

Anima Prime: Factions

By Christian Griffen

The faction rules are layered on top of the regular Anima Prime rules and interconnect with them. They can be adapted to other games by replacing the way in which faction dice are earned, as well as figuring out how some boons affect the characters who belong to a faction.

It helps if you know the Anima Prime rules, but you should be able to understand the faction rules on their own even if you don't. **All dice used are six-sided (D6).**

What Are Factions?

Factions are groups and organizations that hold power. The faction rules are used to simulate several of these groups that may influence, engage, or annihilate one another. PCs can belong to a faction run by an NPC, or they can run their own.

Factions are applicable to different kinds of groups. They can be competing noble houses in a court setting, different crime families and law and order groups that vie for supremacy of a particular town, demonic and human groups fighting each other for the fate of the world, and so on.

Player Knowledge

The amount of knowledge that the players have about existing factions depends on your playstyle. I suggest one of two extremes: either the players get to openly see everything that NPC factions are doing, or they have to figure out everything on their own.

The first approach works if you've got a very collaborative group that doesn't want or need a strong identification with the PCs. The second approach works if the players want to be surprised by in-game events and like discovering things as their characters do.

Before you begin play, you need to figure out which one of these styles you are going to use, so that everybody's expectations align with how you're actually playing.

Terms

The following terms will be used in these rules to describe a faction. I have tried to keep certain terms that work the way they do on the character level (like wounds) the same, while others are changed to emphasize that they work somewhat differently (like engagements instead of strikes).

Core: There must be one or more characters (PCs or NPCs) at the heart of a faction. If these characters are killed or abandon the faction, it may break apart or die completely. Core characters are usually exposed on a character level if the faction has no pillars left.

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Faction Dice: These dice are earned through character actions (or other sources of income for some NPC factions), for example a successful rallying campaign, religious mission, or shadow depository raid. In Anima Prime, this is often linked to achieving goals throughout the PCs' adventures. Faction dice are used to build up the faction through creating and upgrading pillars and to pay for certain actions. They can also be turned into engagement dice. All dice in this game are six-sided (D6).

Faction Pool: This is the place where each faction stores their faction dice. Every faction has only one faction pool. There is no limit to the number of faction dice a faction pool can hold.

Pillar: A faction can only achieve things if it has units to act for it, which are called pillars. Pillars are always comprised of characters, so even when a pillar is based on the social reputation of the faction, it needs to include characters who defend, act for, or otherwise actively support that reputation. Pillars can range from battlefield units to spies to propaganda groups. Pillars have three stats (defense, competence, wounds) and can have boons. The GM may limit the number of allowed pillars per faction.

Defense: This is a pillar stat describing how difficult it is to disrupt (injure, kill, break apart) the pillar. Just like defense on the character level, an attack on the pillar must net more successes than the pillar's defense to inflict a wound.

Competence: This is a pillar stat describing how competent the pillar is at disrupting other pillars. During an engagement, this pillar contributes dice in the amount of its competence rating.

Wounds: This is a pillar stat describing how many wounds a pillar can take before it is taken out. Wounds are depicted by wound circles that you mark off as the pillar takes damage. A pillar with all of its wound circles marked is deemed defeated and cannot act in any way (and its boons are inactive) until it has healed at least one wound. If it takes a wound when all of its wound circles are already marked, it is permanently destroyed.

Boons: Pillars can have special abilities called boons. A list of boons is provided at the end of this document.

Engagement Dice: These dice are earned through character actions or transferred from faction dice and represent an advantage that one faction has against another. They are used during engagements to inflict wounds on the other faction's pillars.

Engagement Pool: This is the place where a faction stores their engagement dice against a specific other faction. A faction has (theoretically) one engagement pool for each other faction that it could clash with, but usually you only start keeping track of it once you accumulate engagement dice against a specific other faction (so you might never start engagement pools against friendly or far-removed factions). There is no limit to the number of engagement dice an engagement pool can hold.

