Faith Power and Truth Holy Wars

Alpha Development Rulebook

Version 0.2.6 amended October 28 2026

This rulebook retains the Version 0.2.6 Alpha baseline with William Byrd’s approved October 28, 2026 playtest amendments. The current supplement at the end governs the first 25-card group and supersedes conflicting earlier card images and wording. Balance remains subject to playtesting.

The immediate goal is to test whether non-Character cards and three-card Sets create clear tactical choices without timing disputes, infinite loops, forced field locks, or post-roll interruptions. Card-specific costs and balance values remain subject to physical testing.

Current Alpha baseline

System	Alpha rule
Victory	Reduce the opposing player from 20 Resolve to 0.
Deck	Exactly 30 main-deck cards plus one separate three-card Set Reserve; no more than three main-deck copies of one card.
Opening hand	Draw seven cards; one full-hand mulligan.
Faith economy	5 Base Faith plus 1 Coalition Faith per active character, capped at +3.
Rally	Once per Resource Phase, exhaust one eligible ready character for 2 temporary Faith.
Capture	Pay 2 Faith; opposed d6 plus Attack versus d6 plus Defense.
Reactions	One legal Reaction per player per appropriate window, active player first; Reactions cannot answer Reactions.
Sets	Components unlock through Build Support, successful conflict, and a shared Crisis Point milestone.

1 Game objective

Each player leads a coalition of characters and convictions. Players spend Faith to build their field, take actions, protect allies, challenge opponents, and influence or capture opposing characters. The Alpha uses a neutral victory system so no real-world conviction is treated as inherently superior.

Resolve

Each player begins with 20 Resolve. Resolve represents the coalition's ability to remain organized and continue the struggle. Resolve is not Faith and cannot normally be spent.

- A player loses when their Resolve reaches 0.
- A successful capture causes the captured character's owner to lose 1 Resolve. Capture-related Resolve loss can occur only once per turn.
- If both players reach 0 Resolve from the same resolving effect, the game ends in a draw.

- If a player must draw from an empty deck, that player loses 2 Resolve for each card they failed to draw. The game continues unless their Resolve reaches 0.
- Card effects may cause additional Resolve loss or recovery only when their text explicitly says so.

2 Components and play areas

Area	Purpose
Deck	Face-down draw pile containing exactly 30 cards.
Hand	Cards available to play; hidden unless an effect reveals them.
Field	Characters, continuing Events, and other cards currently in play.
Conviction area	Up to one Religion, one Political, and one Social Conviction selected before play.
Captured area	Inert opposing characters held through capture; maximum three per player.
Discard pile	Defeated characters and resolved or discarded cards unless an effect says otherwise.
Set Reserve	Three visible set components outside the main deck. Locked components cannot be played or targeted.

Field and copy limits

- A player brings exactly 30 main-deck cards plus one registered three-card Set Reserve. Set Reserve cards do not count toward the 30-card total, the main-deck copy limit, or the main-deck card-type ratio.
- A player may control up to eight Characters, five Actions or Events that remain in play, and three captured characters.
- A player may not control more than one copy of the same named character at the same time.

3 Card classifications

The Card Map organizes cards by subject matter. The rulebook classifies them by function. A card may carry identity, Phenomenon, or Set tags in addition to its functional type.

Classification	Function	Destination
Character	Contributes Coalition Faith and may attack, defend, capture, rescue, or use abilities.	Field; discard when defeated
Conviction	Pre-game identity foundation that enables or improves related cards.	Conviction area
Action	Creates a one-time effect.	Discard after resolution
Event	Changes play temporarily or continuously.	Field while continuing; otherwise discard
Reaction	Answers a declared trigger before it resolves.	Discard after resolution

Classification	Function	Destination
Phenomenon tag	Identifies an unusual human experience; not a separate card type.	Determined by functional type
Set tag	Marks membership in a named three-card combination; not a separate card type.	Determined by functional type

Card text priority

When a card directly contradicts a general rule, the card text takes priority for that specific effect. A card cannot override a restriction it does not address.

4 Non Character Card Rules

This section governs cards and effects that are not Characters. It establishes when they may be played, how targets and costs are declared, how Reactions interrupt them, how long they last, and where they go after resolving. Set components follow these rules except where the Set Reserve rules state a specific exception.

Functional type and subject tags

Every playable non-Character card must show one functional type: Action, Event, or Reaction. Conviction is a separate pre-game classification. Phenomenon, Technology, Religion, Political, Social, Set, Information, Community, Economic, and similar labels are tags or identifiers. A tag does not create timing, duration, or destination rules by itself.

Classification	Normal timing	Duration	Normal destination
Action	Your Action Phase while no other effect is resolving	One resolution	Discard pile
Event Immediate	Your Action Phase while no other effect is resolving	One resolution	Discard pile
Event Continuing	Your Action Phase while no other effect is resolving	While its printed duration or condition remains true	Field, then discard pile
Reaction	Only after its printed trigger is declared	One resolution	Discard pile
Conviction	Selected before the game	Normally the entire game	Conviction area

Playing a non Character card

- To play an Action or Event, the active player announces the card, pays its printed Faith Cost and any additional costs, declares all required modes, choices, and targets, then opens the active-first response window.
- A card cannot be played unless every required cost can be paid and every required target is legal. A card that says choose up to a number may choose zero unless another part of the effect requires at least one choice.
- Faith and other costs are paid when the card is declared. If the card is later canceled, those costs are not refunded unless an effect explicitly says otherwise.
- After the Reaction resolves, or after the opponent declines to react, resolve the original card if it remains possible and has all targets required to resolve. Resolve instructions in printed order.

Actions and Events

An Action creates a one-time effect and is discarded after it resolves. An Event must be labeled Immediate or Continuing. An Immediate Event resolves once and is discarded. A Continuing Event enters the field after its play is not canceled and remains there for its printed duration or while its stated condition remains true. Only continuing non-Character cards occupy the five-card field limit.

