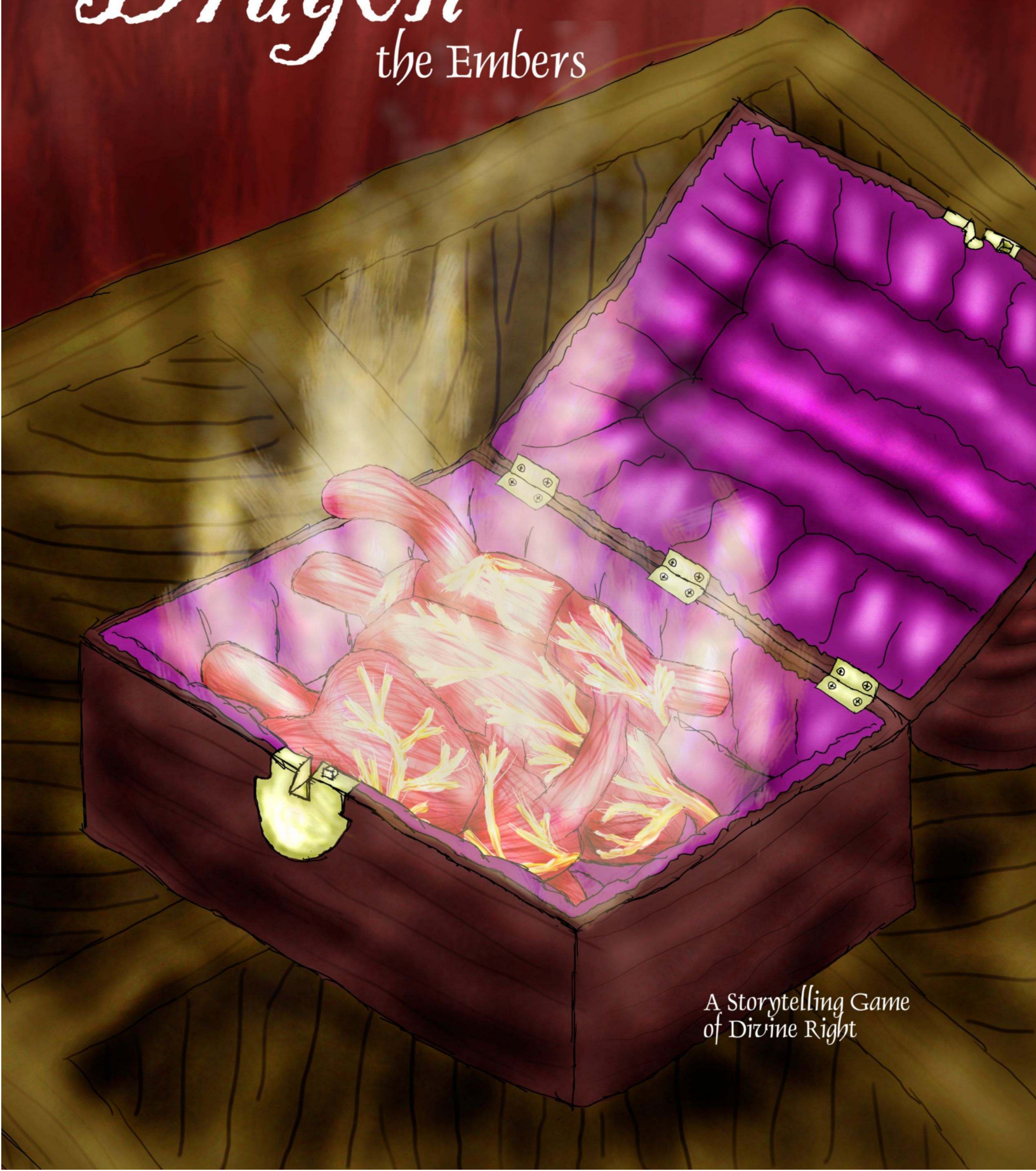


Dragon the Embers



A Storytelling Game
of Divine Right

Dragon the Embers



Prologue: Ominous Drums

She could hear it beating. Sitting there in his hands, well... if you could call them hands. It shouldn't have worked. *How* could it be beating? It wasn't attached to anything!

Thump.

The sound maddened her every thought. Even if she could rationalize his story, his history, there was no reasoning with this. The nine-chambered heart, alive in the hands of the monster before her. And he wanted her to have it.

Thump

Last week. It was definitely some time last week, though the particular day had escaped her. Before that she had lived a perfectly normal life... at least by her standards anyway. Cameron was a therapist. She had a doctorate in psychology from the state university, and her credentials would have been sufficient for a glamorous research position. But she settled for therapy, mostly because it was easy. A usual day involved inviting people to open up their chests and expose weakness, which she would then quickly chew and regurgitate for seventy dollars an hour. She wasn't the most ethical of mental health professionals, but her clients seemed to enjoy her company. Work was easy, pay was easy, and that was pretty much all there was.

Thump

It was Tuesday. Yes, Tuesday, that's when it happened. Cameron received an unmarked envelope in her mailbox. No postage; it had been hand-delivered. The letter was written in script, but it looked old. The paper had been artificially aged. It must have been; no one would write something so silly on something so valuable. It was addressed "To resident," and its contents...

"After a long and lonely existence I have come to the realization that quantity and quality are not interchangeable equivalents. You'd think I'd have discovered this sooner in life, but power makes a man foolish. And I have a lot of it. God, the things I'm capable of could drive a man to tears. Or to shreds, if I wanted it. Why, the whole of this city would have bowed to me at the fall of one word, if I had had the narcissism necessary to will it.

"I've lost focus. The point is a long life of status and power has left me with no connection to the common world, and with no heir to take over for me on my inevitable death. As such, I have decided to end my life and present my fortune to you, the residing party of this address. I will arrive tomorrow at precisely ten. Serendipity has dictated you will carry on my legacy. I look forward to our immanent meeting. Ivan McGregor."

The letter was barely legible—in green ink. Yes, green ink, and the pen had torn the paper in several places. Cameron felt the writer was clearly disturbed and in need of counsel, so she decided to cancel her ten o'clock to meet with him. This Ivan. She sent her assistant home for the day and settled into her office, a hot cup of coffee in hand and a spare waiting for her guest.

Thump

Cameron waited eagerly at ten. She waited frustrated at eleven. At noon, she was ready to leave. But just as she reached for the door a knock shook it at its hinges.

"C... come in," she managed to squeak, for the force of it had terrified her. The door was swiftly pulled open, a tall and stocky man filling its frame.

"I hope you don't mind that I kept you waiting," he said with a sheepish grin. "Patience is one of the most important traits an individual can possess."

"I disagree, Mister McGregor. Punctuality is by far more important. You're two hours late." Cameron was confused; the man looked to be no older than thirty but he carried himself like a fossil. His clothes were ancient as well, authentic pre-depression business attire with hat. They were in perfect condition, though, which led her to believe they were counterfeit. Despite this and his corpulence, he was quite attractive. It was something about his stature, he seemed to fill up the room as he entered it and he stood with the finest posture she'd ever witnessed. She sized him up top to bottom, and then lowering her glasses slightly she met his eyes with a glare. "For a man as well off as you are, it seems odd you'd be so world-weary. Care to elaborate?"

