Invisible Sun Playtester Cover Letter (READ THIS FIRST!)

Dear Playtester,

Thank you so much for participating in the Invisible Sun Playtest. Some of you are getting this because you are part of our playtest team, and some of you because you selected a level in the Invisible Sun Kickstarter that got you access to this material. If you fall into the latter group, please be aware: in this letter and throughout this process, I’m going to talk about what I need from you, and the feedback I want, but you aren’t required to do any of it. If you want, you can get the stuff as it comes in and read it or play around with it, but you’re not on the line here. We appreciate your support no matter what. However, people who actually contribute playtest feedback for the game will get playtest credit in the game.

Now, with this letter, you’ll see you have access to a bunch of files. Let me talk about what you have. Together, these comprise an extremely rough, preliminary draft of the first of four books that will go in the so-called “Black Cube.” What you’re seeing is what I’ve handed to my own design team here at MCG for review.

This book, called the Key, is the largest of the four books, but it’s not enough to play the game all by itself. Remember, this is a process. A process has to start somewhere. The game is still very much in development, and so if you were expected to get an early look at the finished game, I apologize, but that’s not what this is. You’re seeing this just as the other MCG staff is seeing it, and in the days and weeks to come there will be much more coming your way: more information from some of the other books, some of the other material in the box (like a rough deck of Sooth cards, for example), and eventually probably even revised versions of what you’ve already seen.

What you’ve got then, is a chance to peek at some of the foundational material to get a jump start on when you’ve got the material you need to actually start to playtest. Technically, it’s enough to make an Invisible Sun character and hold the first game session, but in the next batch of material, you’ll get information that will give this stuff a lot more context and fill in some holes (things like spells, secrets, the Maker’s Matrix, and so on).

I can’t stress enough that what you’re seeing is a real “peek behind the curtain.” It’s a rough first draft, and it’s got typesetting notes about header sizes and “callouts” that have to do with the eventual layout of the book (ignore those if you can). Like I said, you’re getting this just like the MCG staff gets it.

This is character creation. It’s not setting. It’s not rules. It’s not GMing. You’re going to have a lot of questions with answers not found in this material. As you read through this stuff, you’re going to come upon references to things that aren’t fully explained. Make a note of it for later (or not—your choice) and move on. This is the first foray into a great deal of material. But as you read this, I think you’re still going to get the big picture.

If you’re going to be playtesting this material, get your group together, because we hope to have the next batch of files to you in the next couple of weeks. This will have the stuff you need to get started playing. Perhaps schedule your first session for early February.

In addition, when you get the next batch of files, you’ll also be asked to answer some initial questions. These will be opinion questions about your first impressions. They won’t be asking about playtesting feedback because you can’t yet play the game. Also, please be aware that these files are unedited and unproofed. Sending us editorial or proofing feedback at this stage does us no good and wastes your time. So you can be thinking about them while you read, the questions will include:

What Order, Heart, and Forte is the most appealing, and why?

What Order, Heart, and Forte is least appealing, and why?

What’s the one thing you read that excites you the most about playing?

What single aspect of the setting (of which you’ve only got the merest glimpse) are you excited most to learn more about?

Other than something that you don’t have yet (setting, rules, spells, ephemera, secrets, and so on), what’s the one aspect of the material at hand that has you the most confused?

We know we want the goods lists in the Money and Goods chapter to offer more. What kinds of things do you think you’d want to see on them?

For now, though, read and process the material, and get ready to start actually playing soon. Thanks so much for being a part of this process.

Monte Cook