



DEADLY
DOWAGERS

Rules



"Have you heard about old Agatha?" Vera, the village gossip, asked Florence. "I heard she just got remarried."

"That was after the coroner cleared her; just another weak heart," responded Florence.

Vera snorted. "Her husbands do seem to suffer from that malady consistently."

"And to be engaged again so quickly—that's barely enough time for proper mourning," Florence said.

Vera nodded thoughtfully. "This one at least has a proper fortune; maybe he'll fare better."

Perhaps Agatha is onto something, thought Dahlia, as she strolled past the two gossips on her way to the market. After all, with her own holdings, she could never aspire to marry someone as wealthy as Duke Randolph, who was rumored to be waiting for a proper and wealthy wife. How else was a woman to build wealth except by marriage, when they are barred from most employment? Dahlia resolved to call on Agatha to see if she would impart some marriage advice to an aspiring young woman.

Overview

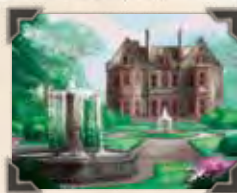
You play as a middle-class Victorian woman who would kill to be a duchess. Since you were not lucky enough to be born into the aristocracy, the only way to attract a noble is to have a large enough dowry. Fortunately, when your parents died, they left you with a small dowry and some land. You must build wealth through investments and strategic serial marriages. Be careful not to gain too much infamy, or the duke may pass you over for another bride!

Objective

Be the first person to marry the Duke!

Minnie Wallace

Lovely 16-year-old Minnie married 48-year-old James Walkup; one month later, he was dead of arsenic poisoning. Later, she married John Ketchum; twelve days later, he died of alcohol poisoning. Eventually, she took a lover named DeLancy Louderback; while she was in Europe, he died from cyanide poisoning. She inherited a quarter of his estate.



Components



Setup

- Sort Husband cards by Dowry cost and Crown tokens by value and place in piles face-up in reach of all players. These represent the pool of available Husbands and the bank respectively.
- Each player gets one player board, one Infamy track token, and 5 Crowns.
- Place the Infamy track token on the zero space of the Infamy track on your player board.
- Shuffle the Starting Farmland cards and pass 2 to each player. Return the remaining cards to the box; they will not be used in this game. Each player places the 2 Starting Farmland cards face up in front of them to begin their tableau.



Working-Class Husbands



Noble Husbands



The Duke

Draw Pile



5. Shuffle the Main Deck cards and place face down within reach of all players.
6. Each player selects a working-class Husband card (Farmer, Curate, or Professor).
 - a. Place the Husband card next to your player board.
 - b. Pay the Dowry for that Husband card to the bank.
 - c. Adjust your Infamy by the amount of Infamy gained from this marriage. (Nobles are less willing to marry someone associated with the working class, but you must start somewhere.)

Infamy Tracker

0 → 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18

1 First, you **Draft** some suitable options.

2 Then, **Invest** in various lands, charities, extra-marital relations, and other business ventures. Play in any order, as many as you desire.

3 After that, it's time to deal with your **Husband**. You may play or or and for **do one** of the following, in any order:

- Promote your Husband, by paying 3 the 1st time.
- and the 2nd time, OR
- Strangle Your Husband, gaining 7 OR
- Elope with a new Husband to gain 3 afterward.

If your Husband dies, resolve and then discard all from your tableau before continuing.

4 Lastly, you must be sure to tend to your **Housekeeping**. You may only keep 3 cards in your hand before the next draft.

When she's not reading Mrs. Beeton's Book of Household Management, Cecily indulges in serial novels and has been known to delve into a penny dreadful or two. She prefers stories about revenge. The best authors always have the most inventive uses of household objects.

To start, you may only own 4 cards. After marrying your first Noble, you may own 5 cards.

Starting Husband

2 GAIN 20 **Professor Report**

During Settling of Accounts, one fewer Shipping card needed to act.

Professor: 10

Dean: Chancellor: 30

Promotion Token



Starting Crowns
(after paying
Husband's dowry)

Player Board

Farmland 2

Farmland 2

Starting Farms

Mary Ann Cotton

When the strikingly beautiful Mary Ann Cotton married William Mowbray, she looked forward to an easy and comfortable life. A decade and eight children later, she was looking forward to William's large inheritance. Her husband tragically and unexpectedly died of "gastric fever." She then met and married George Ward, but he sadly died the following year of the same ailment. Her next two husbands followed suit, but it wasn't until her stepson died of "gastric fever" that she was convicted as Britain's first serial killer. Her weapon of choice? Arsenic.