"A bit on the direct side, are we? Fine. I won't dance around it, I'm lonely. My oldest friend recently passed, when a young caller ate his heart." There was a great deal of melancholy in his voice.

"You say you won't avoid it, yet you bury your contempt in metaphor. A friend finding love is not some last hand, for him or you. And that you described it so violently concerns me greatly. What is it you find so objectionable about this young woman?"

"She beat him at chess."

"What?" She was surprised. Certainly skill in the game of kings was laudable, not something to hold contempt for. "You don't like her because she bested him? That's a little misogynistic, don't you think?"

"No, that's not why I have a problem with her. She challenged his status as a champion then refused to prove her own prowess without incentive. It was unsporting."

"So he bribed her into a match with love as the prize? That's really romantic, how could you be mad about something like that?" Cameron had little time for non-professional relationships, and the fast had left her wanting. She was hungry for meaningful contact with another human being, and the thought of one forming from such an exchange warmed her heart.

Ivan scowled. "What's love got to do with it? He offered his heart, and she took it."

Despite her intrigue with the situation, Cameron smelled profit falling off this man. "I do believe you're jealous of what your friend has achieved. Despite your success you lack personal attachment to anything, and the notion of a contemporary finding such attachment infuriates you."

Ivan paced uncomfortably hither and thither in front of the door. Something could be heard jostling around his briefcase. "Maybe it would set my heart at ease to hear a little about you, young lady." He smiled, though it was artificial. Cameron was offended.

"I'm not much younger than you, sir. I'd prefer it if you'd not talk down to me like you would a child."

The man took a deep breath, then calmly replied.

"Sorry, sometimes I forget to whom I'm speaking."

"Now that *is* something to be concerned about. Confusion bordering dementia combined with a sense of self-loathing and worthlessness could indicate brain misfire or even a tumor. You should seek a doctor and request an MRI immediately."

Ivan thought about what a brain-scanning device would find inside his head. Recovering quickly, he tapped his skull with the knuckles of his left hand. "There's a metal plate in place of my occipital, magnetic resonance imaging would be too dangerous."

"I must insist you seek out some other form of treatment, then. Chatting with me will not help your situation." Cameron went to grab the telephone, but Ivan took hold of her shoulder. Within moments she could not remember what she was doing, she was wrapped in memories of college. She felt uncontrollably flustered, as if a test she hadn't studied for was next on the agenda. "Oh dear, I've just remembered that I've forgotten something. There's... I've got something important to do today, could you come back tomorrow?"

Ivan smiled. "It would be my pleasure. Ten o'clock, on time I promise." He closed the door with a forceful flex of muscle.

Thump

Cameron canceled all her remaining appointments for the week, and told her assistant to catch the next plane to anywhere. She was fascinated by this stranger with a death-wish, and something in her heart told her that he was courting her. Excitement filled her body; someone had actually come looking for her. Not exactly the man on the white horse, but he'd do well enough. She just had to fix him.

The next day he returned, though he seemed slimmer than before.

"Ivan."

"Hello again young lady." He took off the hat this time, and held it against his chest. The briefcase sat adjacent to his feet, safely secured by padlock.

"Am I to believe you would like to register as a patient? I'm going to have to start charging you for these visits." She didn't mean it. There was something mysteriously...exciting about this man.

"No, but I should like to talk with you. At least for a bit longer."

Cameron flung herself into her chair and, with the momentum of the jump snatched up her notepad and pen. She settled at the corner of the room and, looking over the page, addressed this stranger Ivan.

"Tell me more about this friend of yours."

"What do you want to know about him?"

"Nothing, really. Hearing you describe him will teach me something about you."

"Well, Nathan was a pretty cool guy."

"You're talking about him in the past tense."

"Right. Sorry." Ivan swallowed hard. "Nathan is an associate dean at the college. I met him... I met him many years ago."

"Wait, Nathan Monroe? I know him, he taught one of my classes." The coincidence was interesting, but nothing particularly shocking. At least, until Ivan made it shocking.

"About that. I didn't just pick your address out of a hat; Nathan had spoken about you in detail. You reminded him of his daughter." Ivan couldn't look her in the eye. "He made me promise to look out for you when he was gone."

"Wait... he's actually dead? How did he... when did he...?" Cameron shook her head back and forth. The notepad fell from her hands and struck the ground with a resounding *thump*. "I can't deal with this today. You'll have to come back."

"Tomorrow then," Ivan replied, replacing his hat and taking grasp of his briefcase.

Thump

Friday. Cameron returned to her office to meet with Ivan.

"I'm sorry about yesterday. Somehow I made the discussion about me again. You must think me incredibly unprofessional."

"Actually, I had hoped to talk about you." As he spoke, gentle smoke wafted from his nostrils. Had he been smoking? There was no cigar in his mouth, but the scent was thick. Pleasant but overpowering. "What made you pick this profession? Certainly your knowledge of the human state could have led you to more glorious things, yes?"

The therapist thought about her career. "I suppose I could have carved out a path in psychiatric research, but I never wanted to be so removed from the people. We're here to help them, after all."

“So you set aside fame and glory for the good of everyone?”

“Yes, I suppose you could say it like that. A little general, but—”

Ivan cut her off, pressing two fingers to her lips. “I think you’ll do just fine.”

“Wait, we haven’t discussed your mental health at all. Every time the conversation drifts that way you direct it back at me.” She decided not to give him an opening. “Here’s a question: You carry around that briefcase every time you arrive, yet you never open it. What’s inside?”

The mysterious man yanked the briefcase away. “It’s my most valuable possession.”

“I can see that, you guard it with such fervor. Strange that you would want to preserve it, but not your own life.” The therapist pointed to the lock. “Why don’t you open it up and let me see what’s inside?”

“I don’t think you’re prepared for that. Not yet, anyway. And you’re right, it seems silly to protect this thing, but it’s a legacy to me. A symbol of a dying ideology.”

“I’m a big girl, Ivan. Let me see the suitcase.” She stared deeply into Ivan’s eyes, hoping to unnerve him. That’s when she noticed the irises were red. “What’s wrong with your eyes?!”

“Huh?” Ivan blinked hard, and his eyes changed back to green. He shrugged. “I dunno, I can’t see them.”

“They were red. And not bloodshot red, just solid. Like those fake contacts the mental cases wear.” She was visibly shaken by this; she thought her mind was unwinding. Ivan grasped her hands and held them together. “Listen, I have to go out of town for a few days. When I come back we can discuss the contents of my briefcase, okay?”

Thump

Cameron went home and settled herself in front of the computer. Typing *Ivan McGregor* into the search engine yielded no useful results, which was to be expected. She decided to try a government site. One outstanding warrant for an Ivan McGregor for... bootlegging? The issue date was December 13th, 1924. Clearly this was impossible, but when the picture finally loaded, there he was. Much thinner, but the same face. Was it a relative? But why the same name? She decided to look into it further, but the older files had not yet been added to the system. The website listed their location, a record hall two states over. With nothing holding her back, Cameron went to her car.

