**“Yes”** - take hand and walk away together

**“No”** - you may add a short explanation, then walk away on your own

# Breaking up an engagement

Anyone can break up an engagement, at anytime except during a dance

- Ask the game masters to stop the proceedings
- Face each other, with family behind each person
- **“Full name, I wish to break off our engagement because...”**
- Short reply and reaction to break up
- Each person gets a black mark
- Everyone else chooses sides
- If more than 2/3 of the players take one party's side, the other gets a second black mark

# Weddings

- Not all engaged couples will get to marry
- Depends on the couple's combined number of black marks
- End of the game:
  - Those who will not marry form arches with their hands
  - The marrying couple do a wedding march under the arches
  - All say farewell to those going off to war or into service

The top corners of the slide feature decorative, symmetrical scrollwork patterns in a light gray color.

# **The structure of the game**

# Order of events

## Entrance

### First ball

- First dance (leaders)
- *Water cooler-moment*
- Second dance (followers)
- *Water cooler-moment*
- Third dance
- Followers ask for permission to write

### Writing and reading letters

## Second ball

- First dance (leaders)
- *Water cooler-moment*
- Second dance (followers)
- Leaders ask for permission to visit

## Visits

## Third ball

- First dance (followers)
- *Water cooler-moment*
- Second dance
- *Water cooler-moment*
- Third dance (leaders)
- Proposals

## Wedding procession and farewell

# Don't get lost in the rules!

- We will remind you of the rules along the way
- Play to interact, not to win :-)
- Have fun!



# Dances

*Hole in the Wall* no touching!

*Chain Dance* only holding hands with those  
next to you in the chain

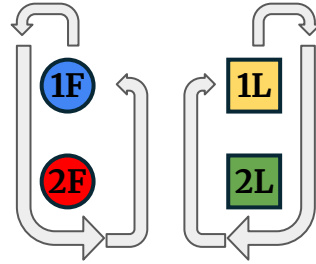
*Waltz* waltz position  
+ stealing partners

*Free Dance* no touching!

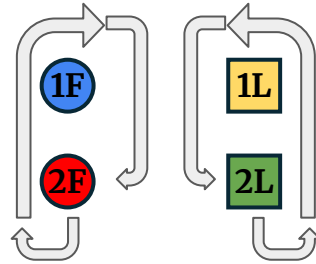
You can talk to anyone on the dance floor

# Hole in the wall

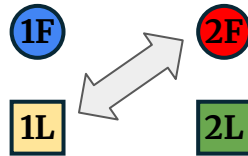
1:  
First couple  
casts down



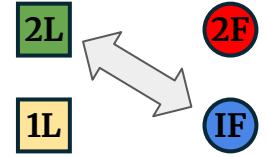
2:  
Second couple  
casts up



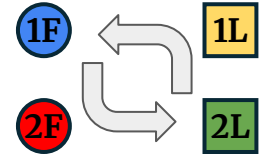
3A: 1st leader and  
2nd follower  
trade places



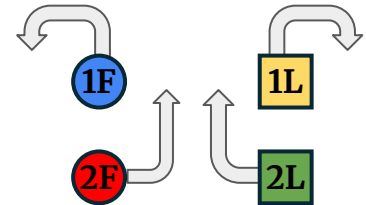
3B: 2nd leader and  
1st follower  
trade places



4A:  
Circle half round



4B:  
Progress



# Who does what?

## Leaders:

- “Mr Lastname”
- Unmarried go to **military**
- Can **propose**
- Ask to dance:
  - 1st dance at the 1st ball
  - 1st dance at the 2nd ball
  - 3rd dance at the 3rd ball
- Can ask one or two to **visit** (second interlude)

## Followers:

- “Miss Lastname”
- Unmarried go into **service**
- Ask to dance:
  - 2nd dance at 1st ball
  - 2nd dance at 2nd ball
  - 3rd dance at 3rd ball
- Can ask one or two to exchange **letters** (first interlude)

## Everyone:

- First name between family members and fiancées
- Can **introduce** a friend to a relative (water cooler moments)
- Can **break up** an engagement

