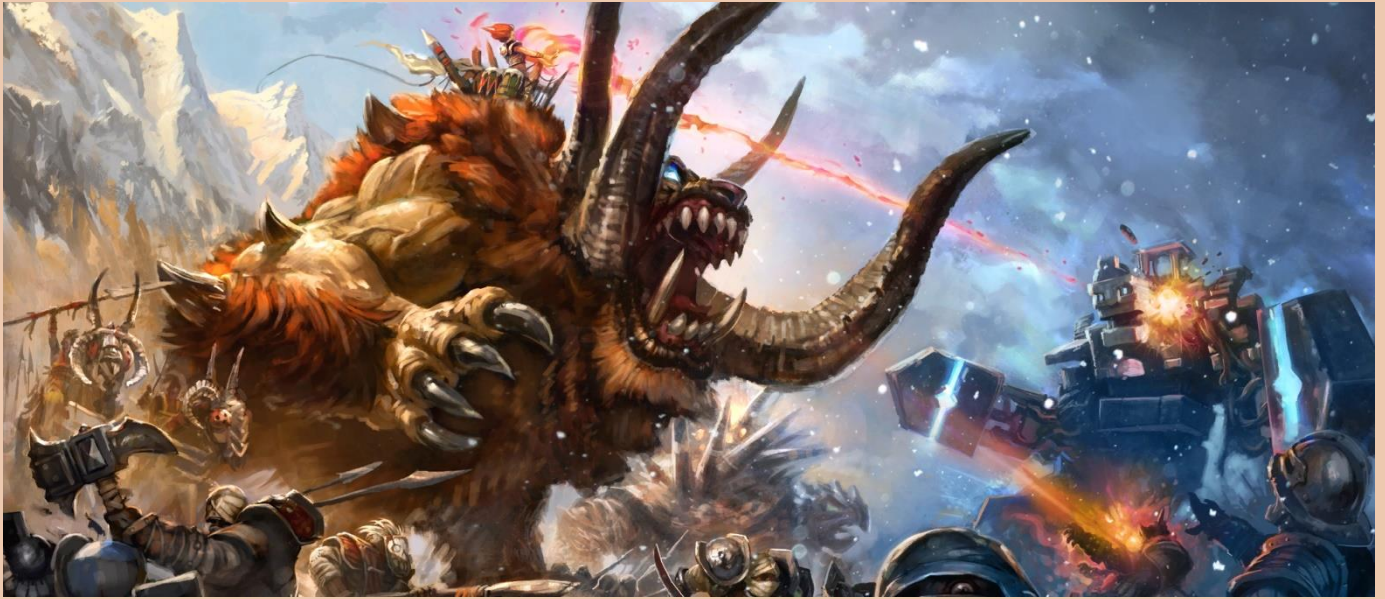


Bandits 2.0



Introduction

Alongside Stonekin, Bandits is the hybrid faction which most encapsulates the essence of its parent factions. Shadow is often referred to as the “risk” faction, but it is more accurate to relate Shadow’s playstyle as calculated self-harm. Fire, true to its lore as the Slayer’s rage, has a playstyle focused around destroying the enemy before the enemy destroys them. Bandits appropriately combines its two parent factions as a micro-intensive faction with a focus on offense and spells and abilities which draw heavily from, or combine, elements of both factions.

While Bandits currently has several viable and strong cards, it suffers from many of the issues that plague other primary and hybrid factions in BattleForge. The strength of Bandits as a faction is more the strength of the splash cards from Fire and Shadow with the exception of one or two strong Bandits cards finding a place such as Soulhunter or Bloodhorn. These strong Bandits cards often manifest themselves as the centerpieces in spell decks, which is fitting for these strong leader-like units, but Bandits as a faction should also possess a cohesion that enables playstyles and strategies that are unique to their theme. This document will analyze Bandits’ identity as a faction and consider how to develop playstyles that are specific to them.

