

PEOPLE
PATTERNS
POSSIBILITIES
BEYOND

A MORE
CONSCIOUS
WORLD
AWAITS



THE VEIL

THE LIVING TABLE

QUICKSTART & PLAYER RULEBOOK

Foundation 85 | Light & Shadow

Alpha Reference A1 • 16 September 2026

Power has a price.
Choices echo across timelines.

QUICKSTART

FOUNDATION 85 • YOUR FIRST GAME

1 TAKE YOUR SEAT

Choose one Main Character.
 85 Main Deck cards; Command stays outside.
 Up to two ordinary family copies.
 Draw 7 cards. Balance starts at 0.
 Start with 1 Time capacity, 1 aligned Energy capacity and 2 Money.
 Your Command sets starting Influence.

2 KNOW YOUR COSTS

Time: commit reusable capacity.
 Light / Dark Energy: pay the exact type.
 Money: spend from your treasury.
 Exhaust is not destruction.
 Ready eligible sources next turn.
 One basic Resource establishment per Resource Phase.

3 PLAY THE TURN

DRAW — ready eligible sources, resolve start effects, draw.
 RESOURCE — establish one basic Resource or pass.
 MAIN — play cards, use abilities, Contest; allow responses.
 EMPIRE → WORLD → END — resolve named effects; discard to 7.

4 WIN THROUGH CONSEQUENCE

Reach 20 Influence at a settled checkpoint; or outlast a Subjugated opponent. At 0 Influence you are Vulnerable, not instantly defeated: the next recovery window matters. After 20 complete rounds, compare the match's pinned Legacy score.
 Balance alone never wins.

This page summarizes Foundation 85, not the old 80-card singleton format.
 Use the full rulebook for timing, targets, Legacy and advanced modules.

Your first match, without the jargon

The Veil is a strategy game about building the people and institutions that give you options, then using those options against another player's position. Your Main Character is your continuing identity. Time and Energy are reusable capacity. Money is spendable wealth. Influence measures your standing; it is not a second currency.

Choose, launch, and inspect

Open Quick Match and choose a starter marked playable. A visible but unavailable deck is a preview of a later release, not a broken selection. Your 85-card Main Deck is shuffled; the Main Character stays outside it in Command. You begin with seven cards. On a phone, select in portrait if convenient and turn sideways for the table. The same match and rules apply on desktop and phone.

Tap or click a card to read it. When the game offers a legal Play or ability action, select it; choose a highlighted target if needed, then confirm. Dragging is an alternate input, not a different rule. An invalid drop or canceled declaration spends nothing. A card in your hand is not automatically playable just because you can inspect it.

What to do on your turn

Refresh eligible sources and resolve start-of-turn effects, then draw. Establish at most one basic Resource in the Resource Phase. In Main, play an affordable card, use an available ability, or Contest an eligible opposing Front holding. Keep some capacity ready when you expect to respond during the opponent's turn. Follow the phase controller to finish the turn; discard down to seven at End, rather than refilling your hand.

What counts as winning? For this Foundation-85 profile, reach 20 Influence at a settled checkpoint, become the last non-Subjugated player, or lead the pinned Legacy score after 20 complete rounds. Reaching 0 Influence makes you Vulnerable and opens a recovery test; it is not instant defeat.

Return to Town leaves the saved match intact. End Match closes an Alpha practice match and lets you start another; it is not a rewind. Availability and exact button wording can change as the Alpha is released. A server-confirmed result—not a video, animation, or browser refresh—determines what happened.

Source basis: S1 §§2, 7–10, 17; S2 format and victory delta; S3 terminal logic; S6 mobile/End Match release.

WHAT THE VEIL IS

Identity. Leverage. Consequence.

A WORLD SHAPED BY YOUR DECISIONS

Lead a Main Character through a world of people and institutions. Build the systems that support you, challenge those that constrain you, and decide what your power is worth. The cards turn those choices into rules; the record preserves what followed.

IDENTITY

Your Main Character begins in Command. Appearance tells a story; the printed rules define power.

CAPACITY

Time and Energy recover. Money accumulates until spent. Commitment has an opportunity cost.

FRONT / BEHIND

The Front faces ordinary Contest. Behind infrastructure needs an explicit effect to target it.

MEMORY

Archive, Void, Cases and future Match Records are different kinds of history—not interchangeable piles.

Light and Dark are fictional alignments, not judgments about real people. The game asks what a choice changes—not whether a color is morally pure.

One living world. Multiple ways to enter it.

How to use this edition

This is an illustrated Foundation-85 Alpha reference, assembled from the supplied VT-0.4 Player Rulebook, the newer Set 2 rules delta, and the release code inspected on 16 September 2026. It updates the old 80-card singleton quickstart without changing the rules of existing saved matches. “A1” is this document’s editorial revision, not a new game engine or catalog release.

You are looking for...	Turn to
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Three kinds of information

Core Alpha rules explain the versioned Foundation-85 game. Catalog examples explain specific registered cards; seeing an example does not guarantee that the card is included in your selected starter. Advanced modules preserve the broader rulebook’s Cases, shared decks, upkeep, and campaign procedures, but must not be assumed active in every digital release.

The inspected release supports a narrower card and mode selection than the full design. Quick Match is the source for which starters are enabled now. A pictured card, a rulebook paragraph, or a catalog row is not an availability guarantee. New cards and additional starters must be released with their actual effects.

Do not mix editions The old Initiation-30 and Foundation-80 rules remain historical formats. The Foundation-85 format uses two ordinary copies, newer Main Characters, separate Front/Behind layers, Balance and the Vulnerable/Subjugation rule. An older match keeps its recorded catalog and rules.

The final pages identify substantive source changes and unresolved edge cases. The document does not silently invent card statistics, promise unreleased systems, or treat a implementation bug as a new rule.

Source basis: S1 edition boundary; S2; S3; S6. See pages 31–32 for the reconciliation record.

Setup & deck construction

Setup item	Foundation-85 rule
Main Deck	Exactly 85 cards, excluding the Main Character.
Command	Exactly one selected Main Character, face up and outside the deck.
Ordinary copies	At most two per mechanical family; an explicitly Unique family has at most one.
Basic Resources	Time, Light Energy, Dark Energy and Treasury may repeat, subject to 85 cards and the selected entitlement.
Identity exclusion	No Main Deck card with the same canonical identity as your chosen Main Character.
Opening / End hand size	Draw seven at setup; discard to seven at End. Draw normally on the first turn.
Starting capacity	One ready Time reserve and one ready Light or Dark reserve, as selected by the format/starter.
Starting Money	2 Money in your treasury.
Starting Influence	Printed/pinned on the Main Character: not universally 5.
Starting Balance	0.
Objective / round cap	20 Influence; 20 complete rounds for Legacy.

The two reserve capacities are public setup markers, not cards taken from your deck. They have their own ready/exhausted state, independent of the Command's ability. They do not count toward your 85 cards, grant collectibles, or satisfy a requirement to control a printed Resource card. Their setup source identity must stay distinguishable from a drawn Resource.