Gameplay

Gameplay is divided into rounds; each round consists of four separate phases: the Drafting phase, the Investment phase, the Husband phase, and the Housekeeping phase.

During each phase, players act simultaneously.

Overview of a Round

- **Drafting phase:** Each player draws five cards from the Main Deck and drafts four while passing.
- **Investment phase:** Each player may play Venture and Land cards by placing them face up in their tableau. Players may also play any Instant cards and use special abilities on Husband cards.
- **Husband phase:** Each player may play one Cause of Death *or* one Remarry card, in addition to taking any *one* other Husband phase action.
- **Housekeeping phase:** Each player discards down to three cards in their hand. Flip the Draft Rotation token to the other side.

Drafting Phase

Players each draw five cards from the Main Deck; order does not matter. Choose one card for your hand and pass the remaining four cards to the player on your left. Choose one card from the four new cards in your hand, and pass the remaining three cards to the player on your left. Choose one card from the three new cards and pass two to the player on your left. Finally, choose one card from the two new cards in your hand and discard the final card, face up in the discard pile. At the end of each Drafting phase every player should have four new cards in addition to any cards left over from the previous round.



Each round, alternate the direction you are passing cards during this phase, so on the second round, pass cards to the right, the third round, pass to the left, etc. Use the Draft Rotation token to keep track of the direction.




If there are not enough cards in the deck for all players to draw, shuffle the discard pile and place it face down to form the Main Deck.

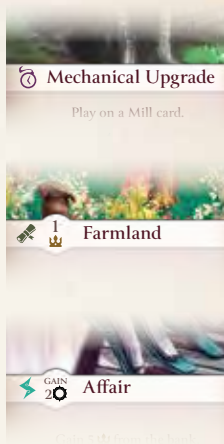
Ethel "Le Neve" Neave

Though Ethel was young when she met Dr. Crippen, she could tell he would make a fine husband. The only thing standing between her and a lavish lifestyle was Mrs. Crippen. Lucky Mrs. Crippen fit nicely beneath the brick floor basement of her North London townhouse. Crippen and Ethel fled across the Atlantic dressed as father and son. But the Captain saw through their disguise. Dr. Crippen hung for the murder... Ethel was acquitted and quickly started a new life in Toronto.

Investment Phase

During this phase, each player may play Venture, Land, and Instant cards from their hand. Play any number of cards from your hand in any order. All players play simultaneously during this phase. Pay any required cost of a card to the bank before playing that card:

-  Ventures are played face up into your tableau. These pay rewards after your Husband dies, but are also discarded at that time.
-  Land is also played face up into your tableau. You may have up to 4 Land cards in your tableau at the beginning of the game. This increases to 5 Land cards once you have married a noble husband, and will remain at 5 for the rest of the game. Land is not discarded when a Husband dies.
-  Instants are played for their effect and then placed into the discard pile.



See the Card Index (page 11) for more details.

Players may also use the special abilities on the following Husband cards during this phase only. You may use these abilities more than once per Investment Phase.

- Baron: Discard a Land card from your tableau to gain 2 Crowns from the bank.
- Curate: Discard a Remarry card from your hand to gain 5 Crowns from the bank.
- Farmer: Discard a Farmland card from your hand to gain 3 Crowns from the bank.

Players may discard any cards from their hand or their tableau during this phase. For example, you may discard a Land card to make room for a different Land card. Any improvements to a discarded Land card are also discarded.

Players may take any number of the above actions during this phase in any order.

Land Cards

You start with the ability to have up to 4 Land cards in your tableau, including your Starting Farmland cards. After marrying a noble husband, you may have up to 5. The death of a noble husband does not decrease your possible land plots, even if you have not filled them yet. You may never have more than 5 Land cards in your tableau at any time. You may discard Land cards from your tableau, but only during the Investment Phase. Any Venture cards on them must be discarded as well. Starting Farmland cards that are discarded are not placed in the discard pile, but are removed from the game.


Husband Phase

During this phase, each player may perform one or both of the following **in any order**. All players act simultaneously in this phase.

▪ Each player may play exactly one card:

- A **Cause of Death** card, indicated by , if you have a husband. What happens when a husband dies is explained on page 9.

