



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

Dignity is the mark of society

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

Keep hands to oneself

Opposite genders do not touch, except

- ... as instructed as part of a dance
- ... if you are engaged

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.
- 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*

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 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





Dances

Hole in the Wall no touching!

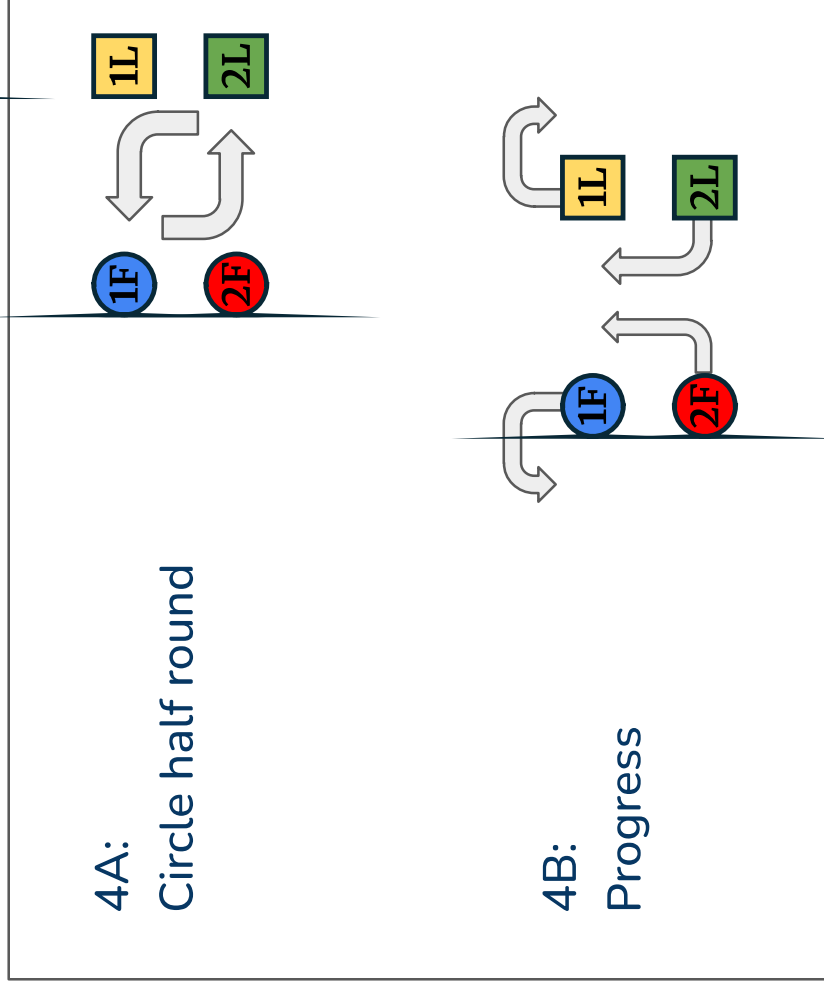
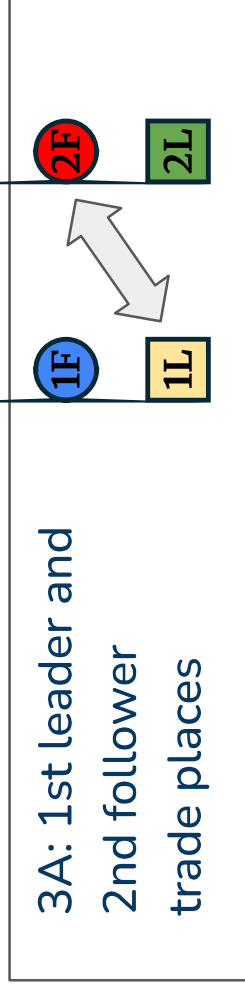
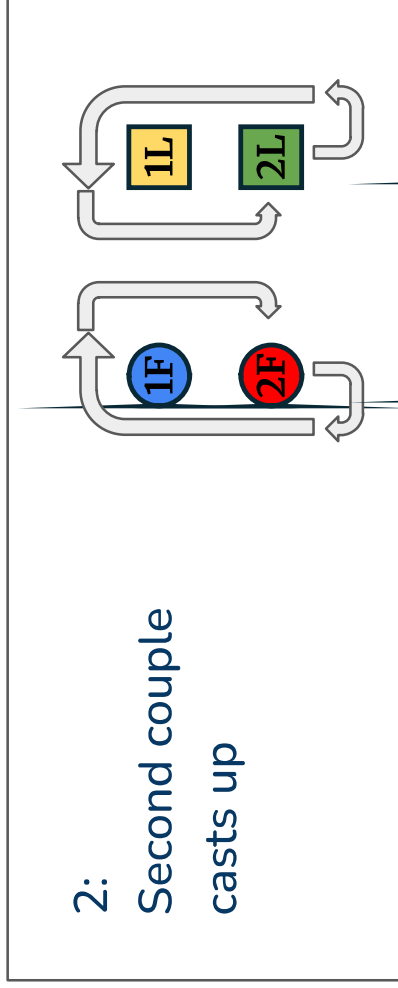
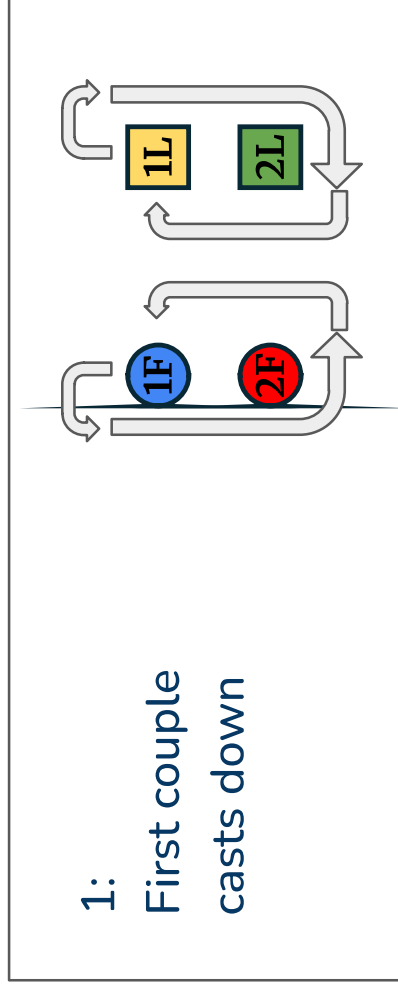
Chain Dance only holding hands with those
next to you in the chain