Archetype:

- Catchphrase: Reckless Abandon and Chaos
- Finesse enables power
- Micro over macro
- Attack over defense



Part 1: Analysis

Bandits is the child of the two primary factions which are the least army reliant and the most micro-intensive. The strength of both factions is found less in their raw stats, but in powerful offensive spells and unit abilities. Bandits share both factions' identity in possessing strong unit abilities while generally also being very stat efficient, especially in the higher tiers. While Fire units are skewed towards damage with low health and Shadow units are typically balanced in terms of damage and life points, Bandit units skew slightly towards more damage compared to other units of their class but without having particularly low health pools.

While factions such as Stonekin, Nature, and Frost possess extensive tools to disable and control enemies, Bandits lack reliable crowd control. Their few cards which do possess crowd control effects, such as Sandstorm and Amok, combine these effects with direct or indirect damage sources. Instead of focusing on disabling enemies, Bandits focus on enabling themselves. This identity is apparent in the abundant number of buffs and cleanse effects available to the faction, which Wasteland Wing expands on with its multi-target cleanse ability.

One of the interesting identities that Bandits have inherited is Shadow's affinity for swarms. Shadow has several swarm cards and abilities, including Undead Army, Harvester's Summon Skeletons, Cultist Masters, Infect, and Satanael's Snapjaws. Out of all of these, only Satanael grants permanent summons. Visions of a swarm archetype are discernable from cards like Banditos, Corsair, and even Bandit Lancer's Mark which can turn a simple group of archers into pieces of long-range artillery. This playstyle is currently only partially implemented and lacking sufficient support to develop into its own archetype but provides us a path for a second potential playstyle to develop alongside the existing spell decks.



Preferences & Tools

Preferences:

- **Opportunists:** Bandits prefer battles on their terms, striking when they are at an advantage and their enemies are ill prepared to respond.
- **Relentless:** Many units have abilities that work against enemy crowd control or protection spells via piercing and disenchantments. This allows them to continue dealing damage which combined with their Life Stealer is the key to Bandits' survival.
- **Micro intensive:** Bandits' playstyle rewards you for playing on the edge. A missed spell, too little power, or a single mistimed ability can end an entire run. But when played well, the player is rewarded abundantly.
- **"Boss" units:** Almost all buff spells are single-target and thus encourage a play style revolving around 1 or 2 strong units.
- **Swarm:** On the opposite end of strong leader-like units enabled by single-target buff spells, Bandits has several cards which enable unit swarms where the enemy drowns in waves of easily replaceable mooks.





Tools:

- **Life Stealer:** All Bandit units and towers have a passive which heals them by 15% of the damage they deal. This ability makes it possible for Bandits to sustain themselves to a degree.
- **Single-target buffs:** Unlike Frost or Nature, nearly all buffs available to Bandits are in the form of single-target buffs like Lifeweaving, Warrior's Death, and Unholy Hero.
- **Disenchant:** Bandits have many available sources of disenchant to counter enemy crowd control and debuffs.
- **Damage Spells:** Both Shadow and Fire provide a plethora of good damage spells and Bandits brings its own with Sandstorm and a new upcoming spell: Bandit Minefield.
- **Amok:** Both Amok and Frenetic are available to Bandits which can simultaneously damage enemies and crowd control them. Tortugun also regresses to an Amok state if not fed.
- **Range Modifiers:** Uniquely, Bandits can modify the range of units with Bandit Lancer and buildings with Bandit Sorceress. Sandstorm's new shadow affinity will reduce the range of enemies.

Throughout the Tiers



T2

Card	Role
	Rioter's Retreat, especially the nature affinity combined with Commandos, gives Bandits' T2 the ability to fortify and hold locations.
	Windhunter plays an important role as a strong flying L-unit in T2. It has a built-in disenchant ability which can keep its allies from being locked up.

T2 is a strong point for Bandits even before Bandits specific cards enter the picture. Rioter's Retreat provides a surprisingly durable defense for an otherwise fragile faction and plentiful access to strong flying units gives Bandits an edge on many maps. Tied with Stonekin for the most hybrid units in T2, Bandits has several unique T2 units though unfortunately many have limited usefulness in PvE or have very niche uses like Bandit Sorceress.




Bandits have access to Shadow's strong buffs and Fire's strong damage spells as well as its own hybrid Warrior's Death and the new minefield spell. What Bandits lack is crowd control, and multi-unit sustain options. These limits encourage Bandits to get in and get out, destroying the target quickly and moving on before they can be locked down and take lethal amounts of damage.