-OR-

- A **Remarry** card, indicated by , if you do not have a husband. Choose a new husband and pay the necessary Dowry to the bank. Husbands do not have to be married in any particular order, as long as you can afford the Dowry. You cannot marry a husband if there are no cards of that type left in the pool of available husbands.

- If this is a working class husband (Farmer, Curate, or Professor), you must also increase your Infamy by the amount indicated on that Husband card. For example, when marrying a Professor, increase your Infamy by 2.



- If this is a noble husband (Knight, Baron, Viscount, Earl, Duke), you must also meet the Infamy requirement on that Husband card. For example, to marry a Knight, your Infamy must be 13 or lower.



- These husbands are shallow creatures and will marry the first player to pay the appropriate Dowry. If there is still a dispute on timing, decide with a coin flip or other random method. (*This does not apply to marrying the Duke. See End of Game on page 10*).

▪ Each player may take **one** of the following actions (no card required):








- **Kill a Husband:** You may strangle your current husband. This increases your Infamy by 7. You may choose this option even if you have just played a Remarry card during this Husband phase. What happens when a husband dies is explained on page 9.
- **Elope:** If you are unmarried, marry a new husband and increase your Infamy by 5, after the wedding. This means you can still marry a husband if the Infamy you gain would bring you over his limit, as long as you are below the limit before the marriage. You may choose this option even if you have played a Cause of Death card during this Husband phase. The same Dowry, Infamy requirements, and Infamy penalties apply as when you play a Remarry card (see above).

You cannot Elope with the Duke.

- **Promote a Husband** (Curates and Professors only): You may only advance your husband by one level per Husband phase. Pay 3 Crowns to the bank to advance your husband by one level to become a Reverend or a Dean. Pay 5 Crowns to advance your husband a second time to become a Bishop or a Chancellor. Use a Promotion token to mark career advancement.

When a Husband Dies

When you play a Cause of Death card or kill your husband by strangling him:

- Increase your Infamy by the amount indicated on the Cause of Death card or by 7 if you strangled him.
- Increase your Infamy by the number of Husbands that were already in your Graveyard, not counting your current victim.
- Trigger **Settling of Accounts**: the  on Husband cards and Venture cards indicates what you collect when your Husband dies. Crowns are collected from the bank.
 - Collect the inheritance willed to you on your Husband card, indicated by the . Check to see if your Infamy level is 10 or higher. If so, reduce your total inheritance by 5 Crowns.
 - You use your husband's death as a cover to settle your business dealings and to increase your cash on hand. Collect money due from your Venture cards  and Land cards , indicated by the  on those cards. You can find additional information in the Card Index on page 11.
- Discard all Venture cards  in your tableau and discard the Cause of Death card  if you played one to murder your husband.
- Place your Husband card face down in your tableau, next to your player board; this is your Graveyard.



Example: Mabel dispatches her husband the Reverend Archibald with her trusty Hat Pin. She gains 2 Infamy for this, raising her Infamy from 4 to 6. She adds 1 Infamy for the husband already buried in her Graveyard, raising her Infamy to 7. Since her Infamy is 10 or less, she can collect her full Inheritance. She collects 15 Crowns from the bank for the Inheritance because Archibald was promoted to Reverend, 3 for her Shipping Investments, and 4 Crowns for her Farms. She keeps her Farms in her tableau and discards her Shipping Investments. She turns the Reverend Archibald card over and adds it to her graveyard.

Infamy

Infamy represents your reputation and suitability for marriage. Each player starts the game with zero Infamy. Players gain Infamy when marrying a working-class husband, killing their husband, or playing Affair and Rumors cards. The number of Husband cards in your Graveyard increases how much Infamy you gain when killing your husband.

A certain level of Infamy is tolerated, but at higher levels your in-laws pressure your intended not to marry you, to cut you out of his will (this can even happen posthumously), or raise so much suspicion that you are investigated by the police. For instance, if you have 10 or more Infamy, the Duke will not marry you, and you will also receive 5 fewer Crowns in inheritance when a husband dies. Other nobles have varying tolerances for Infamy as noted on their cards.

You may not perform any action that would raise your Infamy above 18, as the circumstances and rumors would become so prevalent that the police would be forced to investigate, and the Duke would no longer entertain your calls.

Housekeeping Phase

If a player's hand exceeds 3 cards at this time, the player must discard down to 3 cards. You may have more cards in your hand at any other time, this is only checked during the Housekeeping phase.

