Puzzle Pack 3

**This is a multi-part puzzle. Each puzzle leads to the next, culminating in the final answer.**

*She had been on her feet for what felt like days. Cult or no cult, she needed a break. She found an open chair in a side room, sat down, and closed her eyes. Only a few minutes later, someone nudged her elbow. “Uh, excuse me. Could I get your help with something?” She opened her eyes to see a haggard young college student shuffling his feet nearby. “A GM said that I should come talk with you. He gave me a password to say.” And he repeated the password she had figured out earlier.*

*She immediately came alert. “What’s going on?”*

*“I, um, I got myself into a situation. I was raised by The Cult.” She stared at him. Seeing the look on her face, he hastily added, “Oh, don’t get me wrong! I never participated in anything. I know they’re involved in some bad stuff; it’s just… my parents were members, but they died when I was little. A car crash, apparently. The Cult took care of me, and…” He trailed off. After a moment of silence, he picked back up. “Well, they said it’s time I start paying back what I owe them. At first I thought they wanted me to get a job, but then they said something about a special initiation, and…” He stopped, then reached into his backpack and pulled out a note. “Uh, here’s what they gave me.”*

*She unfolded the note:*

*You exist because of our generosity. You owe us. It is time for repayment.*

*We need an intelligent Initiate to take on certain special projects. We believe you could fill that role. But before we trust you with any more of our knowledge, we need to know you have the aptitude to succeed in our organization.*

*Figure out the meanings hidden within these cards by week’s end. They reveal something about our organization’s founder. If you do, we shall induct you into the organization, and you can start repaying your debt. If not, we shall be disappointed. We would hate to resort to more extreme measures in order to secure what’s ours.*

*A list of instructions followed on a separate page. She looked up and saw that the young man held a deck of cards with strange symbols on them. “I, uh, I can’t figure it out. I’ve stayed up too many nights; the symbols are blurring together. I could really use some help. Please!”*

*She looked at his desperate face, closed her eyes again, and slid sideways to make room for him to sit. That break would have to wait.*

**First task:** Decipher the symbols on the cards. Each card contains a word related to cults or mysticism. Hint: Vowels are not contained inside other letters.

**Second task:** In addition to containing a word, each of the 26 cards uniquely correlates with one of the 26 letters of the English alphabet. A card can correlate with a letter of the English alphabet only if the word on that card contains that letter. For example, if a card contained the word “dog,” it could correlate with either **D**, **O**, or **G**, but no other letter. Figure out which letter of the English alphabet each card correlates with.

Hints:

* The most common letter for a card to correlate with is the first letter of its word.
* Only one card correlates with the letter 5 deep into its word.
* No card correlates with a letter 7 or more deep into its word.
* The number of cards that correlate with the letter 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 deep into their words is unique. That is, the number of cards that correlate with the first letter of their word is different than the number of cards that correlate with either the second, third, fourth, fifth, or sixth letters of their words. And so on.

**Third task:** After arranging the cards according to The Cult’s alphabet, use the numbers and the symbols in the corners to figure out a hidden phrase.

**Fourth task:** Follow the instructions given by the phrase from the third task. You should end up with two piles of cards. For the cards called out by the phrase from the third task, examine the opposite corners from the ones you used previously. Doing so will give you two words. Then consider the opposite corners of the remaining cards in order to get a three-word phrase telling you which of the two words is the final answer.