

## WHAT THE CARDS HIDE – AND WHAT MOVES BENEATH THE TIDE

Two things live in here that never sit face-up: the **sealed squalls** behind the live cards, read aloud in the stakeholder's voice when a watch turns; and the **Divine Work engine** – the weather you set moving, with tonight's first-draft Saga (*Taxe's Federation*) laid out on it, ready to arm.

*House law, both halves: **testimony is king**. Every seal, every beat, every squall arrives on someone's letterhead – never an omniscient voice from above.*

PART	CONTENTS
I	Sealed contents of the live cards (Annex B) – Cards 01, 02, 04, 06.
II	The Divine Work engine – one-page quick reference.
III	<b>Taxe's Federation</b> – Saga, first draft, beats you can arm tonight.
IV	Blank beat planners – build a Divine Work at the table.

## WHAT THE CARDS HIDE

Players, this is not graceful of you. Each seal is a signed report – read it aloud in the stakeholder's voice, never as narration.

CARD 01 – PROJECT HAMMER

DR. RADEK, BY TRUSTED COURIER

Ore going missing from the Genii stocks – small amounts, well hidden, but the numbers do not close. I am not the only one counting, and I do not think the one diverting it answers to Dina.

Do not act on this in writing.

*KEEPER: do not let this resolve as a device delivered – let it **seed the Storm**. This is a Foothold into a larger tide.*

— R.

The compound works. It also kills roughly one in two of those it is given to. Field-ready is not the same as safe, and if we deploy it the wraith will read Hoff as the source and make an example of it.

I have written this down so that whoever orders it done cannot say they were not told.

— *C. Beckett*

The recovered ZPM is nearly dead. It is good for almost nothing – except powering a shield exactly like the one it was pulled from. We crossed a world's goodwill for a battery that fits one lamp.

*OPEN QUESTION (undecided): does the wound to the children's Standing surface later as its own squall, or simply colour every future dealing with that world? **Decide before Card 04 is closed.***

— *Science Division*

Players believe monks guard the site. Truth: a team of contemporary researchers, already partway through translating the tablets – and the table has clocked them as attractive, which is a hook, not an accident.

Reveal through the dig materials, never narration. The name – **Brotherhood of the Fifteen** – surfaces inside a translated fragment.

*STILL TO WRITE: the three seals (Nudge / Bearing / Answer) and the riddle itself. Deferred; not needed to open the card tonight.*

---

*Cards 03 & 05 carry no seal.*

## THE MACHINERY UNDER THE WEATHER

A Divine Work is weather you set moving. It ends on a *turning*, not a watch, and it throws off **Footholds** the crew can grasp. Below is how you build and run one.

## THE THREE TIERS *(guidance, not hard rules)*

**EPISODE** one sitting · a single strong beat    **ARC** several sittings · a handful of chained beats    **SAGA** one or more seasons · beats that may sleep long between arming

### A BEAT – THREE LINES

<b>TRIGGER</b>	the fictional condition that <b>arms</b> the beat. Until met, nothing moves.
<b>CLOCK</b>	watches once armed. May be <b>0</b> – fires the instant it arms.
<b>BREAK</b>	what it does when the clock runs out: usually a <b>signed squall</b> (letterhead), sometimes a rewrite of the card (recast the aim, add a stake, release another beat).

Beats may **branch**: one Break can open several possible next beats, chosen by what you know at the moment it breaks.

### NON-STEP-ABLE – THE TWO GUARANTEES

1. An **un-armed** beat cannot be advanced, forced, or grace'd forward. No player lever moves a clock that hasn't started.
2. Once **armed**, the clock is **yours** – it runs on the terms you set, not the tide's one-per-session cadence.

### THE WEATHERGLASS *(the squall's twin)*

By default the clock is **yours and hidden** – the crew feels the squeeze without seeing the number. The fiction may hand them a **weatherglass** (long-range sensors, an intercepted order, a defector's word) that makes one armed clock **visible** before it breaks – turning dread into a race they can run. Earned through play, never granted.

*Standing default this chapter: keeper's own and hidden, made visible only by an earned weatherglass.*

### FOOTHOLDS *ℓ*

A Divine Work can't be seized head-on. It throws off ordinary **Works** the crew *can* grasp – its Footholds. Each is a normal card (Aim / Hands / Stakes) marked with a small cursive *ℓ*. **Habit, not law**: every armed beat should expose at least one Foothold. A beat with no handhold is something that happens *to* the players – railroading by another name.