## Abbingdon

Connections

History

Wealth

Refinement

*Pious  
Frugal  
Charitable*

## Frankley

Connections

History

Wealth

Refinement

*Trade  
Travel  
Exotic*

## Membury

Connections

History

Wealth

Refinement

*Military  
Humble  
background*

## Strensham

Connections

History

Wealth

Refinement

*Industrialists  
Progressive  
Nouveau riche*

## Woodal

Connections

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Refinement

*Old money  
Old ways  
Duty*

# Get to know your family

- What is your family like?
- Who are you?
- What are your family dynamics?
- When we tell you, play a short scene about receiving invitations to the balls

# Get to know the other leaders/followers

You will have known most of these characters for years - because of schools or social functions.

Play out some interactions:

- Leaders at their club
- Followers at a tea house
- Who is your friend?
- Who is your rival?



# *The Season*

The game begins!

# The First Ball

Entrance

Hole in the wall - leaders ask

*Water cooler break*

Chain dance - followers ask

*Water cooler break*

Free dance - no couples

May I write to you? -  
followers ask

*Silence is golden*

*Keep hands to oneself*

*Dignity is the mark of society*

*Only fools and ruffians  
wink with half their face*

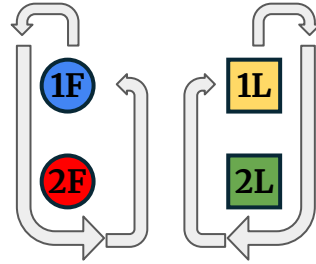
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and hope to be seen!*

*A coward's love is never true*

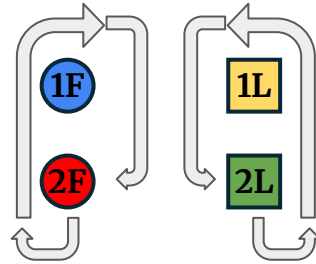


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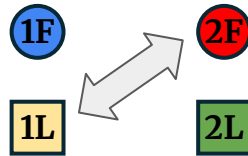
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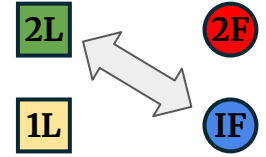
2:  
Second couple  
casts up



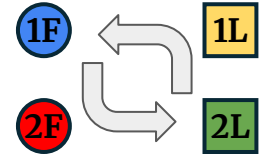
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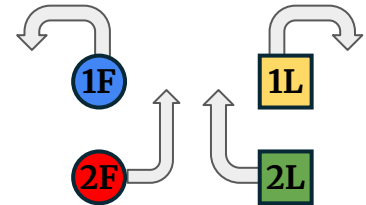
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4B:  
Progress



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# Letters

Followers ask one or two to exchange letters.

Only ask those with the **same number or more black marks** as you

Each person may accept any number of requests, but can only write 2 letters.  
Not writing to someone you have promised a letter to may cause a scandal.

- Writing
- The postman comes
- Reading
- Writing
- The postman comes
- Reading

*One letter good  
Two letters better  
Three letters a scandal!*

# The Second Ball

Hole in the Wall - leaders ask

*Water cooler break*

Waltz - followers ask -  
change partners when bell  
rings (3 times)

May I visit you? - leaders ask

*Silence is golden*

*Keep hands to oneself*

*Dignity is the mark of society*

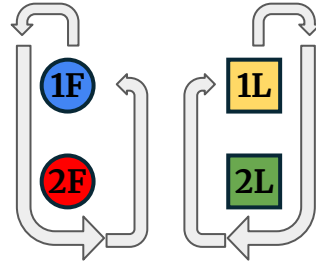
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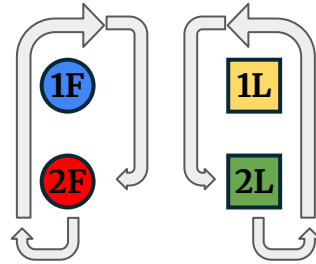
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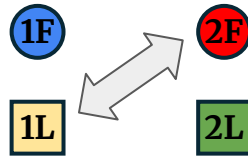
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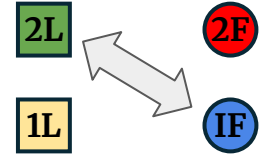
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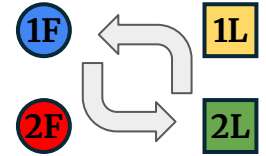
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trade places