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Creating Factions

In order to create a faction, you need to have an idea of what kind of organization you are creating. Is it an order of templars, a political party, or a group of benevolent healers? Is the faction multi-faceted, with a variety of subgroups?

Related to the nature of the faction is its mission. You should be able to express in one sentence why the faction was founded and/or what it pursues. Example missions are:

- To protect the realm from demons
- To hunt down and kill any blasphemers
- To prevent the coming of the apocalypse
- To bring about the apocalypse
- To bring balance to the universe
- To make money for its members through mercenary contracts
- To gain control of the city

The mission may or may not be publicly known. If the faction has a secret mission, it usually has a fake public one to mislead others. Sometimes a faction may change (or become corrupt), and its public and/or secret mission changes accordingly.

After you develop an idea of the nature and mission of the faction, you determine its core. Name one or more characters who are running the faction. The fate of these characters is directly intertwined with the fate of the faction. PCs are the core of a faction they found.

If the GM allows this, the PCs could separately create their own factions (as in, one PC founds a warrior order, another a criminal organization). In such cases, when faction dice are to be earned, there needs to be an agreement or a conflict about whose faction benefits. Engagement dice can sometimes be earned for both (“You uncover a weakness in the defenses of Faction A that both of your factions can exploit”) or have to be split up (“You gain a dozen anti-demon mortar rounds worth a total of 2 engagement dice”).

After you flesh out the nature, core, and mission, you spend faction dice to create pillars for the faction. If this is a PC-run faction, the GM will determine the number of faction dice with which you start out. NPC factions are created at the GM’s discretion, but the GM should keep track of an NPC faction’s earnings and expenditures according to some guidelines about their income and story developments for consistency’s sake.

When creating pillars, you can spend 5 faction dice to do one of the following:

1. Create a new pillar with defense 1, competence 1, and 1 wound circle.
2. Raise a pillar’s defense by 1 (to a maximum of 5).
3. Raise a pillar’s competence by 1 (to a maximum of 5).
4. Add a wound circle to a pillar (to a maximum of 5).
5. Add a boon to a pillar (to a maximum of 5 boons per pillar).

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The GM can impose limits on things like the number of allowed pillars for each faction, according to the story and the fun requirement (too many pillars might bring the game to a crawl and trade spontaneous fun for involved bookkeeping).

Running a Faction

Whenever you gain a faction die (or more), you can act on the faction level, if you so choose (and have enough faction dice to do what you want). One option you have is to upgrade one of your existing pillars. The costs for this are the same as those listed in the Creating Factions section above. In addition, you can do the following:

1. Spend 4 faction dice to heal a wound circle of a pillar.
2. Gain 2 faction dice by scrapping one of its pillar's boons.
3. Move dice from your Faction Pool into any of your Engagement Pools (thereby turning them into engagement dice).

You cannot move dice from an Engagement Pool to your Faction Pool.

Sometimes you cannot immediately act on the faction level because your characters are caught up in a particular situation. In that case, the GM calls for deferral of the action, which means that you'll get to do it later, as soon as your characters have a chance to lead the faction. The GM can also allow you to act at various other times even if you haven't recently gained any faction dice, if it makes sense within the story.

Earning Dice

PCs can earn faction and engagement dice through play. The GM has two ways for awarding them.

First, she can decide that a certain action, turn of events, decision, tradeoff, or other occurrence in the story warrants an award. If the PCs persuade a certain group to support their cause, she might grant them one or more faction dice to represent that support. She can always offer it as a choice or reward, too: "If you bring them the head of the guergican, they'll forge some weapons for your rebel army, which would be worth 3 faction dice." The fun really begins when you make those choices a bit more difficult ("If you wipe out all of their rival tribe's children as blood revenge, they'll support you for 5 faction dice worth.")

