

WORKS & THE TIDE

◆ BOOK THE THIRD ◆

how the world keeps moving while the table sleeps

*A scene is what the crew does with their hands. A Work is what they set in motion and must then wait upon. Everything in this book is bought with the one coin the game keeps honest for everyone at once — **time**.*

§ 3.1 DECLARING A WORK

A Work is any labour too large for a single scene — a bomb built, a treaty struck, a ruin excavated, a wound healed. It is written on a card the whole table can see, and it carries three lines and no more:

- **THE AIM** — the plain thing wanted, stated so plainly that its finishing cannot be argued.
- **THE HANDS** — who does it: a person, a department, a people.
- **THE STAKES** — what is pledged from the Ledger to make it possible (§3.3).

§ 3.2 THE TIDE — WATCHES

Time in Council comes in like a tide, on its own, needing no one's permission. **Every session, every open Work advances one watch** — whether the crew touched it or not, whether they were even in the same corner of the world. Spend a whole scene labouring at a Work, and it takes **one watch more**. The counts are public; a crew always knows how close a thing stands to done.

<p>SMALL WORK 1 watch — a message sent, a door mended</p>	<p>A WORK 3 watches — a treaty, a machine, a search</p>	<p>GREAT WORK 5 watches — a thing that changes the world</p>
--	--	---

The tide is the game's honesty. It moves the villain's schemes at the same rate it moves yours, and it never forgets a thing left half-done.

§ 3.3 THE LEDGER — STAKES

A Work spends more than time; it spends the crew's finite holdings, pledged in the Ledger under three headings. What each is *made of* is the world's to decide — but the three shapes hold in every Council game:

HANDS people & their labour	POWER resources, engines, the means	STANDING goodwill with named peoples
---------------------------------------	---	--

Two laws bind the Ledger, and they are the whole of its strategy. **A stake cannot be pledged twice** — ambition must wait its turn, and so a crew is forced to choose what matters most this season. And **to wound a pledged stake is to stall everything pledged to it**: hurt one trusted hand, and every Work that leaned on them stops breathing at once. This is how a single blow lands everywhere.

§ 3.4 SQUALLS

Every Great Work is declared with **one sealed complication** — its squall — written by the keeper and set face-down beside the card. It breaks at the **halfway watch**, or sooner if the weave calls for it. The crew always knew a storm was priced into so large an ambition; they simply did not know its shape until the sky changed.

§ 3.5 FORCING A WORK

Once per session, a crew may drive a single Work **one extra watch** by paying, then and there, one of two coins:

A TRUTH — confessed aloud, and canon the instant it is spoken.

A FAVOROWED — sealed, and called due whenever the keeper pleases.

Note the mark of haste: **a forced Work always delivers its squall.** To hurry a great thing is to tear open the sealed envelope early, and read the storm before you were ready for it.

§ 3.6 COMPLETION & WORK ORDERS

A finished Work stops being a card and becomes a **plain fact of the world** – no longer counted, simply true from now on. And between sessions the crew need not fall silent: they may send **Work Orders** – written instructions to the hands who do the labour – and the keeper answers them in those hands’ own voices when next the table sits. The world works on while you sleep, and writes you back.

§ 3.7 THE DIVINE WORK – THE GREAT TIER

Above the Great Work stands one tier more, reserved for the labours that span a whole telling – a war, a reckoning, the slow turning of an age. A **Divine Work** is not a card the crew declares; it is a weather the keeper sets moving beneath everything, and it breaks the ordinary rules on purpose:

No fixed count. A Divine Work has no watch-total set at its declaring, and shows the crew no countdown. They feel its weight before they can name its length – and that dread is the point.

Many squalls, not one. It carries several sealed complications – call them **beats** – opened one at a time as the arc turns, each its own small storm, never all at once.

A beat may rewrite the card. Where a common squall merely complicates a fixed aim, a Divine beat can **change the Work itself** – recast its aim, add a stake, release another – for a thing this large does not sit still to be solved.

Stakes bind and loose over time. As the arc pulls on department after department, Hands and Standing **attach and detach** across its length – a Work released from one beat may be pinned anew by the next. The Ledger breathes with the storm.

A Divine Work ends not on a watch but on a **turning** – the beat where its last sealed storm is spent and the world settles into whatever the crew made of it. Even here the one law holds: **mercy**. However dark the arc, it must remain a thing a hopeful crew could yet come through.



HOW A STORM SPEAKS – A STANDING HOUSE STYLE

Every squall, every beat, every hard turn is delivered as an **in-fiction report on the letterhead of whoever bore it** – a courier’s field note, a healer’s clinical page, a quartermaster’s tally. Never an omniscient voice from the clouds. In Council, the bad news always arrives *signed*.

COUNCIL · A PLAYER'S HANDBOOK · BOOK THE NEXT – BOOK THE FOURTH:
THIRD GOVERNANCE