Your collection is what you may use; a saved deck is a selection from it. Alternate art or a renamed printing does not bypass the mechanical-family copy limit. Editing a saved deck or profile changes future matches, not the frozen deck and identity of a running match.

Mixed-alignment decks are allowed. Having a Dual Command does not supply both Energy types for free. The current starter defines its starting attunement; at a physical table, agree that selection before seeing the opening hand. The older rulebook permits one whole-hand free mulligan, but this is an optional format procedure and is not promised as a current Quick Match control.

Source basis: S1 §§2–4; S2 Foundation-85 format and Command delta; S3 opening economy.

Your Main Character is not a hand card



Mireya begins with 5 Influence.



Lucy begins with 6 Influence.

Put your chosen Main Character in Command at setup. You do not draw it, cast it, or wait to summon it from another zone. Its starting Influence initializes your personal track; initialization does not trigger “gain Influence” effects. It begins ready. Its defined passives and activations operate from Command under the match’s legal-action rules.

Command is public and inspectable but is not an ordinary Front or Behind holding. Basic Contest and generic Character/Asset removal cannot target it. A future effect must explicitly include Command or Main Character to do so. A Command can satisfy a simple controlled-tag prerequisite when that tag is part of its definition; this does not make it a normal Character target.

Appearance and identity

Your Academy profile can provide presentation and, later, an authorized render identity. Your portrait, clothing, subscription, or collectible finish does not change a Command’s mechanical template. The match snapshots its definition, starting values and appearance version. The same-identity deck exclusion uses the registered identity key, not just an identical printed title.

Brenn is a separate case Archivist Brenn is an additional Command specification, not one of the five original starter tiles. His printed Energy/Money costs do not become a setup charge. The proposed dual-role use and return-cost discount still need a separate registered interpretation; this guide does not make him an ordinary playable Character by inference.

Source basis: S2 Main Character and final-five delta; S4 Main Character definitions; S1 §3.

Five identities, five strategic directions



Lucy



Jonas



Mireya



Nathan



Azami

Main Character	Start	Registered strategy and signature abilities
Lucy Arlen, Awakened Lucidian	6	Light restoration. The first Light play each turn gains Influence; an Exhaust ability readies a legal controlled Light permanent.
Jonas Arlen, Veiled Architect	5	Infrastructure. Designated Foundations, Shelters and Assets cost 1 less Money, never below zero; Exhaust chooses Money or Influence.
Mireya Arlen, Keeper of Names	5	Community resilience. A Foundation or Shelter supports turn-start Influence; Exhaust readies a legal Foundation or Shelter.
Nathan Mercer, Witness of the Hall	4	Media and response. News Anchor discount; a once-each-turn Influence-loss draw; Exhaust gains Influence.
Azami, Covenant Seeker	5	Dark pressure. First Dark play Money discount; once-each-turn extra Influence loss when an opponent becomes Compromised; Exhaust provides temporary Dark Energy.

These are archetypes, not a guarantee of identical deck power. A legal starter needs working costs, timing, targets, choices and effects on every included card. A disabled tile can remain visible while the remaining rules are implemented; it must not silently launch another deck under that name.

When several decks are enabled, opponent choice can select a different legal starter or a disclosed practice deck. Until then, a mirror match is the honest available matchup. A special bot deck is still bound by normal deck rules, payment, information limits and the same victory conditions; its hidden hand is private, not permission to cheat.

Source basis: S2; S4 Command definitions. Opponent selection is release functionality, not a new game rule.

The card face is one language

READ A CARD



TIME • UPPER LEFT
Commit this much Time to cast.

ALIGNMENT • UPPER RIGHT
Light, Dark, Dual or Neutral.

TITLE + TYPE
Which object and rules family this is.

RULES PANEL
Triggers, choices, targets and effects.

ENERGY + MONEY
Exact additional resource costs.

POWER / RESISTANCE
Only defined statistics grant Contest roles.

RARITY SEAL
Collection tier—not a free power bonus.

Printed face shown: Logistics Crew. Use its registered cost: 1 Time, 1 any Energy, 2 Money.

Read the exact cost and registered effect—not a decorative symbol in isolation. An Action is a one-time effect unless it explicitly leaves something persistent. A Character or Asset is not automatically a source, a defender or a contestant. Power and Resistance exist only where the definition assigns them.

Older Alpha faces contain a few ambiguous glyphs and shortened lines. A stable design ID and definition version resolve those differences. Digital play follows the match's registered definition; the card inspector and this guide should state that definition clearly. Do not invent an ability because the art looks like a weapon or a building.

Source basis: S1 §5; S2 card authority; Logistics Crew: S4 Set 2 number 01.

Time, Energy & Money



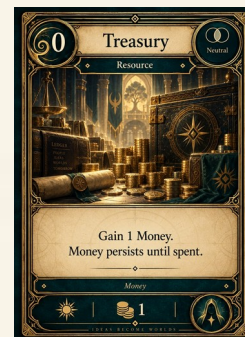
Time



Light Energy



Dark Energy



Treasury

Source	Establish it	Use and recovery
Time	Enters ready.	Exhaust for 1 Time capacity; ready at your next eligible refresh.
Light Energy	Enters ready.	Exhaust for 1 Light Energy; it cannot pay a Dark requirement.
Dark Energy	Enters ready.	Exhaust for 1 Dark Energy; it cannot pay a Light requirement.
Treasury	Gain 1 Money.	The persistent Treasury produces 1 Money on each later controller refresh; spending Money does not discard it.

Establish at most one basic Resource in your Resource Phase while the stack is empty, unless a registered effect grants more and states when. "Zero cost" does not mean you may establish unlimited resources at any time. Non-basic infrastructure is normally cast in Main for its printed costs; it does not use the basic allowance merely because it produces something.

Your available Time or Energy is the sum of eligible ready capacity, not a permanent bank that grows when you pass. Exhausted sources remain on the table and usually recover at your next Draw Phase. Money, by contrast, stays in your treasury until spent or removed. A temporary Energy or Time effect has a type, amount and expiry; it is not a new permanent Resource card.

Treasury face clarification The original Treasury face says "Gain 1 Money; Money persists until spent." The supplied rulebook and inspected economy both also define later refresh income. This reference makes that retained behavior explicit rather than treating the artwork's short text as a complete replacement.

Source basis: S1 §52, 7–9; S3 economy.ts. Printed basic Resource images are Alpha art references.

Pay once. Keep the consequence.

Before committing a card or ability, check timing, prerequisites, modes and mandatory targets. Then choose valid sources for the entire cost. Exhaust the selected Time/Energy sources and subtract Money in one accepted payment. The action enters the stack after that payment. A source cannot pay twice.

Cost mark	What it requires
Time 2	Two eligible ready Time units.
Light 1 + Dark 1	One of each type: two Energy units in total.
Any Energy 1	One eligible Light or Dark unit after exact requirements are satisfied.
Money 3	At least 3 Money; subtract 3 from the treasury.
Exhaust this card	Its ability must be eligible and ready. This is separate from a printed casting cost.

