

Powered by the Paradox

A Faction Paradox game using Forged in the Dark and Powered by the Apocalypse systems.



Based on the [Eighth Doctor Adventures](#) published by the BBC featuring [Faction Paradox](#), the licensed [BBV audio dramas](#), [Magic Bullet](#) audio dramas, and the [Mad Norwegian Press](#) and [Obverse Books](#) published novels.

Warning - Work in Progress. It is not yet playable (playbooks have not yet been balanced)

Feedback & suggestions - please post on the Blades in the Dark community forum thread for this game - <https://community.bladesinthedark.com/t/powered-by-the-paradox/>

Blurb

Why? Why do you do this?

Because... there are monsters in the world, Justine. They can walk the Earth without seeming any more real than fairy-stories. They make their plans while everyone else is asleep, and they can move the walls of the maze without anybody ever knowing it. And sometimes... one has to be those monsters. - Godfather Morlock

Time travelling voodoo cultists surviving (but certainly not thriving) in the fringes between The Great Houses and The Enemy in The War in Heaven¹.

A darker take on Doctor Who, a street level view of epic time wars, a rebellious mischief to the High Council of Gallifrey and Time Lords in general.

If you've ever wondered about the consequences to the people and the universe of things the Doctor does, or the technologies shown in the series or the big events referred to or implied, this is your game.

Disclaimer

This is a fan creation with no licenses from the BBC (license holders of Doctor Who), Obverse Books (licensed publishers of Faction Paradox) or Lawrence Miles (creator of Faction Paradox)

Acknowledgement

Powered by the Paradox is a Powered By The Apocalypse (PbtA)/Forged in the Dark (FitD) game.

- PbtA is a ruleset designed by D. Vincent Baker for his game [Apocalypse World](#).
- FitD is a ruleset designed by John Harper for his game [Blades in the Dark](#).

It also uses ideas, moves and concepts from

- [Blades Against Darkness](#) by Dylan Green
- [Companions](#) by Jeremy Tidwell
- [Grim World](#) by Trenton Kennedy
- [Impulse Drive](#) by Adrian Thoen

Faction Paradox was created by Lawrence Miles. The City of the Saved was created by Philip Purser-Hallard.

Other writers who contributed to the Faction Paradox Mythos and are referenced include:- Simon Bucher-Jones, Daniel O'Mahony, Ian McIntire, Mags L. Halliday, Helen Fayle, Kelly Hale, Jonathan Dennis, Mark Clapham, Kate Orman, Lance Parkin and Lawrence Burton

Core Concepts

- **The Enemy** is an unknowable, unstoppable opponent to the Homeworld's machinations in the Spiral Politic.
- **The Great Houses** who have access to unlimited resources, unlimited energy and unlimited potential.
- **Completion** countdown list ²⁾. When the countdown runs out - your character is retired.
- **Metatime** - how to roleplay player characters in different times ³⁾
- **Malevolence** - The Faction Paradox setting is a much darker Doctor Who universe with bad things happening. The protagonists nearly always survive, occasionally win - but never triumph. ⁴⁾
- **Participants**⁵⁾. Every war-time power has its own agendas and having [Progress Clocks](#) for the participants helps the Grandfather instigate plot developments outside of pre-written adventures.
- **Dice Mechanics** - Advantage (best 2 of 3d6), Disadvantage (worst 2 of 3d6), invoking the Spirits (devil's bargain), untethered flashbacks (flashbacks), pushing, exhaustion, story points, progress clocks
- **Membership** - Faction Paradox has a biological relationship based hierarchy (primarily as an insult to Homeworlders). All player characters are members of some level within Faction Paradox. Different Moves and resources are available at different levels and usually come at the cost of [Completion](#)
- **Canon** - Use as much or as little as you like. The BBC and everyone they've ever employed have always said "There is no canon". This game will be assuming that any questions on the universe you come up with, that you answer by making stuff up - is equally as valid as anything published in any form from any source. You can look at the published stuff on Faction Paradox - either from the BBC or otherwise licensed - but you don't have to. Some of it will be introduced in various adventures or setting material to be added to YOUR game only if you want to. Primarily it is to act as inspiration and a muse if you are having creative shortfalls.