If a Continuing Event has no printed ending condition, it remains until another legal effect removes it. When its duration ends, its condition becomes false, or it is removed, place it in its owner's discard pile unless its text says otherwise. Only Continuing Events a player controls count toward that player's five-card limit.

CONTINUING EVENT REPLACEMENT: A player who controls five Continuing Events may play another by first choosing and discarding one Continuing Event they control. This is a free, non-interruptible additional cost paid immediately before the new card is declared. If the new card is subsequently canceled or otherwise fails to enter play, the discarded Event does not return to the field. An opponent cannot place a Continuing Event under another player's control unless an effect explicitly says control changes.

Reactions and cancellation

A Reaction may be played only when its printed trigger occurs. Each appropriate response window permits one legal Reaction per player. Offer the active player first, resolve that Reaction fully, then offer the non-active player if the original occurrence remains pending and legal. Neither Reaction answers the other. If the original occurrence is canceled, stop without offering or charging another response. Do not repeat passes. Printed pre-roll, post-roll and post-defeat triggers still govern eligibility.

The Reaction resolves first and is then discarded. If it cancels an ordinary main-deck Action, Event, or Reaction, the canceled card goes to its owner's discard pile and all paid costs remain spent. A canceled Set component follows the Set Reserve return rule instead. Preventing all consequences of an effect is not the same as canceling the card unless the effect explicitly uses the word cancel.

Targets choices and resolution

- A target is a card, player, area, or object identified by the word target. Chosen objects that are not described as targets are still declared before the Reaction opportunity unless the card says the choice occurs during resolution.
- If every required target becomes illegal before resolution, the card does not resolve and goes to its normal destination. If at least one required target remains legal, resolve as much of the effect as possible for the legal targets.
- Effects are completed in printed order. Later instructions do not occur before earlier instructions. A player cannot reverse a completed instruction because a later result is unfavorable.
- A source leaving the field does not cancel an Action, Event, Reaction, or activated ability already resolving unless that effect says the source must remain in play.

Standard duration language

Printed wording	Rules meaning
This turn	Ends when the current active player's turn ends.
Until the end of your next turn	Ends after that player's next End Phase finishes.
Until your next Recover Phase	Ends when that Recover Phase begins, before normal recovery.
While this card remains in play	Ends immediately when the card leaves the field or changes control unless stated otherwise.
Once per turn	Tracks that card or ability once during each game turn and resets when the next turn begins.
First time each turn	Triggers only on the first qualifying event during each game turn and resets when the next turn begins.

Ownership control and destinations

- A card's owner is the player who brought it to the game. Its controller is the player currently controlling it. Ownership does not change during a game.
- When a card is discarded, defeated, canceled, or removed from the field without another stated destination, place it in its owner's discard pile.
- Characters are defeated. Cards in a hand and non-Character cards are discarded. A trigger that requires a Character to be defeated does not trigger from an ordinary discard.
- If control of a Continuing Event changes, its existing choices remain unless stated otherwise. Limited uses follow named-card and ability counters per player; a control change uses the receiving player’s existing counter and erases neither player’s history.

Hidden information

- Reveal means show the specified card to both players. After the effect finishes, return it to its previous hidden state unless the effect moves it elsewhere.
- Look means only the instructed player sees the specified card. Looking does not count as revealing.
- For a random discard, the affected player mixes their hand face down and the opposing player selects the required number without seeing the card faces.
- A player may count the number of cards in any deck, hand, discard pile, captured area, Set Reserve, or field, but may not inspect hidden card faces without an effect allowing it.

Prevention replacement and recovery

Prevention is applied before Resolve is lost, a card is defeated, or another stated consequence occurs. A replacement effect changes the occurrence instead of allowing it to happen as originally stated. If defeat is replaced by another result, the Character was not defeated and defeat-based triggers do not occur.

SINGLE APPLICATION RULE: Each prevention or replacement effect may be applied no more than once to the same triggering occurrence. Applying an effect does not create a new occurrence unless the effect explicitly generates a separate action, attack, payment, or source of damage. After every eligible effect has been applied once, resolve the resulting occurrence.

If multiple prevention or replacement effects apply simultaneously, the affected player or the controller of the affected card chooses the order of effects they control. The opposing player then chooses the order of any remaining effects they control. Apply each eligible effect once in that order. For physical battle defeat, use the specific approved order: Marcus, Selfless Intervention, Health replacement, actual defeat, then after-defeat effects.

SIMULTANEOUS AFFECTED PLAYERS: If one occurrence affects both players simultaneously, the active player applies and orders all applicable prevention and replacement effects they control first. The non-active player then applies and orders theirs. After all eligible effects have been applied once, resolve the resulting occurrence simultaneously.

Simultaneous effects and wording priority

- When multiple mandatory effects controlled by the active player trigger at the same time, that player chooses their order. Then the opposing player chooses the order of their mandatory effects. Resolve each effect completely before beginning the next.
- May identifies an optional instruction. Direct commands and choose instructions are mandatory when they can legally be completed. Up to permits zero. Cannot overrides may, can, and general permission.
- Card text overrides a general rule only when it directly addresses that rule. Specific wording overrides broader wording for the affected card or event.
- No modifier can reduce a printed or current statistic, Faith Cost, additional cost, or Resolve loss below 0 unless a card explicitly permits a negative value.

Set component exceptions

An unlocked non-Character Set component uses the same declaration, cost, target, Reaction, and resolution rules. After a one-time Set component resolves, place it face up in the Set Area instead of the discard pile. A

canceled Set component returns face up to its owner's Set Reserve and remains unlocked. A continuing Set component stays in its normal field area. Cards in a Set Area are not on the field, do not count toward any field limit, and cannot be targeted or affected by ordinary Actions, Events, Reactions, attacks, or abilities. They may be challenged only through Set Defiance unless a card explicitly states that it interacts with a Set Area or Set component.

