

ERRATA

No plan survives contact with the enemy.

Sig: City of Blades is a substantial game that diverged in many ways from Blades in the Dark. Since the book was sent to press, several excellent questions arose from keen-eyed GMs and players. This document should serve to clarify the rules, procedures, and assumptions for the game. In addition, the errata are included at the end of the PDF version of the book and as a stand-alone download.

I. WHAT ROLE DOES A FACTION PLAY IN THE CITY?

Factions run the City of Blades, each a curious mixture of a criminal syndicate and a public utility. They hold some similarities to the firefighter brigades of Marcus Licinius Crassus, the Yakuza, or many modern police forces. They have an established role in society and their authority is generally respected. Most people try to avoid the factions altogether, though the more ambitious and desperate will pledge their allegiance to one of them instead.

Sig has been devoid of central leadership since the Silent Regent was overthrown. A kind of stable anarchy has ensued, where each faction has secured total authority over their areas of influence. The Dustkeepers have the final word on funeral arrangements and estate law, for instance, while the Farmers Guild manages the food supply of the city. When the jurisdiction is ambiguous or the desires of different factions run contrary to each other, the crews resolve the situations through whatever means necessary.

Each faction has a crew who perform missions and offer leadership. They also have many “civilian” members who fulfill less confrontational functions on behalf of the organization. These include folks performing city services, those running businesses, and the other key officers who keep the organization afloat. As a general guideline, each faction has a number of members based on their Tier.

- ❖ Tier 1: 25
- ❖ Tier 2: 100
- ❖ Tier 3: 300
- ❖ Tier 4: 600
- ❖ Tier 5: 900

For every member of the faction, there’s roughly two residents of Sig who are sympathetic to their cause. These folks may not be card-carrying members, but they know it’s wise to curry favour from the powerful. For of course, these folks are also more likely to earn the ire of their patron’s rivals....

II. WHAT ROLE DOES THE CREW PLAY IN THE FACTION?

The crews are the leaders, trouble-shooters, and troublemakers of the faction. They are the specialist members of the organizations whose jobs are to improve the faction’s influence, seize territory from rivals, and bolster the treasury. They decide what missions to take based on their strategic goals to improve their faction’s position in the city.

The crews may not be the formal leadership, but they are central to the organization. The conceit is that you agree with your faction’s overall goals, so you will never change factions or run against it.

III. HOW ARE THE MISSIONS SELECTED?

Normally the Freebooters are expected to find their own jobs. They should look at the Map of Sig, consider the status they have with each of the other factions, and look for opportunities. Here are some of the major factors that come to play.

CLAIM PRIORITY: Perhaps your crew wants to secure a specific Claim benefit for their organization. If they want a Vault, they will need to secure one of the following Claims:

- ❖ The Acorn Banks, held by the Paperguard (T5)
- ❖ Godscript, held by the Dustkeepers (T2)
- ❖ Cloudreach, held by the Guild of Advocates (T4)
- ❖ Partisan's Pub, held by the Guild of Toil (T5)
- ❖ Stormlight Vaults, held by the Guild of Artificers (T5)

They would likely see that the Dustkeepers are the weakest rival faction and start planning their job to steal the Godscript. The crew might instead seek to curry favour from one of the other more powerful factions so they can become Allies (+3), who are able to borrow access to those Claims at a cost of 1 Coin per session.

PERSONAL GRUDGES: Perhaps your crew wish to strike out at a rival or enemy faction during this mission. If they have been angered or insulted by the Enforcers, it would be reasonable to look at the three Claims the Enforcers hold, hopefully stealing one and dragging the faction down a Tier.

- ❖ Drowner's Gate (Boathouse)
- ❖ The Golden Tether (Tether)
- ❖ Grumpy Gorgon (Turf)

They might decide that Tether access is important and start planning the mission to secure it.

RUMOURS OF TREASURE: Rather than seeking a Claim, the crew can tell the GM they are seeking treasure. One of your faction contacts, or a civilian member of your faction, might have some promising leads. Use the Drama Phase to search out these opportunities, and the Game Master will offer the crew two potential jobs. It's the Freebooters who get to decide which opportunities to pounce upon.

These jobs are structured as normal missions, but more control is given to the GM who determines the targeted Claim, the size of the Profit objective, and the size of the Political objective. These kinds of jobs tend to have higher potential Profit and lower potential political gains.

IV. HOW DOES DESTABILIZATION WORK?

Every territorial Claim is vulnerable in Sig unless they are actively defended. Unless a Cohort is assigned to defense, the player's Claims may be targeted with the destabilization fallout option. This triggers a special defensive mission with modified mechanics.