Second, she can link awards to goals in conflicts. For example, while the PCs are trying to fight their way out of the vampire stronghold, she can create a "Grab the Gems [5]: +1 FD" goal to allow the PCs to gain 1 faction die for their faction. It could also be "Obtain the Stronghold Blueprints [7]: +2 ED v. Vampire Clan", which would give their faction a distinct advantage when engaging the vampires by giving them 2 engagement dice against the vampire faction.

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Factions can also transfer faction dice to each other. This might be a political loan, part of a treaty, or in some way related to an exchange on the character level (such as a bribe).

Engagements

Factions would be no fun if they got along. When they don't, one faction will engage another. That means it uses its pillars, gained advantages (engagement dice), and raw resources (faction dice) to try and inflict damage on the other faction.

An engagement looks much like a strike on the character level. It works specifically like so:

1. The engaging faction (aggressor) declares its target faction (defender).
2. The aggressor chooses one attacking pillar for free and pays 1 faction die for each additional pillar that will participate in the engagement.
3. The aggressor gains 1 die for each level of competence of its participating pillars.
4. The aggressor takes up to 3 engagement dice out of the Engagement Pool against the defender and adds them to the competence dice.
5. The aggressor divides its dice among the defender's pillars.
6. The aggressor rolls its dice against each defending pillar. Every 3 or higher counts as a success. For every time that the roll nets more successes than the pillar's defense, it inflicts a wound on that pillar (rolling 1 to 2 successes against defense 2 inflicts no wounds, 3 to 4 successes inflicts 1 wound, 5 to 6 successes inflicts 2 wounds, and so on).
7. The defender counters. All of its pillars that were attacked (and not defeated) get to participate free of charge; others cannot participate.
8. The defender's counter works like the aggressor's engagement (with dice from the engagement pool and pillar competence divided among the attacking pillars). You can only counter against those pillars that attacked you.

A faction has the option of engaging another whenever it gains engagement dice against that faction, or at other points where the GM decrees that it makes sense in the story. This action is subject to GM deferral just like the action triggered by earning faction dice.

Combined Engagements

Factions can ally themselves with each other and join together in an engagement. In that case, each faction spends and allocates their own dice, but their successes against particular pillars are counted together. Factions cannot assist in each other's counters.

Some factions (mercenaries) will participate or engage for payment (in faction dice). Others can be involved through character actions, including subterfuge.

Faction Goals

Factions do not always simply fight each other. Often, they clash over a specific something. At any time during play, the GM can establish faction goals to represent those issues. These mostly mirror goals on the character level in the way they work.

For example, one faction might have taken control of a vital bridge. This breaks a valuable support route, leading to famine and suffering in the nearby city. The PCs, caring as they are, may have an interest in breaking the embargo, even if it has no effect on the faction level. In fact, since factions are simply an addition to the much more important character level, there should always be reasons on the character level for the PCs to care about what's going on with the factions.

The GM establishes a “Break the Embargo [3]” goal and associates it with one or more pillars of the controlling faction. When the PC faction engages the other faction, they can now assign dice to the goal as if it was a pillar to be wounded. If the successes rolled from those dice overcome the difficulty level (in this case, if the players get 4 or more successes on this goal), they achieve the goal and break the embargo. Alternatively, they could defeat all of the pillars who hold the goal to achieve it.

All of the pillars who were associated with a goal get to counter when that goal is engaged. Sometimes that counter may achieve a goal for their side (e.g., catching the refugees that the PCs were trying to smuggle through) if they aim for it.

The GM should make sure to let achievements count and last. As a general rule, a faction cannot undo an achieved goal without achieving a new goal itself. So if the NPC faction wanted to reestablish the embargo, the GM would create an “Establish Embargo” goal associated with the PC faction pillars that broke the last one. If you violate this guideline, your players will be frustrated and stop believing that acting on the faction level actually matters, which is contrary to the spirit of fun.

