

# THE ESTABLISHMENT

INNER WORKINGS OF A SECRET CABAL

RULEBOOK

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Special thanks to all my play testers and rule book readers:

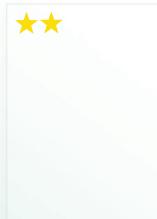
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# Game Components

**35** Influencer Cards



**30** Experience Point Cards



**93** Storyline Cards



**38** Description Cards



**5** Turn Order Cards



**5** Faction Cards



**16** Society Cards



**1** Manual



# Game Setting

## The Story So Far

After the successful colonization of Mars, climate crises and overpopulation on Earth lead to a mass migration of humans to other settlements. Humans have established themselves on the inner planets (Venus, Earth and Mars), within the Main Asteroid Belt based on Ceres, and the outer planets (Jupiter and Saturn) and their moons.

Ceres began as a mining town, but grew as miners and their families decided to stay and call Ceres home. You play a faction leader on Ceres.



# Rules for play

## Game Overview

The Establishment is a hybrid game. While it uses cards to keep track of the action, there are no points-based objectives for winning. Like most role-playing games, your goal is to play out your faction and to achieve an end to the story you think best fits.

The game is played over four rounds. You choose a path you agree with on storyline cards. Then you argue, make deals, and support other players by playing influencers. A society card, representing the whims of society, will determine which way the story goes.



# Setup

## Player Area

**01**

Choose a faction. Take that faction card and place it in front of you.



**02**

Shuffle the influencer deck and draw a starting hand of 4 cards.



**03**

Place the remaining 3 influencer cards beside your faction card.



**04**

Draw 5 description cards, select 3 and place them to the left of your faction card. Discard the remainder.

Impulsive

Kind

Provocative

**Each player takes a turn to describe their faction to the other players before the start of the game. Give a brief summary and reveal your description cards.**

# Setup

## Play Area



- 01** Take the storyline deck and lay out the 3 starting cards in a row (cards 1, 32, 63).
- 02** Place the remainder of the cards above this row in their respective piles (2-31, 33-62, 64-92).
- 03** Shuffle the society deck and place near the storyline cards.
- 04** Shuffle the turn order deck and place it below the society deck.

# Rules for play

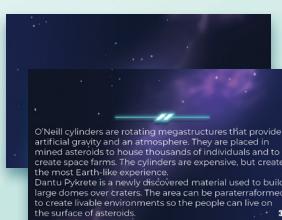
## Phases

### Opening Discussion → Support → Resolution

Players read and discuss storyline options.

Players place out influencer cards.

One at a time, storyline cards are resolved.



Storyline card example



Influencer card example

# Opening Discussion

Starting with the left-most storyline card, read the bottom half of the front of the card. Next, turn the card over and read the two options on the back.

The group then discusses how each player feels about the two options. Refer to your faction card and influencers to help guide your decisions. If you don't feel strongly about either choice, you can bargain with other players for their support on another storyline.

Continue this process for the remaining storyline cards.



<b>Remain Neutral (2)</b>	<b>Side with IEN (3)</b>
"Trade with the outer planets is important to Ceres' future. We can't afford to upset Queen Artemis and must remain neutral in this dispute."	"Earth is willing to pay our captains to support this blockade. It could bring in a lot of money and resources into Ceres if we support them."

<b>O'Neill Cylinder (2)</b>
O'Neill cylinders are rotating microstructures that provide artificial gravity and natural light. They are placed in mined asteroids to house thousands of individuals and to create space farms. The cylinders are expensive, but create the most Earth-like experience. Duru Pykrete is a newly discovered material used to build large structures on asteroids. The area can be paraterrified to create livable environments so the people can live on the surface of asteroids.