T3

Card	Role
	Soulhunter is a XL-unit with good stats and a strong ability. It functions great either as a single unit army or as a frontline for ranged units like Magma Hurlers and Gunners.
	Corsair with its change to buff all nearby friendly Bandits units can act as a commander unit for a swarm army or form a Corsair fleet.

T3 Bandits continues the story of T2 with strong spell support. If the player chooses to go towards double Fire, they gain access to Inferno and Unity, while double Shadow brings Infect and Frenetic, besides the single splash spell options provided from both factions. On top of this Bandits brings its own hybrid damage utility spell in Sandstorm. Unity and Blood Healing, along with the increasingly effective passive Life Stealer begin to provide Bandits with reliable if micro intensive sustain options.

T4

Card	Role
	Bloodhorn is one of the best melee XL units in T4 with beefy stats and two useful abilities.
	The changes to Amok make it function as Bandits appropriate crowd control spell also able to turn enemy armies against each other, ushering in the chaos in which Bandits thrive.
	Tortugun is a ranged unit with 50m range and one of the highest attack values in the game. As a drawback, it has a unique hunger mechanic where if it doesn't get fed it goes wild and start eating its allies.

Bandits have several viable T4 strategies and with the addition of two new cards in Wasteland Wing and Banzai Lord, the player will have a plethora of possible combinations to use whatever their final orb combination. Especially Tortugun and Banzai Lord provide unique gameplay options with a distinctive Bandits flair.

Structural Weaknesses

- **Splash Redundancy:** One of the issues with Bandits being so closely connected to the identities of Fire and Shadow is that many Bandits cards share similar identities to their splash counterparts. Skyfire Drake and Windhunter, Gunner and Ashbone Pyro, Frenetic Assault and Amok, etc. This leads to a situation where Bandits cards are overshadowed such that it is less a “Bandits” and more a “Fire/Shadow” deck.
- **Army Deterioration:** While Bandits have a built-in 15% life steal, they generally lack reliable sustain. In T3 Unity becomes available, but only if the player chooses double Fire and only if the player uses an army. Blood Healing and Bloodthirst are both powerful healing spells though they require a lot more work from the player than Nature healing or new Frost’s Ice Shields to be effective. In many ways this is a by-design weakness and new cards which might alleviate it should be implemented with great caution.
- **Poor Synergy:** Bandit units lack synergistic effects such that they make sense to play in tandem with each other. Other hybrid factions, like Lost Souls and Twilight, whatever their current balance state, have a number of support spells and effects specifically designed to promote using the hybrid units together in a deck. Outside the new Corsair, only Rioter’s Retreat has an effect that promotes using Bandits units, but the issue runs deeper than just having spells and abilities which specifically buff or affect other Bandit cards. Bandit cards in general lack effects that harmonize well with each other such that you would think they were designed to be placed in the same deck.
- **Limited Ally Support:** Fire and Shadow have a plethora of damage spells to utilize in supporting allies as well as some limited sustain and crowd control options. The Bandits faction itself does not make any meaningful contribution to the already available support options and outside of Shrine of War lacks any global effects.
- **Lack of Crowd Control:** Outside of Amok effects and some limited access to knockback, Bandits lack formal crowd control. Changes to Sandstorm will give Bandits more conditional crowd control, but in general it is part of the design that when Bandits are fighting enemies those enemies are also fighting back.



Part 2: Envisioned Playstyles

A major issue for Bandits is a lack of synergy within the faction itself. Bandit decks are frequently in actuality Fire/Shadow decks with a Bandit card or two. This is not necessarily wrong and has its place, especially in Bandits where it is the historical reality. With the addition of multiple new cards to Bandits, we have had a unique opportunity to enhance their options and enable new playstyles.

Our goal is to preserve and encourage the existing “Fire/Shadow with a Bandit card or two” playstyles, especially strategies like Bloodhorn’s spell deck, while also creating “Bandits with Fire/Shadow support” strategies.