End of Game

The game ends when one player has no current husband, no more than 9 Infamy, spends 120 Crowns, and plays a Remarry card to marry the Duke. That player wins. You may not Elope to marry the Duke.

Ties

If 2 or more players are able to marry the Duke during the Husband phase, by having no husband, no more than 9 Infamy, the necessary 120 Crown dowry, and a Remarry card, the player with the most money left wins. In case of a further tie, the player with the least Infamy wins. Any further ties should be settled in a rematch of the game.



Marie Manning

Marie Manning and her husband Frederick agreed that she should stop seeing her wealthy ex-lover. Obviously the best way to end that relationship was to remove him from the world of the living. No one could have predicted that Marie and Frederick would double cross each other in an attempt to steal the dead man's railway shares and money. Marie and Frederick hung together for their crimes.

María Swanenburg

Nothing should get in the way of a woman's inheritance. Marie so kindly cared for the elderly and sick in her neighborhood that she acquired insurance policies on 102 of them. If only old age killed as quickly as arsenic.

Card Index

Husband Cards

Working-class husbands increase your Infamy upon marriage. Noble husbands require your Infamy to be less than a certain level (in addition to the Dowry) or they will not marry you. Marrying a noble husband allows you to permanently increase the number of Land cards in your tableau from 4 to 5.

Baron: (Noble) Allows you to sell (discard) any Land card from your tableau for 2 Crowns each during the Investment Phase. Payment is taken from the bank. Starting Farmland cards that are sold are removed from the game; all other Land cards that are sold are placed in the discard pile.

Curate: (Working Class) Allows you to discard a Remarry card to gain five Crowns from the bank during the Investment phase. Curates can be leveled up during the Husband phase by paying 3 Crowns to become a Reverend, and 5 Crowns to advance from Reverend to Bishop. Use a Promotion token as a reminder. Each increase in level provides a greater inheritance when they die.

Duke: (Noble, Victory) When you marry the Duke, you win the game. You must play a Remarry card to marry the Duke; you cannot Elope with him.

Earl: (Noble) Doubles all Infamy reduction. For example, when playing a Charity card to lower your Infamy, reduce your Infamy by 4 instead of 2. Infamy cannot go below zero. Infamy reduction does not apply to previously played cards (such as Estate cards already in your tableau).

Farmer: (Working Class) Allows you to sell (discard) Farmland cards from your hand (not your tableau) for three Crowns each during the Investment phase. Land cards that are sold are placed in the discard pile, and payment is taken from the bank.



Knight: (Noble) Allows you to play Charity cards for free (i.e. do not pay another player).


Professor: (Working Class) Allows you to claim Shipping card sets with one fewer Shipping card. You turn in Shipping card sets for Crowns when Settling Accounts after your husband's death. Professors can be leveled up during the Husband phase by paying 3 Crowns to become a Dean, and 5 Crowns to advance from Dean to Chancellor. Use a Promotion token as a reminder. Each increase in level provides a greater inheritance when they die.

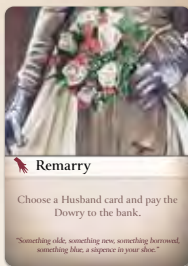
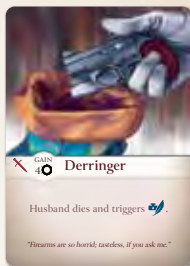
Viscount: (Noble) Allows you to play Affair cards without gaining Infamy.

Husband Phase Cards

You may only play 1 of these per Husband Phase.

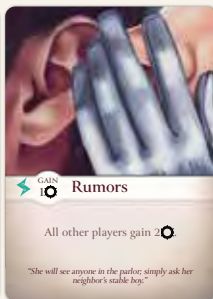
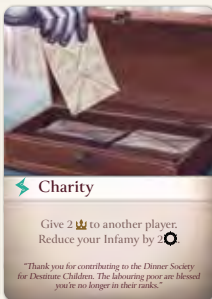
Cause of Death : You must have a husband to play this type of card. Playing a Cause of Death will increase your Infamy and trigger a Settling of Accounts . See **When a Husband Dies** on page 9.

Remarry : If you are currently unmarried, you can play this to marry a new husband. Noble Husband cards have a maximum Infamy requirement. Working class husbands increase your Infamy. Pay the Dowry to the bank and place your new husband in your tableau. Then discard the Remarry card.



Instant Cards

Instant cards can only be played during the Investment phase. They have an immediate effect and are discarded once resolved.