Mining is the livelihood of everyone on Ceres, whether they came here as independent miners, as part of a company expedition, or for lucrative jobs in the service industry for those miners. Economist Marsh Jonston has suggested that Ceres will benefit from a regulated market where the Consortium sets prices and rules for mining and trade. However, many small corporations insist that a free market without interference from the Consortium will mean more wealth for Ceres.	63
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## Example

A random player has read the front and back of the first card. The group has discussed whether their faction prefers the first or second option. They will read the next two and discuss these options also.

## Motivation

**Opening discussion is a good time to decide your faction's motivation. Remember, this is a role-playing game. There are no point based goals. How you want to play your faction is completely up to you. There are no wrong or right answers for which side your faction takes.**

**Use the opening discussion to get a feel for what direction other players might take. It is an opportunity to see who may be your ally. You can also use this time to sway other players over to your side using logic, reason, or bribes in the form of promises of future support.**

# Support

In this phase, players must place a total of 3 influencer cards each below the storyline cards.

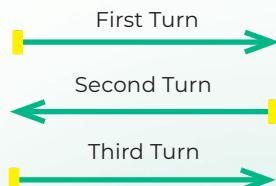
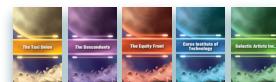
Reveal the turn order cards one at a time in a line to establish the playing order.

Starting with the first player, place 1 influencer face-up below either the left or right side of a storyline card.

Proceed with the next player in turn order until the end of the line.

Repeat the process in reverse order for the players' second turn, and repeat it again in the original order for the third turn, so that each player has placed a total of 3 influencers.

After the first round, players will need to pay attention to society restrictions when playing influencers (see Society Restrictions on next page).



*Example of a snake turn order.*

If society restrictions prevent you from using a card where you want, make deals with others to achieve your goals. Collaboration is key to success.

## Example End of First Round



# Support

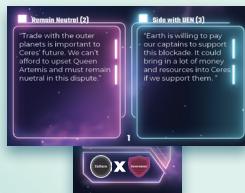
## Influencer Placement Rules

Unless restricted by a society card, an influencer may be placed on either side of any story card. You may have multiple influencers on a story card. You may also place influencers on both sides of the storyline. However, each player will receive experience points (XP) for only one influencer per storyline card.

Once a player removes their hand from a card, it is considered permanent and cannot be changed or moved.

## Society Restrictions

Society cards restrict certain influencers from being played (see page 14-15). If a player illegally places an influencer, it is up to the other players to catch it while it is being played. They have until the next player's turn to point out the illegal placement. If discovered, the influencer is removed from the round and the player forfeits their turn, even if the placement was an accident. Otherwise, the card will count during resolution.



## Example

*In this example, the Taxi Union believes strongly in Option B, so they played two influencers there. If that side wins, however, they will only win 1 XP and choose who receives it.*

*When this card is resolved, it's discovered that either the Taxi Union or Ceres Institute of Technology had played an illegal card, since Culture and Governance cannot be across from each other. However, the other players did not notice this during the support phase so both cards must stand.*

## Making Deals

**If you don't feel strongly for either side of a storyline, use that opportunity to get support on a different card. Another player may have a matching realm that can boost your play.**

**Offering support on a topic they are fighting for in exchange for support on a topic you care about or future support is a great way to get matching icons. Players are not obligated to keep any promises and may go back on their word at any time.**

# Resolution

## Scoring Each Side

Starting with the left most storyline, resolve each completely following these steps:

**01**

Draw a society card and read the card description.

**02**

Flip face down all influencers matching the realm icons cancelled by the society card.

**03**

Next add all bonuses for each side's score. (See Scoring Each Side below.) The side with the highest score wins. In the case of a tie, the side assisted by the society card bonus wins.

**04**

Pull the storyline card with the number matching the winning side. Read the top paragraph out loud to learn the consequences of your choices. This card is placed below the previous storyline card to show the progression of the story.