“This is silly. There’s not going to be anything there. I’m being insane.” She stared at the wheel, contemplating the turn her life had taken.

“Oh well, lucidity is overrated.” Slamming her foot on the gas, she whipped out of the driveway and sped down the road.

Thump

She arrived just before dawn. Locked. Of course it was locked. Six hours of driving and now she’d have to check into a hotel. She went to her glove-box and retrieved her umbrella. Striking the glass door twice, she fragmented it and then kicked in the remains. An alarm rang its screech, but that wasn’t important right now. She *had* to understand this man. It was essential to her mental well-being. Cameron made haste to the basement, where the records were stacked eight feet high. The boxes were labeled by year, so she started with 1896. There were eight separate boxes, so she took them down one by one and rifled through them.

“Tax records for Ivan McGregor. Age thirty. Damn, does this guy age at all?” She decided to try ten years earlier, but found the records did not go back that far. The therapist fell to her knees and slammed the record boxes with both fists.

“What are you doing here, Cameron?” Ivan was standing behind her. His footprints trailed behind him like phantoms, like the shadows were sluggish to react.

“You- you’re a paradox. An impossibility.”

“Come on now, that’s not true. I’m just incredibly improbable.” He smiled.

“How is it possible you’ve lived so long? What are you?”

“Ah, that’s the matter of the briefcase. I believe you’re ready now.”

Cameron looked to the container Ivan had been lugging around all week. The padlock was gone this time, and she could hear something moving inside. Her hands shaking, she carefully opened the case to reveal its only contents, a nine-chambered heart. “When you said the chess girl ate Nathan’s heart, you meant-”

Ivan did not allow her to finish her question. “We were both members of the Oroboroi, Nathan and I. We met in 1912.”

“That word, ‘Oroboroi’... it’s derivative of Oroborus, the serpent that bites at its own tail.”

Ivan nodded. “You could say that’s the mark of our people. We are only sustained by consuming ourselves. To join, you must replace an existing member.” As he spoke, Ivan’s body began to change. Teeth grew sharp and gigantic, fingernails became claws, scales coated the body, the spine curved and then exploded into a set of feathered wings, and a shadow of his heart formed in the vicinity of his chest. His hair grew rigid, wild and untamed; his tongue forked; his eyes turned deep crimson. And he stood over her a hulking mass of mythical monster. Cameron fainted.

Thump

It woke her like an alarm clock. The tick of the beating. Ivan had her in his lap, with the heart in hand before her. He spoke. “My best friend cared for you a great deal. I don’t know if you actually were his daughter, but I made a promise. If anyone deserves to take my legacy, it’s you.”

The sun was up. Sunday morning, new week. The police would come for the alarm soon. In fact, it was odd that they hadn’t already. “You want me to eat this, your heart. And that will end your life.”

“Yes.”

“Won’t that turn me into... you know, something big mean and scaly?” Ivan let a waft of smoke escape his nostrils.

“It’s not so bad. You get to breathe fire and fly without an airplane.”

“I’m afraid of heights.”

“Ah, that won’t last. You’ll get used to it in no time.”

Cameron took the heart from Ivan’s claws. Looking it over top to bottom, the only response she could muster was “Will it hurt?”

“What?”

“When you die, will it hurt?”

“If I said yes, would that stop you?”

“It might.”

“Well I don’t think it will.” Lub-dub. The heartbeat quickened. “Please, Cameron.”

Thump

She lowered her mouth to the soft flesh.

THUMP

The sound rang in her head as she sank her teeth in.

THUMP

And for a moment, silence. She felt a burning down her throat that crawled into her chest. Time stopped, and she could feel her entire body light up with an intense heat. She felt... different. She felt empowered. She felt GOOD.

She took another bite, and then another, and as she ate the room shrank around her.

THUMP

In her chest now. Where the sound belonged. Where it had always intended to go. Ivan sat lifeless on the floor a man again. He looked... comfortable; Cameron justified herself with the notion that she'd brought him peace.

The police would be there soon. When they came, she would greet them with fire.

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Introduction

Come on Cameron, you can do this.

Pick up the knife. Okay. Now, take it and make a vertical incision down your chest.

God, where do they get the courage to do this stuff?

It's not going to hurt, it's not going to hurt, it's not going to HURK!

NNNGHGHAH!

Ha, hah ha! Oh what a mess.

Okay... okay, I've got to get past the ribcage now.

It would be so much easier to take out in pieces... but that wouldn't be very healthy now would it?

Come on... break. HAAGH! Deep breath now.

Wrap your fingers around the Heart.

Give it a yank.

HAH! There. Job well done.

Now I just need a mop.

“...In case of fire you have to line up quietly in a single file from smallest to tallest. What is the logic in that? What, do tall people burn slower?”

–Warren Hutcherson

When the word “dragon” is uttered the first thought that flies across the minds of most is an outdated history lesson, or some myth about an impossible beast with greed as grand as brawn and a lust for terrorizing the local populace. For some, dragons are spirits of natural events, a symbol of raw power and change.

Many political factions, including some quite despicable ones, use the dragon as an emblem and a sign of power. Monarchs and tyrants may falsely claim heritage to a draconic bloodline. The idea of genetic right to rule is an old one indeed, and though evidence points to the contrary it is a tightly held belief in all forms of society. *My son will take over the business when I'm gone. He's my son, he'd be the best man for the job.* Obviously that is a light example of what could easily be a very controversial topic, but for the scope of this game simply consider that certain people are ‘born’ for the job, and certain people are born to lead.

If you gathered up all the world leaders and gave them an exam, what would they all have in common? Perhaps the myth of dragon blood isn't as far-fetched as it would seem. Could the act of rising to power *change* a person? Is the secretive life a leader lives for their own protection, or to hide something dark? What is it that makes a leader a Leader?

A Game of Divine Right

Dragon: the Embers is the story of secret monsters, of the people who became more than human when they take control of the world around them. It's a story of tradition broken: of cutting one's heart out to gain immortality at the cost of the future, of shunning the hubris of the past. It's also

a story of genetic attrition; there are no new hearts to be had. Dragons are on their way out, the smoldering remains of a once brilliant flame. And someday the heat of those ashes will be gone. The last flicker of light is the dragons that remain; they are the embers of the past.

Dragons have one crucial weakness that drives them mad; their heart. Or Heart, rather. Capital H. By removing the Heart a dragon can guarantee her immortality, for no matter how many times her body dies her Heart remains to bring her back. But the Heart is also a great weakness, to be stolen and destroyed or consumed means the dragon dies instantly—and likely is replaced by someone else. This fact makes most of the Oroboroi incredibly paranoid, so much in fact that much of their long lives is spent trying to develop the perfect protection for this precious cargo. Needless to say there is no such perfection.

Dragons disguise themselves as the humans they used to be, but that is not their true shape. One may take on any number of their *real* traits with little effort, but while the truth may be more comfortable and more powerful, it is not discrete. Since dragons are usually in positions of authority—be it actual authority or authority puppeteered—it is useful not to reveal these differences, firstly because it would be a publicity nightmare and secondly because it would no doubt lead to torches and pitchforks. Part of being a modern dragon is about finding ways to subtly take advantage of the powerful truth without revealing it.