The upper-right alignment mark identifies the card. The Energy cluster defines payment. A Dual alignment is not a universal wildcard, and it does not add a hidden Light/Dark cost. When a cost explicitly lists both Light and Dark, both must be paid. When it explicitly lists any Energy, either may pay. Ambiguous older split symbols must be normalized to registered quantities, not guessed.

Example: a deliberate commitment

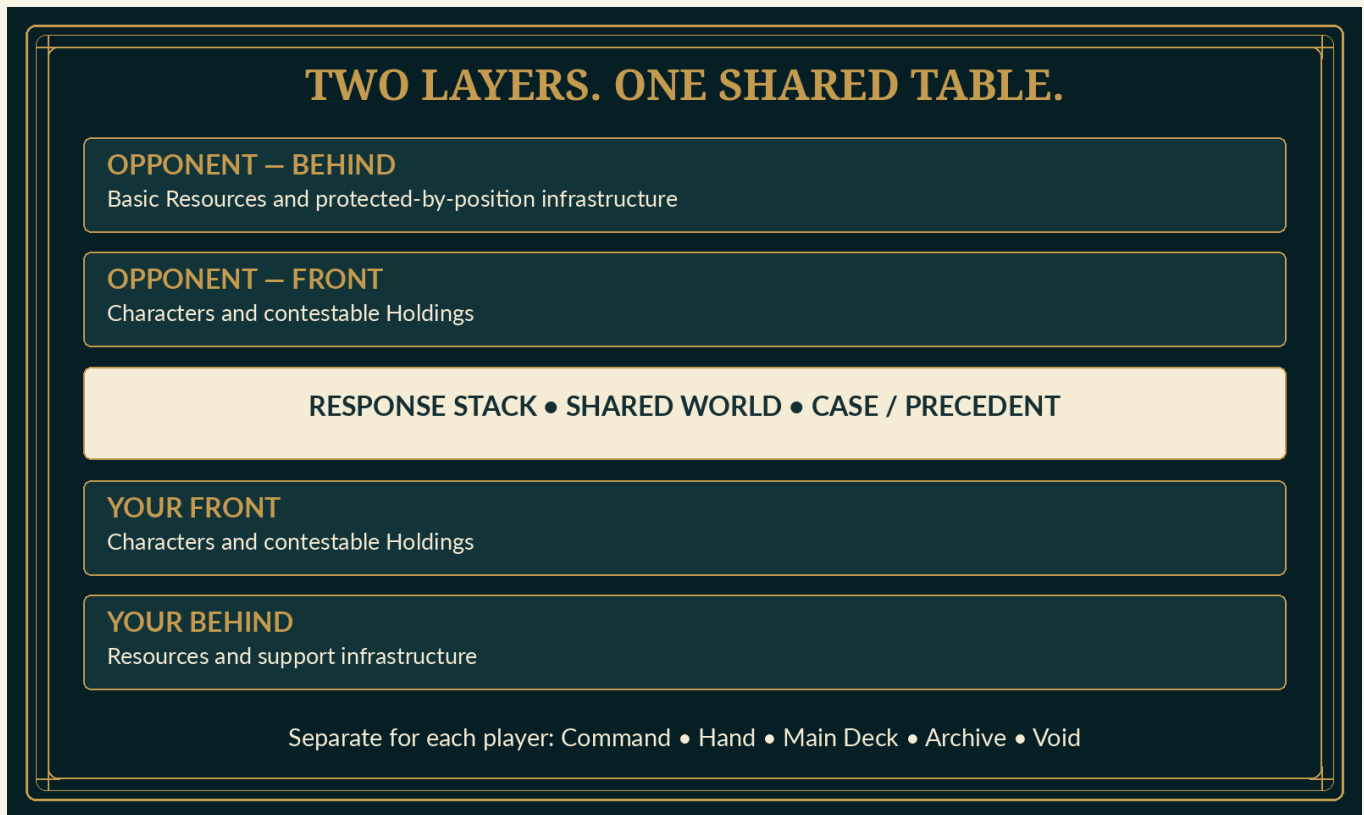
A card costs 2 Time, 1 Light Energy, 1 Dark Energy and 3 Money. Two ready Time sources, one ready Light source, one ready Dark source and 3 Money satisfy it. Three Light sources and no Dark source do not, even though the total Energy count is larger. Exhausting the sources leaves them in play; your treasury decreases by 3.

Cancel before submission and nothing is spent. If the server rejects an illegal declaration, no part of its cost is paid. Once a legal declaration is committed, a later counter or invalidated target does not refund payment. Ready does not refund Money, reverse a previous decision or undo a trigger.

Automatic payment should explain which sources it selects. Where manual selection is available, it lets you reserve an important source for a response. Pure resource provision inside an atomic payment is not a response window halfway through paying. An ability that also draws, targets or changes the world follows its own timing.

Source basis: S1 §§5, 7–8; S2 typed-resource delta. Explicit typed quantities take precedence over ambiguous art.

In front of—and behind—the Veil



The Front contains Characters and contestable Holdings: the visible position an opponent may challenge through Basic Contest. Behind contains basic Resources and support infrastructure. Behind is protection by position, not absolute immunity. An effect whose target contract includes Resources, Foundations or cross-layer Assets may still reach it.

Board layer is explicit metadata. “Asset” does not automatically mean Front, and “building” in an image does not supply Resistance. Cascade Crown Casino is a Front Holding; Civic Workshop is Behind infrastructure. Mirecourt Apothecary is a Behind Asset with no printed Resistance. Do not invent a defense statistic simply to make it attackable.

Command remains separate. Your private hand and face-down Main Deck are distinct from the public Response Stack, Archive and Void. Destroy normally moves an object to its owner’s Archive. An explicit Void effect moves it to the separate removed zone. A move between those zones is not a collectible transfer.

Stacking saves space, not identity Similar cards may fan or stack visually. Their quantities, controllers, readiness and conditions remain individually inspectable. A grouped display never merges two cards into one rules object.

Source basis: S2 persistent-board delta; S1 §6; S4 layer metadata.

One turn, six phases

Phase	What happens
1. Draw	Ready eligible capacity and cards, add Treasury refresh income, resolve required start/upkeep effects, then draw one.
2. Resource	Establish up to one basic Resource, or pass. Resolve its entry before continuing.
3. Main	Play legal Main cards, use abilities, make the turn's permitted Basic Contest, and respond when priority allows.
4. Empire	Resolve only the Empire income/effects actually printed or registered. The illustration does not imply production.
5. World	Finish queued world effects and required judgments. Mandatory choices must be settled.
6. End	Resolve end effects and expirations, choose discards down to seven, settle resulting checks, and finish the turn.

A complete round gives each participating seat a turn and then performs the format's shared-world boundary. In the current inspected Foundation-85 release, there is no approved shared Keeper recipe: the round advances without inventing a world card. See the advanced modules for the fuller shared-deck design.

Readiness is not automatic permission

A basic Time or Energy Resource normally enters ready and may pay immediately. A new ordinary holding normally waits until its controller's next eligible refresh before it can exhaust or Contest, unless its version explicitly grants immediate use. Automatic entry effects and permitted passive/Empire effects follow their own text; they are not the same as an Exhaust activation.