**05**

Award XP and return influencer cards to players

**Matching realm icons on influencer cards can be very powerful. You receive a +1 bonus for each matching pair and an additional +1 for each matching icon after the first.**

**Not all players will have a specific realm in their current hand. Planning with others is very important.**

**Be careful! There is a risk with playing too many of the same icon on one side. If a society card matching that icon cancels it out, you will lose all bonuses including the influencer rating, the experience points, and the matching icon bonus.**

## Scoring Each Side

To get the score for each side of the storyline card you will add:

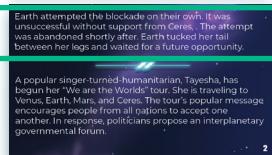
- Influencer rating from face up influencers;
- +1 for each star on a face up influencer;
- +1 for each matching realm icon pair on face up influencers;
- +1 for each additional matching icon after the first pair;
- Any bonus from the society card for the side the arrow indicates.

# Resolution

## Reading the Winning Card

The number in parenthesis next to the title is the card you will pull for the winning side. The card will be found in the storyline deck located above it.

Players read only the top portion of the card to see the results. The bottom portion of the card will be read in the next round. This card is placed below the previous storyline card to show the progression of the story.



## Reward Experience

Influencers on the winning side receive one experience point (XP) each. Take an XP card and slide it into the sleeve with the influencer.

If you are receiving your second or third XP for this influencer, replace the existing XP card with a two- or three-star card, respectively.



Kala has no empty stars so she cannot receive more XP. Danai and Shaheen were played on the same side, so the Taxi Union chooses who to award XP.

## About XP

**Each filled in star on your influencer card counts as +1 in future rounds.**

**You cannot fill in more stars than are available on a card.**

**If you place more than one influencer on a storyline card, you must choose one to receive the XP.**

**Even if your card was flipped due to a society card, your influencer card still receives an XP.**

# Resolution Example

Before the society card, the score on the left side would be 8 with three cards played ( $3+2+2$ ) and one matching realm bonus (+1).

The bonus on the right side is a total of 5 with the three cards played ( $1+2+1$ ), one XP star (+1) and no matching realm bonus.

A society card is flipped. The card cancels any Elite cards, so [Institute of Technology's Robin Priyanka](#) and [Galactic Artist's Inc.'s Wu Bai](#) are flipped over.

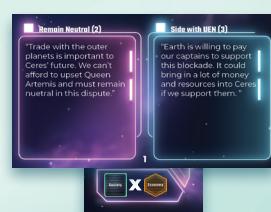
The bonus on the left side is now only +3 because of the [Descendants' Ronny McCullough](#). They have an influencer rating of 3.

The society card gives the left side a +1 bonus for a total of 4 versus 5. The right side wins. The players read the top of storyline card #3.

## Before



## After



## End of Round

The round ends once all storyline cards are resolved.

Place the completed society card underneath their respective storyline card. The bottom section of the card will be left visible to indicate the restrictions for the next round.

Remove previous society cards and place them into a discard pile.

Players collect all their influencers and form their deck of 7 cards. Shuffle all the cards and draw 3 new cards for the next round.

# End of Round and Game End

Collect all the turn order cards, shuffle, and place the deck above the storyline cards.

Begin the next round with the new level of cards in Opening Discussion.



*Society card restrictions only last for one round and are not cumulative. You should discard the previous, and place the new restrictions under the storyline card that you will read for the next round.*

## Game End

The game ends after 4 rounds when all storylines have concluded with an epilogue.

Players are encouraged to discuss how the epilogues affect their factions.

## About the Cards

### Storyline Cards

The game includes 93 storyline cards. They will tell the progression of the story in the game. You will not use all 93 cards in every game.