Alpha effect card audit

The public Card Map organizes many cards by subject, but subject families are not functional types. Before physical printing, every mapped non-Character card must receive one functional type, a Faith Cost, legal timing, required targets, a defined duration when applicable, and a normal destination.

Mapped family	Required treatment	Alpha status
15 Convictions	Remain pre-game identity foundations; no Action, Event, or Reaction timing unless a card explicitly changes a Conviction.	Framework locked; individual effects provisional
5 Phenomena	Each must also be labeled Action, Event, or Reaction. Phenomenon remains a tag.	Functional types still required
10 Religious cards	Assign functional type, Faith Cost, timing, targets, duration, and destination.	Individual wording provisional
10 Political cards	Assign functional type, Faith Cost, timing, targets, duration, and destination.	Individual wording provisional
10 Social cards	Assign functional type, Faith Cost, timing, targets, duration, and destination.	Individual wording provisional
Non-Character Set components	Use the rules above plus the Set Area and canceled-play exceptions.	Set payoff text locked; individual abilities provisional
Technology and other identifiers	No automatic rules effect. Cards interact with the identifier only when printed text says so.	Identifier rule locked

5 Setup and mulligan

1. **Each player prepares and shuffles an exact 30-card Alpha main deck.**
2. **Each player places one registered three-card set face up in their Set Reserve. All three components begin locked.**
3. **Each player places up to one Religion, one Political, and one Social Conviction face up in their Conviction area. Convictions begin outside the deck.**
4. Set each player's Resolve to 20. No Set component is unlocked at setup.
5. **Determine the first player randomly.**
6. **Each player draws seven cards. After seeing both players' Convictions and Set Reserves, each player may take one full-hand mulligan.**

Mulligan

Once per game, before the first turn, a player may shuffle their entire opening hand into their deck and draw seven replacement cards. The replacement hand must be kept.

First-turn balance

First-turn restrictions: The first player skips the Draw Phase of their first turn, and no player may declare an attack during their own first turn.

6 Turn sequence

Phase	Name	What happens
1	Recover	Ready all exhausted cards you control unless an effect prevents recovery.
2	Draw	Draw one card. Apply the empty-deck penalty for each failed draw.
3	Resource	Calculate Faith. You may Rally once with an eligible character.
4	Action	Play cards, use abilities, attack, attempt captures, or attempt one rescue.
5	End	Resolve end-of-turn effects and lose all unspent Faith.

7 Faith economy

Faith is the temporary resource used to play cards and pay ability costs. It is recalculated during each Resource Phase and does not carry into the next turn.

Available Faith = 5 Base Faith + 1 Coalition Faith for each active character you control, to a maximum of +3 Coalition Faith.

Active characters	Faith for the turn
None	5
One	6
Two	7
Three or more	8

Rally

Once during the Resource Phase, you may exhaust one eligible ready character you control to gain 2 temporary Faith for that turn. A character cannot Rally during the same turn it enters play. Rally Faith disappears at the end of the turn if unused.

Printed Faith statistic

A Character's Faith statistic does not add its full value to the resource pool. Rescue and resistance use current Faith, including applicable bonuses and penalties, unless a card explicitly specifies printed Faith.

At the beginning of each opponent’s turn, gain 3 Response Faith in a separate pool, shared between legally triggered Reaction cards and legally timed Character abilities. Spending on one reduces what remains for the others. Unspent Response Faith expires at that opponent’s turn end. Normal Faith does not carry over. Legal own-turn Reactions use normal Faith.

8 Character states

Exhaust and recover

Turn a card sideways to show that it is exhausted. Exhausted characters cannot attack, capture, rescue, Rally, or pay an exhaust cost. Unless a card says otherwise, exhausted characters may still defend. Cards normally recover at the beginning of their controller's next turn.

Newly played characters

A character must have been under its controller's control since the beginning of that controller's turn before it can attack, capture, rescue, Rally, use Set Defiance, or use an ability with an exhaust cost. A newly played character may defend normally.

During your Action Phase, announce a Character, check deployment and named-Character limits, and pay its Faith Cost and additional costs. Use the active-first response window, with one legal Reaction per player. If not canceled and deployment remains legal, place it on your field. A canceled main-deck Character goes to its owner's discard pile; a canceled Set Character returns to its Set Reserve unlocked. Paid costs remain spent.

Active characters

For Coalition Faith, an active character is a character you control on your field that is not captured. Ready and exhausted characters both count as active unless a card says otherwise.

9 Battles and direct attacks

Character battle

1. Choose one eligible ready character you control as the attacker and one opposing character as the target. Exhaust the attacker as an upfront cost, then use the active-first response window before rolling.
2. The attacker rolls one six-sided die and adds its Attack.
3. The target rolls one six-sided die and adds its Defense.
4. The higher completed total wins. On a tie, both characters remain in play.
5. Resolve the battle: If the attacker wins, the defender is defeated. If the defender wins, the attacker remains in play unless Combat Trained applies. Place a defeated character in its owner's discard pile unless an effect prevents defeat.

ROWAN 7 HEALTH: Rowan 7 enters play with 3 health. Each physical battle that would defeat it, including a Combat Trained counterattack, instead removes 1 health. At 0 health it is defeated. Capture bypasses health; capture and rescue preserve remaining health. Returning from the discard pile restores its starting health unless an effect says otherwise. Other defeat effects follow their printed instructions.

Only the declared target defends. Other characters do not block or replace the target unless a card specifically permits it. Combat does not spill excess Attack into Resolve.