A Treasury pays once when established and once at each later controller refresh. Establishment is not a second refresh. Turn-start effects fire once per actual start; reconnecting or reopening the page must not award them again. If a choice is mandatory, the game waits for it rather than silently picking a card or deleting one.

No hand refill Draw means draw the specified number. End means discard down to the limit. Neither means refill the hand to seven every turn.

Source basis: S1 §§7, 9; S2; S3 Keeper boundary and authority timing.

What kind of ability is this?

Wording	How to understand it
"When this enters..."	An entry trigger. Follow its target and choice rules; it is not an extra manual activation button.
"At the start of your turn..."	A turn-start trigger. It happens once at the actual start, not whenever you refresh the browser.
"Exhaust: ..."	An activated ability. Choose the named legal effect/target, commit the cost, and mark the source used.
"Cards you play cost..."	A static modifier. It applies only to the named category while its source is eligible; Money costs floor at zero.
"The first ... each turn"	A per-turn condition. A different turn can reset it; leaving and reopening the screen cannot.
"If you control..."	Check the actual controlled tags or card classes the effect names—not ownership in your collection.
"This turn"	A temporary effect with a recorded expiry, not permanent card text.

Choose Light or Dark only when an effect asks. Choosing a direction for Balance is not automatically choosing which type of Energy an independent activation will later provide. Selecting a target and selecting a mode can be separate decisions. The interface should show those decisions rather than hide them behind a generic "Activate."

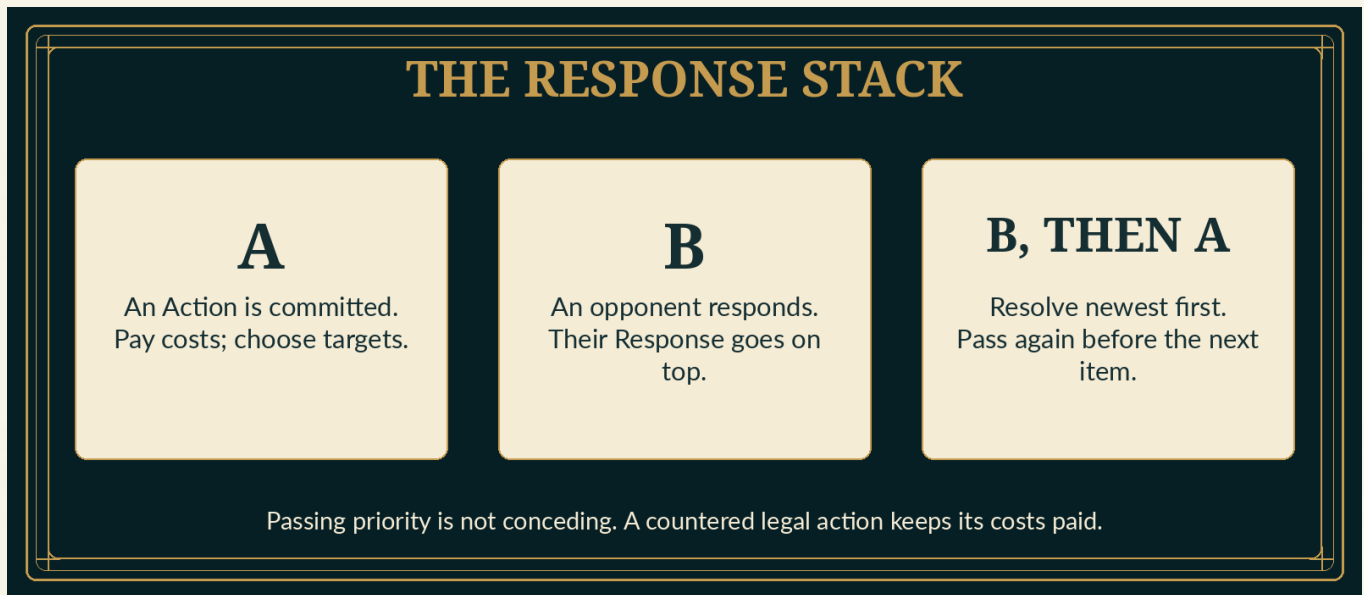
A card may have both an entry trigger and an Exhaust ability. Resolving its entry does not exhaust it unless the entry says so. Conversely, exhausting it later does not repeat the entry trigger. For Mirecourt Apothecary, the entry can restore a controlled Compromised Character or Asset; its Exhaust restoration is narrower and targets a Character.

Flavour and rules are different

A subtype such as Charity, Casino, News Organization or News Anchor becomes mechanically relevant only where an effect queries that tag. The story can explain why a relationship exists; it does not create a hidden bonus. Rarity, dramatic art and philosophical language do not override costs, legal targets or responses.

Source basis: S1 §§5, 10, 12; S2 Earth-system and final-five rules; S4 effect contracts.

Priority: the chance to answer



A Main card normally needs your Main Phase and an empty stack. A Response needs a legal response window. When a player commits a legal declaration, they pay its complete cost, choose required targets and place it on the stack. Priority passes. Each player may make a legal response or pass.

When all players pass consecutively, resolve only the top item—the newest one. Perform its effects and required checks, then offer priority again before the next item. With an empty stack, a full pass cycle advances the phase. A cinematic or fast animation must not remove an actual chance to respond.

Targets may change before resolution

Recheck targets when the effect resolves. If none remain legal, the effect fails without refunding paid costs. If some remain legal, apply the allowed parts unless the effect requires all of them. A triggered ability already on the stack normally survives removal of its source; a static bonus ends when its source ceases to supply it.

Witnessed Accord is a registered Set 2 Case/Response card: its defined protection applies to a controlled Character or Front holding, with a draw. The older rulebook's zero-Time illustrative Accord is not this version. The example face's title does not make it the shared-world Strain Case procedure.

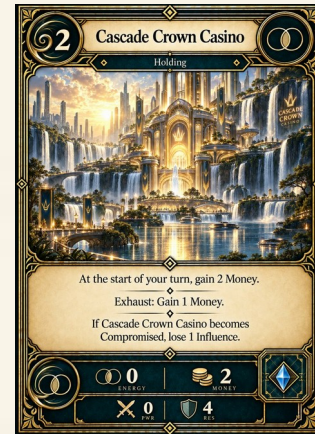
Passing is not giving up Pass Priority means “I add nothing at this response opportunity.” It does not concede the match, end every remaining effect, or automatically discard a card.

Source basis: S1 §10; S4 Witnessed Accord; S3 Foundation timing normalization.

Contest: challenge a position



A Character can be Contest-capable.



A Front Holding can be a Contest target.

There is no ordinary attack on a player's life total. Basic Contest challenges an eligible opposing Front holding. Once in your Main Phase with an empty stack, pay 1 Time and 1 any Energy, exhaust a ready established Front contestant, and declare a legal opposing Front target. The Contest enters the response sequence.

The target's controller receives the defined defender opportunity. A legal ready Front defender may exhaust to help. An active Defender designation forces an opposing Basic Contest to choose an eligible Defender before another protected Front holding. These restrictions do not redirect every targeted spell; follow the effect's actual target contract.

