



Playtest Version Rules

Designed by Clay Weill



Face Off - Playtest Version

The story so far . . .

The OverNerd stared at the shattered remains of his beloved arena, contemplating what went wrong. He had gathered forces from across all the universes --his, yours, the ones that are imaginary, and the ones that have yet to be imagined. He armed them. He motivated them. And yet... failure. All systems move towards chaos.

"I need something else", he thought. And he picked through smoking, twisted mash of flesh, magic, and metal, looking for the bits of tech that might still be salvageable. "I need someone else. Someone with the will to marshal their forces. Someone with the cunning to maximize their resources. Someone with the ambition to win."

He ran a nerdy finger over the bullet holes in door of a Black and Gold Pontiac Tans-Am, and walked past the bloodless bodies of Aristotle, Dracula, a The Little Man with the Green Beard. A thought was crystalizing in his mind. And as he climbed over the broken skull of Kong and kicked aside The Spear of Destiny that had been inexorably wrapped around A Vorpall Blade That Goes Snicker Snak it came to him in a flash of inspiration. "I need Champions, leaders, to guide my factions, to prevent my battle from descending into chaos. I need a set of Bosses. I need you"

Overview

In a 2-5 player game, players start with a deck of twelve starter cards from a selected faction. They shuffle the cards in a deck, and draw a hand of five. Each turn, a player picks a card from the available selection, and this determines if the players will face off or assault the current headquarters.

In a face off, players first play a personality and then an equipment. Then players calculate their power, and players with the highest can choose to strengthen their deck with stronger cards or increase their victory points.

In an assault, each player adds a card to their army near the headquarters (HQ). The players may also have a chance to bid on a very powerful cards with victory points. After a number of assaults on subsequent turns, the players total their armies power and the top players gain rewards. Players can choose to gain a special power or gather victory points.

Play continues until either all headquarters have been defeated or a player has collected all seven victory cards related to a single faction. The winner of the game is either the player with the most victory points or the player with the full set of seven victory point cards.

Contents:

Faction cards (26+ cards) for each Faction



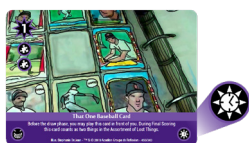
12 Starter cards



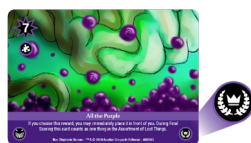
4 Power cards



1 Market card



6 VC cards (1-6)



1 VC card (7)



1 HQ



1 HQ Reward

Factions:



Monsters



Cowboys



Ninjas

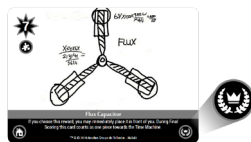


Pirates

Heathen House (103 non-faction cards):