### THE LIMIT ON THE MAKER'S HAND

Grace and Standing can nudge a people, open a door, soften a blow – but they **cannot make a people other than what they are**. When you decide whether a faction lifts a hand, ask first what that people *is*; the answer is the ceiling.

## THE CONFEDERATION OF THE PEGASUS REACH

**Tier:** Saga · **Arming pressure:** Cinco's stated desire to bind the peoples of Pegasus into one company against the Wraith. **Turning (the end):** a Council of peoples that must actually *meet* – at which point the Federation stops being a dream and becomes a thing that must govern.

*This is a first skeleton, not scripture. Swap the fiction freely; keep the engine. Clocks hidden by default. Every Break arrives signed.*

### BEAT I · FIRST WORD

Foothold 0

**Trigger** – Cinco formally proposes union to any second people (Genii, Hoffan, Athosian, ...).

**Clock** – 0 (the reply comes as soon as the word is sent).

**Break** – a signed reply on that people's letterhead: interest, terms, or refusal. Refusal is not failure – it names the price of a later yes.

**Foothold 0** – *Draft the First Compact* (Work · Hands: Command / whoever speaks for the crew). Pour Hands in to shape how favourably Beat II opens.

### BEAT II · THE SKEPTICS

Foothold 0

**Trigger** – two peoples at the table who distrust each other are asked to sit together (the obvious first pair: Genii ↔ Hoffan).

**Clock** – 2 watches once seated.

**Break** – one walks – signed by whoever feels slighted – unless a named grievance is answered first. Remember the maker's-hand limit: the Genii will not become trusting; they can, at most, be given a reason.

**Foothold 0** – *Broker the Concession* (Work · Standing pinned with the aggrieved people). This is where Standing gets spent, not numbered – narrate the dial.

### BEAT III · THE PRICE OF A FLAG

Foothold 0 · ties to Cards 01 & 04

**Trigger** – the compact needs teeth: someone proposes mutual defense.

**Clock** – 3 watches.

**Break** – a raid tests it. The union either answers as one – or is shown hollow, signed by whoever bled while allies looked away.

**Foothold 0** – *Stand up a shared defense*. This is the natural home for **Project Hammer** (Card 01) and **The Shield's Heart** (Card 04) – a Federation that can arm and shield itself. Note the Hammer's sealed ore-theft: a Federation gives the thief a bigger prize.

**Trigger** – the Confederation becomes visible enough to register as a target – a dense food-web worth culling.

**Clock** – hidden by default. If the crew earns eyes (a Foothold that wins long sight, or intelligence off **The Catch**, Card 03), grant a **weatherglass** and turn this dread into a race.

**Break** – a Saga-scale squall: the Wraith move against the union as a whole, signed by the first world to burn.

**Foothold 0** – *A warning network* across member worlds – the Federation's own weatherglass, built by Hands.

**Trigger** – enough peoples bound that a Council of peoples must actually convene.

**Clock** – 0.

**Break** – **the turning**. The Federation is real – and now it must *govern*: seats, vetoes, whose flag flies first. The Saga ends here and hands the table a whole new order to run. (Cross-ref the Fasces question in SO-1.1a – the wide table vs. the narrow one, now writ large across nations.)

*Tonight: Beat I arms the moment Taxe/Cinco says the word to a second people. Everything after sleeps until its trigger. Don't tick what isn't armed.*

## A DIVINE WORK, EMPTY

Fill in as the weather asks for it. Name the Work, set the tier, then arm beats one at a time. Give every armed beat a Foothold.

<b>DIVINE WORK</b>	
<b>TIER</b>	EPISODE / ARC / SAGA
<b>ARMING PRESSURE</b>	
<b>THE TURNING (END)</b>	

**BEATS**

#	TRIGGER (what arms it)	CLOCK	BREAK (signed, on whose letterhead)	FOOTHOLD ℓ
I				
II				
III				
IV				
V				

<b>DIVINE WORK</b>	
<b>TIER</b>	EPISODE / ARC / SAGA

#	TRIGGER	CLOCK	BREAK	FOOTHOLD ℓ
I				
II				
III				

*Reminders: un-armed = untouchable · armed clock is yours · hidden unless a weatherglass is earned · every armed beat gets a Foothold · the maker's hand goes only as far as a people's nature.*

*The pen is mightier than the die. · by Sir Landis Fishman*