Finding oneself raised so far above humanity can be dizzying, but members of the Oroboroi have to temper themselves with the fact that they *chose* this fate. The only way to become a member is to eat the

heart of an old member, and with the first bite that fate is sealed. No matter how much a dragon wants to pretend she's human, the power that sets her apart will exist as long as she lives and will tug at her from afar should she shun it. Embracing the new life completely isn't an option either, the dragon risks losing her perspective. It takes respect for the power and the knowledge it isn't self-affirming to live a dragon's life properly.

This is **Dragon: the Embers**—the Storytelling game of Divine Right.

A Societal Metaphor

Most dragons from western myth are simply monsters, ravaging the countryside in search of meal and plunder. A monstrous beast of six limbs, two being wings. Something to be killed. Virtually opposite are the eastern myths, in which dragons are seen as righteous beings in command of the waters of the world, akin to gods. They are a symbol of purity and power, though sometimes those features can cause destruction. It was the modern reinvention of the dragon that created the fire-breathing madly-intelligent hoarders. For this book, we will be combining these three concepts to create a new type of dragon.

Embers dragons are no more intelligent than people, seeing as they used to *be* people. They are also neither benevolent nor malevolent, they are both. A necessary part of the world proper. Embers dragons gather swag not particularly out of greed, but to feed on the metaphoric value said swag possesses. They have a heat-source burning in their gut—the furnace—and it takes quite a bit to keep it hot. Finally, Embers dragons have a psychic bond with their Heart, and can survive so long as it is intact (even if it is not in the body).

So where does the metaphor for society start? Replace 'Dragon' with 'Leader' and it becomes very clear. In times of old leaders were born into their position,

a genetic predisposition to lord over others. But eventually the plebs beneath figured out leadership was not exclusive to royalty, and some rose up to claim the position. Ironically they became just as the ones they'd replaced, initiating the cycle anew.

It took a while, but eventually dragons figured out how to protect themselves from usurpation. Cutting out the Heart, *that* was the secret. A dragon could die time and again, but so long as the Heart is whole she can come back to reclaim her position. This too is part of the metaphor. Though a position can be lost time and again, the only way to eliminate a leader permanently is to destroy her.

Genetic Attrition

If Dragon is a metaphor about leaders, why are their numbers dwindling? Though leaders can be replaced, they are also destroyed by competitors. As eliminations stack up the numbers dwindle, eventually 'endangered' becomes 'final specimen', and from there it isn't even a baby step to extinction.

So why not breed for more numbers? History has shown that such a method does not work well. Heirs to power are spoiled by their entitlement, and usually eradicated in a coup. Dragons have also given up their right to genetic heirs by removing their Hearts, so such a notion is no longer even possible. An inability to produce draconic children means negative population growth and thus negative population; the point being no new dragons are born and so no new hearts bolster the population.

This is not to say that dragons are incapable of creating children. The children are simply born 100% human, 100% of the time.

A Voluntary Madness of Heart

A new dragon is born when she consumes the heart of an old dragon, in its

entirety. This is a life-affirming experience, and the means through which the heart was acquired forever marks the type of beast she'll be (It provided her with her Method). Most know at least a little about what will happen when they take this step... after all, there's rarely incentive to just eat a mysterious muscle for the fun of it. Part of the personal horror stems from this foreshadowing; when actions lead to regret the dragon can only blame herself. After all, she took that first bite.

The following metamorphosis is exhilarating if not just a little frightening. The entire body burns as the furnace ignites, particularly in the region of the heart and throat. Many parts become unfamiliar and foreign. And in the midst of this, the draconic code of conduct flash-burns into the mind. It takes time to adjust. Of anything it is an unforgettable, if not solitary, experience.

Schools and Philosophies

Almost immediately after the metamorphosis a dragon proceeds to remove her heart and choose a school—The Dominion school of Embers or the Saintly Devil school of the Five Evils. The code of conduct makes her aware of these options and the fact that her heart is the key to her longevity. There are a rare few who refuse this decision, and thus keep their Heart in chest.

Each school provides a general mentality. The Embers school doesn't deny their purpose but neither do they gorge. The Five Evils school, on the other hand, live life with a binge-and-purge gusto. The violent type of binge-and-purge gusto. After choosing a school the dragon chooses a main philosophy, the lens through which she examines all things. This is not the only philosophy she can follow, but it is the one she holds with most regard.

Theme and Mood

Though every story told with the Storyteller System is unique, stories that involve dragons have some common ground regardless of setting or plot. These anchors are the mood and theme, which are inescapably sewn into the state of Oroboroi membership.

Theme

The prevalent theme in any **Dragon** game is divine right facing faded glory. This often takes the form of relevance. In a world that is evolving beyond a need for them, dragons as a group have to take a stab at importance or be trampled in the march of time. Being natural leaders, this attempt usually takes the form of climbing social ladders.

Dashing to the top is dangerous business. There's nothing left to grab onto, with a great plummet waiting at just a single push. Mortals are vicious competitors in this pursuit, but they are not the only threats. *Other* things also vie for the reins.

Mood

The mood of any **Dragon** game is simple: paranoia for the sake of self-preservation. Despite the fact that they are practically indestructible, the critical weakness attached to this revival cycle is a matter of constant concern for dragons of any age.

With the information revolution it has never been more dangerous to hold membership with the Oroboroi. Whispers become screams as little fragments of truth slip free into the ether and more secrets become fact. Though many are hesitant to believe, there is always someone

willing to research further. And that research is becoming easier and easier. There's a reason exposure and extinction start the same way.

How to Use This Book

A sampling of the Oroboroi in whole can be found in the **Introduction**; it's a good section to check before planning a **Dragon: The Embers** game.

Chapter One explores what it means to be a dragon, from history to society to threats to provinces.

To make use of the Storyteller system and craft a member of the Oroboroi, go to **Chapter Two**. It details all the physical traits a dragon can incorporate into her True Form, as well as the mysterious powers Philosophies grant her.

Chapter Three covers mechanics exclusive to dragons, from assuming Oroboroi traits to Caloric requirements of the Furnace to the conditions of death and resurrection. This chapter also covers the function of the draconic Code of Ethics (their alternative to Morality), as well as special wound penalty mechanics new to this template.

Story and setting swatches are the focus of **Chapter 4**, which provides a range of different story seeds for basing a chronicle. This chapter also delves further into the various antagonists a dragon might face.

In **Appendix One** the Dreamtide is discussed in detail. From breaching the Miasma and dealing with dreamers to Nightmares and their Numina, you'll find everything you want to know about dream-walking here.

Appendix Two covers the setting of San Francisco, California. Learn the supernatural history behind the City by the Bay, explore the conflict of an Oroboroi-saturated region, and learn to fear the World Serpent.

Finally, **Appendix Three** details options a Storyteller has to make **Dragon** compatible with a **Mirrors** chronicle.

Sources and Inspiration

Dragons in a modern setting are somewhat a new localization of the classic myth. As of yet they have been inescapably tied to fantasy. An unfortunate side effect of this is a general lack of sources for a modern Dragon story. You can use your preconceptions about dragons from their fictional appearances as a source of information, but incorporating them into the setting will be a challenge only your imagination can face. The following list can get you started, though.