Direct attack against Resolve

A player may be attacked directly only when they control no characters, ready or exhausted. Exhaust one eligible ready attacker, open the active-first response window, check legality, then roll one six-sided die and add that character's Attack. On a completed total of 7 or higher, the opposing player loses 2 Resolve. No defender roll is made. On a total of 6 or lower, the attack fails and causes no Resolve loss.

Combat Trained

When a character with Combat Trained defends and its completed Defense total exceeds the attacker's completed Attack total by at least 3, the attacker is defeated after the battle. No additional roll is made. If the attacker has a printed health or durability exception, apply that exception to the counterattack. This applies only to physical Character attacks, not capture, rescue, or Set Defiance.

10 Reaction timing reference

Section 4 contains the complete rules for declaring, paying for, canceling, and resolving non-Character cards. The sequence below is the quick timing reference used during play.

Each appropriate response window permits one legal Reaction per player. Offer the active player first, resolve that Reaction fully, then offer the non-active player if the original occurrence remains pending and legal. Neither Reaction answers the other. If the original occurrence is canceled, stop without offering or charging another response. Do not repeat passes. Printed pre-roll, post-roll and post-defeat triggers still govern eligibility.

Attack redirection

A declared attack can have its target changed no more than once. After its target changes, no effect may change that attack's target again before the attack resolves or ends. This limit does not prevent a later attack during the same Action Phase from being redirected once.

11 Capture and rescue

Capture attempt

1. During your Action Phase, pay 2 Faith and choose one eligible ready character you control as the captor. Choose a legal target and exhaust the captor before intervention and Reactions.

You cannot declare a capture attempt while holding three captives unless an effect explicitly permits it.

2. Choose one opposing character as the target.

3. The target's controller may exhaust one other ready character they control to give the target +2 Defense for this attempt. Only one character may intervene. Declare and pay for intervention before the active-first response window; then resolve any Reaction before rolling. The helper remains exhausted if the attempt is canceled.

4. The captor rolls one six-sided die and adds its Attack. The target rolls one six-sided die and adds its Defense, including the intervention bonus if used.

5. If the captor's completed total is higher, move the target to the captor's captured area. On a tie or lower result, the capture fails.

6. The captor remains exhausted regardless of the result or cancellation.

- A player may hold no more than three opposing captured characters.
- Captured characters are blank and inert: they cannot attack, defend, use abilities, Rally, generate Coalition Faith, assist captures, or count toward a set.
- A successful capture causes the captured character's owner to lose 1 Resolve, no more than once per turn.
- All captured physical cards return to their owners after the game.

Rescue attempt

1. During your Action Phase, pay 2 Faith and choose one eligible ready character you control as the rescuer. Choose a legal captive and exhaust the rescuer as an upfront cost. Declare the resisting Character before the Reaction opportunity; resolve any Reaction before rolling.

A rescue requires an open Character slot when declared and again before rolling. If the field becomes full, end the attempt without rolling; the captive remains captured, paid Faith remains spent, the rescuer remains exhausted, and the attempt counts. A legally declared rescue consumes the one rescue attempt for that turn even if canceled.

2. Choose one of your characters in an opponent's captured area.

3. After the resisting Character is declared and the Reaction opportunity finishes, check participant and field-space legality. Each side rolls one d6 and adds its Character's current Faith, including applicable modifiers. The resisting Character is not exhausted by resisting.

4. If the rescuer's completed total is higher, return the captured character to its owner's field exhausted. It is treated as newly returned and cannot take restricted actions that turn.
5. On a tie or lower result, the rescue fails. No additional Resolve is lost.
6. The rescuer remains exhausted regardless of the result or cancellation.
7. A player may attempt only one rescue per turn.

If the captor controls no active character able to resist, use a resistance value of 0 and still roll one six-sided die.

12 Convictions

Before play, a player may select no more than one Conviction from each category: Religion, Political, and Social. Convictions begin outside the deck, are revealed publicly before mulligans, and remain fixed for the game unless a card explicitly changes or removes one. Convictions do not count toward the 30-card deck size.

Inclusion of a conviction or viewpoint represents its presence in the game; it does not represent endorsement by the creator.

13 Three card Set Reserve

The Set Reserve is the Alpha's visible endgame system. It gives each deck a dependable route toward a conclusion without consuming six main-deck slots or requiring search cards. A player still has to pay for, protect, and use the components; the reserve guarantees access, not victory.

Set construction

- Each player registers exactly one named set containing three distinct components.
- The three components begin face up in the Set Reserve and do not count toward the 30-card main deck, its 18 Character, 5 Action, 4 Event, and 3 Reaction ratio, or ordinary copy limits.
- A Set Reserve must list all three component names and the complete set text before the game begins. A player cannot change sets or component wording during a match.
- A Set component keeps its printed functional type. A Character remains a Character; an Action, Event, or Reaction keeps that classification. Technology and similar labels remain tags and do not replace the component's functional type.

Milestone unlocks

Each player tracks the following three personal milestones. The first time a player completes a milestone, that player unlocks one locked Set component of their choice.

BUILD SUPPORT: You control at least two Characters.

ENTER THE CONFLICT: One of your Characters defeats an opposing Character in battle, completes a successful direct attack, completes a successful capture, completes a successful rescue, or finishes a battle with a completed Defense total higher than the attacker's completed Attack total. A tie does not qualify. A result prevented or canceled by a Reaction or other effect does not complete this milestone.

CRISIS POINT: The first time either player's Resolve reaches 12 or lower, both players complete Crisis Point and each unlocks one locked Set component of their choice. Resolve the triggering effect completely before unlocking components. A player who already completed Crisis Point receives no additional unlock.

Each milestone can unlock only one component. Completing more than one different milestone through the same resolving action may unlock one component for each milestone completed. Crisis Point occurs only once per game and does not trigger again if Resolve is restored above 12 and later falls to 12 or lower.

