



A R O L E P L A Y I N G G A M E · P L A Y E D W I T H W O R D S , N O T D I C E

COUNCIL

The Handbook — the whole of the game, set down plain

◆ STRIVE AND PAY, OR BE GIVEN — BUT KEEP HOPE ◆

When a table sets down the dice, it loses the old gift they gave — a way to learn what no one thought to ask. Council hands that gift back, and asks no dice in return.

Every answer in Council comes one of two ways: **seized at a price**, or **given as grace**. Behind every real obstacle wait three sealed clues, so no crew is ever truly stuck. The whole game is built to reward **hope** — it can wound you and grieve you, but it breaks only the one who has stopped hoping. Below is the entire Handbook. Read it in order, or steer by the contents.

READ THIS FIRST · FIVE MINUTES



How to Play

The crew's quickstart. Everything a player needs to sit down and play — the loop, the two roads, the promise that you cannot be stuck. If you read one thing before the table sits, read this.

[Read →](#)

THE FIVE BOOKS

I Foundations

What Council is and who it is for, the core loop, and the line between the fixed keel and the world a table brings.

[Read →](#)

II The Resolution Core

[Read →](#)

How the game answers with no die to throw: price and grace, the three Seals, the roads to a clue, and the reward of cleverness.

§ 2.1 THE TWO ANSWERS · 2.2 GRACE · 2.3 PRICE · 2.4 THE SEALS · 2.5 THE ROADS

III Works & the Tide

[Read →](#)

The between-session engine, priced in time: Works, watches, the Ledger of stakes, squalls, forcing, and the Divine Work tier.

§ 3.1 DECLARING A WORK · 3.2 THE TIDE · 3.3 THE LEDGER ·
3.4 SQUALLS · 3.7 THE DIVINE WORK

IV Governance

[Read →](#)

The Council itself: shared command, dissent on the record, the narrow-or-wide dial, deputies, interrupts, the override, and absence.

§ 4.1 THE COUNCIL · 4.2 WHO SITS (NARROW BY DEFAULT) · 4.5 THE OVERRIDE

V Teach & Ship

[Read →](#)

For the keeper: raise a Council game in one sitting, the three arts (writing Seals, giving grace, the signed squall), hope & harm, what to print.

§ 5.1 SESSION ZERO · 5.2-5.4 THE THREE ARTS · 5.5 HOPE & HARM · 5.6 WHAT TO PRINT

THE WHOLE GAME, AT A GLANCE

If you have three minutes and not fifteen, this is Council entire:

STATION ONE

The Scene

You play. A need arises the table cannot just wish true.

TWO ROADS

The Answer

It comes now at a **price**, or in time as a **Work** the Tide carries.

STATION THREE

The Turn

What returns walks into the next Scene, changed.

↻ scene - answer - scene: that wheel is the whole machine ↻

By Price

By Grace

What you **pay for** and may demand. It costs the self – a truth, a trouble, a scene – and is always true. The dearest altar of price is the Water: Landis, real only in water. A rare road, walked least.

What you are **given**, freely, when you are stuck and the story loves you. Cannot be bought, banked, or demanded – untracked, quiet, and bound by one law only: **mercy**. A crew truly aground always receives it.

YOU CANNOT BE TRULY STUCK – THE SEALS

Behind any obstacle worth being stuck on, the keeper writes three clues before play and seals them, face-down and visible, in order. Both price and grace reach for these – only the manner of the coming changes.

THE FIRST

The Nudge

A word or image. A turned head, no more.

THE SECOND

The Bearing

What to do – never why. A heading to steer by.

THE THIRD

The Answer

Plain as porridge. The card no one should need.

Despair is the only door that locks from the inside.

THE FIXED VOCABULARY

These words mean the same at every Council table. A keeper may re-rig the world above, but not rename the timbers below.

The Water

Landis, real only in water – true answers at a price.

The Council

Shared command; every vote and dissent on the record.

Works

What a crew sets in motion: aim, hands, stakes.

The Tide

Time itself – every session moves every Work a watch.

The Ledger

What a Work spends: Hands, Power, Standing.

Squalls

Sealed complications the larger Works carry.

The Seals

Nudge, Bearing, Answer – pre-written, shown, in order.

Price & Grace

The two ways an answer comes: seized, or given.

The Weave

The shared fiction itself – the story the table is telling.