Video Games

Alundra (PSX): You may have trouble getting a copy of this classic top-view platformer by Matrix Software, but it fits perfectly into the concept of the Dreamtide and Nightmares. In the game you play a teen called Alundra who, shipwrecked in the village of Inoa, must help the superstitious residents survive their fatal dreams. The game has excellent imagery and settings for a dream-based **Dragon** chronicle.

Breath of Fire Series (Mostly PSX and SNES): Ignoring the religious overtones, the Breath of Fire Series (by Capcom) is a great example of genetic attrition. The third game also involves a riveting gene mechanic which parallels the Aspect system of this game. Breath of Fire provides an excellent idea of what a dragon is like when they take human form... or rather what a human who can turn into a dragon is like. The fifth game in the series (on the PS2) is optional.

Film

DragonHeart: The 1996 film by Universal Pictures about a dragon and a king that share the same heartbeat is a perfect fit for the

Bond of Brood Merit in this game. The movie explores the shared sensations and moral pangs of two who live with one heart. Plus, it has a dragon in it. Wee!

The Godzilla Series: Kaiju films are about giant monsters destroying cities, or terrifying the populace while fighting each other. The Godzilla series of films, originally created by Tomoyuki Tanaka, is a great example of this. Watch one or two of these films if you really want to understand collateral damage.

How to Train your Dragon: A DreamWorks production from 2010 that reinvented a children's book series from earlier in that decade, this film is useful for visualizing a dragon's physical features and body language. Juvenile, but justifiable as a "scientific study".

Literature

The Works of Edgar Allan Poe: This haunted, nightmare driven poet of the 1800s wrought countless fantastic works of poetry and short fiction, most of which connect with the themes of **Dragon** on at least some levels. Two that fit perfectly are "The Cask of Amontillado" and "The Tell-Tale Heart". The prior covers the horror of revenge in the name of honor, and the latter quite literally explains the paranoia that comes with hiding a dragon's Heart.

The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde: This novella by Scottish author Robert Louis Stevenson is a great inspiration for Saintly Devil Oroboroi. The dichotomy of Jekyll versus Hyde is exactly the feeling a scholar of Five Evils should portray.

The Dragon Delesangre: This novel (by Alan F. Troop) tells the story of a modern dragon seeking a mate. It is of utility primarily because it depicts a monster taking

human form and blending with a populace that is primarily antagonistic. Romance gets in the way, but overall it's a passable source of inspiration.

Lexicon

Anima: A mortal's copy found in the Dreamtide. Indistinguishable from the real thing.

Antecedent: An Oroboroi Heart's previous owner.

Aspect: A physical trait of dragonhood. To manifest an Aspect is to relinquish human features and become more divine. To disband an Aspect is to disguise the true nature and blend.

Attra: A wealth magnet in Oroboroi superstition. Often believed to be double-edged.

Breath: The heat of a dragon's furnace, it fuels the Oroboroi and their mysterious powers.

Brood: A dragon's family unit.

Bonded: Mortals that possess a piece of dragon heart in chest, usually as a gift.

Carrion: A mortal's copy found in the Dreamtide. Sentient but locked in one emotion.

Challenger: An Oroboroi who received her Heart as a prize for a test of skill;

Challengers shine in matters of honor and hard work.

Code, the: The set of ethics by which a dragon is judged.

Collapse, the: The mythical end of Dominion in which mankind rose up to steal the hearts of the Oroboroi. The birth of the two schools.

Common Aspect: A draconic trait common to Oroboroi of all methods.

Constituent: A mortal living within the boundaries of an Oroboroi Province.

Daylight: The Material world.

Den: An alliance of Oroboroi.

Devourer: A dragon who stokes her Furnace with the Hearts of others.

Doll: A mortal's copy found in the Dreamtide. Limited to a pittance of pre-determined responses.

Dominion: The mythical time of monarchy by genetic right, ended by the Collapse.

Dragon-Born: A child born from a dragon and human mating.

Dreamtide, the: The Astral world. Dragons may travel here by piercing the Miasma.

Embers Schools: The group of schools practiced by the Embers Oroboroi, based off lessons learned in the Collapse.

Ether, the: An Empyrean world comprised of swirling chaos. Locked away behind the Equinox.

Ethics: Dragon Morality

Finder: An Oroboroi who received her Heart as a result of research and investigation;

Finders are usually intellectuals and antiquers.

Furnace: The heat of a dragon's Heart, held in chest and reflecting the degree of her leadership potential.

Graft: Boney clasp that supernaturally enhances other objects. Made by erasing a mortal.

Heart: A nine-chambered blood pumping muscle. A dragon's weak point and most treasured possession.

Hedge, the: The Fae world. The Bramble holds it separate from Twilight.

Hydra: A multi-headed Oroboroi who's neglect for the Code of Ethics has rendered her a monster.

Inheritor: An Oroboroi who received her Heart as a gift; Inheritors are social titans.

Knight: A member of the Bloody Chalice conspiracy.

Lair: A dragon or Den's home.

Last Hand, the: Euphemism for a death that holds no escape. Death that prevents resurrection.

Metamorphosis: The first manifestation of Aspects, immediately after consuming an Oroboroi Heart.

Method: The means by which a dragon came into possession of her Heart.

Method Aspect: Aspects seen most frequently in dragons of a particular method.

Miasma, the: The skin of negative thought that an Oroboroi must pierce to enter the Dreamtide.

Non-Method Aspect: Aspects not usually seen in dragons of a particular method.

Oroboroi (or-ROB-or-roy): Dragons.

Oroborus (or-ROB-or-us): The mythical self-consuming serpent.

Pandemonium: The furthest depths of the Dreamtide, where the dreams of all living things melt together.

Philosophy: An Oroboroi outlook and worldview. Thought made reality.

Philosophy of Ash: An Embers Philosophy that believes society has a fundamental flaw that is causing its decay and inevitable destruction. That flaw should be exposed and utilized if necessary.

Philosophy of Blood: An Embers Philosophy that believes treachery and broken vows are the source of the past's suffering. Crafted the Code of the Oroboroi after the Collapse to push forth the duty of honor.

Philosophy of Bone: An Embers Philosophy that believes the unrelenting hand of fate will strike regardless, and the best option is to pick up the pieces after tragedy falls.

Philosophy of Greed: A Sainly Devil Philosophy that believes Greed is the worst sin to indulge. Takes measures to prevent the greed of others without recognizing their own covetous nature.

Philosophy of Lust: A Sainly Devil Philosophy that believes Lust is the worst sin to indulge. Desensitizes the body to suppress urges.

Philosophy of Pride: A Sainly Devil Philosophy that believes Pride is the worst sin to indulge. Works to prove others wrong, though without the modesty to admit a *personal* shortcoming.

Philosophy of Sloth: A Sainly Devil Philosophy that believes Sloth is the worst sin to indulge. Drives others to act with the power of memory.

Philosophy of Sweat: An Embers Philosophy that believes pain is the taskmaster of life and any attempts to defer it, such as society, are doomed to fail.

