

Blades in the Dark, Quick Start Heritage FAQ

(maintained by the Blades in the Dark G+ Community) <3

Note: Questions referring to out-of-date rules have been removed. - JH

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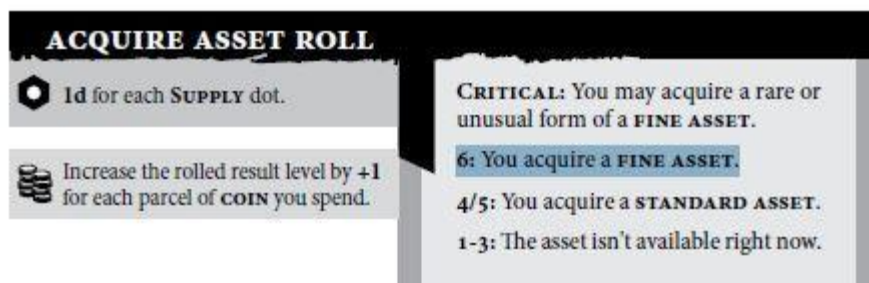
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**About acquiring assets. A. What exactly is the benefit of a standard asset?
Just fictional positioning, I assume, but I want to be clear.**

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TEMPORARY USE

When you acquire an asset this way, it's for "one use" only. This may be a single instance (like pouring a vial of poison into a goblet, or luring a rogue ghost into a spirit bottle) or a single period of use (like hiring a boat for a couple hours).

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"All that time brawling down at the docks wasn't for nothing either. Arcy used it to round up a crew of muscle to watch over the parlor. We know the Red Sashes are coming for it and we'll +need some heavies to help us hold it. Hix-towers-gang/er first pick of the lot was Cyclops. had already beaten him down once and those things tend to stick around. John offered up the Devil's Bargain that she could find a capable crew, but they'd be likely to look out for themselves in the long run, and after a time wonder why they weren't running the corner themselves. I gladly took that one, with both Sean and Arcy in full knowledge of the type of crew she was assembling. Arcy has no dots in Supply, but I took 1D for our shared background, and 1D for the Devil's Bargain. Result was 6: You acquire a Fine Asset. Not just a group of thugs. A fine group of thugs. And enterprising to boot!"

**About acquiring assets. B. When can you obtain a permanent asset?
Is that only through crew advancement or fictionally as well?**

If you acquire an asset in the fiction, but not as a crew upgrade or playbook advancement (to add items from other playbooks to your item list), then you can use it as a temporary asset, and continue to make "acquire asset" rolls during downtime to keep it running. Fa
You could also start a long-term project(s) to assemble everything you need to keep the asset permanently.

With group actions, if the point person rolls a six and someone else rolls a six, does that count as a crit?

Or does one person somewhere in the group have to roll two sixes?

One person must roll multiple 6s to count as a critical result.

When do the 'desperate rolls' advancement marks get ticked?

Every time you make a desperate roll, or is there another trigger somewhere?

Every time you make a desperate roll.

How do you handle PvP?

You use action rolls pretty much as normal. The PC with initiative rolls action. The PC who's resisting can roll to resist.

If there's a question of who's acting and who's resisting, you work it out from the fiction, or both parties can roll action.

It seems a bit complicated at first, but if you step through the results and apply them, it works out well.

Here's an example from our group:

Brann's Cutter, Kobb, wanted the crew to do a particular job. The other PCs wanted to do something else. So, Kobb was like, "This isn't a fucking democracy. We're going after the cult. So gear up."

*I asked the other players if this was a roll or not. Can Kobb even try to command them like that? They thought it was worth a roll. So Kobb rolled **Command** (it was controlled, I think). The other PCs rolled **Will** to resist, and then decided to either go along with Kobb's command, or resist and pay stress. Everyone ended up deciding to go along with Kobb's orders.*

Is 1 PC playable?

Either as a lone-wolf Garrett style character, or the leader of a crew, or a low-ranking scoundrel rising up in the ranks?

Yes, you can totally do this. I recommend 3 PCs as a good number, but 1 PC is playable, either as a lone-wolf Garrett style character, or the leader of a crew, or a low-ranking scoundrel rising up in the ranks. The game also has co-GMing rules where each player has a scoundrel and also takes on some GMing duties, so a 2-person group about a duo of scoundrels also works well.

Yeah, you have to change several things to run a single PC who isn't part of a crew. It's possible, but obviously not the core experience. The easiest way is for the lone-wolf to be part of a faction (with a crew they net) -- they just prefer to do missions alone. No teamwork moves available, but hey, you wanted to be a lone wolf.