Resolution test Current attacker Power must be strictly greater than current target Resistance plus current defender Power. A tie favors defense. A missing or ineligible defender adds zero.

Success Compromises the target and makes its controller lose 1 Influence. Failure does neither, but payment and the attacker's exhaustion remain. If the attacker or target is no longer legal at resolution, the Contest fails. A second normal success against an already Compromised target does not automatically destroy it.

Example: Power 4 contests Resistance 2 defended by Power 1. Four is greater than three, so it succeeds. With a Power 2 defender, four ties four and defense holds. District Reclaimer is a specific exception: a successful Contest against a target already Compromised before resolution can destroy it to Archive instead, with the normal Influence loss occurring once.

Source basis: S1 §11; S2 Contest and District Reclaimer delta; S4 statistics.

Conditions are not zones

State or action	Meaning
Ready / Exhausted	Whether the relevant source or ability is currently available. Exhausting does not destroy or archive it.
Compromised	A condition. The retained rule prevents Contest and reduces Power and each printed Empire income amount by 1, minimum zero. Other effects apply only as defined.
Restore	Remove Compromised from a legal Compromised target. This does not automatically ready it.
Ready	Make an eligible source available. This does not automatically remove Compromised or defeat an explicit lock.
Exposed	A public marker; no universal extra punishment unless a card gives one.
Contested	A temporary marker while a dispute/Contest is pending.
Dormant	In an enabled module: no production, activations, Contest or static benefits while dormant.
Seized	Control changes, not ownership. See the advanced control rules.
Destroyed	Move to the owner's Archive unless the effect states another destination.
Sent to the Void	Move to the separate removed zone; ordinary Archive retrieval cannot reach it.

A card can be both exhausted and Compromised. Removing one condition does not silently remove the other. A one-turn activation ban is not necessarily Compromise, and a skipped refresh is not permanent destruction. Duration, source and target must remain recorded independently.

Behind infrastructure is not an ordinary Contest target, but a legal cross-layer effect may Compromise or remove it. An effect that names “a Resource” does not automatically include setup reserve markers. Money points are not physical cards and cannot be rescued from an Archive.

Avoid the double consequence “If already Compromised” examines the relevant pre-resolution state. An effect cannot first Compromise a healthy card and then pretend it was already Compromised to claim the extra penalty.

Source basis: S1 §56, 11–12; S2 board, conditions and final-five delta. Unreleased conditions remain module-gated.

Balance, Influence & agency



Balance starts at 0 and stays between -100 and +100. Negative is toward Dark; positive is toward Light. Only a registered effect moves it. Simply playing a Dark Resource, controlling more Light characters, or changing a portrait does not move Balance in this Alpha. Reaching either end is not a victory by itself.

A direction changes the value, not the player's morality. At Balance -6, moving 5 toward Light produces -1. At +98, moving 5 toward Light stops at +100. "Dark 10 or lower" means a Balance value of -10 or below; it does not mean owning ten Dark Energy sources. A threshold is checked at its defined commitment or resolution point.

Personal Influence is the standing and resilience of one player. Your Main Character sets its initial value; cards and successful Contests can change it. It is distinct from Money, Balance, and the shared realm's Influence. At 20 personal Influence, the Foundation-85 objective is checked after the required sequence settles.

At zero: Vulnerable, not erased

The Set 2 rule replaces immediate zero-Influence elimination with Vulnerable. You receive the next defined recovery window: refresh, start effects, draw and the basic Resource opportunity before the agency check. Recovery above zero clears Vulnerable. If you remain at zero and have no meaningful legal agency at that checkpoint, you become Subjugated.

The check considers available ready capacity, Money, a legal basic-resource recovery opportunity or an immediately usable recovery ability. Merely spending your resources during ordinary play is not an instant loss. A visual meter displays these values; it must not let a user edit authoritative game state.

Source basis: S2 Balance, Influence and Subjugation delta; S3 agency/terminal implementation. See editorial note R5.

How a match ends

Path	Foundation-85 result
Symbolic Fulfillment	A surviving seat reaches 20 personal Influence at a settled checkpoint, or fulfills a separately approved objective.
Domination	One non-Subjugated seat remains after the required recovery and result checks.
Legacy	After 20 complete rounds, finish the pending sequence and compare the version-pinned score.
Practice exit	End Match abandons the current practice session. Starting again creates a new match, not a rewind or replay of rewards.

Current Alpha Legacy

Score Personal Influence + controlled non-resource holdings/infrastructure counted by the match + unspent Money + available ready Time units. The wider rules add 2 per resolved Divine Path; the inspected Alpha has no Divine Path operations, so that term is zero.

Command is not an ordinary scored holding. Basic Resources are not scored as holdings. Ready Time is a capacity term, including available setup Time where the release includes it; it is not the old banked-Time currency. Balance, card rarity, real money, Account Gold and collectible prices do not add points.

Example: 11 Influence, four counted holdings, 6 Money and two ready Time units give 23 Legacy. If a later approved scenario also records one resolved Divine Path, its specified term can add 2. Equal highest scores share the result/draw under the format; no undocumented tiebreaker is invented.

Resolve first, judge second

The result is checked after pending stack items, required triggers and choices settle. A brief threshold crossing during an unresolved sequence is not necessarily final. Zero Influence in this profile is Vulnerable, not the old immediate elimination rule. A software error or safety limit is not permission to invent a winner.

Failed Main Deck draws cause increasing fatigue: lose 1 Influence on the first failed draw, 2 on the second, and so on. The Archive is not shuffled in to avoid fatigue. Multi-draw failures are applied in order. Refreshing a result or reopening it never creates a second reward.

Source basis: S1 \$15 retained with S2 changes; S3 settleCandidateTerminal and candidateLegacyScore. Formula difference is explicit in R6.

Archive, Void & return



Restore a condition.



Move a legal Compromised card to Void.



Return a legal own Void card to hand.

Archive is the normal destination for used Actions/Responses and destroyed owned cards. Void is a distinct removed zone. An effect that retrieves from Archive cannot reach Void unless it explicitly says so. Both are separate from your collection: destroying a game object does not burn a collectible or delete the owned card design.

The three-step example

First, Exposure Directive legally Compromises an opposing Character or Holding. If it was already Compromised immediately before resolution, apply the defined additional Influence loss. Its News Organization/Compliance condition is a separate draw condition.

Second, Severance to the Void requires a legal Compromised Character or Asset. It moves that card into its owner's Void. Its conditional Balance shift follows the target's registered alignment. Use the registered Dark Energy cost; an older decorative footer glyph is not permission to pay Light instead.

Third, Resonant Retrieval chooses a legal Character or Asset from your own Void and returns it to your hand. It does not put it directly into play. You must later cast it normally. Its additional Light-readying and Character-Influence clauses follow the registered targets and conditions. Returning the object is not an extra draw from the Main Deck.