For Tier 3 and Tier 4 we envision two distinct playstyles, one resolving primarily around one or two strong units supported by **powerful spells** while the other utilizes an **army-based** strategy. Both playstyles should embody the feeling of chaos in their own way, with spell decks tending to be faster and more micro intensive, but consequently less forgiving.

We do not expect these to be mutually exclusionary paths and it would be a failure of design to cause such an outcome. Instead, we expect overlap between the decks but with some cards finding their place more in one style than in the other.

Tier 3

Soulhunter Spell Deck

The combination of Shadow and Fire orbs in T3 provide access to powerful offensive spells, strong single-target buffs, and robust void manipulation. These characteristics provide the necessary sufficient conditions to enable a playstyle focused around relatively few but powerful units with spells doing a substantial amount of the work in clearing out camps. **Soulhunter** serves as the centerpiece by being a strong XL-unit that benefits from Shadow’s buffs with an AoE ability that speeds up clears.

This playstyle is already well established so relatively few changes will happen relating to it. One such change is an upcoming **buff to Aura of Pain**, allowing it to damage up to 10 enemies at a time while reducing its cooldown to 15 seconds. This will allow two Auras to be applied simultaneously. Given Aura of Pain must be cast on a unit and is dispelled on death, it synergizes well with tanky melee units like Soulhunter which want to wade into the midst of enemies.

Many of the cards which are used in a Soulhunter spell deck in T3 naturally transition into a Bloodhorn spell deck in T4. Decks of this sort are relatively slot efficient while being united in terms of theme and gameplay.



Corsair Swarm & Army Deck

Corsair is the only actual T3 Bandit swarm card, and we envision it as the lynchpin and enabler of this archetype, with its cheap summons as fuel for Blood Healing as the primary sustain. Players that opt towards double Shadow can complete the feeling of a chaotic swarm with Frenetic Assault, Undead Army, and Infect. Others who opt for two fire orbs can create a durable army with Unity and focus down priority targets with **Inferno** which is having its total **damage buffed by 33%**.



Corsair's Inspirational Call damage aura is being changed from only buffing friendly humans to **now buffing all friendly Bandit units**. This will allow Corsair to extend the usefulness of leftover T2 units as well as justify its slot by scaling into T4 as a support unit. Fellow Corsairs will buff each other, enabling Corsair fleets to be dangerous threats. Additionally, the change will substantially benefit the recently buffed Gunners. We plan to revisit Gunner in the future to turn it into a damage dealer worthy of its name.

Balancing a swarm archetype next to a boss-unit style archetype can be dangerous as swarms require force multipliers and these could easily strengthen the boss-unit as well. Given that Corsair is relatively expensive at 230p and already has an identity as a summoner unit, we thought it naturally fit as a force multiplier. This gives the bandit ship the identity of a commander unit, which enables and empowers its fellow Bandits. This design path is similar to the one we took with Dreadnought and if well received we will likely continue to move other units into this type of role.

Tier 4

Bloodhorn Spell Deck



Bloodhorn is in many ways a perfect T4 melee XL-unit. It is highly stat efficient, among the highest of any melee unit in any faction in T4, with two useable abilities and two viable affinities. It is united in terms of theme and gameplay as a rampaging destructive monster whose abilities synergize well with Shadow buffs. Additionally, due to its high damage numbers and innate life steal, Bloodhorn can sustain itself in situations where other units would die.

Much that is true of Soulhunter spell decks in T3 is true of Bloodhorn spell decks in T4. This archetype is well established and already a top tier deck. It is highly micro-intensive and a few wrong clicks or a mistimed ability can put an end to an otherwise perfect run. It is hard to use but highly rewards the player, which fits the identity of Bandits as a faction.

Further buffs and changes specifically aimed at this archetype are not currently envisioned or planned at this time, but some recent card changes have affected it already. The recent buff to **Bloodthirst** gives Pure Bandits a solid sustain tool and upcoming buffs to **Amok** provide another possible tool, though one which may remain overshadowed by Frenetic Assault. If the player goes triple Shadow, they will also have access to the previously reworked **Plague** spell.