For the single PC who leads a crew, yes, you'd use Command and the crew's Quality to determine how well the NPC teammates do. You can give them a shared stress track to use, too. [rpgnet thread]

Does a character have access to all those item on his sheet at no expense?

The characters own everything on their item lists. The players decide what to carry on an operation.

Is there a mechanic for buying items for the characters?

I mean, a coin per item is the simplest solution, just wondering if there's any official way, ely for the playbook-specific ones.

You use the Acquire Assets roll during downtime to use an item you don't normally have. At worst, you can spend 1-coin on that roll to auto-succeed, but you might also be able to get the item for free with a good roll.

[rpgnet thread]

You may also permanently add two items from another playbook to your list by spending a playbook advance to do so (instead of gaining a new special ability)

For items like vial and ammunition, is there a limit to the number of uses and once exhausted how do you replace them?

A vial is single use. All items are replenished during downtime. Spending coin for an extra vial is fine, but you might be able to get it with an acquire asset roll, "for free," also.

Would a player ever roll to resist an effect caused/threatened by his or her own flaws? (ie insecurity, penchant for always getting lost, paranoia, being jaded, sloth, lust)

Yep. Include as much of that as the group is interested in.

"You definitely take the black lotus when she offers, don't you?"

"No way. This is obviously a trap."

"You're a drug addict. I think this is a resist roll, isn't it?"

"Ah... dammit, yeah, it is. Crap, a 3! So it's four stress or do the drug? Yeesh. I take the lotus."

This gives me an idea! For the fourth playbook advancement item, I'm changing it to this: *Express your character's flaws, obsessions, secrets, or shortcomings.*

So now you get XP when you ditch your lookout post to go drink. :)

Can you make a roll if you have 0 points in an Action?

You can roll with "zero dice" -- you roll 2d and take the lowest.

[rpgnet thread]

Is it possible to offer more than one devil's bargain?

More than one devil's bargain can be offered. Several players might have ideas. That's cool. But only one may be accepted for a given roll.

The advantage of using a Large weapon is purely fictional positioning, right?

It potentially alters the type of Action roll ("well, he's only got a knife so I think this situation is pretty controlled, unless he manages to get in close to you" and the "what you'd expect" result (with a knife, "what you'd expect" would be a stab wound, the greatsword might make the expected effect more like brutal decapitation).

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Gear question: Is the only mechanical difference between say a non-fine large weapon and a small one (aside from effects on load) primarily narrative grounds for different effects or rationale for using certain skills or approaches?

(ie attacking that knife-wielding thug with your pike may be Controlled, where it would be Risky if you also had a small knife; or dismemberment is more believable with an axe than a switchblade). But then reacting to a quick dagger ambush in tight quarters may be more desperate or disadvantaged with an 8-foot polearm. Would those considerations ever result in +d or -d to any given roll?

Another fictional difference is that big martial weapons are more conspicuous, which could be beneficial (more intimidating for instance). Are gear descriptions basically a non-explicit way to do something similar to AW's tags like messy/loud which strongly affect fiction, but not quantifiable mechanics?

Exactly right.

For +d on a roll, consider a devil's bargain that relates to the weapon.

"You can take +1d here with your pole-arm if you keep falling back to keep him at reach, but you'll have to move out of the alley and into the street where people can see what's going on."

"You can take +1d with your dagger, in close, to shank him repeatedly, but you'll be absolutely covered in blood."

Should players describe some kind of fiction when they take stress?

Yes. Describe how you shrug off the worst of the consequence.

From my reading, it doesn't seem possible for PCs to die.

If they fill up all their trauma, they have to retire. While obviously you don't want them dying because they made a bad roll and fell off a roof, I kinda feel that in a game about rising through a violent criminal society, it should be possible for PCs to perish when serious shit goes down.

By default, death is an option a player can take when they suffer a deadly effect (instead of taking stress). I play with people who do this.

"Nope, that's definitely how Cross dies. Dang, that was brutal. Okay, I'm playing a Cutter next."

The players are just as responsible for the tone of the game as the GM, so if they want it dark and gritty, they can accept dark and gritty outcomes for their characters. Or they can squeeze by with stress if they're not quite ready to buy the farm.

Oh, and ghosts! You can totally play a ghost.

[rpgnet thread]

A gang of Thieves has "Elite Shadows" as an option. Do you need to take regular Shadows first?

Elite Shadows has the effect of upgrading the quality of all of your gangs of Shadows by one. If you do not have a gang then the upgrade will have no targets to effect.

How do gang upgrades work? Such as adepts/killers/thugs.