Faction goals work best when they have a direct impact on characters in the story. Goals about conquering and holding uninhabited hills are pretty lame. But goals about smuggling refugees through a barricade, saving a city from a demonic siege, or freeing prisoners of war are much more interesting.

While pursuing faction goals, do not forget about the character level. If the city is under demonic siege, the PCs are going to be fighting demons in the streets, rescuing groups of citizens, and building up resistance groups, all while gaining engagement dice for victorious battles, goals and insurgency actions until they can strike on the faction level and fully break the siege.

Finally, goals can have faction-level consequences of any kind the GM deems possible (and fun). These are completely up to the GM and can include temporarily negating an enemy pillar's boon or lowering their stats. Some of these will be character goals (like the PCs striking as an infiltration squad) while others will be faction goals.

Boons

A Note on Boons and Characters

Some of the boons listed below have a direct impact on the character level, such as Morale. But the GM can translate other boons into character effects as well.

When the PCs encounter characters that belong to a particular pillar, you should feel free to translate that pillar's boons into character terms. For example, you can give soldiers from a pillar with the Heavy Armor boon a high defense when the PCs encounter them (probably as a swarm on the character level).

Listing of General Boons

These boons are usually applicable to any kind of setting. If, however, you feel like any of these would not fit with your specific story, take them out and inform everyone of that before the game begins.

Assassinate: This pillar cannot be targeted when a faction counters. If all of the engaging pillars have this boon, the defending faction cannot counter at all (but see Counterstrike, below).

Assimilate: Each time this pillar is involved in an engagement during which an enemy pillar is destroyed, this pillar can gain, free of charge, one of the boons of the destroyed pillar (if the assimilating pillar does not already possess it and does not already have the maximum number of boons). The assimilating pillar can also confer the boon to another friendly unit instead if the faction pays 2 faction dice.

Counterstrike: This pillar can counter pillars with the Assassinate boon. That means that in a counter, you can assign the basic engagement dice and any competence dice from pillars with Counterstrike against pillars with Assassinate, while dice from pillars without Counterstrike (competence as well as extra engagement dice from Fanatical) have to be assigned to enemy pillars without Assassinate. If the pillar with Counterstrike is also Fanatical, you can assign those extra engagement dice against the Assassinate pillars.

Disguised: When this pillar engages another faction, there is a 50% chance (1-3 on a D6) that the defending faction is not informed which faction engaged them. If the GM engages the players' faction, then the players will not be told who engaged them (if the roll succeeds). If the players' faction engages another faction, on a successful roll, the GM has to react accordingly and cannot act as though he NPCs know who engaged them. Taking this boon a second time raises the chance to 100%. When multiple pillars engage, the lowest Disguised boon is in effect (which could be none).

Fanatical: This pillar can focus intensely on an enemy. Raise the limit of engagement dice you can spend in this engagement by 3 for each involved pillar with this boon.

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Healing: As long as this pillar is active (i.e., not defeated), the cost for healing wound circles is lowered to 2 faction dice for this faction.

Hidden: This pillar cannot be selected as a target by an aggressor (but it can be countered by a defender).

Inquisitor: This pillar can offset an enemy pillar's Hidden boon by spending 2 faction dice. This allows any pillars of this faction to engage the Hidden pillar (the Inquisitor must engage, too). The cost has to be paid again for each engagement. In order to use this boon, the existence of the Hidden pillar must be known to the engaging faction (for example, by having encountered them in an engagement where the Hidden pillar participated and was not successfully Disguised).

Morale: Any characters belonging to this faction gain 2 morale dice per conflict. Note that this is an effect on the character level, not the faction level. The morale dice count as bonus dice that the character can add individually (meaning only 1 per roll) to any roll during a conflict. After they are used up, they are regained at the beginning of the following conflict. A pillar can take this boon twice to double the earned morale dice, but having multiple pillars with this boon does not grant additional dice.