Waltz waltz position
+ stealing partners

Free Dance no touching!

You can talk to anyone on the dance floor

Hole in the wall



Characters and families



Who does what?

Leaders:

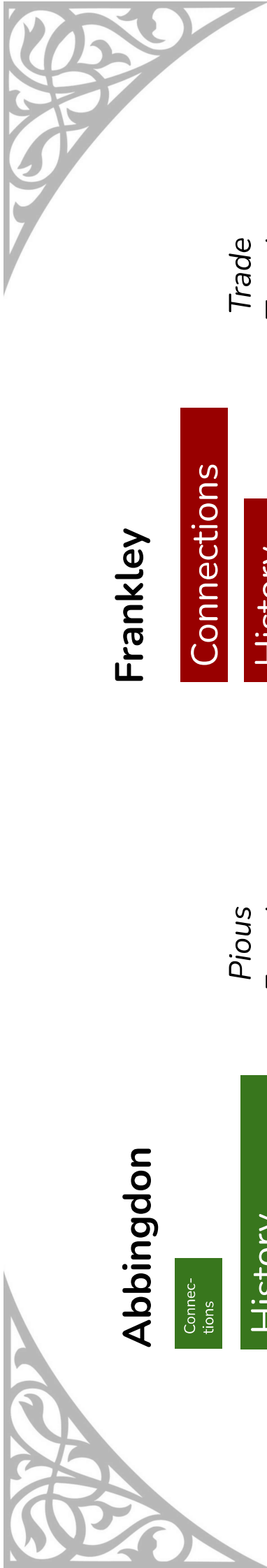
- “Mr Lastname”
- Unmarried go to **military**
- Can **propose**
- Ask to dance:
 - 1st dance at the 1st ball
 - 1st dance at the 2nd ball
 - 3rd dance at the 3rd ball
- Can ask one or two to **visit** (second interlude)

Followers:

- “Miss Lastname”
- Unmarried go into **service**
- Ask to dance:
 - 2nd dance at 1st ball
 - 2nd dance at 2nd ball
 - 1st 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