Once unlocked, a component remains unlocked for the rest of the game unless a card explicitly says otherwise. Restoring Resolve above 12 does not reverse Crisis Point or relock a component.

A locked component cannot be played, targeted, discarded, challenged, or affected. An unlocked component may be played from the Set Reserve as though it were in its owner's hand.

Unlocking is not playing. The component's printed Faith Cost must still be paid, normal timing must be followed, and deployment and field limits still apply.

Playing Set components

An unlocked Character component must be deployed normally. It occupies a Character slot and follows all normal Character rules.

An unlocked continuing card may be played normally and remains in its normal field area.

When an unlocked one-time non-Character Set component is played, pay its normal Faith Cost and resolve its printed effect. After it resolves, place it face up in the Set Area instead of the discard pile. Its printed effect does not resolve again merely because it remains there.

Playing any Set component gives the opponent the normal Reaction opportunity. If its play is canceled, return it face up to its owner's Set Reserve. It remains unlocked and may be played again on a later turn by paying its full cost.

Completion and rebuilding

- A set becomes complete when one player controls all three named components face up on their field or in their Set Area.
- Captured Characters, locked cards, cards in a discard pile, and components controlled by an opponent do not count.
- Completion is the one-time text introduced by the label COMPLETION. Each player resolves a named set's Completion effect only the first time that player completes it during a game.

Check set completion after the current card, ability, or battle finishes resolving. On first completion, announce the Completion effect and required choices. Use a separate active-first response window, with one legal Reaction per player, following printed trigger and payment requirements. Completion counts as used even if canceled. Canceling Completion does not break the set or disable its While Complete effect. Completion never repeats when rebuilt.

- Continuing text is introduced by the label WHILE COMPLETE. It applies only while that player controls all three components.
- Ongoing set effects stop immediately when the set becomes incomplete and resume when rebuilt. Completed actions, such as Resolve changes, draws, discards, and exhaustion, are not undone. For Politics of Fear, mark the originally selected Characters: penalties and the related Resolve-loss trigger apply only while the set is complete. Rebuilding restores them only for original selections that remained on the field; leaving the field permanently removes a selection. Rebuilding chooses no new Characters.

A defeated Set Character goes to its owner's discard pile, not automatically to the Set Reserve. Returning it requires a legal recovery effect.

- Duplicate cards and copied names never create additional Completion effects.

Set Defiance

Set Defiance is an activated ability. Once during your Action Phase, you may attempt it against one opposing non-Character Set component that is face up in the Set Area.

Announce the attempt, identify the eligible component, pay 2 Faith, and exhaust one eligible ready Character you control as the challenger. Then open the active-first response window. If a Reaction makes the challenger or component illegal, or cancels the attempt, Set Defiance fails and all costs remain paid.

After the Reaction resolves, or after the opponent declines to react, proceed only if the attempt remains legal. The challenger rolls one six-sided die and adds its Attack. The component's controller rolls one six-sided die and adds 3.

DICE COMMITMENT RULE: The Reaction window closes permanently when either player releases a die from their hand, cup, or dice tower. After a die has been released, no new Reaction or optional pre-roll effect may be declared until that roll sequence is resolved. Effects that explicitly modify, replace, or reroll a completed die result still function normally.

Before rolling an attack, capture, rescue, or Set Defiance attempt, check that the acting Character remains on its controller's field under that controller and that its required target remains legal. Otherwise the attempt ends without rolling; paid costs remain spent and committed Characters remain exhausted. Legal attack redirection changes the target without ending the attack. Exhaustion paid when declaring an attempt does not make that participant illegal, and exhausting it again does not cancel the attempt.

If the challenger's completed total is higher, Set Defiance succeeds. Return the component face up to its owner's Set Reserve and place a Disrupted marker on it.

A Disrupted component remains unlocked but cannot be played during its owner's next turn. After that turn ends, it becomes eligible to be played again, but keep the Disrupted marker on it. Replaying it requires paying its full printed Faith Cost. If it is successfully played again, replace its Disrupted marker with a Stabilized marker. A Stabilized component cannot be targeted by Set Defiance again for the remainder of the game. If the replay of a Disrupted component is canceled, return it face up to its owner's Set Reserve. It retains its Disrupted marker, cannot be played again during that turn, and becomes eligible at the beginning of its owner's next turn.

On a tie or lower result, Set Defiance fails. The Character remains exhausted and the Faith remains spent.

Character components cannot be challenged through Set Defiance. They are attacked, captured, defeated, rescued, and otherwise affected under the normal Character rules.

Physical marker guidance

Keep locked components in a clearly designated locked row of the Set Reserve; no token is required. Place a red token or red die on a Disrupted component and a blue token or blue die on a Stabilized component. Markers remain on the component when it changes between the Set Reserve and a play area unless a rule explicitly replaces or removes the marker.

Five Alpha sets

The following wording replaces the completion text on the current prototype cards. Individual component abilities remain provisional unless this section changes them.

Q ASI

Components: Rowan 7; Quantum Computing Access; Military AI

COMPLETION - SYSTEM INTEGRATION: Choose up to two opposing Characters and exhaust them. They recover normally during their controller's next Recover Phase.

WHILE COMPLETE - Q ASI ONLINE: Rowan 7 gains +1 Attack and +1 Defense while Q-ASI is complete. Once per turn, while Q-ASI is complete, you may reroll one die rolled for a Digital Character you control, even if that die has already been rerolled by another effect. You must use the new result. The first time each turn one of your Digital Characters wins a battle or makes a successful direct attack, the opposing player loses 1 Resolve.

Closing pattern: immediate disruption followed by repeatable Digital pressure without punishing rescue attempts.