Playbooks

Playbooks are short (usually 2 page) character sheets that are archetypes specific to the setting and genre. Usually every player must choose a unique one from the other players and they then have ownership over that archetype and anything relevant to it. This means they may add to the fiction

being created by everyone (players and the Grandfather) with authority about things relevant to their playbook. Each playbook usually has all the rules needed by a player for playing the game without resorting to using a rulebook.

- **The Chosen One** - You are the last scion of Faction Paradox
- **The Citizen** - This is not your first life
- **The Fighter** - You are the timeline frontline
- **The Diplomat** - Not every solution has to be a violent solution⁶⁾
- **The Homeworlder** - Despite being a Gallifreyan and therefore a Great House approved member, there's a lot of stigma attached
- **The Leader** - This group is your group, you are their leader
- **The Killer** - You were the terror of the galaxy and now you're a time terrorist⁷⁾

Character Backgrounds

Moves in these backgrounds are often not directly Faction Paradox related. Faction Paradox Moves are usually acquired later in the character building process.

Examples are from the TV episodes, books and audios for Doctor Who and mention their first appearance

- **The Alternate.** This isn't [your timeline](#) or possibly not even your universe or dimension. Perhaps you were sent back in time to stop the Daleks conquering the Earth. Possibly you were even cloned to be a human sacrifice in a bottle universe, and escaped.
 - Examples: Shura⁸⁾, Christine Summerfield⁹⁾, Rachel Cooper¹⁰⁾, Adric¹¹⁾
- **The Collateral.** Time active agents (or the Renegade) have swept through your life or had a major impact on it forever changing your destiny. From investigating old houses with statues, to being part of an ELO appreciating fanclub.
 - Examples: Sally Sparrow¹²⁾, Elton Pope¹³⁾, Flip Jackson¹⁴⁾
- **The Disaffected.** You used to work for one of the other major powers, but have had a change of heart(s).
 - Examples: The Old Man¹⁵⁾, Grandfather Paradox¹⁶⁾, Fitz Kreiner¹⁷⁾
- **The Ex-Companion.** Either you've got a hole in the head, had your memories expunged, spent 40 years in exile and made non-existent through time travel, or were a forgotten plastic android when the universe was rebooted - but something happened that stopped you hanging about with the Doctor, permanently.
 - Examples: Adam Mitchell¹⁸⁾, Donna Noble¹⁹⁾, Zoe Heriot²⁰⁾, Jamie McCrimmon²¹⁾, Amelia Pond²²⁾, Rory Williams²³⁾
- **The Infected.** At some point your [biodata](#) was infected with the [Faction Paradox virus](#) created by Godfather Morlock. Your history was usurped to have always been a member of Faction Paradox.
 - Examples: Cousin Pinocchio²⁴⁾, The 3rd Doctor²⁵⁾
- **The Witchblood.** Your ancestors gifted you with extra senses or extra ways to manipulate or bypass how everyone interacts with the laws of physics. Also known as Time Sensitivity or Time Awareness.
 - Examples: Tharils²⁶⁾, Justine McManus²⁷⁾, Marielle Duquesne²⁸⁾, Octavia Sutherland²⁹⁾

Coterie Playbooks

These are used as a collective playbook accessible by all players, and often able to supply replacement characters. The kind of coterie playbook chosen also determines the kind of campaign you will be playing.