Protect: This pillar can protect another pillar of its own or an allied faction. When an enemy faction engages, pay 2 faction dice to involve this pillar in the engagement. The protected pillar cannot be engaged, but it also cannot counter (but this pillar can).

Reinforcement: This unit can participate in a counter even if it was not attacked, at the cost of 1 faction die.

Scavenge: For every pillar that is destroyed in an engagement in which this pillar is involved (friend or foe), this pillar's faction gains 1 faction die for each wound circle or boon that the destroyed faction possessed (thus, a pillar with 3 wound circles and 2 boons can be scavenged for 5 faction dice). Defeating a pillar is not enough—it has to be completely destroyed by inflicting one more wound than it has wound circles. Both sides can scavenge the same destroyed pillar and gain the full benefit of this boon.

Unmask: This boon lowers the effect of Disguise of enemy units in engagements in which it participates by one step (Disguise II to Disguise I, or Disguise I to no Disguise). You can take this boon a second time to completely offset even Disguise II.

Listing of Special Boons

These special boons are suggestions for how to make factions more interesting and more in tune with your particular setting. You shouldn't usually have all of these in your game, however, nor should PCs necessarily have unrestricted access to them.

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Feel free to make up similar boons for settings with different kinds of creatures, powers, and vulnerabilities. Simply renaming Ethereal to Dreambound and Planeshifting to Dreamscaping, for example, drastically changes the feel of the boon while retaining the mechanical function.

Armor Piercing: This boon affects only enemy pillars with the Heavy Armor boon.

Blessed: This boon negates all enemy pillars' Undead boons in any engagement in which this pillar participates.

Demonic: This pillar feasts on the souls and flesh of its faction's victims. For every 2 cumulative wounds this faction inflicts during engagements with any pillar, it can heal one of its Demonic pillars' wounds, even if that pillar did not participate in the engagement.

Ethereal: This pillar can only engage/counter and be engaged/countered by other ethereal units.

Heavy Armor: This pillar's defense counts as 2 points higher in engagements if no enemy pillar has the Armor Piercing boon. If one enemy pillar has the Armor Piercing boon, the defense remains unchanged. If two or more enemy pillars have the Armor Piercing boon, this pillar's defense counts as 1 point lower than normal.

Legendary: This pillar can have up to 8 boons, including this one. All stat maximums are raised to 8 as well. The availability of this boon should be highly restricted.

Mind Control: Pay 4 faction dice to use another faction's pillar as if it was one of your own during an engagement. The cost is 8 faction dice if you use it against its own faction.