The players determine the size of the Profit and Political clocks as per the normal procedure. The size of the Threat clock depends on the relative Tier value of the attacking faction:

- ❖ Lower Tier Rival: Minor, 4-segment Threat clock.
- ❖ Equal Tier Rival: Moderate, 6-segment Threat clock.
- ❖ Higher Tier Rival: Major, 8-segment Threat clock.

The GM will pick which approach the rival faction is taking, and the crew needs to react!

Profit Objective: This represents how much Coin their faction may lose from the attack. The GM fills segments of this clock and removes an amount of Coin from their Treasury based on the size of the clock. If the Treasury is empty, any extra Coin is taken from the Freebooters.

- ❖ Minor Profit: 4/1 Coin
- ❖ Moderate Profit: 6/2 Coin
- ❖ Major Profit: 8/3 Coin

Political Objective: This represents how much danger the Claim is in. Completing the Political Objective for a mission enables the GM to make a fortune roll to seize control of the Claim. Completing a minor objective gives the GM 1 die, a moderate gets them 2 dice, and major gets them 3 dice. If they succeed, they seize your faction's Claim.

Threat Objective: This represents how well the crew is addressing the threat. Whenever the crew successfully defends their turf, strikes back against their foes, or otherwise protects their interests, they can mark segments on this clock. When this clock fills, the mission is over, and you evaluate how much Coin was lost.

V. ARE THERE EXISTING TENSIONS BETWEEN FACTIONS?

There absolutely are! There is no stable equilibrium in the city, and everyone knows it. The Game Master is responsible for tracking the political situation of the city, changing the faction Tiers, and Claim ownership as the fiction demands.

Keep in mind that the factions all have political relationships with each other. Here are a few principles to follow when considering inter-faction politics.

1. Major factions may be concerned about the threats posed by those who are smaller in scale.
2. Major factions may seek to secure the loyalty of minor factions.
3. Minor factions may seek to secure alliances with their superiors, working on their behalf.
4. Factions whose associated planes are in conflict will likely also be on bad terms. The Cleaners (Flame) can't stand the Riverwatch (Waves). Similarly, the Teachers Guild (Justice) has major problems with the Guild of Advocates (Tyranny).

Sig is effectively a Bismarckian political landscape with overlapping alliances and grudges. Be careful before you pull the crossbow trigger on an Infernal Duke.

VI. WHAT IS THE MECHANICAL IMPACT OF YOUR TIER?

Tier is a measure of the relative power of the different crews. Whenever you are making an Action roll, your effect will be modified based on the differences in Tier. If you are a greater Tier than your opponent, then any success will be at two levels of effect instead of one. If you are a lower Tier than your opponent, then a simple success will produce zero levels of success, and you will need some other advantages.



ACTION VS SUPERIOR OPPONENT

Rolling a 4-5 would give you zero levels of effect. You would need to roll a 6, outnumber your opponent, have quality equipment, or establish a controlled position to mark any levels.



ACTION VS EQUIVALENT OPPONENT

Rolling a 4-5 would give you one level of effect, while rolling a 6 would give you two.



ACTION VS INFERIOR OPPONENT

Rolling a 4-5 would give you two levels of effect, while rolling a 6 would give you three.

VII. WHAT HAPPENS IF A TIER 1 FACTION LOSES THEIR FINAL CLAIM?

Factions depend on their territorial Claims for their survival. Just as a faction can secure new Claims to grow, they can also have their home territories stolen out from under them. Any faction that loses their last Claim will be reduced to Tier Zero, which is as bad as you might expect.

A faction reduced to Tier Zero is unable to support a crew, meaning that they have no defence against the depredations of the other factions. Any of the few, traumatized survivors will struggle to perform their essential service on behalf of the city. If the Cleaners were devastated, you might have a shortage of healers and bodies piling up. Crushing the Portalsmiths could deprive the city of experts in portal navigation which might cause... problems?

Keep in mind that the City of Blades doesn't have any centralized administration or decision making ever since the Tsar was banished. Instead, Sig is a fragile anarchy which depends on the efforts of the various factions to perform vital services. Reducing any faction to Tier Zero risks plunging the city into an even more severe chaos than usual.

VIII. WHAT IS A TETHER AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

Tethers are major planar ports hooking into different planes of existence. Whenever a Tether connects to a given plane, the associated influence and magic flow into the city. In addition to changing the demographics of the city, it mechanically influences what kinds of Planar Bargains you can make. Certain crews also have advances that provide additional benefits when their allied plane gets the Tether.