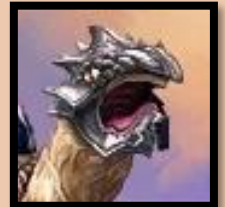
Tortugun Deck



Tortugun was designed to be the apex Bandit unit and the payoff for going Pure Bandits. To this end, it has one of the highest attack values in the game, in addition to having an exceptional 50m range and a 20m splash that ensures its full damage potential is realized. These strengths are offset by a unique hunger mechanism whereby each Tortugun must be regularly fed. If the player fails to do so, she goes berserk and eats the nearest ally. This is an interesting concept, and it leads to a unique playstyle. Unfortunately, ever since Tortugun's release the most efficient strategy has been to use Offering and Motivate to ignore the unit's hunger mechanism entirely, and even this strategy is not particularly effective.

As-is, it is inefficient to feed Tortugun for three reasons:

1. Tortugun's rate of digestion is very high at 90 life points per 2 seconds. A newly summoned Tortugun will run out of food in only 34 seconds.
2. The Devour animation is very long, requiring approximately 4 seconds where the player cannot make use of Tortugun. That accounts for only the animation itself, not even the potential walk time for Tortugun to reach its food or rejoin the fight.
3. Tortugun continues to digest its food while it is occupied with eating its food. This leads to the situation where only high health targets are worth devouring.



Our planned buffs for Tortugun aim to address these issues. Tortugun actually has a second **faster Devour animation** for when it is going berserk. We are making this faster animation its standard one and reducing the Devour cooldown to 2 seconds. On top of that, we are implementing a **5 second period after every use of Devour where Tortugun stops digesting**, this will make lower health units able to be eaten more efficiently, specifically leftover units from T2 and T3. Next, we are **reducing the digestion rate** from 90 life points per 2 seconds to 75 life points per 2 seconds while simultaneously reducing Tortugun's initial hunger bar from 3000 to 2550. This will leave the timer for when a newly summoned Tortugun becomes hungry at 34 seconds while opening up more initial space in her stomach. Finally, **we are making both affinities have 50m range with S and M knockback**, not just the fire affinity. Each affinity will now have a buff effect after successfully devouring an ally unit.

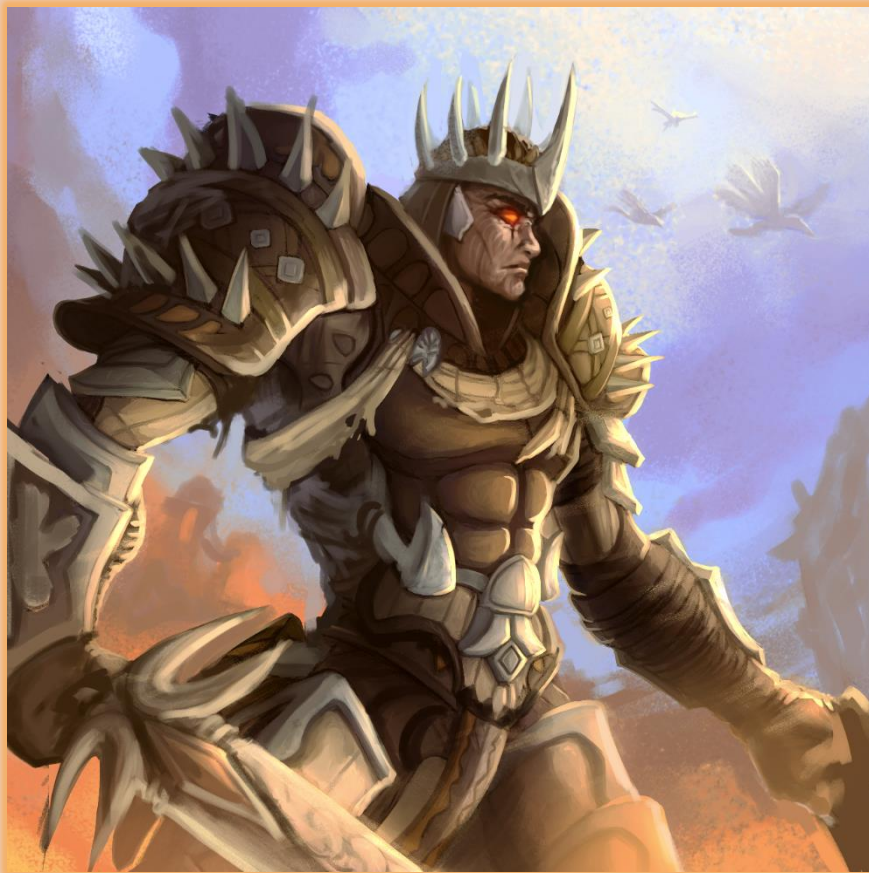
With these changes it is our goal to encourage players to interact with Tortugun's hunger mechanic and to be rewarded for doing so. Players who prefer to continue using the Offering and Motivate playstyle are free to do so without being penalized. It seems likely the newly most efficient way to utilize Tortugun will be some mix of feeding and sacrificing. With the reduced digestion rate, a player should be able to sustain a larger number of Tortuguns at the same time, thus increasing the archetype's clear speed. We hope that with these changes that Tortugun continues to provide an interesting and micro-intensive playstyle, though one which the player is now more properly rewarded for executing upon.