Affair: Playing an Affair card is one of the few ways to acquire money without killing your husband. Increase your Infamy by 2 and take 5 Crowns from the bank.

Charity: Playing a Charity card lets you spend a little money to improve your social standing. Pay 2 Crowns to any other player to decrease your Infamy by 2.

Rumors: Playing a Rumors card increases all other players' Infamy by 2, and you gain 1 Infamy.

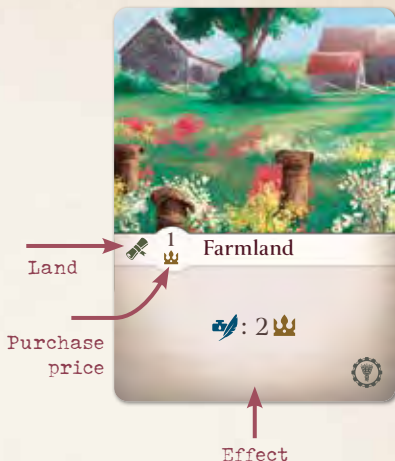
Emma Cunningham

The beautiful young widow Emma Cunningham inherited property and benefits worth \$10,000 from her husband George, but she knew the sum would not allow her the life she desired. She focused her energies on Dr. Harvey Burdell, but when she discovered his trysts with female patients and his attractive young cousin, her blood boiled. Harvey was discovered strangled with a garotte and stabbed fifteen times by a left-handed murderer. The left-handed Emma was found not guilty.



Land Cards

Land cards can only be played during the Investment phase. To play a Land card into your tableau you must pay the purchase price to the bank. Land Cards remain in your tableau after Settling of Accounts. Once in your tableau, Land cards can be discarded, but only during the Investment phase. Starting Farmland cards that are discarded are removed from the game instead of being placed in the discard pile. At the beginning of the game, players may have up to 4 Land cards in their tableau. Marriage to a noble husband allows players to permanently have up to 5 Land cards in their tableau.



Estate: Purchasing and placing an Estate card into your tableau immediately reduces your Infamy by 5. Estates can be rented, but have no intrinsic value during Settling of Accounts. Estates remain in your tableau after Settling of Accounts.

Farmland: Farmlands remain in your tableau after Settling of Accounts. Each Farmland generates 2 Crowns during Settling of Accounts. Farmland may be rented to generate additional income during Settling of Accounts, see Venture Cards. The Resource Icons on Farmland have no intrinsic value or effect, but are used to calculate the value of Mill cards, below.

Mill: Mill cards remain in your tableau after Settling of Accounts. During Settling of Accounts, each Mill card allows you to gain 2 Crowns, plus 1 Crown for each matching Resource icon on your Farmland and Rent cards.





Example: There are 3 Resource icons that match this Mill, so you would gain 5 Crowns total from this Mill card.

Venture Cards

Venture cards can only be played during the Investment Phase. They are free to play into your tableau and remain there until resolved during Settling of Accounts. They are discarded after a Settling of Accounts.

Mechanical Upgrade: These cards must be played on a Mill. You may only upgrade a Mill twice, once for each Resource icon. During Settling of Accounts, a Mechanical Upgrade doubles Crowns collected for one Resource of your choice on that Mill. You may select which Resource icon the upgrade applies to during the Settling of Accounts. A second Mechanical Upgrade card on a Mill will double the Crowns you receive for the second Resource.





For example, if you add a Mechanical Upgrade to the first Mill card in the image on the previous page, you will generate 2 additional Crowns during Settling of Accounts by selecting to double the . A second Mechanical Upgrade on that Mill would double , generating 1 additional Crown.

Rent: These cards may be played on any Farmland or Estate in your tableau that is not already rented. Rent cards cannot be played on Mill cards and you may not play more than one Rent card on another card. During Settling of Accounts, you collect 4 Crowns for each Rent card you have in play. Each Rent card has one Resource icon that only affects how much money is collected for Mill cards. The Resource icon does not have to match the Farmland or Estate (Estates have no Resource icon).

Shipping: These cards represent investments that are a little uncertain. You must collect a set of at least 3 Shipping cards to gain money. Once you collect 5 Shipping cards, you must start a new set in order to keep collecting. You cannot start a new set if you have an incomplete set. During Settling of Accounts, calculate for each set, not each card. For example, a set of 5 Shipping cards will gain you 12 Crowns in total, not 60! If you are married to a Professor, your sets of Shipping cards act as if they have one more Shipping card.