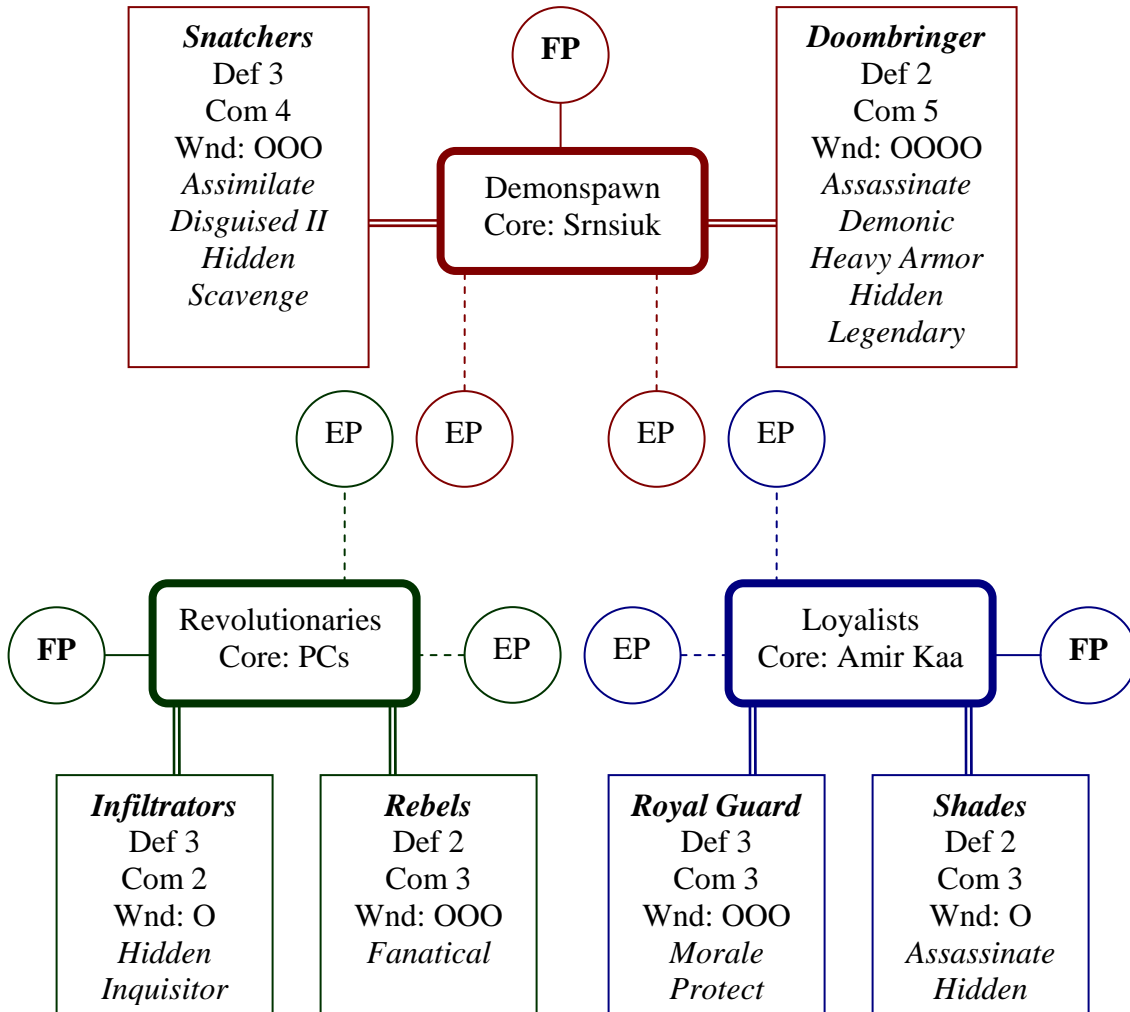
Mind Shield: This pillar cannot be controlled with the Mind Control boon.

Planeshifting: Pay 1 faction die to consider this pillar ethereal for the duration of one engagement (see the Ethereal boon). If the pillar already has the Ethereal boon, you can pay 1 faction die to consider it non-ethereal for the duration of an engagement. This boon can only be used by the engaging faction, not the defending one.

Undead: If the unit is not destroyed during an engagement, one of its wound circles automatically heals immediately afterwards. This boon does not work if there is at least one enemy pillar with the Blessed boon participating in the engagement. Undead pillars do not benefit from the Healing boon.

Unravel: Pay 2 faction dice to lower an enemy pillar's defense by 1 for the duration of an engagement. You can pay multiple times to lower several enemy pillars' defenses, but you cannot use it more than once on each pillar.

Example Faction Diagram



In this setup, the players are revolutionaries in a monarchy after the death of the royal family. They fight with the loyalists over whether the kingdom should fall into separate, independent regions or return under the auspice of a new unitary ruler.

Unbeknownst to both of them, a demonic force has begun to infiltrate the lands, using the current disarray to snatch up victims and establish a base of power, secretly feeding its Doombringer with human flesh (*Assimilate*, *Scavenge*, *Demonic*). The revolutionaries and the loyalists will suspect each other whenever the *Disguised* demons attack. Can they figure out the true threat to their people? Will they unite against the outside threat?

I also would add cities and villages as factions with citizen/villager pillars with basic stats, which the demons can attack and devour (and the human factions may protect).