Truth Uncovered

Components: Investigative Journalist; Anonymous Source; Evidence Released

COMPLETION - THE TRUTH COMES OUT: Choose one opposing non-Character card in play or one random card from the opponent's hand. Discard it. Draw one card. The opposing player loses 2 Resolve. This effect may be answered by one legal Reaction.

WHILE COMPLETE - PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY: The first time during each player's turn that an opposing card is revealed or discarded by one of your effects, its owner loses 1 Resolve.

Closing pattern: information becomes public pressure with a strict first-time safety limit.

Community Resilience

Components: Community Organizer; Mutual Aid Network; Neighbors Answer the Call

COMPLETION - STRONGER TOGETHER: Restore 2 Resolve and recover up to two Living Characters you control.

WHILE COMPLETE - COMMUNITY IN ACTION: Once per turn, immediately after an opponent declares a legal attack against a Living Character you control, but before the Reaction opportunity, you may exhaust another ready Living Character you control. If that Character is a legal target for the attacker, it becomes the target instead. The normal Reaction opportunity then begins for the redirected attack. At the end of your turn, if two different Living Characters you control declared an attack, made a capture attempt, made a rescue attempt, or participated in Set Defiance this turn, the opposing player loses 1 Resolve.

Closing pattern: mutual protection supports proactive participation instead of rewarding a passive field.

The Economic Squeeze

Components: Predatory Lender; Housing Crisis; Medical Debt Trapped by the System

COMPLETION - TRAPPED BY THE SYSTEM: The opposing player loses 2 Resolve. During their next turn, the first card they play costs 1 additional Faith unless they exhaust one ready Character they control. Mounting Costs does not apply to that card.

WHILE COMPLETE - MOUNTING COSTS: The first card the opponent plays during each of their turns costs 1 additional Faith unless they exhaust one ready Character they control. If they end their turn without playing a card, they lose 1 Resolve.

Closing pattern: the opponent must make a tactical resource choice, but the set cannot impose an unavoidable Faith lock.

Politics of Fear

Components: The Demagogue Politics of Fear; Algorithmic Outrage; Scapegoat

COMPLETION - MANUFACTURED ENEMY: Choose up to three opposing Characters. For each, name one Religion, Political conviction, Social conviction, or other identifier printed on it. Mark these original selections. While this set is complete, each selected Character gets -1 Attack and -1 Defense, to a minimum of 0. Breaking the set suspends these penalties; rebuilding restores them on original selections still on the field. Leaving the field permanently removes a selection, even if that Character later returns. Rebuilding selects no new Characters.

WHILE COMPLETE - ESCALATING DIVISION: The first time each turn one of the affected Characters is defeated or captured, that Character's owner loses 2 additional Resolve.

Closing pattern: manufactured division affects a limited number of Characters across focused or diverse fields. The mechanic targets printed game characteristics and does not assign human worth.

Alpha assignment and measurement

- Each of the four first-round Alpha decks receives one different Set Reserve. The fifth set remains available for a later comparison test. No Alpha deck uses two Set Reserves.
- Record the turn or round in which each milestone and first set completion occurs. Flag routine completion before meaningful conflict, failure to complete before the game is effectively decided, or any strategy that delays interaction merely to protect Set components.
- A completed set should normally create a credible conclusion within three additional turns without producing an automatic victory. Also record whether shared Crisis Point access creates a fair closing race or gives the active player an excessive tempo advantage.
- Record whether the set shortened the match, prolonged it, created a lock, or had no meaningful effect.

14 Four-deck Alpha structure

All four test decks use the same 30-card main-deck ratio so performance differences are easier to trace. The separate three-card Set Reserve does not alter this ratio.

Card type	Cards per deck
Characters	18
Actions	5
Events	4
Reactions	3
Total	30

Deck	Primary strategy
Aggro	Apply early pressure and create direct-attack opportunities.
Control	Manage threats through prevention, exhaustion, and timing.
Capture and Rescue	Test capture pressure, intervention, hostage limits, and recovery.
Faith Efficiency	Use discounts, Faith checks, and precise resource timing without breaking the Coalition Faith cap.

15 Alpha card design limits

The first test decks should isolate the core engine. Most cards should use a small shared vocabulary and modest numerical changes.

Use freely	Use sparingly
+1 or -1 modifiers	Multiple conditional clauses
Exhaust and Recover	Long reaction chains
Draw and Discard	Permanent rule rewriting
Prevent	Large resource multiplication
Capture and Rescue	Broad identity targeting without counterplay
Gain or lose Resolve	Alternate victory conditions
Gain or spend Faith	Repeated searches or shuffles

Marcus Hale, Sparkles Rebellion, and Rowan 7 may retain distinctive abilities so the Alpha tests the game's identity as well as its mathematics.

16 Dignity and balance standard

[ ] The effect connects to a documented action, tradition, belief, or human experience.

[ ] The card does not portray an entire group as inherently good, evil, intelligent, violent, or weak.

[ ] A fictional character remains an individual rather than a spokesperson for everyone sharing an identity.

[ ] The opposing player has meaningful counterplay.

[ ] A knowledgeable member of the represented community would recognize the reference.

[ ] Comparable standards are applied across conflicting viewpoints.

[ ] The mechanic represents behavior and consequences rather than assigning human worth.

17 Playtest record

Complete this record after every Alpha game. The purpose is to find problems, not to defend the current design.