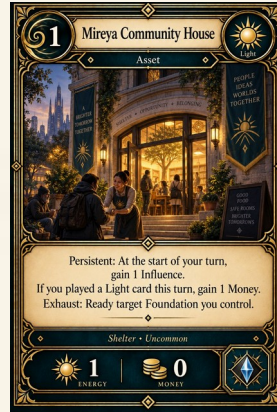
Restoration is different Mirecourt Apothecary removes Compromised from a legal controlled target that is still in play. It cannot restore an absent card out of the Void unless an explicit separate effect says so. Its Exhaust restoration is Character-only and awards Influence only on a successful restoration.

Source basis: S2 final-five delta; S4 definitions 37–40. Illustrations may show earlier shorthand; adjacent registered explanation governs this reference.

A worked community turn



Command



Shelter Asset



Behind Property

Mireya begins the match with 5 Influence. Her Command can gain Influence at the start of your turn if you control a Foundation or Shelter. A plain Asset or a picture of a building is not enough; the registered category must match. Mireya Community House supplies Shelter. Civic Workshop supplies useful income but is not automatically a Foundation or Shelter.

Build the support, then benefit

Suppose you begin a later turn controlling the Community House and Civic Workshop. Resolve each genuine turn-start ability once, in the permitted order: the Workshop gains its Money, the House gains its Influence, and Mireya's conditional start ability can also apply because a Shelter is present. These are separate sources, not one repeatedly replayed trigger.

During Main, a first legal Light play may satisfy the House's once-per-turn Money condition. The House's Exhaust ability readies a controlled Foundation; it does not automatically target itself just because it is an Asset. Mireya's Exhaust ability is broader—Foundation or Shelter—so the Command can ready a legal Shelter under its definition.

Ready does not repeat a start-of-turn trigger and does not remove Compromised. A legal readying sequence can make an Exhaust ability available again when the rules permit, but cannot create an unbounded chain without continued legal conditions and costs. The interface should name the actual ability rather than repeat every paragraph as a button.

What this teaches An institution can supply income while another supplies resilience. The useful question is not “which picture is rarest?” but “which permitted relationship keeps my next decision available?”

Source basis: S4 Mireya Command, Community House and Civic Workshop; S1 trigger/payment rules; S2 tag prerequisites.

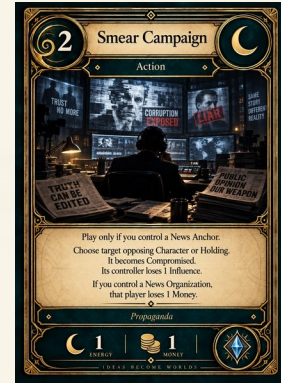
Earth systems: stories become prerequisites



News Organization



News Anchor



A prerequisite-based Action

The Earth cards connect an institution to a person and then to an intervention. A controlled News Organization can enable an ordinary News Anchor. A controlled News Anchor can enable Smear Campaign. The chain uses registered tags; it is not a special hand-built rule for each picture or a real-world instruction to mislead people.

Mirrostream Media Tower supplies the organization role. Ordinary Nathan Mercer has the News Anchor role and its own printed cost, entry draw and activation. Nathan's Main Character version is a different rules object in Command. Its News Anchor tag may satisfy a simple prerequisite, but that does not make the Command a generic Character target.

Other chains use the same structure

A Casino Holding can support Velvet Table Pit Boss. A Foundation or Shelter can support ordinary Jonas Arlen, Quiet Patron. A Light or Neutral Holding can contribute to the stated SafeNet relief condition. Static cost reductions and Resistance bonuses apply only to their named category, end when their source stops supplying them, and do not permanently rewrite a target's base statistics.

A prerequisite that says "Play only if..." is normally checked when declaring the play. It does not automatically destroy the resulting Character when the enabling institution later leaves, unless the registered ability says that continued support is required. The catalog must make those timing choices explicit.

Fictional systems, real questions These relationships make room to discuss media, trust, protection, coercion, care and opportunity cost. Playing a Dark card does not classify the player as a bad person; it explores the consequences of a fictional choice.

Source basis: S2 Earth systems; S4 associated card contracts. These examples are available only where the release enables them.

Board control without invisible rules

Control means changing the opponent's available options, not secretly changing the rules. Compromise, a temporary activation ban, a forced Money choice, a skipped refresh and Void removal are different operations. The game must name which one applies and for how long.

Expose, protect, restore

Exposure Directive provides a Compromise line; its additional penalty uses whether the target was already Compromised. Witnessed Accord provides a specifically targeted Contest-protection line plus a draw. Mirecourt Apothecary provides restoration. None is a general permission to cancel every kind of harm. A "cannot be Contested" protection is not immunity from a legal cross-layer Action.

Pressure requires an actual choice

An opponent-choice card must present only legal options and preserve privacy. Paying Money requires enough Money. Discarding requires a legal card in the relevant private hand. The opponent's selected hidden card cannot be revealed to the other player merely because an AI is helping to decide. If no offered choice is legal, the rule contract must state the fallback; the narrator does not invent a punishment.

Timing can be the strongest resource

A saved ready Light source may permit a Response. Exhausting it for an optional income line may remove that response option. A cheap resource producer can be powerful because of the turns it survives, but it still needs its named timing and any actual costs. The visual effect of a card entering does not itself award an extra resource.

Read the exact version Some Alpha card faces use shorthand such as "combat damage," "Exile," or a generic "Energy" mark. For this Set 2 profile, District Reclaimer's combat wording is normalized to its registered Contest-win effect, and Exile is the Void. Other ambiguous wording stays an explicit editorial issue, not a silent new mechanic.

A rules question should record the card ID/version, target and state before resolution. This is more useful than reconstructing later what a picture seemed to imply. A well-designed fix should update the structured rule, the human wording, and the displayed card/inspector together.

Source basis: S1 §§8, 10–12; S2 normalization and targeting notes; S4 card definitions.

The shared world & the Keeper

The full Living Table design includes three different shared decks: Consequence for complications, Divine Path for openings and reversals, and Keeper for the world's independent response. These are not extra cards in a player's 85-card deck. Their recipes, sizes and triggers belong to the agreed scenario.

In the retained full-table setup, prepare ten Consequence and ten Divine Path cards per player plus a neutral 12-card Keeper deck, unless the scenario explicitly states a smaller recipe. After a complete round and settled sequence, reveal one Keeper card and resolve it once. Ongoing shared cards remain visible for their duration; other cards go to that shared deck's discard.

If a shared draw pile empties, shuffle only its eligible discard back into the same shared deck. Do not recycle unresolved or ongoing cards. An empty shared pile with no eligible discard is recorded as unavailable. Personal Main Decks do not use this recycling rule.

Realm track	Full-module behavior
Influence, Consent, Stability, Memory, Resonance	Each ranges from 0 to 20; named changes clamp to that range.
Population	Calm → Uneasy → Unrest → Revolt.
Case triggers	Examples include realm Influence crossing above Stability, Consent reaching zero, a two-step Population advance, or an explicitly registered violation.
Repeat protection	A threshold latch prevents the same unchanged condition reopening a Case on every check.