History

Wealth

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

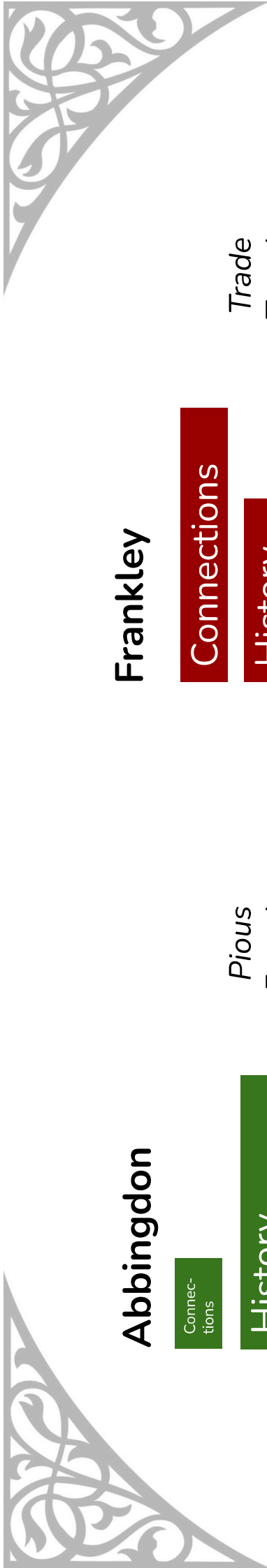
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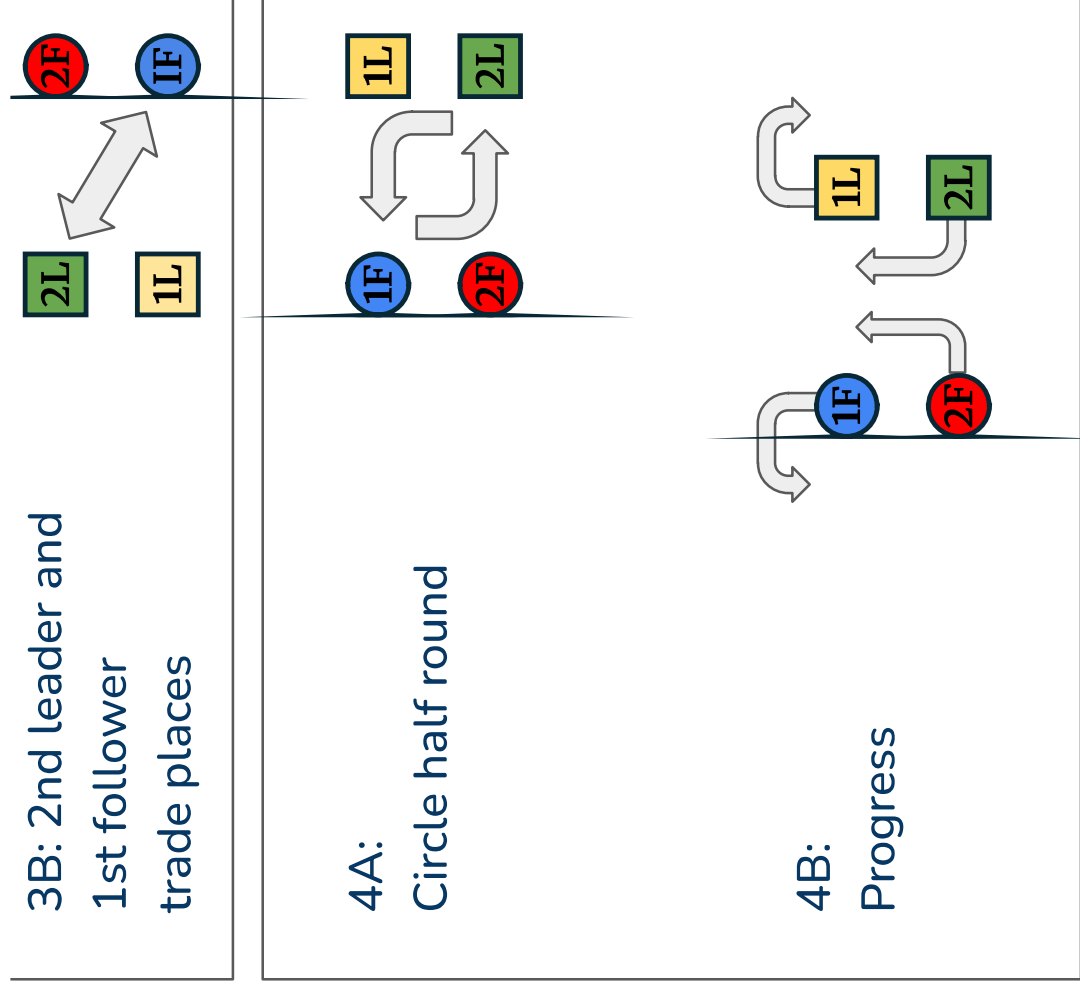