- **Stolen Timeship.** Often custom shapes - typically not able to be effectively used by anyone except their official owner.
 - Activities: Exploration and problem solving³⁰⁾
- **Faction Shrine.** Works similar to a Timeship, but more liquids are involved (often blood). Time/space travel with a [messy](#) tag
 - Activities: Espionage³¹⁾
- **Faction Embassy.** A normal place in linear time.
 - Activities: Politics, public relations and marketing³²⁾
- **A Minute in London.** Your group has a home within a particular minute of the Eleven Day Empire. Choose any time between the 3rd and 13th of September 1752.
 - Activities: Troubleshooting³³⁾

Moves

See [Moves](#)

The Powers That Be

The premise of the Faction and its founding is the [Grandfather Paradox](#) - so named for the time travel paradox of killing your own Grandfather before you were born. Many of the rituals of the Faction involve praying to, or invoking the idea/concept of the Grandfather. These rules will refer to the person running the game as [The Grandfather](#) rather than GM/MC or DM.

That said though, feel free to also use "The Spirits", "Grandparent" or "Grandmother"³⁴⁾

Other Faction Paradox stuff

I've got bits of the Faction all over this wiki:

- [The Faction Paradox Website](#) - mirror of the old official website
- [Dronid](#) - wiki of fan creations
- [Faction Roleplaying in DW:AITAS](#) - rules for the Cubicle 7 game Doctor Who: Adventures in Time and Space
- [The Grand Stair](#) - rules for Lords of Gossamer and Shadow
- [Faction Roleplaying](#) - rules for Amber Diceless

The Rules

[Work in Progress](#)

1)

Note - [The War in Heaven](#) is not [The Time War](#) in the TV series

2)

similar to corruption in [FATE of Cthulhu](#) or [Urban Shadows](#), Humanity in [World of Darkness](#) or [Cyberpunk](#). A tradeoff for breaking the laws of the universe which will eventually end your character. The closest PbtA equivalent is Calamity as used in [Impulse Drive](#)

3)

This is heavily inspired by one of the Big Finish stories in [Legacy of Time](#), The Split Infinities.

4)

Malevolence effects the game in a similar manner to Bad Stuff in the [Amber Diceless RPG](#), but is tracked in a similar method to Heat in [Blades in the Dark](#). Activities of protagonists garner attention by beings, concepts and even complex space-time events that can manipulate causality and entropy as easily as humans can walk.

5)

Similar to factions in [Blades in the Dark](#)

6)

and some of the convoluted complex solutions do actually work sometimes

7)

e.g. you were a Dalek, Cyberman, Sontaran etc

8)

[The Day of the Daleks](#) TV episode

9)

[Dead Romance](#) novel

10)

[The Architects of History](#) audio drama

11)

[Full Circle](#) TV episode

12)

[Blink](#) TV episode

13)

[Love & Monsters](#) TV episode

14)

https://tardis.fandom.com/wiki/Flip_Jackson[The Crimes of Thomas Brewster]] audio drama

15)

[Warlords of Utopia](#) novel

16)

[Christmas on a Rational Planet](#) novel

17)

[The Taint](#) novel

18)

[Dalek](#) TV episode

19)

[Doomsday](#) TV episode

20)

[The Wheel in Space](#) TV episode

21)

[The Highlanders](#) TV episode

22)

[The Eleventh Hour](#) TV episode

23)

[The Eleventh Hour](#) TV episode

24)

[The Book of the War](#) novel

25)

[Spearhead from Space](#) TV episode

26)

[Warrior's Gate](#) TV episode

27)

[Alien Bodies](#) novel

28)

[Christmas on a Rational Planet](#) novel

29)

[The Book of the War](#) novel

30)

Often this is escaping the destruction done to the Faction by the bigger powers, but can also be the seeking and rebuilding of the Faction

31)

Frontline efforts to get a piece of the power being fought over in the War in Heaven

32)

often longterm projects to influence the course of history, and swift emergency retreats when bigger fish realise what you are up to

33)

Finding trouble and shooting it for the most part. Similar to missions for [Night Witches](#)

34)

I'll see if I can dynamically change the instances on this wiki for this historically gendered familial relation

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