6 VC cards (1-6)



1 VC card (7)



1 HQ



1 HQ Reward



10 HQ Assault



10 Bonus cards



20 Power cards



9 Market cards

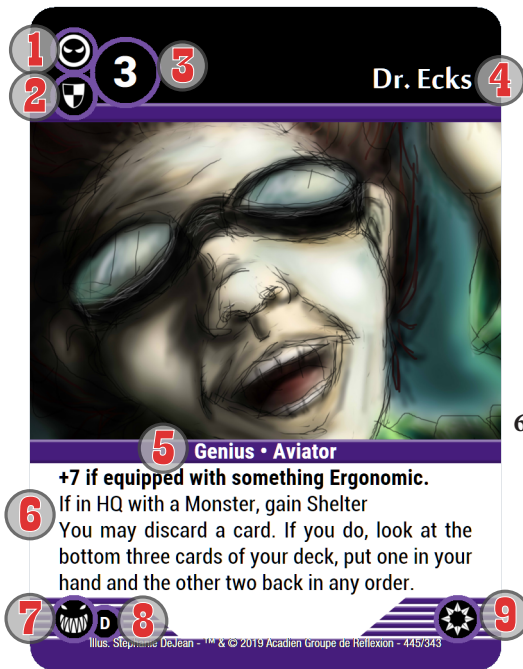


30 Scrubs cards



10 Timing cards

Personality / Equipment Breakdown



1. **Type Icon:** This icon indicates whether the card can be played as a personality ☺, an equipment ⚙, or both ⚙☺.
Note: When a card with the both is played, it must be played as a personality or equipment and remains that card type until it is discarded.
2. **Action Icon:** This icon indicates if the action is an attack ⚔, defense 🛡, or both ⚔🛡. It will be blank if it is none of them.
3. **Power value:** base or printed value of the card
4. **Name**
5. **Keywords:** Keywords may be referenced by other cards.
6. **Abilities:** The combo text is in bold with the bonus to the power level and conditions necessary to trigger. The ability may have the word **Face Off** or **HQ** in bold. This limits where the action can be performed. If neither is presented, then the action can be performed in any location.
7. **Faction icon:** This icon indicates the faction the card belongs to. The four factions in the base game are Monsters 🐉, Cowboys 🤠, Ninjas 🥷, and Pirates 🏴‍☠. The Heathen House 🏠 are not a playable faction. More factions coming in future expansions.

8. **Tie breaker letter:** This letter is used to determine who wins in a tie either in a Face Off or a HQ Assault.
9. **Sorting Icon:** This icon helps with the setup at the beginning of the game. More information is provided in the set up section.

Victory & Bonus cards



1. **Point Value:** The value of the card at the end of the game if conditions are met.

2. **Pieces:** Each victory card will have 1 to 3 puzzle piece icons indicating how many pieces it is worth of the set. The player with the most pieces in a set earn full point value of the card.

3. **Name**

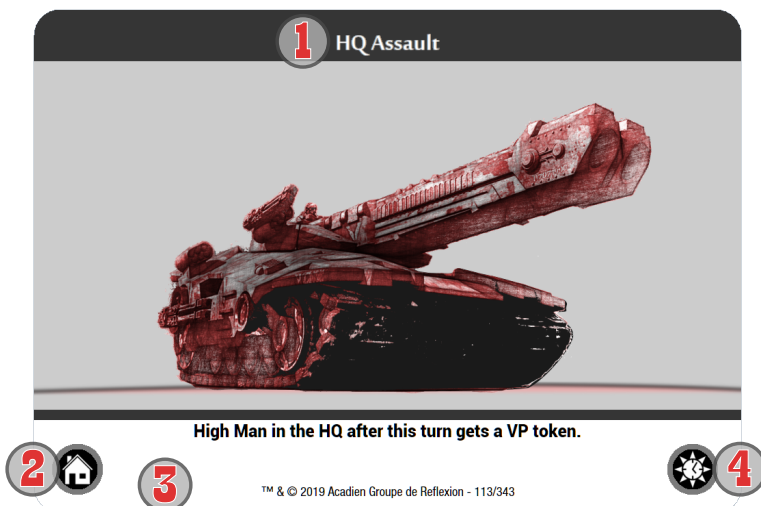
4. **Faction Icon:** This icon indicates the faction it belongs to. It helps with set up and with final scoring. Players may collect any VC cards, not just the faction they are playing.

5. **Action/Reminder:** When a player selects a victory card for a reward, it initially goes into their discard pile. If the player has a victory card in their hand

before the Draw Phase, they can place it in front of them, removing from their deck until end of game scoring.

6. **Sorting Icon:** This icon helps with the setup at the beginning of the game. More information is provided in the set up section.

HQ Assault Cards:



1. **Name**












2. **Faction Icon:** As shown here, this card is part of the Heathen House set which isn't a playable faction. These cards make up the Clock, Power, Scrub, and Market decks as well as the beginning Headquarters.

3. **Action:** The action instructs the players on any additional conditions for the HQ Assault. For example, it may instruct players to perform a Market step after cards have been played, or it may indicate that a reward or penalty should be given out after cards have been played in the HQ.

4. **Sorting Icon:** This icon helps with the setup at the beginning of the game. More information is provided in the set up section.

Setup

(Example set up on next page.)

