

GOVERNANCE

◆ BOOK THE FOURTH ◆

who may command a thing to happen — and what it costs to choose

The game is named for this book. A Council is not a throne — it is a table, where authority is shared, choices are witnessed, and the cost of command is that everyone remembers what you decided.

§ 4.1 THE COUNCIL

A Council is a body of shared command with a single seat that holds the **final say**. Its virtue is not efficiency — it is **the record**. Every vote and every dissent is entered and remembered; a voice overruled is not silenced but **minuted**. So when a hard or a dark path is taken, the objection to it is already canon — a thing the fiction owns, not a thing the keeper must invent after the fact. A Council governs by leaving witnesses.

A king may be wrong in private. A chair may only be wrong in front of the table.

§ 4.2 WHO SITS — A DIAL SET AT SETUP

Council does not decree who holds a seat; the table sets that dial when it seats its own Council, and lives with the answer. Two settings are offered, and a table may sit anywhere between them:

THE WIDE TABLE

Every standing head holds a seat and a vote. The Council is loud, slow, and truly divided — dissent bites, because the dissenters can outvote you. Choose this for intrigue.

THE NARROW TABLE · THE DEFAULT

Only the few at the heart of the story sit and vote; the heads report and advise. The record notes their counsel, but the choice is the seated Council's alone. Choose this

for pace — and, absent a reason otherwise,
this is where a Council begins.

*Council seats a **narrow table** by default — counsel heard, the choice held close — and widens only when a table decides the intrigue of a true vote is worth the pace it costs. Decide it the first time a head wishes to vote against the seat of final say. You will learn then which table you actually built.*

§ 4.3 THE SECOND CHAIR — DEPUTIES

A deputy may **hold** a Work at its present watch — keep it from stalling while its head is elsewhere — but may not **advance** it. To move a Work forward wants a Work Order or a Directive from the seat of command. A second chair keeps the seat warm; it does not sign.

§ 4.4 INTERRUPTS

An emergency that names a head **pulls them off their Work automatically**. The card **freezes** — no watches, forced or otherwise — until it is released, or a deputy steps in to hold it (§4.3). The world's sudden needs do not queue politely behind a crew's ambitions.

§ 4.5 THE OVERRIDE

Only the seat of final say may keep a pulled head at their task regardless, by issuing a **Directive**. And a Directive is never free: it is a **truth committed aloud, on the record** — an open judgment about whose need matters more this hour, which the minutes will remember for good or ill. Command that overrides an emergency must be willing to be quoted on it.

§ 4.6 ABSENCE BEYOND REACH

The rules above assume a head who can be **reached**. When they are truly beyond word – across the world, past any messenger – there is no one to pull, and the need is met anyway, by whoever stands present, **without that head's insight**. This never resolves as a clean sealed squall; it shows as something **concrete and specific** – late, wrong, or half-finished – a gap you can point at, shaped exactly like the missing hand. If word can be raised in time, treat it as a long-distance Override: the cost of §4.5, plus the travel of the message.

COUNCIL · A PLAYER'S HANDBOOK · BOOK THE NEXT – BOOK THE FIFTH: TEACH &
FOURTH SHIP