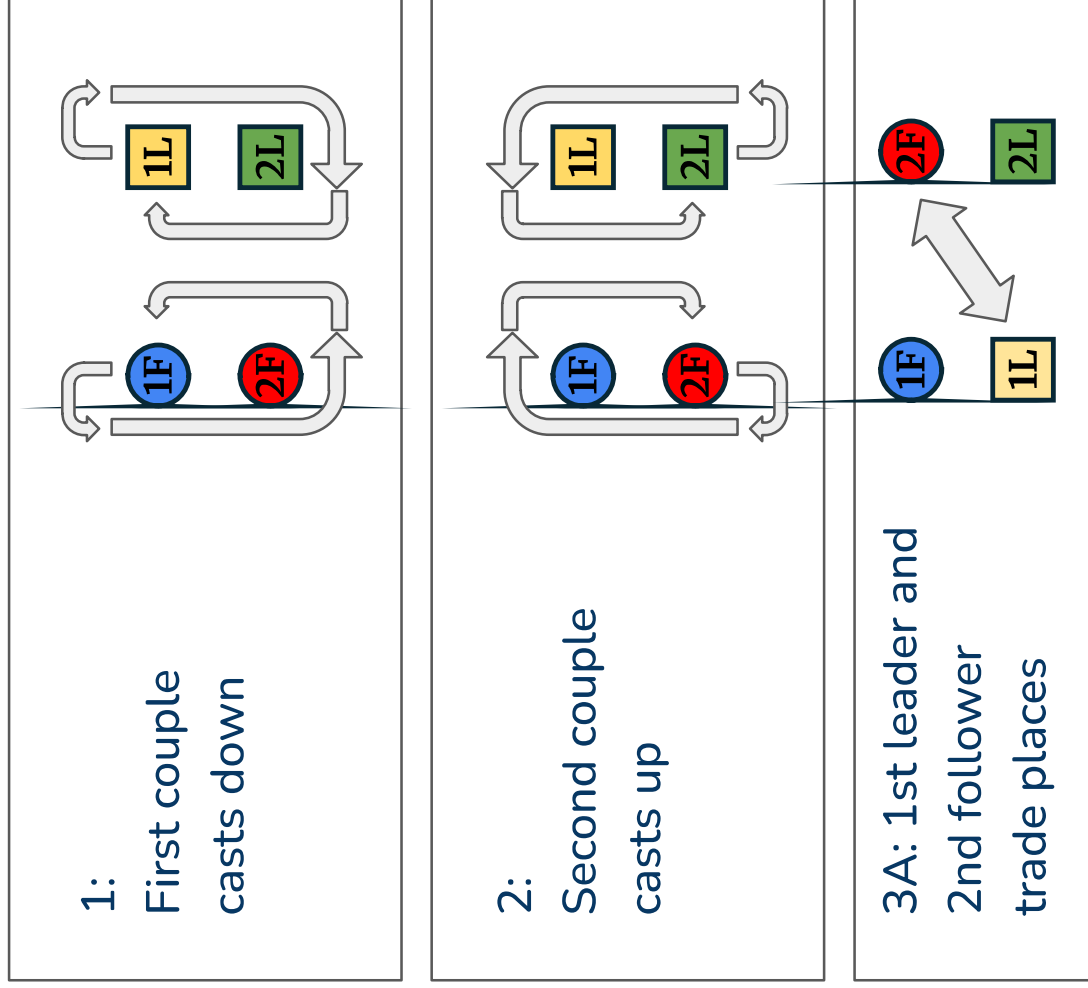
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Hole in the wall



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Letters

Followers ask one or two to exchange letters.