- Prepare factions:** Separate cards into five stacks by the faction icon in the lower right corner. There are four faction decks (*Cowboys*, *Ninjas*, *Pirates*, and *Monsters*) and a deck of *Heathen House* cards. Set the *Heathen House* aside.
- Select Factions:** Each player should select a faction, and separate the cards by the sorting icon in the lower right corner. The remaining factions can be put back into the box.
- Prepare Heathen House:** Sort the *Heathen House* cards by the sorting icon in the lower right corner.
- Create the Scrub Deck** by shuffling the scrub  cards and placing them face up in easy reach.
- Create the Market Deck** by first setting aside “A Haunting Presence” and then shuffling the faction market  cards with a number of Heathen House market cards (see chart below). Place them face down with “A Haunting Presence” face up on top.
- Create the HQ Deck** by shuffling the HQ  cards of the selected factions. Place the Heathen House HQ on top. Place the corresponding reward  cards in a handy spot nearby. Create the **Timing Deck**  by shuffling the appropriate number (see chart below) of HQ Timing cards together. Then, reveal the top one. Place the seven point Faction VC  cards in a stack next to the HQ Deck.
- Deal starting victory cards:** Shuffle the non-seven point VC  cards together and deal two to each player. (Players should keep these cards hidden.)
- Create the Clock Tree:** Add a number of bonus  cards to the remaining victory cards (see chart below). Then, add a number of HQ assault  cards (see chart below). Shuffle, and draw the top three cards from the deck to form the Available Clock Row, and the next two cards behind them.
- Build the Power Tree:** First set aside “Aristotle”, “Dracula”, and “Truth Gun” and then shuffle the faction power  cards together with a number of *Heathen House* power cards (see chart below). Next, place “Aristotle”, “Dracula”, and “Truth Gun” in the Available Power Tree Row, and draw and place two cards from the *Power deck* behind them.
- Timing Cards:** Shuffle the listed Timing cards into a deck near HQ. Flip the top card face up.
- Create the Starter Decks:** Shuffle the starter  cards and set face down. This is the player’s **Starting Deck**. Also, give each player 10 vp tokens.
- Draw opening hand:** Each player draws five cards from their starting deck. If a player draws no personalities in their starting hand, they can mulligan once by shuffling the five back into the starting deck and drawing five again.
- Determine first player:** The best-looking player is the First Player. (Or you can randomly select the first player.)

You are ready to begin.

Each player begins the game with:

- a deck of 12 starting cards marked with icon (shuffle and placed face down)
- 10 vp tokens
- a faction rule and game phase summary card (not included, yet)
- two randomly selected victory cards (keep hidden)
- any special cards marked with icon nearby

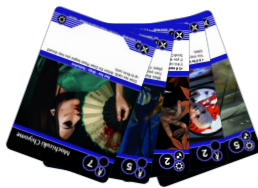
Deck/Icon	2 players	3 players	4 players	5 players	Special cards
Market Deck	5	6	5	4	A Haunting Presence
Power Deck	6	8	10	12	Aristotle, Dracula, Truth Gun
HQ Assault	1-10	1-15	1-15	1-15	***
Bonus Cards	3	4	5	6	
Timing Deck	2, 3, & 4	1, 2, 3, & 4	1,2,2,3, & 4	1,1,2,2,3, & 3	***

* Face off can be made longer or shorter depending on the timing cards chosen. We only recommend including the numbered 5 card for experienced players.

Ninjas' VP Tokens



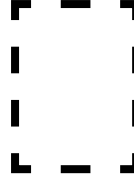
Ninjas' Hand



Ninjas' Starter Deck



Ninjas' Discard



Ninjas' Victory Cards



Ninjas' Play Area

Available Power Cards

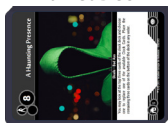
Power Deck



Scrub Deck



Market Deck



Available Clock Cards

Clock Deck



HQ Timing



Headquarters

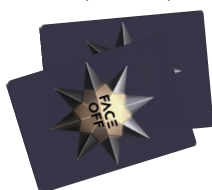


HQ Rewards

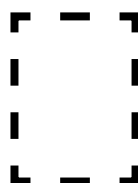


Cowboys' Area

Cowboys' Victory Cards



Cowboys' Discard



Cowboys' Starter Deck



Cowboys' Hand



Cowboys' VP Tokens



Key Concepts

The Golden Rule

If the text on a card directly contradicts the text of the rules, the text on the card takes precedence. If it is possible to observe both the card text and the text of the rules, both are observed.