Banzai Swarm Deck

Banzai Lord is something of a design experiment, both in terms of itself as a card and in terms of the new swarm archetype it is meant to enable. Bandits already has two defined archetypes in T4 and on top of that Wasteland Wing, the new T4 Bandit dragon, is also being added. There is thus little need for another T4 XL unit when the faction already has 3 available itself before even accounting for the units which come along with Shadow and Fire.





The issue is that Bandits has a substantial store of units available from PvE, but many of these are not substantially different from existing units. In order to avoid more situations where Bandit units overlap with the design of existing Fire and Shadow units (as mentioned in “Structural Weaknesses”), we decided to branch out in a different direction partially guided by the Corsair-based playstyle we are trying to flesh out. The Banzai Lord from Mo seemed the perfect base for such an archetype.

The new Banzai Lord card gathers corpses and uses these corpses to summon a swarm of up to 3 Banzai Birds at upgrade 3. The **Banzai Birds** of the shadow affinity explode when attacking, dealing damage to enemies in a large area while the nature affinity’s birds explode to heal nearby allies. We decided to make Banzai Lord as splashable as possible to allow more decks to make use of its unique design, either as a damage dealer and/or as a healer and are looking forward to seeing how the player base makes use of this new card. Given it is a unique card that opens up the possibility of an equally unique playstyle, we expect to make further changes to its numbers and design in the future as it becomes clearer where it currently stands in terms of power level.



Upcoming Changes Highlights

The changes below are an excerpt from all the changes which we plan to release in order to make Bandits a more compelling choice and move closer to realizing their theme and vision. We want to highlight some of these changes and provide our reasoning for these changes.

Card	Suggestion
 <p>Tortugun (240)</p> <p>1 Beast Dominator</p> <p>Infused Eruption</p> <p>Devour</p> <p>Amok</p> <p>Life Stealer</p> <p>8400 HP, 3200 XL</p>	<p>Tortugun Changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Devour: Substantial changes to the devour and hunger mechanic including a faster Devour animation.• Affinities: Both affinities now have 50m range and each affinity now applies a different buff after Tortugun uses Devour. <p>Tortugun is a very unique card whose theme and playstyle fits perfectly into Bandits. Heavily micro-intensive, the payoff for using Tortugun has never been sufficiently high enough to justify the many limitations of her hunger mechanic. Changes to the mechanic should leave it just as challenging while adequately rewarding the player who can play Tortugun to the limit.</p>
 <p>Corsair (230)</p> <p>1 Artifact Destroyer</p> <p>Big fat Cannon</p> <p>Flank Attack</p> <p>Tainted Assistance</p> <p>3000 HP, 2100 XL</p>	<p>Corsair Changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inspirational Call: Now buffs the damage of friendly Bandits by +50%.• Attack Increase: Increased number of cannons from 4 to 6.• Lowered Cost: 230p to 220p <p>As already mentioned, Corsair should now enable swarm strategies as well as act as the glue that justifies the inclusion of multiple Bandit units in a deck by buffing their damage past some of their normally more powerful splash counterparts.</p>
 <p>Amok (125)</p> <p>1 Arcane</p> <p>Tainted: Friend or Foe?</p>	<p>Amok Changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• More Charges: 4 to 8• Duration Increase: 15s to 20s• Target Increase: Both affinities now affect 10 targets• New Affinities: Infused(r) debuffs enemy damage, Tainted(p) makes enemies take more damage. <p>Amok is now the ultimate Bandits spell it was always meant to be as a combined chaotic crowd control and an indirect damage spell.</p> <p>With its large area of effect and high target count it can target the majority of a camp while still affecting the high priority targets it needs to distract.</p>
 <p>Sandstorm (230)</p> <p>4 Spell</p> <p>Infused Desert Sand</p>	<p>Sandstorm Changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lowered Cost: 230p to 160p• Changed Affinities: Tainted(p) reduces the range of ranged units and Blessed(b) knocks back L-units <p>Sandstorm was long a hybrid spell with strong effects, but these offered little help in PvE. This transition to make Sandstorm provide crowd control utility will give it a proper place in a faction high on damage but low on control without compromising the faction's or the card's core identity.</p>