Record	Notes
Date and testers	
Decks and Convictions	
Starting player	
Game length	
Winning condition	
Highest Faith generated	
Direct attacks	
Captures and rescues	
Completed sets	
Rules questions	
Cards that felt too strong	
Cards that felt too weak	
Most enjoyable decision	
Most confusing moment	

Record	Notes
Recommended change	
Set component unlock milestones	
Set milestones and completion turn	
Set Defiance attempts, successes, and Stabilized components	
Turns from completion to game end	
Did the set shorten or prolong the game	
Did the set or Defiance create a lock or non-game	
Successful defensive battles	
Redirected attacks	
Canceled Disrupted replays	
Non-Character cards played by type	
Canceled cards and Faith spent	
Targets that became illegal	
Continuing Events removed or expired	
Prevention or replacement disputes	
Hidden-information procedures used	
Continuing Events replaced and whether the new play was canceled	
Prevention or replacement effects applied to the same occurrence	
Set Defiance Reactions declared before a roll	
Simultaneous effects affecting both players and ordering used	
Dice commitment or mid-roll timing disputes	

Version 0.2.6 change record

Version 0.2.6 commits exhaustion before Reactions and rolls for attacks, captures, rescues, and Set Defiance; specifies intervention timing and participant legality; originally added 2 Reaction Faith (superseded by 3 Response Faith on October 28); uses modified Faith for rescue; clarifies deployment, capture and rescue limits, new-Character Defiance eligibility, Rowan 7 health, defeated Set Characters, separate

Completion Reactions, and ongoing-effect rebuilding. Capture balance and set closing speed remain playtest questions. Earlier changes follow.

Version 0.2.5 limits each prevention or replacement effect to one application per triggering occurrence; establishes ordering for competing prevention and replacement effects; lets a player replace one of five controlled Continuing Events as a non-interruptible additional cost; exempts the Set Area from field limits and ordinary interaction; replaces event-only Reaction language with one Reaction per triggering occurrence; defines the complete pre-roll Reaction window for Set Defiance; gives the active player first ordering priority when both players are affected simultaneously; and closes a dice Reaction window when the first die is released while preserving explicit result-modification and reroll effects.

Earlier Version 0.2.4 record:

Version 0.2.4 defines the complete non-Character card procedure; separates functional types from subject tags; distinguishes Immediate and Continuing Events; locks cost, target, cancellation, resolution, duration, hidden-information, ownership, prevention, replacement, and simultaneous-trigger rules; and audits every mapped effect-card family for the information required before printing.

Earlier Version 0.2.3 record:

Version 0.2.3 makes Crisis Point a one-time global milestone for both players; requires meaningful offensive or defensive success for Enter the Conflict; converts replayed Disrupted components into Set Defiance-immune Stabilized components; limits each attack to one redirection; clarifies canceled Disrupted replays; prevents The Economic Squeeze taxes from stacking on the same card; defines Community in Action's pre-Reaction redirection window; and ends Manufactured Enemy modifications when a chosen Character leaves the field.

18 Remaining production work before physical assembly

[ ] Assign every non-Character card one functional type, legal timing, required targets, duration, and normal destination.

[ ] Replace every remaining use of Act as a functional type with Action before printing.

[ ] Finalize the exact ability wording for every card in the four deck databases.

[ ] Assign one three-card Set Reserve to each deck and record the fifth set for the comparison test.

[ ] Update every set component with its correct set position, component list, Completion text, and While Complete text.

[ ] Check all Faith costs, statistics, copy quantities, and one-named-character limits.

[ ] Create four final 30-card main-deck lists using the required 18 5 4 3 ratio and attach one separate three-card Set Reserve to each.

[ ] Prepare Resolve trackers, counters, a quick-reference sheet, and printable test cards.

October 28 approved playtest amendments

These amendments govern the first 25-card playtest. Use them with the retained Alpha baseline. They supersede conflicting older card-image text and baseline wording. Original artwork by William Byrd. The app was built with Claude. Balance remains subject to playtesting.

Response Faith and response windows

At the beginning of each opponent's turn, gain 3 Response Faith in a separate pool, shared between legally triggered Reaction cards and legally timed Character abilities. Spending on one reduces what remains for the others. Unspent Response Faith expires at that opponent's turn end. Normal Faith does not carry over. Legal own-turn Reactions use normal Faith.

Each appropriate response window permits one legal Reaction per player. Offer the active player first, resolve that Reaction fully, then offer the non-active player if the original occurrence remains pending and legal. Neither Reaction answers the other. If the original occurrence is canceled, stop without offering or charging another response. Do not repeat passes. Printed pre-roll, post-roll and post-defeat triggers still govern eligibility.

Combat declarations and support

The attacking side declares eligible pre-roll Character abilities first, then the defending side. Pay each printed cost and respect targets, readiness and use limits. One shared pre-roll response stage follows this bundle; the abilities do not each create another window or declaration pass. Standalone activated abilities outside this bundle retain their ordinary Reaction opportunity.

Tess and Argus support physical Character combat rolls, excluding captures, rescues, Set Defiance and Event defense. Naomi supports another friendly defender in a Character battle. Existing stat modifiers still affect other contests using that stat; Gabriel's Defense reduction can therefore affect capture defense.

Combat Trained defeats the attacker when the defender's final Defense total is at least 3 higher than the final Attack total. No additional roll is made. If saving the attacker with Marcus or Resurrection Hope, compare against that completed Defense total. For an ordinary defender defeat, compare against the completed Attack total. Include modifiers and rerolls.

Rowan 7 and defeat order

Selfless Intervention replaces Rowan 7's former personal reroll. When another Character you control would be defeated in a physical battle, you may remove 1 Health from Rowan 7 to prevent that defeat. Exhaust the protected Character. If Rowan 7 reaches 0 Health, he is defeated.

The Health removed is the payment; there is no Faith cost or added once-per-round limit. Rowan may spend his final Health and cannot protect himself. His Attack 3, Defense 5, Faith 7, Cost 6 and existing 3-Health protection against physical battle defeat remain.

Apply Marcus's prevention opportunity first, then Selfless Intervention, then applicable Health replacement, then actual defeat, then after-defeat effects. A successful prevention stops the threatened defeat; later defeat-dependent steps do not trigger. Do not apply the same prevention or replacement repeatedly to one occurrence.