Shipping		Total Shipping Cards	Total Award
	1	-2 	
	2	0 	
	3	3 	
	4	7 	
	5	12 	

In most cases, a set of only 2 Shipping cards during a Settling of Accounts will gain 0 Crowns, and you lose your progress as the cards are then discarded. If you are married to a Professor, however, it will act like a set of 3 Shipping cards and gain you 3 Crowns.

Professor Bateman		Shipping				Shipping
During Settling of Accounts, one fewer Shipping card needed per set.		Total Shipping Cards	Total Shipping Cards	Total Shipping Cards	Total Shipping Cards	Total Shipping Cards
	Professor: 10 	1	1	1	1	1
	Dean: 20 	2	2	2	2	2
	Chancellor: 30 	3	3	3	3	3
		4	4	4	4	4
		5	5	5	5	5

While married to a Professor, a set of 4 Shipping cards will count as a set of 5, and be worth 12 Crowns during Settling of Accounts. One more Shipping card will begin a new set, but since you're married to the Professor, it counts as a set of 2 cards and will be worth 0 crowns until you find more Shipping cards.

Lucretia Chapman

Unlike her stout, lazy husband William, the handsome Cuban gentleman Carolino who entered Lucretia's home was charismatic and entertaining. He told tales of his families' silver and gold mines in California, and she rapidly found herself in his bed. Just nine days after her husband's abrupt death from arsenic poisoning, she married Lino, only to discover his fine stories of riches and grandeur were fabrications. They were arrested for her husband's murder, and tried, but Lucretia walked free. Her husband of just weeks hanged at the gallows.



Disclaimer

The historical asides throughout this rulebook are retellings of real events. This game is a work of satire. The designer and publisher of this game do not endorse murdering your actual husband, nor any other murder or violence of any kind.

Symbols



Instant effects happen immediately, and the cards are then discarded.



Ventures remain in play until your husband dies. They are discarded after Settling of Accounts are calculated.



Land ownership is inherited, so these cards remain in play unless you choose to discard them through another effect.



Remarry cards are used to represent a typical courtship that does not raise suspicion.



Cause of Death cards are used to make sure a husband meets a timely demise. Some circumstances are more suspicious than others.



Infamy represents your reputation and suitability for marriage. Each player starts the game with zero Infamy. Players gain Infamy when marrying a working-class husband, killing their husband, or playing Affair and Rumors cards. Add or subtract the indicated amount of Infamy on your Player Board when playing this card or using this effect.



Crowns are the currency used in the game. Unless otherwise stated, money is paid to or received from the bank.



Settling of Accounts occurs when a husband dies. This usually results in a certain number of Crowns being inherited by the surviving widow (paid by the bank).



Resource icons on Land and Rent cards only matter when calculating the effect of Mill cards.

Credits

Game Design: Sarah Shipp

Editing and Proofing: Petra Schlunk, Charlotte Jones, Tim Schuetz, Ian McCormack

Illustration: Mercedes Palacios

Graphic Design: Jared Gannuscio, Cisco Garrido

Additional Graphic Design: Natalie Johnson

Production: Tim Schuetz, Dawson Ellis

Producer: Skye Walker, EJ Granbery

Executive Producer & Publisher: Dan Yarrington

Thanks to our amazing playtesters: Misty Abrams, Joshua Beck, Valentine Callais, Anthony Ciapponi, Christina Cohenour, Josh Cohenour, Alexandra DeFoore, Jason Duncan, Heather Elftman, Geoff Engelstein, Nicole Fende, Amanda Harris, Kayla Hensley, Michael Hensley, Sebrina Hensley, Taylor Hughes, Elora Karim, Tommy Kerbow, Tanner King, Carla Kopp, Jerry LaFevers, Susie Meadows, Tom Meadows, Kathleen Mercury, Brad Merrell, Ariana Montgomery, Robert Montgomery, Fred Morgan, CJ Moynihan, Baylor Peak, Rachel Rindo, Erin Roh-Ciapponi, Elise Royston, Jess Schoonmaker, Ivan Segovia, Caleb Segura, Nadine Sehnert, Mark Shipp, Sheree Shipp, Jillian Sico, Bryn Smith, Jake Sullivan, Val Teixeira, Tina Tempest, Tony Tran, Isaac Vega, Jason Vogt, T. Nikolai Voloshko, Pam Walls, Jeremy Whittington, Dara Wilhelmson, Allison Williams, Dominic Yeager, Tiffany Yeager

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