**The Result** of the winning card is above the blue line. It is read immediately after a card is resolved.

**The Current Situation** is under the blue line. It is read at the beginning of a round.

**The Card Number** is like a page number and tells you which card it is.



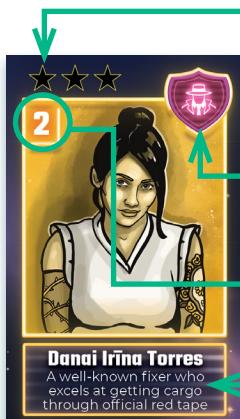
**The Title** is a brief description of the choice. If this side wins, you draw and read the card in the **Winning card number**.

**The Quote** is an argument in favor of that option.

# About the Cards

## Influencer Cards

Influencer cards represent people you control that have influence over others in society. You send them out to sway people to your side. Each faction has 7 influencer cards. Influencers are used to grant bonuses to a storyline. Their bonuses range from 1 through 3 with the ability to level up with experience points (XP). Each influencer is associated with one of the twelve realms of influence.



**Experience** is filled in when you win a contest. The blank stars are the max number of XP you can win.

**The Realm of Influence** is where this person has influence in society. Matching suites gives you a bonus in the scoring.

**The Influence Rating** is the number you add to the score of the storyline side that you support.

**The Name and Description** tell you who this is and why they are important.

# About the Cards

## Society Cards

These cards represent the current societal climate and how much it supports one side of a storyline over another. Society card events will cancel out influencers with the matching icon.



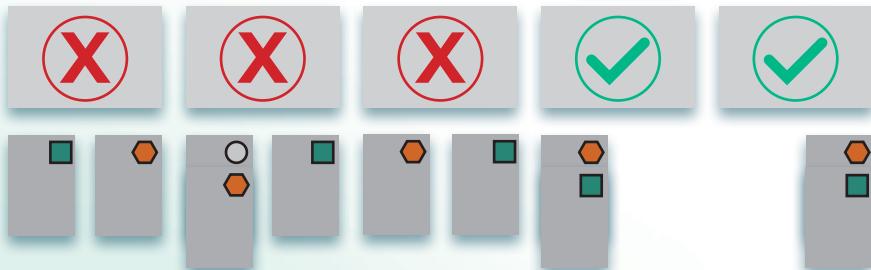
**The Card Bonus** is the number you will add to the score of one side of the storyline card. You add it to the side (left or right) designated on the **Bonus Direction** and color of the card.

When the society card is revealed, all influencers with matching realms of influence that are in the **Cancelled Realms** area get flipped face down. The Influencer does not count towards the score.

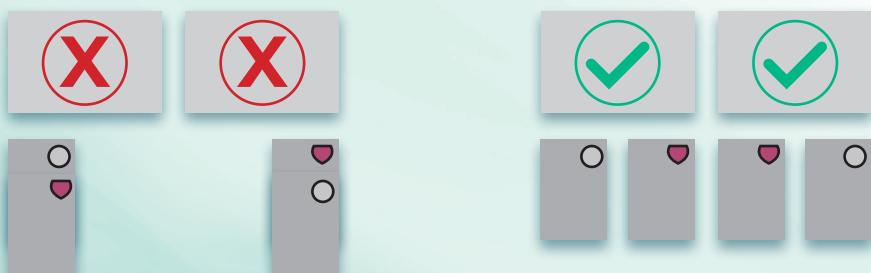
**Society Restrictions** go into effect the next round. You will not be able to play certain cards because of these restrictions.

# Society Restrictions

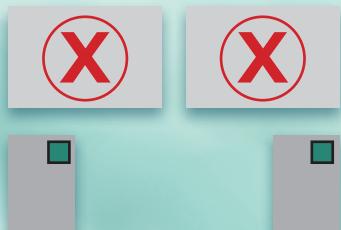
You may not play these realms of influence suites on opposite sides from each other, regardless of play order.



You may not play these realms of influence suites on the same side as each other.



You may not play this realm of influence suite on either side of the card.



# Realms of Influence

## Economy



Finance



Transportation



Labor

## Culture



Research



Entertainment



Media

## Governance



Politics



Law



Underworld

## Society



Elite



Occult



Street

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