Commandos Changes:

- **Lowered Cost:** 80p to 75p

Commandos synergize well as a T2 defense with Rioter's and as an attack option, but they are currently overpriced for the amount of value they give. We are starting cautiously by reducing their power cost a slight amount and will likely propose more buffs in the future.



Aura of Pain Changes:

- **Increased Damage Cap:** 200 to 400 total damage
- **Reduced Cooldown:** 20s to 15s

Aura of Pain will provide another incentive to splash 1 Fire orb and rewards decks like Bandits who already have to include a Fire orb.

Aura of Pain should now be a good option for those T3s which want to focus on a single strong unit such as Soulhunter.



Inferno Changes:

- **Increased Damage:** Increased splash damage per meteor from 600 to 800.
- **Improved Description:** Clarified that both the cast area and the splash radius of each meteor are 15m wide.

Each meteor from Inferno now damages an additional enemy, making it more likely Inferno is able to damage the desired target. The spell will now be able to compete against the likes of Thunderstorm and Soulshatter.

Conclusion

We hope you have enjoyed this dive into the Bandits faction and are excited about the many changes the agents of chaos will soon be receiving. It is our goal with documents such as these to give our players a glimpse into how we think about factions and where we are planning to take the game. We also hope that our deep dives give you a greater appreciation for how the various factions play and give you that final boost you might need to branch out of your comfort zone and try something new.



Appendix 1:

Bandit Minefield - Design choices

We wanted to share some insights into our thought process regarding the design of our new Bandit Minefield spell. It plays an integral role in our upcoming rework of Bandits and will be a very powerful new tool to make the faction viable in PvP.

Bandits in PvP

Our goal with the upcoming rework is to make Bandits a great faction in PvP across any skill bracket. To reach this state we started to take a look at the current position and issues of the faction.

Unique T2 Bandits cards have been mostly underwhelming. This limits the options of tweaking the faction, as a buff to a splash card always has an impact on 3 additional factions. Bandit Stalker buffs were an attempt in the past to help in that regard. Outside of unique faction cards, many decks in PvP gain strength through splash synergies. For Bandits, almost all of them are limited to offensive setups. This leads to the state where the deck can be really explosive when played from ahead. It makes the deck fun to play and is definitely something we would like to preserve.



However, with the lack of access to crowd control and building protection, Bandits was left with extremely low defensive capacities, in addition to limited strategic options to secure advantages on open field trades. This heavy reliance on outplaying your opponent through micro locked the faction behind a large skill barrier for new players, while keeping it exposable upon facing a somewhat equally skilled opponent at higher Elo ranges. Because of this, the new cards are supposed to help with trading and keeping your economy alive in the first place. It is not supposed to warp the entire identity of Bandits as an offensive faction, but it increases the chances of getting into this position in the first place rather than being forced to proactively defend any opposing siege attempt all the time. On top of this, it should help lower the skill floor of Bandits, making it much more new-player-friendly while still preserving skill expression elements for the more experienced and skilled players.

Decision to add a spell

The decision to add a new spell to Bandits wasn't a very difficult one to make. The spell arsenal of Bandits is lackluster: Its unique Warriors Death spell is rather poorly designed and far too specific. On the other hand, the splash options for T2 spells are expensive (≥ 100 power) making them very situational. When opting for a splash in T2, crowd control options from Nature and building protects from Frost are usually the most desired tools. Bandits has access to none of these.