Current Alpha boundary The inspected Foundation-85 authority advances a complete-round boundary without an approved Keeper recipe. It does not run the full Consequence/Divine Path/Strain Case system merely because the board displays “Shared World” or “Precedent.” These procedures are retained for future accepted modules and agreed paper/campaign play.

Presentation follows public state. A light effect, story paragraph or later cutscene may express a resolved world event, but cannot reveal a hidden card or supply a mechanical effect that was never committed.

Source basis: S1 §§2, 13; S3 resolveCandidateKeeper. This page explicitly preserves a non-universal advanced module.

Cases, judgments & Precedent

A competitive Case is a finite procedure, not an argument decided by an improvised language-model verdict. Record its initiating event, subject, permitted facts, choices, die, modifiers, outcome and scope. Finish the currently resolving item and retain the remaining stack before starting a mandatory Case.

Retained default: Strain Case

The subject is the controller of the triggering action. An actorless shared-world cause names all surviving seats. In active-seat/clockwise order, each surviving seat may contribute once: pay/exhaust 1 Time for +1, spend 1 Money for +1, do both, or pass. Total positive contribution cannot exceed +3. Printed negative modifiers use the same overall -3 to +3 range; do not charge for a contribution that cannot legally fit.

Roll a d12 using the agreed physical die or recorded server randomness. Apply the modifier and clamp the final value to 1-12.

Result	Judgment	Consequences
1-4	Fracture	Each subject loses 2 Influence; realm Stability +2; record the fracture.
5-8	Mutation	Each subject loses 1 Influence; Stability +1; Watchful Table lasts until the end of the next complete round.
9-12	Absorption	Stability +2 and Consent +1; record absorbed pressure.

Watchful Table adds 1 Time to Basic Contest. Identical effects extend to the later expiry rather than stacking an unlimited surcharge. Seal the judgment, update trigger latches and resume the suspended sequence. Replaying a narration or opening the record does not roll again or apply the result twice.

A Precedent token is a versioned ruling with a stated match or campaign scope. An Asset record token describes a created object with a controller, properties and duration. Neither is an unannounced extra collectible placed in a deck. Overturning a ruling marks its record; it does not erase the history.

Do not confuse two uses of “Case” Witnessed Accord’s card type/timing is a catalog definition. It does not automatically invoke the d12 Strain Case procedure described here. Enable shared-world procedures only through the matching scenario adapter.

Source basis: S1 §14; S2 Witnessed Accord and scenario separation.

Upkeep, control & longer campaigns

Upkeep is printed, not assumed

An ordinary Character does not demand a salary merely because it depicts an employee. Upkeep — N Money is an explicit ability: after refresh income and before the normal Draw, pay N or put the card in its owner's Archive. There is no partial payment and no negative treasury. The game records a mandatory choice rather than letting the player skip it by changing pages.

Cumulative upkeep — N Money adds one tenure counter at each such upkeep, then charges N times the new count. With cumulative upkeep 1, the first payment is 1, the next 2, then 3. Taking control does not reset tenure; genuinely leaving play does. Dormancy suppresses benefits, not an already printed upkeep obligation.

Ownership is not control

Seize changes the controlling player of an in-match object, not ownership of the physical card, digital entitlement or future token. A seized holding becomes newly established for its new controller. A capacity Resource changing control arrives exhausted; Treasury does not repeat its entry payment and next produces at the new controller's refresh. A real leave-and-reenter event instead follows entry rules.

When an attached host leaves, attachments go to their respective owners' Archives under the retained host rule. Merely changing control does not detach them. The selected match version determines participant-departure cleanup; do not import a four-player elimination procedure into the current two-seat practice transport by guesswork.

Physical play and narrative campaigns

A paper table can use matching cards, counters and agreed shared decks without a wallet or internet connection. It must still choose one rules/catalog profile and record its optional modules. A narrative campaign uses the published Lucidian Narrative Engine through its named adapter; Origins, Vectors, lore revelations and roleplay do not silently become competitive stats.

Keep the boundaries This reference preserves the larger game's tools. It does not claim that every upkeep, control-change, multiplayer, campaign or physical-card feature is released in the current online Alpha.

Source basis: S1 §§3, 6, 9, 12, 15, 17; S2 immutable-match boundary.

THE CODEX & PERSISTENT PLAY

THE TABLE KEEPS THE FACTS

A saved match records its cards, versions, choices and results. Lucy can explain authorized information; she does not rewrite the game, reveal an opponent's hidden hand, or create a result for dramatic effect.

WHAT THE RECORD HOLDS

Card identity and editions
Command and player profile
Costs, choices and targets
Turn order and resolved effects
Archive and Void movement
Public precedents and history
The match's actual result

WHAT COMES NEXT

Curated event cinematics
Narrative match summaries
Optional generated Match Films
Private saving in Vault
Optional sharing in Theater
Physical-card companion tools
Consent-aware character media

MATCH □ RECORD □ STORY

The future Narrative Engine selects real turning points, connects approved character and world assets, and makes a cinematic Match Record. Personal Match Records do not automatically alter the published Lucidian canon.

Forward architecture: Match Cinema, Theater publishing, QR/NFC tracking and player card creation are not implied by a saved Alpha match.

Lucy listens, connects, and illuminates. The story remains yours.

Collections, rewards & the Card Forge

In-match Money pays card costs. Account Gold is a separate Academy utility balance. There is no fourth Match Gold allowance in Foundation 85, and buying a product does not import cash into a competitive turn. A card's Money cost, store price, rarity and collectible finish are different fields.

A reward comes from the live versioned reward policy, not from this book's illustration. Earlier tests reported 60 XP and 5 Account Gold, but that does not establish the current Alpha reward amount or even that this release issues account rewards. A repeated result request returns the same receipt rather than awarding again. An abandoned practice match is not a reward-farming shortcut.

Rarity	Consistent identity-panel treatment
Common / C	Veiled-figure seal with restrained bronze/ivory treatment.
Uncommon / U	Silver surround.
Rare / R	Deep green and gold surround.
Mythic / M	Dark steel blue and platinum surround.

Use a letter/name as well as color. Rarity can express specialization and unusual combinations, but is not a guaranteed power multiplier, supply ceiling, resale value or investment return. A special finish does not change the printed mechanics.

Create → inspect → save → publish

The intended Forge takes artwork and locked fields, suggests a thematic title, and compiles effects from supported templates. Actual image understanding requires a working vision adapter. Saving a picture does not publish a card, create an entitlement, debit Gold or mint a token. Publishing requires a validated exact revision and a receipt. Unknown effects remain design requests until implemented.

QR/NFC identifiers, serialized physical editions and a future player Forge are separate features. A decorative seal is not a scannable code. No NFT is required to understand or play the current digital game. Match Films, consent-aware render identities, Vault saving and optional Theater publishing are future extensions over recorded game truth, not substitutes for it.

Source basis: S1 §§16, 18–19; S5 Match Cinema architecture. Product availability stays release-specific.

Common questions at the table

Why do I start with Time and Energy?

The supplied VT-0.4 setup expressly grants one Time and one attuned Energy reserve, plus 2 Money. They are setup capacity, not cards missing from your deck. Their blank early UI was a presentation issue.