Clock Tree

The Clock Tree is a set of five randomly drawn cards (vc, bonus, and assault cards) arranged in a pyramid with the Clock deck at the top. The bottom three cards are called the Available Clock Cards, and the first player selects one of these at the beginning of each round.

Power Tree

The Power Tree is a set of five power cards arranged in a pyramid with the Power Tree deck at the top. The bottom three cards are called the Available Power Row, and each Face Off, one player who ranks in the top three may choose one of these cards to add to their deck.

Aviators and Travellers

Some personalities have the keyword **Aviator**, and some Equipment cards have the keyword **Traveller**. During a Face Off, An Aviator who was played along with a Traveller may be moved to the player's HQ Assault stack instead of being discarded.

High Man and Low Man

These phrases refer to the power of each players cards in a specific location. The players should recalculate the total power of all their cards in the listed location. The High man is the player with the most power, and the low man is the least.

Playing the Game

Round Overview

Face Off is played over a series of rounds. During a round, players will either fight over a treasure, secure new personalities and equipment, or build up their forces to take over the current headquarters.

Each round is divided into three phases:

1. Clock Phase
2. Violence Phase
3. Draw Phase

After all phases have been completed, the round is over, and the first player marker is passed to the left. The player with the first player marker begins the next round. Phases will be described in more detailed in the sections following.

Clock Phase:

At the beginning of each round, the first player chooses one of the three face up cards at the bottom of the Clock Tree, referred to as the Available Clock Cards. If the first player chooses a VC card or a Bonus card, a Face Off will occur during the Violence Phase. If the first player chooses an HQ assault card, then an HQ Assault will occur during the Violence Phase.

Teri is playing the Cowboys and is the first player. She selects "The Mystical Book of Ninja Secrets", a VC card. Since she selected a VC card, the players will conduct a Face Off during the Violence Phase.

Violence Phase:

During this phase, the players will either conduct a Face Off or an HQ Assault depending on the card the first player selected during the **Clock Phase**.

Face Off:

During a Face Off, players are fighting over the VC card or the Bonus card that was selected by the first player. All players will perform four steps:

1. Personality
2. Equipment
3. Reward
4. Clean up

Personality step

During a Personality step, each player chooses a personality from their hand places it face down near the card that was selected by the first player. Personality cards have a personality icon or a mixed personality/equipment icon in the upper left hand near their power value.

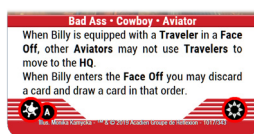


Note: A player may choose to discard any card instead of playing a personality. If a player does so, they leave it face down until the Clean Up Phase. They may also chose to not play a card. If they do not play a personality, they will not receive a reward during the Reward step.

When all players are ready, players reveal their cards simultaneously. Then starting with the first player and proceeding clockwise, each player resolves the ability on their personality.

*Teri reveals the personality "Billy the Kid" who has the keyword, **Aviator**. Tom (Ninjas) reveals the personality "Tomo Sukesada". Teri performs the action on "Billy*

the Kid". She discards a card, and draws a card from her deck. Tom performs the following action on "Tomo Sukesada". He decides to gain a VP token since he does not want to destroy a card in his hand and does not have a discard pile.

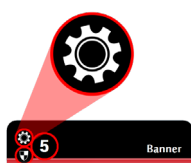


Note: Some actions are limited to a location such as a Face Off or an HQ. It may be indicated either by a bold phrase before the action or by bold words within the text. If the action does not state a location, then the action can occur anytime it is played.