- Writing
- The postman comes
- Reading

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.

*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

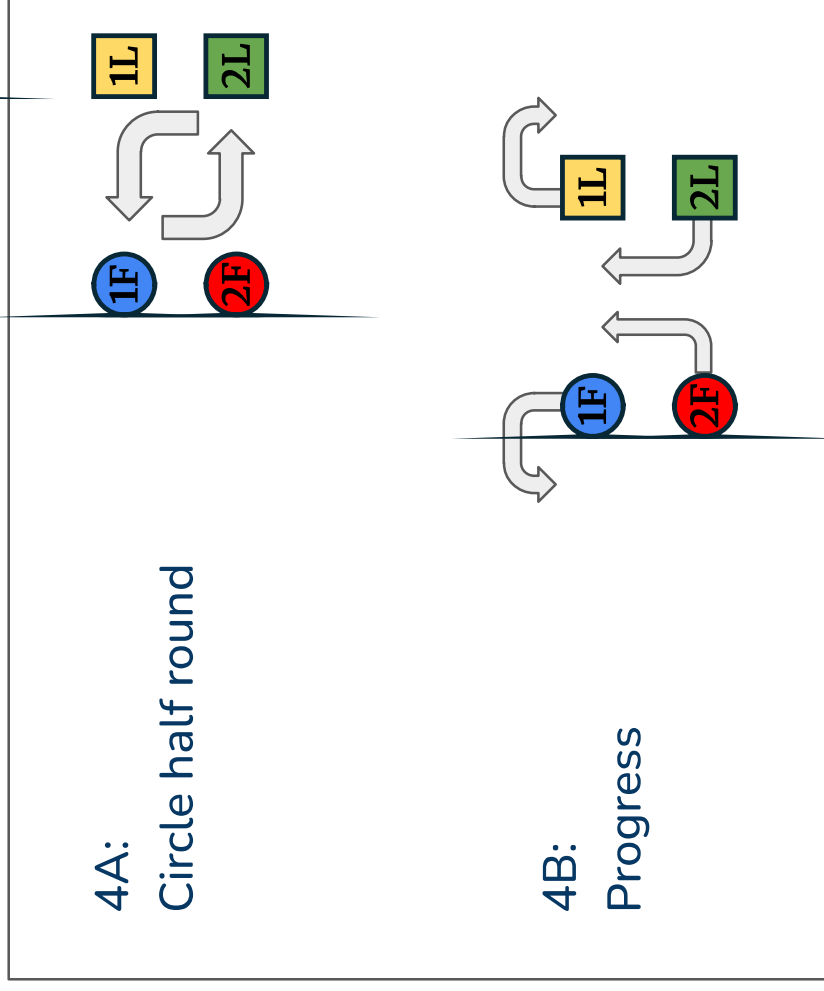
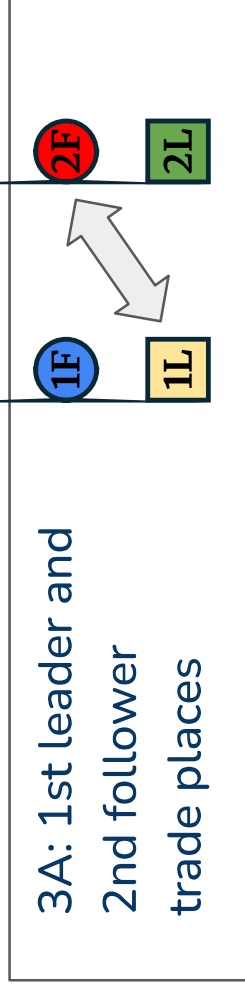
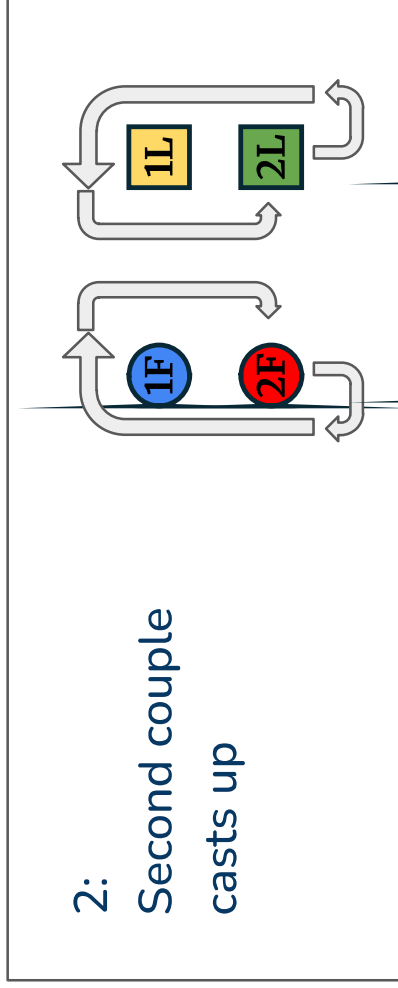
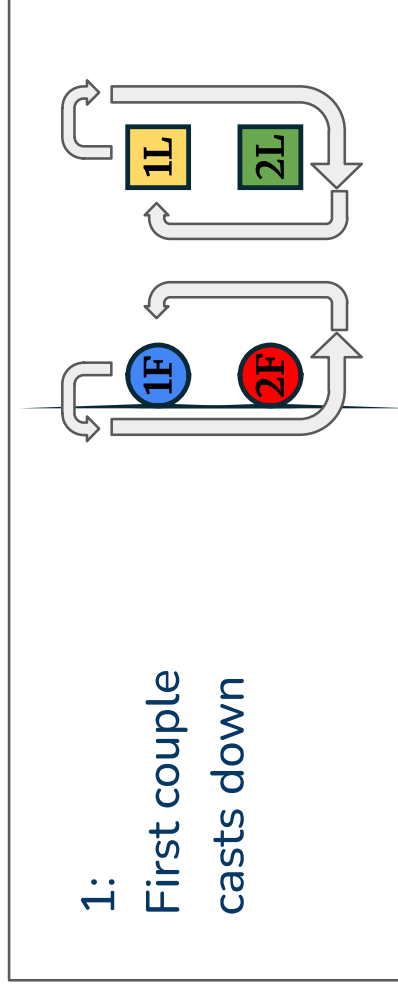
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Visits