Does zero Influence mean I lose instantly?

Not in Foundation 85 Set 2. You become Vulnerable and receive the specified recovery window before Subjugation is tested. Running out of Money or exhausting sources alone does not end a match.

Can I attack the player or the Command?

Basic Contest targets eligible opposing Front holdings, not a life total or generic Command. Explicit card effects can reduce personal Influence.

Can I destroy a card Behind the Veil?

Only when an effect's legal target contract includes that card/layer. Ordinary Basic Contest does not reach Behind.

Does Ready also repair Compromised?

No. Ready changes availability; Restore removes Compromised. A card must expressly combine them to do both.

Why can I not play a rare card?

Rarity is not permission. Check phase, priority, sources, typed costs, prerequisite tags, legal targets and whether that exact definition is enabled.

Why can I not choose every starter yet?

Each playable deck must have working operations on all included cards. Tiles marked Coming Next do not imply the underlying art or concept is missing.

Is the opponent Lucy learning from me?

The current bot is a bounded legal-action policy, not proof of a self-training system. Lucy guidance and future analysis are separate capabilities, with the same information boundaries.

What happens on my phone?

Select the deck, rotate to landscape and use the same saved Alpha game. A mobile failure is an implementation defect to report, not a separate rules format.

Source basis: S1, S2, S3, S6. These answers distinguish rules from unreleased product behavior.

Keep this beside the table

Term	Meaning
Main Character / Command	Your starting public identity outside the Main Deck; ordinary generic targeting excludes it.
Mechanical family	The rules identity for copy limits, regardless of renamed or alternate-art printings.
Front / Behind	Explicit board layers; ordinary Contest targets Front, not all persistent cards.
Any Energy	A generic quantity payable by eligible Light or Dark after exact type costs.
Balance	Personal Light/Dark track, -100 to +100, moved only by explicit effects.
Influence	Personal standing; separate from realm Influence, Balance and treasury Money.
Vulnerable / Subjugated	Zero-Influence warning state / loss of agency after the defined recovery checkpoint.
Exhaust / Ready	Commit and recover source availability; not destruction and not automatic restoration.
Restore / Compromise	Remove or apply the defined condition; distinct from readiness and zone movement.
Archive / Void	Normal used/destroyed destination / separate removed zone requiring an explicit return effect.
Priority / Stack	The chance to respond / ordered pending actions, newest resolving first.
Precedent / Case	Versioned ruling / defined judgment or catalog procedure, not improvised narration.
Catalog release	The exact definition set frozen for the match.
Match Record	Recorded history of play; a later cinematic adaptation must not rewrite that history.

A turn in one line Refresh → start effects → draw → one basic Resource → Main and responses → Empire → World → End/discard → next seat → round boundary.

A payment in one line Check timing, mode and targets → choose valid sources → pay once → commit → allow responses → resolve and record.

When reporting a problem, record the card title and ID/version, the phase, relevant public target/state, match revision, expected behavior and actual behavior. Keep concealed cards, access tokens and private account details out of public reports.

Source basis: Definitions consolidated from S1–S4 and the current owner-directed release scope.

What changed—and what did not

Topic	This Foundation-85 edition
80-card singleton	Replaced for this format by 85 Main cards and two ordinary family copies. Historical formats remain unchanged.
Generic Command templates	The five story Main Characters define their own starting Influence. Brenn remains additional, with unresolved dual-role details flagged.
Starting reserves	Retained: 1 Time, 1 attuned Energy, 2 Money. This was explicit in the uploaded rulebook, not an accidental blank-card grant.
Zero Influence	Set 2 replaces instant elimination with Vulnerable → recovery/agency check → Subjugation.
Balance	Added explicit −100...+100 personal track. No automatic Light/Dark tally and no automatic victory.
Empire / board	Explicit Front/Behind metadata; Behind support does not require invented combat statistics.
Legacy	The inspected Foundation runtime adds ready available Time to the older score. This edition labels that current Alpha rule instead of silently using the old formula.
Shared-world procedures	Preserved as advanced modules. The current inspected Alpha has no approved Keeper/Divine Path recipe.
Rarity / face differences	Registered quantities and effects resolve ambiguous older glyphs. Artwork is not mechanically rewritten by this document.
Mulligan / custom decks / rewards	Do not promise controls or rewards merely because an earlier design includes them.

Open issues, not invented answers

Brenn's nonzero printed Energy/Money, ordinary-deck role and first-Void-return discount require a registered rule before enablement. The Set 2 Legacy description speaks of active holdings while the inspected reducer counts controlled holding/Asset objects; the private release note flags this difference. The agency helper also needs target/payment-aware verification for recovery abilities. This document records the rule intent and the current inspected scoring; it does not silently patch software or certify all edge cases.

These are editorial release notes, not reasons to reset old matches or hold unrelated page improvements. Any actual rules change needs a new pinned definition/release and updated wording together.

Source basis: S1 §§2, 11, 15, 23; S2; S3; S4 final-five definitions.

Sources, editions & the next page

Prepared 16 September 2026. This is one player text presented in editable Word and matching PDF. The diagrams and replacement reference images are derived from the same stated rules. Updating a PDF is not a deployment or a gameplay migration.

ID	Source and use
S1	The_Veil_Player_Rulebook_v0_4(1).md and matching .docx, supplied by the owner; 13 September 2026. Retains vocabulary, six phases, costs, stack, core conditions, advanced Cases/upkeep, digital boundaries and collectible guidance.
S2	Repository Set 2 rules-delta.json, format.json and VT04_SET2_RULES_DELTA.md at main commit f0b5c74116908ac279e2d341fe01ef43e7740b2a. Supplies Foundation 85, copy limits, Front/Behind, Balance, Vulnerable/Subjugation, main identities and Void clarifications. Some prose status lines are older than runtime progress.
S3	Same inspected commit: candidate-authority.ts, economy.ts, case-legacy.ts and Foundation catalog logic. Supplies current start values, 20/20 objective/cap, implemented Legacy terms and shared-world boundary. Source inspection is not a fresh device playtest.
S4	Set 2 card-manifest.json and art.manifest.json, plus owner-provided individual full-card art. Supplies names, costs, types, layers, identities and effect contracts; examples do not certify every card as enabled.
S5	Lucidian Narrative Engine — Match Cinema Architecture, September 2026, supplied in the project. Forward context for event records, Lucy, Vault and Theater; not a current generation entitlement.
S6	PR #116, merged 16 September 2026: Alpha cleanup/mobile launch. Reports checks and deployed practice-ending support; explicitly does not claim real-phone acceptance.

The older cover, Quickstart, “What The Veil Is,” and “Codex & Persistent Play” artworks are retained as visual references, not as competing rule sources. This package includes newly typeset replacements. The original 80-card Quickstart must not be linked as the current Foundation-85 instructions.

The world can grow without changing the past A future release can add starters, physical editions, campaign modules and cinematic Match Records. A saved match still belongs to its own rules and catalog. That is how a living world can remember without contradicting itself.

Power has a price. Choices echo across timelines.

Source basis: Review performed for this document; no claim of production publishing from this document-creation task.