Note: Abilities with "Attack:" in bold are considered attacks. Attacks tend to be immediate and can usually be blocked by playing a Shield. Another type of action is called a Seige. A siege action is usually limited to the HQ and delayed until the HQ is defeated.

Equipment step

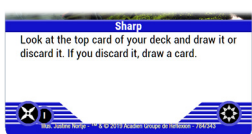
During the equipment step, each player plays an Equipment from their hand face down near their previously played card. Equipment cards have a equipment icon or a mixed personality/equipment icon in the upper left hand near their power value.



Note: A player may choose to discard any card instead of playing an equipment. If a player does so, they leave it face down until the Clean Up Phase. They may also choose to not play a card. They are still eligible for a reward if they played a personality during the personality step.

When all players are ready, players reveal their equipment simultaneously. Then starting with the first player and proceeding clockwise, each player resolves the ability/action on their equipment.

Teri reveals "Banner" who has the Traveller keyword. Tom reveals "Goemon's Chain Whip". "Banner" only has reminder text for the keyword ability. Tom performs the action on "Goemon's Chain Whip". Tom looks at the top card of his deck. He decides to discard it, so he draws another card to his hand.



Reward step

During the Reward step, players calculate their total power of their face up cards in the Face Off. The value is calculated by adding the power value of their personality and equipment (and their other cards) in the Face Off. Then applying any modifications from combo text or action effects, and subtracting any penalties from attacks or other action effects. The player with the highest total wins the Face Off. Other players are ranked in descending order. In the case of a tie, the tie is broken by the following order:

1. The HQ card (skip if Heathen House is active).
2. Letter on the Personality card (bottom left corner)
3. Letter on the Equipment card.
4. Turn order starting with the first player.

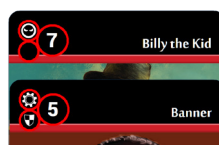
The Winner of the Face Off may choose one of the following Rewards:

- The VC card or Bonus card that was chosen before the Face Off
- A Power card from the three Available Power Cards at the bottom of the Power Tree.
- A VP Token

The Second Place Player may choose from the remaining rewards. The Third Place Player receives any reward that remains. Other players do not receive a reward.

Note: Any player who did not play a personality may not receive a reward.

Teri's total power is 12. ("Billy the Kid's" power value of 7 + "Banner's" power value of 5) Tom's total power is 1. ("Tomo Sukesada's" power value is 2 + "Goemon's Chain Whip's" power value is 3 + the combo ability 6.) Teri wins the Face Off and selects "The Mystical Book of Ninja Secrets" because she was randomly dealt a Ninja VC card at the beginning of the game. Tom select "Aristotle" and places it in his discard pile.



Strategy Tip: The selection of the reward is probably the most important decision in the game. A VC card is more valuable to the player with the most puzzle pieces from a faction because the VC card will be worth it's face value. For other players, the VC card would be worth only 1 point. A power card is more valuable at the beginning of the game because it has a better chance to be used, and the person with the most Power cards will get a bonus points at the end of the game. The VP token and Bonus cards are constant, and they may be a better value towards the end of the game.

Clean Up step:

During the Clean Up step, players discard the cards they played during the Face Off to their discard pile. This includes the personality, equipment, any additional cards played, and any face down cards. The cards are placed face up in the discard pile.

Note: The Aviator / Traveler action triggers in the clean up step. Instead of discarding the Aviator personality, it is moved to the HQ stack of the player.

Tom discards both of his cards. Teri moves "Billy the Kid" to her HQ stack because she played a Traveller, and discards "Banner"

Note: The discard pile is considered open information to all players.

The first player moves one of the two cards in the middle of the Clock Tree to the Available Clock Cards row. Then they draw the top card of the Clock Deck to replace the moved card.

The player who chose the Power Tree card as a reward moves one of the two cards from the middle of the Power Tree to the Available Power Cards row. Then, they draw the top card of the Power deck to replace the moved card.