Philosophy of Tears: An Embers Philosophy that believes emotion outweighs action when the chips fall. Seek a society with the proper motive to thrive.

Philosophy of True Heart: A total rejection of Dominion and the Collapse. Members do not extract their Hearts, and are thus incapable of resurrection.

Philosophy of Wrath: A Sainly Devil Philosophy that believes Wrath is the worst sin to indulge. Bottled anger explodes in a destructive rampage.

Province: A dragon's range of property, both territorial and by population.

Red Pearl: A crystalline formation within an elderly Oroboroi brain. Highly coveted.

Sainly Devil Schools: The group of schools practiced by the Scholars of the Five Evils, determined to expunge the wicked but doomed to backslide.

Shadow, the: The Ephemeral world. The Gauntlet keeps it from merging with Twilight.

Slayer: An Oroboroi who received her Heart through murder; Slayers are vicious and powerful.

Thicker Waters, the: The space within the Dreamtide where similar dreams overlap.

Trickster: An Oroboroi who received her Heart through treachery or resources; Tricksters are noxious and toxic, and are not to be trusted.

True Form: The state of having all Aspects manifest.

True Heart: The state of living with Heart in chest; a refusal to remove the Heart for immortality.

Twilight: The skin between Daylight and the Realms Invisible, where Material coexists with Ephemeral, Astral, Emphyreal, Plasm, and Fae. Ghosts live here, if it could be called life.

Underworld, the: Home of the resolved dead. This world is comprised of Plasm, and is separated from Twilight by the Wall.

Chapter One: Fire of the Oroberoi

Cameron sat in the diner slowly stirring the table sugar into her coffee. It was her fourth cup. Normally she'd only have one, and it'd be decaffeinated, but her recent shift in fortune had made her bold. It was odd to be drinking it on such a hot day, but the bean water made the cavity of her chest warm and that felt good.

That guy by the window had been staring at her for twenty minutes. He hadn't even ordered anything; he just sat there pretending to read the paper. Poorly pretending. Cameron wasn't worried, though. She was practically indestructible after all.

The edges of the man's newspaper began to sag with red, and he looked around with greater care. The people around him began to back away and then fled the establishment. There were a few screams as he was spontaneously coated in blood. Hematidrosis: the condition of bleeding through the sweat glands, though not contagious, is particularly rare and thus incredibly frightening to the layman.

But something was off about this. The man stood, dropping the bloodied print to the floor. Glaring sternly at Cameron, his lips widened into a smile of brilliant white teeth. When he spoke, he sounded hungry: "I've found you."

"He who fights too long against dragons becomes a dragon himself; and if you gaze too long into the abyss, the abyss will gaze into you."

–Friedrich Nietzsche

Before the metamorphosis, a dragon is mortal. There's no mystical predetermination that slates a mortal for membership in the Oroboroi, so eating the Heart is their first step into the supernatural. While this brings a refreshing change in perspective, most learn things about the world they were better off not knowing.

The world is less fair than it seems. When it comes down to it, life is nothing but a giant pileup, and the one on top holds the highest chance for survival.

A new kind of Cardio

In the days of old the dragon was feared. Similar in stature to a god, she sat untouchable on the backs of the plebs, who would do everything in their power to please her (so that she wouldn't incinerate them). But as humankind became enlightened new gods took the throne, and banished the monsters from sight.

The Dragon was distraught. Without belief, and without the stature that accompanied it, she would fade into obscurity and ineptitude. An ancient god from the deep—long forgotten but still immensely powerful—came to her in a dream and offered her a choice. "I can make you eternal," he said, "but I do not work for free."

"Your ambition, your foresight, or your joy. This is the price I demand." The deep one reeked of the sea's rot, but his words were sickly sweet.

"I cannot part with my ambition" the Dragon said, "for without it my life would be pointless."

"Then your ambition you shall keep," the deep one said, a silhouette of the Dragon's gut becoming illuminated.

"I cannot part with my foresight," the Dragon said, "for without it I cannot shape the world as I must."

"Then your foresight you shall keep," the deep one said, as the eyes of the Dragon lit up like stars. "So you would part with your joy?" The deep one smiled; a wicked grin of sharp teeth.

"Yes, that is the only acceptable choice."

The forgotten god of the deep reached into the Dragon's chest and removed her Heart. Holding it out in his hand, he offered it freely. "Keep this someplace safe," he said, "You may need it again. But remember, should you welcome it home my gift is forfeit."

With that, the Dragon awakened.

Dominion and the Collapse

The time when dragons were prominent was called *Dominion*. They were regarded as a perfect combination of fear and respect, which let them leech off civilization while throttling its growth. It was the period where dragons were gods.

But as humankind evolves, it invents new deities. Ones less demanding and less likely to retaliate with wrath. Dragons lost their status, and likewise the power they held over the world. In a vain effort to reclaim their usurped thrones, the dragons removed their Hearts. With the loss of their joy came the ability to blend with the sheep, and so dragons vanished into myth and infected the world of man.

But not everyone forgot. While the dragons climbed back into their seats of power, these people watched. And when the guard was dropped, they struck. The dredges killed their masters. The dredges ate their hearts. And the dredges became the new masters. This was called *the Collapse*.

By the power of worship, a man became a monster. By the power of worship, a man became a god. But he was not fit for the position like his predecessor; he did not have the stature to extend his rule beyond his life. A charismatic dictator... *that* is what came out of the Collapse. A new ruler could rise only by destroying the old one, and so Oroboroi became the word to describe them. A serpent sustained only by itself but dying a little more with each and every bite.

Personal Matters Draconic

The Oroboroi are as diverse a people as the imaginations that forged them. Still, there are a few areas where they all hold common ground. These include their initial metamorphosis, the Heart removal, the methods through which they acquired their Hearts and the schools of thought through which they examine the world around them.

The Metamorphosis

When a mortal eats a dragon's Heart, she joins the Oroboroi. But what is that like? First off, it's the worst heartburn a person will ever experience. Sharp, insanely hot pain spikes at the center of her chest. Then, both skin and muscle begin to scream as they grow white hot and re-forged. Her body is hammered into her own personal image of what a dragon *should* look like... at least within reason. Finally a migraine spawns, like blasting dynamite in the brain. This is the Code of Ethics inscribing itself; the new dragon is spontaneously made aware of Dominion and the Collapse.

Some Oroboroi feel that these are both fictional events, built into the metamorphosis as a conduct guide and looming threat rolled into one. Others observe the visions more literally and try to learn from them. Either way, a character's reaction to these two stories will help to decide which school to join if she removes her Heart.

Heart Removal

Usually a very personal affair, removing the Heart involves making a vertical incision down the chest, then cracking open or breaking off the ribcage and finally severing the four veins and five arteries that connect the Heart to the bloodstream (this sets them apart from mortals who only have two veins and two arteries forming these connections). As it is detached, the light of the Furnace takes on a firmer form in the chest cavity, acting as a substitute pump in the Heart's absence. For mortals, this is a very fatal process. For the Oroboroi, it is an incredibly painful and likely traumatizing process, but one that will not end in death.

