

FROM THE SILVER SURFER · MASTER & ENTIRE CREW: L. FISHMAN

A Proposal for Cinco

on how to run the Council — sent with my letter



Two things a Council cannot run without, Cinco: a rule for how it decides, and an honest reckoning of what it holds. I enclose both. The letter says why. — L.F.

THE COVERING LETTER · ENCLOSURE I · ENCLOSURE II

HIS IN-GAME LETTER, SENT WITH THIS PROPOSAL · IN HIS OWN HAND, REDACTED
BEFORE SENDING

L

A Letter, Meant for Taxe

Some lines the hand struck out and let stand; some it buried entire. The gaps are his, not ours. Read what is blacked as a thing not yet earned.

Taxe —

Y

ou'll want the shape of what changed since the first night we sat and let the pen catch a decision. A great deal did. I'll go quickly, because ~~I already know how this ends and there isn't~~ because there isn't much time before the tide.

On Standing. Every people you deal with now sits on a dial of five words — Hostile, Cold, Guarded, Warm, Bound — and it moves one notch at a time, never a leap, and only when the record says so with a cause named. You spend it for an ask; you earn it for a gift or a deed. The Genii are Guarded and ~~will be exactly Guarded on the night Colm walks back through the~~ capped there by my own hand, so don't waste your breath warming them. The Hoffans are Warm because they need you. The children are Cold because you spent them for a dead battery, and you'll mend that with a garden. Watch the dial. It is the truest thing on the table.

On the Works, and how they're paid. A card carries watches, and the watches only fill when a hand is actually at the work — not when you *plan* it, when you *do* it. Learn that and you'll stop miscounting. The Great Works carry sealed prices, named now and held unread, and here is the thing I need you to hear: **a seal does not open because you arrived somewhere.** It opens when you *earn* it or when you *pay* to break it. Reward, or spent effort. Nothing spills on a schedule. ~~You will forget this exactly once, over the Hoffman compound, and the number of the dead will~~

On research — the three tiers. Nothing worth knowing arrives whole. It comes in three: Reading, where you hold the theory and learn what to ask; Practice, where you do the thing once, on record, under weight; and Mastery, where you *own* it and can teach it, which is how a department is born. You cannot skip a rung. Rainbow is on the first rung of a terrible ladder and ~~will reach the third the night the wraith~~ don't let him rush it.

On logistics — the boring salvation. Guns are free; wars are not. Never let your table waste an hour counting rifles. Count the things that *run out* across a long trouble — ammunition in a siege, medicine in a plague, food you gave away to make a friend. Some things you have never counted at all — the drones, chief among them, and you would be wise to ~~check them before the storm, because when Colm's people come over the water you will reach for the drone stores and find~~ check them. Just check them. And the couriers now carry the record between wards, because a decision that never travels was never made.

On the record itself. This is the last thing, and the strangest, so I'll say it plainly and then I'll wish I hadn't. The record is append-only now — a line once written stands forever, and you correct it only by writing beneath it, never by erasing, because a Council that can erase itself can lie to itself. And it is *kept*. There is a man ~~who is not entirely a man, who is the water wearing a~~ — there is a keeper of it, always near, never in sight, in a rocking chair you'll hear and never find, until you call for him. Say “for the record” and he is listening, wherever you are, whatever the watch. His name, such as it is, is ~~the same as mine when I'm not looking, he is what I become when I set down~~ the [REDACTED]

I've said more than I meant to. That happens to me lately — I look at the page and I see it already written, which is a curse when you are trying to leave a man free to make his own mistakes. Make them. That's the whole point of a narrow table with your name at the top. Which brings me to what I've enclosed.

~~When Omar washes up, be gentle. He won't remember past the~~ [REDACTED]

Fair winds, Cinco. Try not to need me. Burn this if you're wise; keep it if you're not; either way it's already in the ledger, which is the one book I could never bring myself to ~~lie in~~ close.

— L.F.

aboard the Silver Surfer, on the falling tide

WHAT IS ENCLOSED

Enclosure I — Governance. The rule for how the table decides: the bylaws I began in your name, the fasces if you want it, and the plain law of a gate team off-world.

Enclosure II — The Atlantis Inventory. An honest reckoning of what the expedition holds, what it may spend, and how to reckon a supply when the ledger is silent. Read the one rule of supply twice.