HQ Assault:

An HQ Assault occurs instead of a Face Off if the first player chooses an HQ Assault card during the Clock Phase. Unlike a Face Off, players can play any card to their stack near the HQ. The cards will remain over subsequent rounds until a enough assaults have occurred for the HQ to be defeated or crack. When the HQ cracks, players will earn rewards based on the total power of their forces at the HQ. In an HQ Assault, players may perform five steps:

1. Build up
2. Assault card
3. Reward*
4. Clean up*

*Reward step, and Clean up step are not performed every HQ Assault.

Build Up step

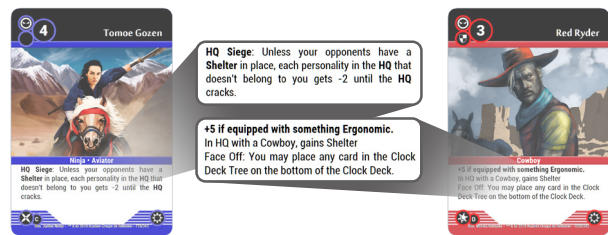
During the Build up step, players play one card face down near the HQ. Unlike a Face Off, there are no restrictions on which cards can be played. Equipment and other non-personality cards can be played without the need for a corresponding Personality card.

Note: Heathen House has an ability that changes this step. During the Build Up step at the Heathen House, players add two cards to their HQ stack.

When all players are ready, players reveal their cards

simultaneously. Starting with the first player and proceeding clockwise, each player resolves the ability on their card and then adds it to their HQ stack.

On Tom's turn, he selects the HQ Assault card, so everyone will conduct an HQ Assault. Tom selects and reveals "Tamoe Gozen". Teri selects and reveals "Red Ryder". Tom performs the HQ: Seige ability on "Tamoe Gozen" that gives a -2 penalty to all personalities in an army without Shelter. Teri performs the ability on "Red Ryder" that gives it Shelter because Teri had played "Billy the Kid" in a previous turn. This makes the cards in Teri's army immune to the HQ Seige.



Note: If an ability targets a card in the HQ, the ability can only target cards that have already been added to the HQ, either a card from a previous turn or a card from a player who went earlier in the turn.

Note: HQ Siege actions usually have effects that last until the HQ cracks.

Assault card step

After all players have performed their actions and added their card to the HQ, the first player reads the action on the HQ Assault card. The action will either be a reward/penalty or a market action.

For the reward/penalty action, the text will state a condition and the corresponding penalty. Most actions reward the player with the highest total power or penalize the player with the lowest.

During a Market action, players bid victory point tokens on the current face up Market card to add the card to their deck. Bidding begins with the first player who must bid at least one VP token, but can bid up to the maximum tokens they currently have. In turn order, each player either passes or raises the bid. A player who passes may not reenter the bidding. Bidding proceeds until all players but one have passed.

The winner of the bidding pays the highest bid of VP tokens to the bank, and then places the face up Market card into their discard pile or shuffle it into their deck.

Then, players check if the HQ has been defeated. If the number of HQ Assault cards is lower than the current timing card, then players proceed to the **Draw Phase**. If the number of HQ Assault cards equals or is higher than the number on the HQ Timing card, players resolves the **Reward step** followed by the **Clean up step**.

Tom reads the ability on the HQ Ability outloud, "High man in the HQ gains 2 vp tokens". Tom's army currently has 1 card worth 4 power, and Teri's army has two cards worth 10 power. Teri receives 2 vp tokens.

Note: If the HQ assault card ends the final HQ --thus ending the game --no Market Action takes place.

Reward step

During the Reward step, players calculate the total power of their face up cards in the HQ. A player's total power includes the power value of each card in the stack, combo bonuses, penalties from actions, and any effects from the HQ. Players may equip each personality with one equipment to receive the combo bonus.

Note: Players do not need to have Personalities in the HQ to win the HQ.

The player with the highest power total wins the HQ. Other players are ranked in descending order. In the case of a tie,

1. The HQ card (skip if Heathen House is active).
2. Letter on the Personality cards (bottom right corner)
3. Letter on the Equipment cards.
4. Turn order starting with the first player.