After the Heart has been removed, the sternum can be replaced, healing instantly. When closed, the chest wound cauterizes leaving a hard-to-spot scar.

Methods

Each dragon becomes that way by acquiring the Heart of another dragon. The means by which this Heart is acquired have a greater influence on the new dragon than they would seem. A dragon's method helps to classify which traits she'll likely possess, as well as the way she conducts herself in her new life.

A method falls into one of five categories (the fit may not always be the best, but a suspension of disbelief and generalized description helps). Those that acquire their Heart by taking a life are called the Slayers. Research and baiting leads to the birth of a Finder. When Hearts are a prize of competition, a Challenger is the result. Conversely, if Hearts are the cornerstone of a heist or the subject of theft, a Trickster is made. And finally, Hearts that are gifted forge Inheritors.

Slayers

Often called "the Rabid Monster", the Slayer is forceful, violent, and impatient. Bloodshed is her first resort, not her last, and she has the muscle to back it up. The

Aspects a Slayer incorporates into her True Form always have something to do with war.

Finders

“The Inquisitive Monster”, as Finders are sometimes called, is curious, determined, and driven. Finders want to know everything about everything, and they have the time to do it. Finders use Aspects that enhance their intellectual pursuits.

Challengers

Also known as “the Devoted Monster”, Challengers are skilled, tactful, and arrogant. A Challenger is always looking for the next big game, no doubt because she thinks she’s unbeatable or maybe because she wants someone to finally best her. The True Form of a Challenger is that of some great champion, ready to take on all odds through sheer force of will.

Tricksters

Referred to as “the Noxious Monster”, a Trickster is deceitful, cunning, and treacherous. The favored pass-times of a Trickster involve setting traps and pulling the rug out from other people. Tricksters are rotten on the inside, and it shows on the outside when they assume Aspects. They’re toxic.

Inheritors

Synonymous with “the Entitled Monster”, the Inheritor is socially favored, pompous, and ambitious. Ingrained by their initial handout, Inheritors expect respect and are adept at negotiation. Their True Form is a perfect combination of stature and elegance.

Schools of Thought

Less important than the method and a larger matter of choice, a school is the lens through which a member of the Oroboroi looks at the world. The Dominion Schools are based on conclusions regarding the Collapse, and the Schools of the Five Evils are based on the rejection of sin... particularly the flavor of sin the Five Evils Scholar hates most.

The True Heart School falls somewhere between the two; it is the precipice off

which a new dragon must leap to claim immortality.

Ash

The Dominion School of nihilism, Ash followers feel the world is crumbling around them with no option but acceptance. Fatalistic and broody, they are slow to make friends.

Blood

The Dominion School of honor, Blood followers believe broken oaths are the source of the world’s problems. Determined and serious, these dragons lay judgment constantly.

Bone

The Dominion School of second chances, Bone followers are similar to Ash followers in that they believe the world is inescapably fragile. However, Bone followers feel that once the world breaks, all that need be done is sweep up the pieces and glue them back together. Eternal optimists, they are quite loveable.

Sweat

The Dominion School of hard-asses, Sweat followers are not happy unless they are suffering. To them, pain is the only true sign of life and to settle into comfort is to resign into mediocrity. They’re tough to get along with.

Tears

The Dominion School of carpe-diem, Tears followers feel that the world is lost in its apathy and needs ‘awakening’. The methods these creatures apply are less than savory, though. Scary and difficult to trust.

Wrath

The Five Evils School that detests the failure of rage control. Ironically, they struggle the most with their own anger, and it escapes in explosive bursts. Detested for the damage they inflict, but loved for the charity they rain.

Pride

The Five Evils School that detests the over-inflated ego. They fight to keep themselves out of the spotlight, but once they're there they will not step down. Quickly hated as a stage hog, then just as quickly forgotten.

Greed

The Five Evils School that detests the materialistic hoarding of the modern world. Though they claim their possessions are meaningless, they constantly fear the loss of 'things'. When fear turns to overprotection, people suffer.

Lust

The Five Evils School that detests the washed-out focus that comes from passion untended. They spend their whole lives running from what they love, but inevitably run back into its arms. Once there, they must start over. Tragic, really.

Sloth

The Five Evils School that detests the concession of motivation to apathy. In their fervor to 'get up and go', they tire themselves out and slink home in a stew of shame and exhaustion. Incapable of doing a good job, as they don't work efficiently.

True Heart

The only school that is neither Dominion nor Five Evils, True Heart dragons refuse to remove the symbol of their joy. Being of this school means shunning the choice of other schools, integrating the metamorphosis into one's personality instead of rejecting or justifying it. True Heart dragons are incredibly vulnerable and possibly naïve, but there is hope to be found in the way they reject what is established. Perhaps they are the only real future for the flickering Oroboroi.

Life of the Flickering Flames

The Oroboroi may live virtually forever, but such a life is not without hardships. Besides the immediately apparent horror of outliving all their loved ones, an Oroboroi must cope

with the fact that she has access to stupendous capabilities, but has few appropriate situations in which to expend them. Her membership is her greatest gift and darkest secret, and most of her life is spent trying to take advantage of the gift part without giving away the secret part.

For those that peel away the secret, there are really only three possible outcomes. They could promise never to tell anyone and to help bear the burden of the secret, but that's incredibly unlikely. That, and even if they did, time would eventually steal them away. They could blab to somebody else, which will either land them in a mental asylum or homicidal frenzy. But... even incoherent nonsense draws unwanted attention. And then, there are those that would harvest the Oroboroi for her Heart, red pearl, or blood (would-be dragons, greed-hoarders, or Knights of the Bloody Chalice respectively).

Another thing the Oroboroi must face in their longevity is boredom. Those that continue living the life they did before their metamorphosis find it does not fill them the way they did before. Grander stature calls for grander things, and so most Oroboroi take on a province to occupy their time.

Oroboroi Society

A dragon and her province combined are easily compared to an independent nation. Likewise, the relationships between two dragons can be easily analyzed by thinking of them in a world scope, rather than a personal one. Dragons forge trade routes with each other, swap techniques, and make treaties, but they could never really be called friends. So long as a relationship is mutually beneficial or sufficiently forced, the Oroboroi will interact.

It is this 'island' mentality that keeps the Oroboroi in check, as they are too paranoid and greedy to actually collaborate on a regular basis. So in truth, the Oroboroi don't really have a society. It's a maelstrom

of control freaks trying desperately to shield themselves from calamity. Despite this, though, there are a few rules of etiquette that (most) Oroboroi follow.

1: The Subjects must not Know

The presence of the Oroboroi and the details of their physiology are precious secrets that if leaked could endanger every living dragon. This rule is a matter of self-preservation, and to break it is to risk extinction.

2: The Devourers must not be Harbored

The Heart is a delicacy a dragon is only allowed to enjoy once. Those that eat Hearts only serve to accelerate the end of days. Members of the Oroboroi are forbidden from interacting with the Hungry both as a message of self-preservation and for the good of their species. If an Oroboroi meets one of the heart-eaters, she should kill him, or find somebody who can.