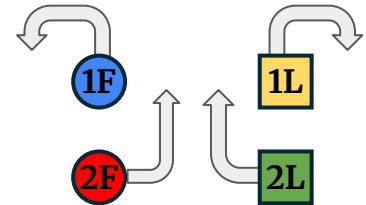
3B: 2nd leader and  
1st follower  
trade places



4A:  
Circle half round



4B:  
Progress



# The Second Ball

Hole in the Wall - leaders ask

*Water cooler break*

Waltz - followers ask -  
change partners when bell  
rings (3 times)

May I visit you? - leaders ask

*Silence is golden*

*Keep hands to oneself*

*Dignity is the mark of society*

*Only fools and ruffians  
wink with half their face*

*One must look to one's betters  
and hope to be seen!*

*A coward's love is never true*

# Visits

Each leader gets to ask up to two people if they may visit them.

Leaders may only ask characters with the same number or more black marks as they have

Followers may accept as many requests as they like

*Family gathering*

Leaders go to first visit

*Family gathering*

Leaders go to second visit

*Family gathering*

*A missed visit is  
a missed reputation*

# The Third Ball

Hole in the Wall - followers ask

*Water cooler break*

Free dance - no couples

*Water cooler break*

Waltz - leaders ask  
- change partners when bell  
rings (3 times)

Engagements

*Silence is golden*

*Keep hands to oneself*

*Dignity is the mark of society*

*Only fools and ruffians  
wink with half their face*

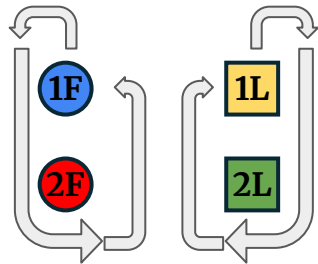
*One must look to one's betters  
and hope to be seen!*

*A coward's love is never true*

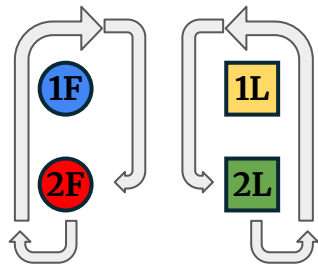


# Hole in the wall

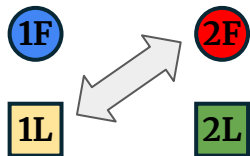
1:  
First couple  
casts down



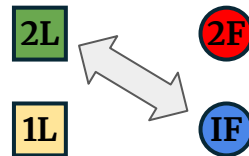
2:  
Second couple  
casts up



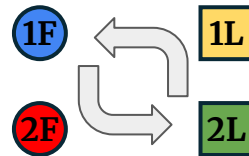
3A: 1st leader and  
2nd follower  
trade places



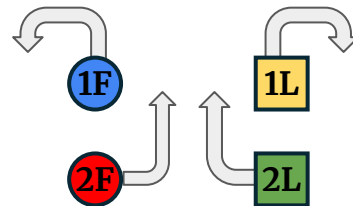
3B: 2nd leader and  
1st follower  
trade places



4A:  
Circle half round



4B:  
Progress



# The Third Ball

Hole in the Wall - followers ask

*Water cooler break*

Free dance - no couples

*Water cooler break*

Waltz - leaders ask  
- change partners when bell  
rings (3 times)

Engagements

*Silence is golden*

*Keep hands to oneself*

*Dignity is the mark of society*

*Only fools and ruffians  
wink with half their face*

*One must look to one's betters  
and hope to be seen!*

*A coward's love is never true*

# The Finale

Announcement of who will get to marry

Wedding March

Final farewell



*The End*