The Winner of the HQ may choose one of the following Rewards:

- One of the seven point VC cards
- The HQ Reward
- A VP Token

The Second Place Player may choose from the remaining rewards. The Third Place Player, if there is one, any reward that remains. Other players do not receive a reward. After rewards have been selected, the Clean Up step occurs.

*[[improve with actual cards]] After several rounds of HQ Assaults, the HQ has been defeated. Tom and Teri add up the total power of cards in their HQ stacks. Teri has a lot and Tom has only a little. Teri selects the 7 point reward for the Cowboy faction.
[[insert image]]*

Clean Up step

The Clean Up step occurs only if the HQ has cracked. All players discard the cards in their HQ stack. The current HQ card, HQ Assault cards, and HQ Timing card are set aside. The first player reveals the next Headquarters and reads its global effect out loud. The next HQ Timing card is drawn and placed near the new HQ card.

The Draw Phase

After the Violence Phase, the Draw Phase occurs. During

the Draw Phase, players perform any Draw Phase actions. Draw Phase actions are usually on Scrub cards and VC Cards. After performing the actions, players draw cards up to their hand limit. If a player has more cards in hand before the draw phase, they do not discard any cards, but will not draw any additional cards during that phase.

Note: The starting hand limit is five cards.

Note: Card drawn during the Draw Phase do not trigger their Draw Phase actions until the next turn.

After players have drawn their cards, players may trigger their End of Turn actions. Then, the first player token is passed to the player's left, and the next turn begins with the Clock Phase.

End of Game and Final Scoring

Should a player collect all seven cards from a single VC set, the game ends immediately, and they win. If this doesn't occur, then the game ends when the final HQ has been cracked.

Note: The Market step is skipped even if the final HQ Assault card instructs you to perform a Market step.

Players then gather all their cards and separate the VC cards into sets by faction using the color and lower left icon.

Players then select and compare the number of puzzle pieces for each set. Player with the most puzzle pieces leaves their VC cards face up. Other players turn their face down. If two or more players are tied in puzzle pieces for a set, all tied players keep them face up. Repeat with each set in the game.

The player with the most power cards earns VP tokens equal to the number of power cards they have minus the number of cards from the second most player.

Players can then calculate their final score to determine the winner.

Final score is calculated as follows:

- Face up VC cards are worth face value
- Face down VC cards are worth a point each.
- Bonus Cards are worth their face value.
- VP Tokens are worth one point apiece.
- Some scrub cards are worth negative points.

After a long struggle, Tom and Teri have ended the game. They both sort their cards and compare VC cards.

Starting with the Heath House set, Teri has 1 Time Machine VC card with 1 puzzle piece, and Tom has 2

Time Machine VC cards with 3 puzzle pieces. Tom leaves his face up, and Teri turns her Time Machine cards face down.

For Ninjas, Teri has two Ninja VC cards with 3 pieces, and Tom has 1 Ninja VC with 2 pieces. Teri leaves hers face up, and Tom turns his face down.

For Cowboys, Teri has one Cowboy VC with 3 pieces, and Tom has two Cowboy VCs with 3 pieces. They are tied, and both keep their cards face up.

For Power cards, Teri has 3 power cards, and Tom has 4. Tom receives one VP token for the difference.

Tom and Teri calculate their final totals.

Teri has two Ninja VCs worth 3 points and 1 point, one Cowboy VC worth 7 points, one face down VC, one bonus card worth 4 points, 14 VP tokens, and three scrubs worth -1 point a piece.

Time Machine	0
Ninjas	4
Cowboys	7
Face down VC cards	1
Bonus	4
VP Tokens	14
Scrubs	-3
Total	27

Tom has two Time Machine VC worth 1 point and 7 points, two Cowboy VC worth 1 point and 5 points, one face down VC, no bonus cards, 9 VP tokens, no scrub cards,

Time Machine	8
Ninjas	0
Cowboys	6
Face down VC cards -	1
Bonus	0
VP Tokens	9
Scrubs	0
Total	24

Teri wins the game by three points.