

THE RESOLUTION CORE

◆ BOOK THE SECOND ◆

how the game decides a thing when there is no die to throw

A die answered a question the table could not: did it work, and what do you learn? Council answers the same question, but the coin it spends is not chance. It is grace — effort, honesty, and a willingness to pay. This book is the whole of that exchange.

§ 1.1 GRACE BUYS CLARITY

The single stance that stands where the roll once stood: **a thing is learned in proportion to the grace with which it is sought**. Grace is not politeness. Grace is the sum of three plain things —

Effort tried

You attempted it yourself first, and can say what you tried.

Truth risked

You are willing to spend something of your own for the answer.

Fiction honoured

The asking fits the wake — it makes sense that this could be known here, now.

Ask with much grace and the answer is **plain**. Ask with little — barging, empty-handed, out of the wake — and the answer is a **riddle, true but veiled**. The keeper never refuses an answer for lack of grace; the keeper only lowers its clarity. **The table weighs grace together**, not the keeper alone, so that no one soul is judge of another's effort.

The question is never "do you succeed?" It is "what did you bring, and how plainly may I answer?"

§ 1.2 THE ROADS TO AN ANSWER

Insight is not bought at one counter. Four roads lead to the same sealed clue; each sets its own **price** and its own **speed**, never the answer's contents.

The Water

Seek Landis and pay his price (§1.4). Fast, dear, and always true. The road of last resort and first temptation.

Honest search

Look in the fiction – dig, read, question, pry. Grace paid in effort and scene-time; the cheapest road, if the wake affords it.

A Work

Declare research as a Work and let the Tide carry it (Book the Third). The slow road – free of truth and trouble, priced only in watches.

A letter

Ask one who is absent but would know. Plain and free – but slow as the post, and read by whoever carries it.

The rule that binds them: whatever the road, it opens **the next Seal in order** – never a later one, never two at once. A road decides how dearly and how fast you pay; the Seals decide what you get.



§ 1.3 THE SEALS – THE HEART OF THE GAME

Here is Council's answer to its own founding question. **Before play, for any obstacle worth being stuck on, the keeper writes three clues and seals them.** They are set upon the table face-down, visible, in order. The players see that help exists and costs something – and that alone is half the machine already turning. No clue is ever improvised under pressure; no obstacle is ever truly unwinnable.

SEAL THE FIRST

The Nudge

A single honest word or image. Enough to turn a head the right way, no more.

SEAL THE SECOND

The Bearing

What to do next – never why it works. A heading to steer by, not the chart.

SEAL THE THIRD

The Answer

The solution, stated plain as porridge. The last card, and the one no one should need.

Each road of §1.2 opens the next seal along. A player bargaining to the Water for the Answer pays the Answer's price; a crew that reads the room and digs may earn the Nudge for nothing but a

scene. The clue is fixed either way – only the toll changes.

§ 1.4 THE PRICE AT THE WATER

The Water is the dearest road because its coin is the self. Landis's prices climb with each answer of a single visit and reset when you leave the water. Every answer he gives is true – water carries no lie.

FIRST	A truth. Reveal a secret, or commit a new fact about yourself, aloud. It is canon the moment it is said.
SECOND	A complication. The answer is true and arrives lashed to a fresh trouble of the keeper's making.
THIRD	The madness bleeds. You glimpse a thing the keeper knows that you should not. You must act upon it, and cannot say why.
ALWAYS	A scene. To sit with Landis costs time; the wake moves on while you do. This toll is paid on every visit, atop the rest.

The player-facing forms of this exchange – the Grace Book and the Bill of Fare – are Landis's own two handouts, and are bound at the back of this handbook for the table to keep.

§ 1.5 THE TWO RAILS

Two rules keep the game safe to hand to strangers – one that rewards the clever, one that saves the stuck.

BANKED GRACE

Solve an obstacle while seals still lie closed, and each unopened seal becomes a **grace** – one free, graceful asking, kept for a later day. Cleverness is never wasted; it is saved.

THE MERCY CLAUSE

If every seal lies open and the table is still aground, the Answer is simply true and the story sails on. **Nothing in Council may sink the ship.**

The Seals are not a cage for the story. They are a promise that no one drowns in a riddle.

COUNCIL · A PLAYER'S HANDBOOK · BOOK
THE SECOND

NEXT — BOOK THE THIRD: WORKS &
THE TIDE