Marcus has one No One Left Behind attempt per player per game across all copies, including a failed attempt. Keep his printed Faith 6. A d6 plus 6 necessarily reaches any comparison threshold of 7 or less.

Offer Resurrection Hope for an eligible defeated Christian Living Character before Adrian's capture. If it is declined, unaffordable or unsuccessful, Adrian may use his eligible capture ability before normal discard placement. A successful return prevents that capture. Preserve printed costs, capacity and use limits; no ordinary capture roll or ordinary attempt cost is added.

Adrian may gain Faith from an actual Living Character defeat even if Resurrection Hope returns it. Prevention or Health replacement that avoids defeat does not qualify. His gain enters normal Faith on his turn or Response Faith on the opponent's turn. Response Faith may exceed its starting 3 through this gain and still expires at the opponent's turn end.

A return enters exhausted and begins a new continuous-control interval. Restricted actions become eligible at the controller's next turn start, subject to recovery and other prohibitions. Return is not playing unless stated; it does not by itself trigger Dana.

An actual opposing Character defeat qualifies for Enter the Conflict even if Resurrection Hope subsequently returns that Character. The milestone unlocks once. Rowan's final-Health Selfless Intervention sacrifice is caused by his own ability and does not credit an opposing Character with defeating him.

Use limits and modifiers

Track limited abilities by named card and ability per player across copies, replay and reentry. Once per turn resets each game turn; once per round resets at that player's own turn start; once per game never resets. A control change uses the receiving player's existing counter and erases neither player's history. Track distinct abilities separately.

Defense has a minimum of 0 after modifiers; recompute as effects expire. Mira Sloane may select either player's Digital Character under her unrestricted target wording.

Convictions and Reaction cards

Catholic Christianity matches Christianity for game effects, including Tess. Dana Rusk is Christianity, Conservative and Traditional Values, with Attack 2, Defense 4, Faith 6 and Faith Cost 4. Trusted Connections is unchanged.

Safe Space Network — Reaction, LGBTQ+, cost 2: before capture dice are rolled against a friendly Living Character, give that defender +2 Defense for that contest. It changes the Defense stat, not spendable Faith. Eligibility requires the player's LGBTQ+ Conviction or a friendly LGBTQ+ Character.

Angelic Message may affect an eligible Christian Character's own-turn roll using normal Faith. It may add its bonus to one eligible Christian Character's Event defense roll, selected and paid for in the Event pre-roll window before any Event dice. It cannot modify the separate player or Conviction defense roll or all Christian rolls at once.

Conviction-pressure Events affect matching opposing field Characters whether ready or exhausted. Captured Characters and cards in reserve, hand or discard are excluded. The matching opposing Conviction or player defense follows the printed Event procedure.

Sparkles retains Blazing Glory. With Sparkles the only LGBTQ+ Character identity in this first group, its requirement for another friendly LGBTQ+ Character cannot currently be met.

Q ASI in the first playtest

Each starter deck uses a separate Q-ASI reserve: Quantum Computing Access, Rowan 7 and Argus. These are reserve-only in these starter lists. Argus follows ordinary defeat and discard rules and has no extra Health.

Quantum Computing Access costs 3 Faith to establish after unlocking, with no free activation. Once during your turn, pay 5 Faith to look at the top three deck cards, put one in hand and put the remainder on the bottom in any order. Deregulation discounts its establishment from 3 to 1, consuming the next-Action discount; it never discounts the separate activation.

Completion — System Integration: choose up to two opposing Characters and exhaust them. They recover normally during their controller's next Recover Phase. Announce Completion and choices, resolve its legal response window, then exhaust the legal targets.

Rowan 7 gains +1 Attack and +1 Defense while Q-ASI is complete. Once per turn, while Q-ASI is complete, you may reroll one die rolled for a Digital Character you control, even if that die has already been rerolled by another effect. You must use the new result. The first time each turn one of your Digital Characters wins a battle or makes a successful direct attack, the opposing player loses 1 Resolve.

Use the set reroll after the eligible completed roll or contest and before consequences. It may follow a fully resolved Déjà Vu repeated roll but cannot interrupt that Reaction. Q-ASI must still be complete and its once-per-turn use unspent. Spend that use; it cannot refresh or answer itself. Only one die is rerolled. Apply active-first ordering to competing post-roll opportunities.

The Q-ASI payoff causes 1 Resolve loss for a qualifying battle win. A successful direct attack causes the normal 2 plus this 1, for 3 total. Capture itself is neither a battle nor a direct attack.

Approved starter decks

Both lists contain 30 main-deck cards: 18 Characters, 5 Actions, 4 Events and 3 Reactions, with at most three copies per identity. Convictions and the separate reserve are outside that count. These are first-test lists; balance is not established.

Deck A Convictions: Christianity and Conservative. Characters: Marcus Hale 3; Tess Navarro 3; Adrian Vale 3; Dana Rusk 2; Gabriel Torres 2; Evan Mercer 2; Naomi Brooks 1; Mira Sloane 1; Sparkles Rebellion 1. Actions: Deregulation 3; Pride March 2. Events: The Lavender Scare 2; Edicts Against Christians 1; Tea Party Targeting 1. Reactions: Angelic Message 1; Resurrection Hope 1; Preserve Institutions 1.

Deck B Conviction: LGBTQ+. Characters: Sparkles Rebellion 3; Mira Sloane 3; Naomi Brooks 3; Evan Mercer 2; Gabriel Torres 2; Tess Navarro 2; Dana Rusk 1; Marcus Hale 1; Adrian Vale 1. Actions: Pride March 3; Deregulation 2. Events: Edicts Against Christians 2; Tea Party Targeting 2. Reactions: Safe Space Network 2; Déjà Vu 1.

The first development group contains 25 unique gameplay identities. The two Angelic Message artworks share one identity.