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

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Keep hands to oneself

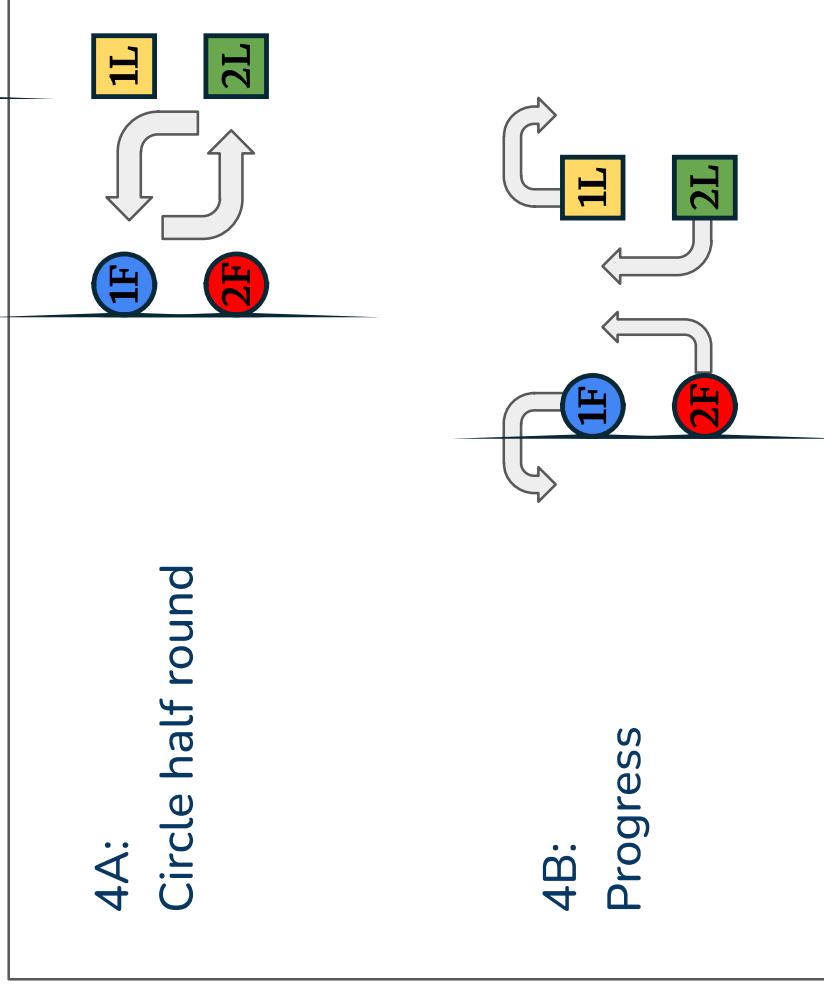
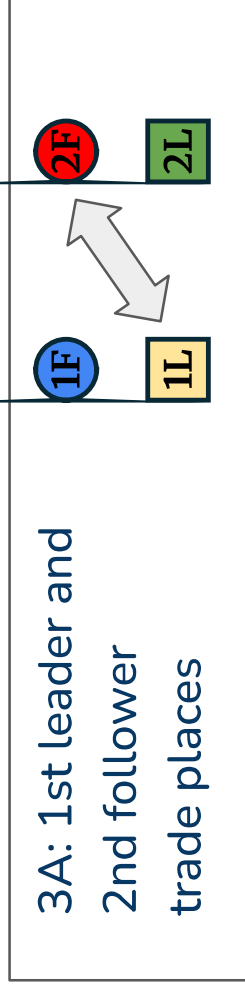
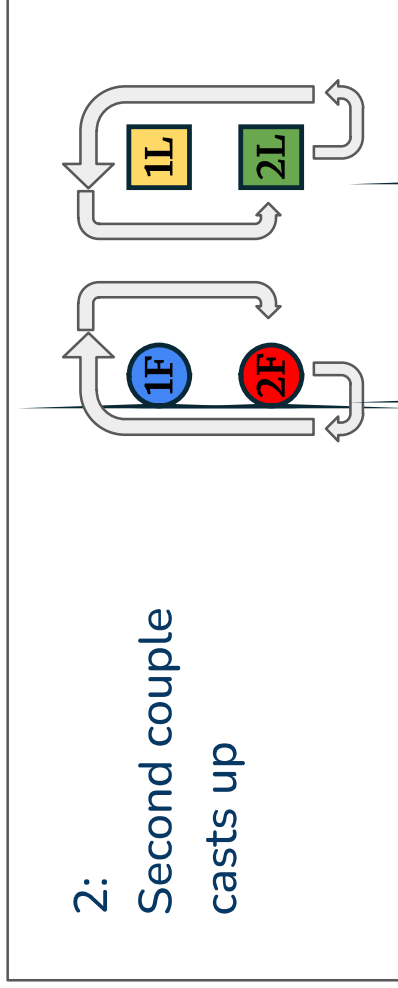
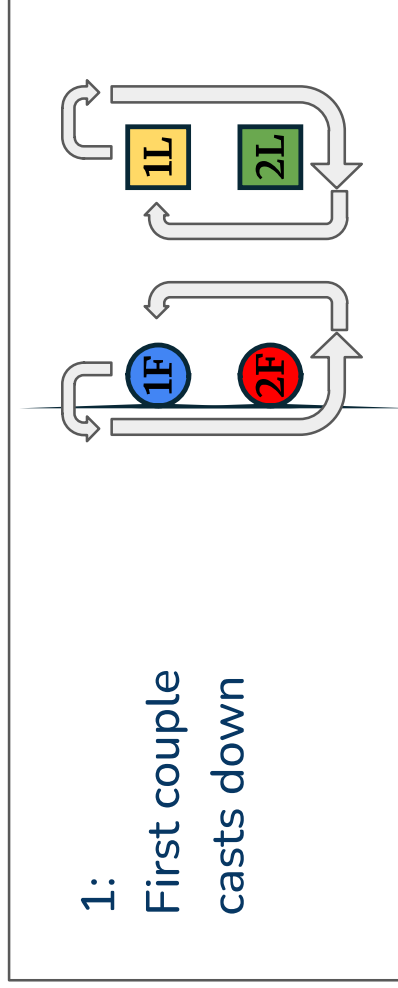
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The Finale

Announcement of who will get to marry

Wedding March

Final farewell



The End