The assumption is that Sig begins Tethered to the following planes:

- ∞ The Ideological Plane of Order, strengthening the Paperguard;
- ∞ The Conceptual Plane of Shadows, strengthening the Guild of Artificers; and
- ∞ The Elemental Plane of Stone, strengthening the Guild of Toil.

Tethers are likely to change periodically. The most common ways this can happen are...

- ∞ When a faction ascends in Tier, a relevant/associated plane may get the Tether.
- ∞ Whenever a faction is downgraded in Tier, their associated plane may lose the Tether.
- ∞ Certain magical or religious rituals might force the Tether to change. Intentionally diverting the Great River to flood a neighbourhood might change a Tether to the Plane of Waves or Destruction.
- ∞ Certain other events may lead the Tethers to spontaneously change. The recent multiplanar sociology conference organized in Sig led the Plane of Lore to get the Tether.

IX. THE PLANAR BARGAIN RULES SEEM REALLY HARSH?

The Planar Bargain should follow the same rules as set out on pg. 78. The GM can always apply minor consequences. They have the option of applying moderate consequences on any Freebooter with 3+ stress, and the option of applying major ones to a freebooter with 6+ stress.

X. HOW DOES INFAMY AND FALLOUT WORK?

Clearing the Infamy Clock is kind of a chapter break or a minor milestone. It usually means that your crew has made a strong impression on the city for good or for ill. The Infamy dynamic is meant to have long spans of careful, stealthy action, punctuated by audacious and attention-grabbing displays of bravado.

Note that having too much Infamy can be bad for your health. It can result in your crew being hit with multiple, painful Fallout conditions. They can even potentially select the same Fallout condition multiple times, such as starting multiple schemes, or perhaps mugging several Freebooters on the same fateful night.

XI. WHY DO WE HAVE THIS AWESOME GEAR WHILE LIVING IN SQUALOR?

At the start of play, you portray the crew of a minor, Tier 1 faction and have access to some excellent gear. This may seem at odds given the fact that you are desperately low on Coin, but there's a simple explanation for it. The gear that you can use during your missions are not the personal property of your individual characters, but rather property of your faction. You are effectively borrowing your equipment from your collective armoury, returning it between jobs. That's why you might have access to Shadowforged Armour while struggling to make rent.

XII. HOW DOES THE GM FILL CLOCKS OR TRACKS?

Clocks and tracks are potent tools for managing the state of the fiction. Players can fill in segments on a clock or track through a successful die roll, while the Game Master fills in segments as consequences.

- ❖ As a minor consequence, the GM may mark one segment on any relevant clock or track.
- ❖ As a moderate consequence, the GM may mark two segments on any relevant clock or track.
- ❖ As a major consequence, the GM may mark three segments on any relevant clock or track.

This is similar to how the GM fills in a Freebooter's Harm track with the Pain, Wound, and Trauma conditions.

The GM also has the discretion to mark any clock or track to reflect the fiction. If a player mentions that their character was beat up in the bar fight the previous night, the GM can tell them to mark a point of Harm. Similarly, they could advance a hostile project clock by a segment if the players let the problem fester. The mechanics should reflect the fiction, and vice-versa. To do it, do it.

XIII. HOW DO YOU MARK MISSION OBJECTIVE CLOCKS?

Your crew will mark a number of segments on your mission objective clocks based on the kinds of obstacles you overcome.

- ❖ Simple actions (not using a clock) which directly serve securing a Claim or earning Coin may allow you to mark a segment on the relevant objective clock.
- ❖ Completing a minor clock will allow you to mark one segment on either the Politics or Profit objectives.
- ❖ Completing a moderate clock will allow you to mark two segments on either the Politics or Profit objectives.
- ❖ Completing a major clock will allow you to mark three segments on either the Politics or Profit objectives.

The same principle holds true for the GM when they are attempting to mark the Peril clock.

XIV. HOW ELSE CAN YOU IMPACT A RIVAL FACTION?

While missions are the standard method of weakening a rival faction, there are many alternatives. A long-term project via the Work preparation action is often the best tool for mechanically tracking the progress of your efforts. You can also complicate your rival's life by spreading rumours, interfering with their business, smearing their reputations, or recruiting some of their civilian members to work for you.

XV. WHO WROTE THOSE MISSIONS IN CHAPTER 6?

Quinn Murphy (@qh_murphy) should have been prominently credited on the credits page for his brilliant work on the missions City of Questions (pg. 198), Angel Dust (pg. 203) and The River War (pg. 208). Appologies to Quinn for this error in the print copy.