Fortunately, there are already 2 viable factions without the strong spell support of a Nature or Frost splash. Pure Fire and pure Shadow both are powerful factions in their own way, but they share a similarity in the spell department. Both have a unique faction defining spell (Wildfire/Nether Warp), that

expands playmaking potential at various situations. These cards also give the option to counteract the classic offensive pattern where the enemy aims directly for the power well, while buying enough time to destroy it with crowd control. On top of that, both factions have a lot of power loaded onto a few cards, which really helps with slot efficiency, an important consideration in PvP deck building. Therefore, from the existing examples of pure Fire and pure Shadow, we derived the following requirements for the new Bandits spell:



1. Needs to have a clear impact on open field trading
2. Should be significantly cheaper than existing spell options (Aura of Corruption, Lavafield)
3. Should enable more defensive options when it comes to protecting the economy structures
4. Ideally, the spell should be sufficient as a replacement for cards from the existing T2 rather than just complementing them (deck slot efficiency).

Design Decisions and First Proposal

The next step of the design process was finding a mechanic that fulfils these requirements, while also fitting into the style of Bandits as a faction. For example, adding hard cc would not be ideal for a mixed identity around the colors of Shadow and Fire.

Because of this, we decided to look for a zoning tool that either works around DPS or knockback, and which is derived from an existing Bandits ability. At first, we talked about something similar to Sandstorm, but in the end the Soulhunter ability ended up being the preferred choice because of its potential to be unique. An added bonus was that it was an easy concept to implement.

In terms of design there are certain similarities to Wildfire, which scales extremely well into attacks, something Bandits were already good at. Therefore, we removed the ability to deal damage to power wells, as this has been proven to be oppressive against factions that have no access to building protect spells. We wanted to focus on open field trading and maximize the defensive potential, so we added knockback and damage to the card. The knockback and damage, combined with being cheap, was supposed to allow the spell to zone enemies away from an area for a certain amount of time. To avoid permanent choke point zoning, we made the mines deplete after 10 seconds with a 20s cooldown. By looking at previous design requirements this led to the following proposal:

Initial card Design

- Places 4 mines in a line of 20m
- Cannot be placed next to hostile units and structures
- Mines disappear after 10 seconds
- Power cost: 65
- Knockbacks S and M units
- Reusable every 20 seconds
- Each wave dealing 100 (300) damage

The biggest question mark was how placement restrictions would end up working in a realistic PvP environment. For example, how close can Minefield end up getting placed, can swift units dodge it before triggering the effect, etc. Our hope was that swift units would be able to dodge Minefield successfully.



The process of fine-tuning

Once we got our hands on the card, we immediately noticed that Mines appeared far quicker than we had anticipated, and that the line placement allowed you to guarantee mines triggering before swift units like Burrowers and Nightcrawlers could leave the area. This led to very reliable CC due to the constant M knockback, ultimately making the spell much more powerful than anticipated.

For this reason, we had to remove the M-knockback in order to add more reasonable counterplay to the spell. A second side-effect of guaranteed activation was the circumstance that activated mines could zone for 12 seconds, which decreased the window of entering an area during its cooldown. We tried to compensate for this by increasing the cooldown by an additional 5 seconds.

After playtesting, we still thought Minefield fulfilled its intended purpose too well, so we also increased its power cost to 70, matching some of its common counter options more evenly (Netherwarp, Surge of Light, etc.).

To keep the spell functionality consistent with the existing card Mine, we also added 25% building damage to structures, with the exception of Power Wells, Orbs or Walls. This should give the spell a more intuitive feeling when using it in a PvE environment, considering its solid potential for use there as well. Through fine-tuning, we were led to the following final adjustments for Bandit Minefield:

Summary of fine-tuning process:

- Increased power cost by 5
- Increased cooldown by 5 seconds
- Removed M-Knockback
- Added 25% damage vs buildings (power wells, orbs & walls excluded)

This leads us to the current design, and we are excited to observe how this spell will perform in the hands of our players!

