

A NARRATIVE ROLEPLAYING GAME · RUN ON WORDS, NOT  
DICE

# COUNCIL

*A Player's Handbook*

◆ BOOK THE FIRST — FOUNDATIONS ◆

*being the whole of the game, set down plain, that any hand aboard may read it*

## § 0.1 THE THESIS

*Council is for tables who left the dice behind — and found they had left something else behind with them.*

When a crew stops rolling and starts telling, the story runs warmer and the arithmetic goes quiet — and then, one night, a locked door appears that no one at the table happens to be clever enough to open. Under dice, a character *rolled to know things their player did not*. Take the dice away and that quiet gift goes with them: now a player can learn only what they personally thought to ask, and the keeper is left dangling hints, praying someone guesses the shape of the answer.

**Council exists to hand that gift back without handing the dice back.** It is a game of insight, consequence, and shared command that runs entirely on words. One question steers every rule in this handbook: *how does a soul come to know a thing without guessing the exact right way to ask?* All that follows is an answer.

*You will not roll to see if you succeed. You will decide what you are willing to pay to find out. —  
the first principle*

## § 0.2 WHO SAILS UNDER IT

**Crews who have already drifted.** Long campaigns that quietly abandoned sheets and initiative and now live on narration and trust. Council names what they are already doing and gives it teeth.

**Keepers weary of dangling hints.** Game masters who love the shared story but keep striking the reef where a puzzle stalls because no one has yet said the magic thing.

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§ 0.3 THE TURN OF THE TIDE – THE CORE LOOP

Play turns through three stations. A **Scene** raises a need the table cannot simply declare true. The world answers by one of two roads – **the Water** (buy insight now, at a price) or **the Tide** (commit the work, let time carry it) – and whatever comes back walks into the next Scene, changed. That is the entire machine. All else is rigging hung upon it.

STATION ONE

### The Scene

Play, talk, act. A need arises the table cannot just wish true – a locked door, a hidden truth, a thing that must be built.

ROAD A – NOW

### The Water

Seek Landis. Trade a truth, a trouble, a scene, for a real answer drawn from a sealed clue – never from guessing the question.

ROAD B – IN TIME

### The Tide

Commit a Work. Between sessions the world moves it a watch at a time; the consequence arrives later, signed by whoever bore it.

↳ and whatever the world returns walks back into the next Scene, changed ↳

*Three stations. Two roads. One turning tide. If a rule does not serve the turn, it does not belong aboard.*

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§ 0.4 THE EIGHT TIMBERS

The fixed vocabulary of the game – the timbers of the hull. These words mean the same at every Council table; a keeper may re-rig the world above, but not rename the timbers below.

I	The Water	Landis, real only in water, who sells true answers at a price. The game's one fixed presence and its oracle.
II	The Council	Shared command with a final say. Every vote and dissent goes on the record, so a hard choice is already canon.
III	Works	The things a crew sets out to accomplish between scenes, declared as cards: an aim, the hands, the stakes.
IV	The Tide	Time itself. Every session advances every open Work one watch, whether or not the table touched it.
V	The Ledger	What a Work spends: Hands, Power, Standing. Nothing is pinned twice; wound a stake and all pinned to it stalls.
VI	Squalls	Sealed complications carried by the larger Works, breaking when the wake turns against you.
VII	The Seals	Pre-written clues – Nudge, Bearing, Answer – sealed and shown, so insight never waits on a clever question.
VIII	Grace	The etiquette and economy of asking for help. Grace buys clarity; it is what you spend where others spent dice.



## § 0.5 THE KEEL & THE RIGGING

Council is a keel, not a world. A table brings its own fiction – a drowned empire, a generation ship, a haunted county – and rigs it to the timbers below. But one timber is not the table's to swap. **Landis is fixed.** The madman on the sea, real only in water, who sells true answers at a price, stands in every Council game that has been or will be run. He is not a figure in your setting; he is the keel itself, and the crew reach him from inside whatever world they inhabit by finding water and asking with grace.

### THE KEEL – FIXED

Landis & the Water. The eight timbers and their names. The turn of the tide. "Grace buys clarity." The Seals. The safety rails.

### THE RIGGING – YOURS

The world, its peoples, what "Power" and "Standing" are made of, what a Council governs, what the riddles guard. All of it a

These sail unchanged between every Council game.

table's to invent, replace, and burn to the waterline.

*Change everything you like. Leave me the water. – L.F.*

A NOTE ON OUR OWN VOYAGE

This handbook is the game any crew may read. A single game then hangs its own command upon it: our voyage seats the **Council of Un**, and its leader keeps a bound supplement – the **Standing Orders** – that this handbook makes room for but does not contain. The rules are shared; the orders are ours.

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COUNCIL · A PLAYER'S HANDBOOK · BOOK NEXT – BOOK THE SECOND: THE  
THE FIRST RESOLUTION CORE