When you use one of your gangs against an obstacle or danger, you roll Command (almost always) as a group action. You use your crew's Gangs quality for the teamwork roll.

All the normal rules apply (position on the action roll, effect outcome, etc.). The PC commanding can take stress to avoid bad effects for the gang (if they're present).

Gangs are particularly useful as setup moves during a team operation (our thugs will attack the gates while we sneak around back). But there are lots of other uses.

Your gangs can also give you a bump in scale. At tier 0, you have small gangs. So if the 4 PCs plus their gang go on an assault, they count as a medium gang.

Is it possible on Tier 1 to get a faction standing at +2 or higher and would it be possible for one player to basically negate the standing another player has been set?

i) Yes. In John's youtube AP, I seem to remember the three players picking same faction, so the crew started with +3 status

with a faction. I assume that was a Tier 1 faction.

ii) I assume the motivation to negate is to avoid negative status with a faction, at the cost of having a positive status with another. I suppose it's an option, though a rather boring one. I would ask why status with such a faction has see-sawed.

Faction Blurbs

Some short blurbs for the factions on the ladder. Will surely revise for the final book, but these should serve for your quick start games.

- **The Unseen (t3):** An insidious criminal enterprise with secret membership.
- **The Silver Nails (t3):** A company of Severosi mercenaries turned to crime when the war for Skovlan Unity ended.
- **Lord Scurlock:** An ancient noble, said to be immortal, like the Emperor. Possibly a vampire.
- **The Hive:** A guild of legitimate merchants who secretly trade in contraband. Named for their symbol, a golden bee.
- **The Circle of Flame:** A refined secret society of antiquarians and scholars; cover for extortion, graft, vice, and murder.
- **The Crows:** An old gang with new leadership. Known for running illegal games of chance.
- **The Lampblacks:** The former lamp-lighter guild, turned to crime when their services were replaced by electric lights.
- **The Red Sashes:** Originally an Iruvian school of swordsmanship, expanded into criminal endeavors.
- **The Dimmer Sisters:** House-bound recluses with an occult reputation.
- **Ulf Ironborn:** A brutal Skovlander, newly arrived in Duskwall and fighting everyone for turf.
- **The Fog Hounds:** A new gang of smugglers looking for a patron and clients.
- **The Eels/Lampreys:** A new crew of scoundrels, getting into the spirit trade.
- **The Lost:** A group of toughs, bravos, and ex-soldiers dedicated to protecting the downtrodden and the hopeless.
- **Duskwall Council:** The rulers of the city government, lead by the Lord Governor.
- **Skovlander Refugees:** Hopeless refugees from the Unity War, turned to criminal opportunities when denied all others.
- **Ironhook Prison:** Where many scoundrels spend the bulk of their lives. Several criminal operations are run by convicts inside its walls.
- **Spirit Wardens:** The bronze-masked hunters who capture and destroy rogues spirits. Also run Bellweather Crematorium. Membership is secret.
- **The Bluecoats:** The street patrol of the City Watch. Known as the meanest gang in Duskwall. Corrupt, violent, and cruel.
- **The Inspectors:** The investigators of the City Watch. They have a reputation for ethics and integrity (no one likes them). They present evidence prosecutions to the city magistrates.
- **Leviathan Hunters:** The daring captains and crews that grapple with titanic demons on the Never Sea to drain their blood for processing into electro-plasm.
- **Sailors:** The captains and crews for merchant and Imperial Navy ships.
- **Dockers:** The hard-bitten laborers who work the docks.

- **Gondoliers:** The guild of canal boat operators. Venerated by ancient tradition. Said to know occult secrets (many things are submerged in Duskwall.)
- **Cabbies:** The coach operators of the city. An impressive gossip network.
- **Rail Jacks:** The men and women who protect the electro-trains of the imperium from the savage spirits of the Deathlands.
- **Church of the Ecstasy of the Flesh:** The "state religion", if there is such a thing. They honor the sensual life of the body and abhor the corrupted spirit world. Structured as a mystery cult.
- **The Weeping Lady:** A charity and pseudo-religion, honoring the first Lord Governor of Duskwall, said to be a champion of the poor.
- **The Path of Echoes:** A popular mystery cult which borders on open rebellion against spirit laws. They revere the ancients, and seek to gain knowledge from the past -- including consorting with ghosts.
- **The Forgotten Gods:** A jumble of cults and mysteries which attempt to follow the old ways from before the cataclysm, doing the bidding of demons and darker things.
- **Deathlands Scavengers:** Convicts from Ironhook given the choice of execution or work as scavengers outside the lightning barrier. The shortest of life spans.