3: The Righteous must honor Surrender

Members of the Oroboroi are free to place pressure on their peers, be it for wish of land or simple rat-bastardry. All such pressure, political or physical, must stop when the dragon surrenders. In essence, every dragon has a right to demand negotiations, and that dragon is guaranteed her safety up and through the execution of that meeting. Her fate afterwards depends on the agreement forged, but will not impart physical violence. Likely, she will be incorporated as a vassal in the winning Den's holdings, or she'll be deported.

It is important to note that this rule of etiquette only applies to members of the Oroboroi. Those that extend these courtesies to mortals are exceptional, but rare. The golden rule of survival enforces this. If an Oroboroi wishes to be treated fairly when she is bested, she'd better do the same for those she conquers.

4: The Gracious will greet Guests without Malice

Vagabond Oroboroi and those that decide to vacation may sometimes wander into the province of another dragon (with or without knowledge of this blunder). Provided the intrusive dragon does not stir up trouble, she is allowed to spend three days in the other dragon's province before she'll be disturbed. If at that time she is asked to leave and she refuses, the other dragon is within his rights to attack her by any means.

This rule is enforced by mutual courtesy. If a dragon wishes to be treated well in another's province, she'd best extend the same welcoming atmosphere lest she be rendered a hypocrite.

Dens

The name is a little deceiving, but Den comes from a self-loathing Oroboroi who called dragon alliances a 'Den of Evil'. Unfortunately, the name stuck.

The Oroboroi population is so phenomenally low that usually the only other dragon one meets is the Heart's previous owner. Still, paths do cross, and when dragons meet they need a way to interact peaceably with each other. While they're working towards a common goal, dragons will willingly call themselves beasts 'of the same den'.

In the previous metaphor, the Den acts as a federation to individual sovereign states with mutual interests (a group of independent dragons). Forming a Den gives Oroboroi the power to claim a larger geographic region, and more importantly it lets them ask for help. A dragon can trust her Den-mates to at least be civil.

Provinces

The word 'province' comes from the Latin 'provincia' which meant "a territory under Roman domination". In this case, it is used to mean "a territory under Oroboroi domination", and the meaning of territory is loosely applied. A dragon province could be a particular group of professionals, or even a

genetic bloodline. For those that take physical provinces, their geographic extent is usually one building or at most one city block.

The province is a dragon's pet project; it gives her something to do as well as a source of accomplishment and pride. The long-term goals of a dragon almost always involve shaping her province and its residents into a form that pleases her. It's a reason to live. Pretty much the only reason.

What an Oroboroi may not notice, though, is the way her province shapes her. As she mixes the ingredients of her region, she too breaks apart and becomes amalgamated in the concoction. She picks up traits of her province as it assumes traits from her, and the two become a compromise of their original components.

A Dragon's Lair

Though the term is a bit archaic, the lair is a dragon's home. It's where she keeps all of her valuables, the most important one being her Heart. A dragon's lair may or may not be part of her province.

Most modern Oroboroi don't care for cave life. In fact, they like to live the way they did when they were mortal, or possibly just a smidge more extravagant than that. Lairs run the spectrum from studios to penthouses, and they're indistinguishable from other properties.

Because of her connections to the Dreamtide, a dragon's lair fills up with astral energy. Though not immediately apparent, this energy leaves a touch of mysticism behind when a dragon has gone, and it draws the attention of other supernatural beings. It works like creating a magnet; the Oroboroi presence polarizes the world around her, and her presence is no greater felt than in the place she resides.

Superstition of the Attra

An Attra, or Wealth Magnet, is a luck trinket believed to attract riches from the shadows. Though it's never been proven the things

work, the Oroboroi like to keep them around. In fact, it's a matter of spite to swipe an Attra from another dragon. If an Attra actually *does* produce wealth, it does not form from the air. It has a source, and sometimes it's of a type that is unsavory (like illegal narcotics).

The Attra itself is usually a statuette or trinket. Even if it's portable, an Attra is traditionally left on a counter so that it can work in peace. "If you lug it around, the riches won't know where to go!" Attra are always made of stone.

As for what started this superstition, nobody really knows. There's a rumor that an incredibly selfless act is the only way to create an Attra, as it causes the good karma to solidify as a precious stone. Another says that the collective wishes of humankind gather in the Dreamtide and fall as tears into the material world. Whatever makes them, they're certainly special even if they aren't actually magic.

Threats

Life as an Oroboroi isn't a safe existence. Despite being a particularly exposed target (standing at the top of a ladder does that), there are a slew of supernatural entities that want nothing more than to harvest a dragon for her flesh, her Heart, or her blood. Potential future dragons, other dragons, psychotic human serial killer cultists, vampires, sorcerers, were-beasts, forgotten monsters from the deep, and even Nightmares from the Dreamtide all have something to gain from slaying a dragon.

Obviously a human mortal that knows too much is a threat, as they covet the Heart that makes a dragon special. They are not the only ones that seek Hearts, however. Devourers, or rather Oroboroi that eat dragon Hearts to stoke their Furnace, are a constant and dangerous force in the darkness. Then, there are those who wish to snuff out dragon-kind completely, and these predators hunt for Hearts so they can destroy them.

Hungry Players

Though it is okay to give players a taste of the cannibalistic spiral of Heart consumption, it's not a good idea to let them indulge. Such action would lead to a meteoric, bloody rise to power... one far too swift for the themes of this game. For this reason the increase in Furnace is not free, but rather discounted. A character who consumes another Heart pays only *4 x new dots* for the next dot of Furnace she purchases. This does not stack, so if she intends to eat multiple Hearts she should make sure she has the experience to benefit. Be sure to use consequences to discourage becoming a Devourer. Eating another dragon's Heart is both a level 2 sin against Ethics (cannibalism) and a level 1 sin (destroying the Heart of an Oroboroi). Roll for degeneration twice, showing the speed of the slip and the slew of mental anguish that follows. Also, eating a Heart transfers all its antecedents to the cannibal dragon, and the consequences of that should follow suit. Information on these topics can be found in Chapter 3.

The Knights of the Bloody Chalice are a lingering problem for all the night folk, but especially for the Oroboroi. Blood-bathing murderers, they maim and accost others for sacrifice in their bizarre rituals. A province, its denizens, and its dragon are in danger as long as a Chalice Knight is in town. But they are not the only ones interested in Oroboroi blood. Vampires are especially allured by its full-bodied flavor, and mages are inescapably intrigued by its alchemical properties.

Then there are those that would kill a dragon for her flesh. The first that come to mind are the deep ones, who like the original forgotten deity wish to trade favors for body parts. Something about these creatures is sustained by dragon flesh. Werewolves tend to rip dragons to pieces before asking questions, mistaking them for spirit-claimed. Finally, the hydra (plural) that have slid down the slopes of the dragon's Code of Ethics have no problem fueling their Furnace with cannibalized flesh, and for this reason they hunt and kill other Oroboroi.

Those that Hunt for Heart

The most dangerous of the dragon's enemies, those that hunt for an Oroboroi Heart are out to inflict the Last Hand. Threats of this manner are always taken seriously, since it only takes one to end a dragon.

Mortals

Likely the biggest danger in the Oroboroi world, a mortal that's done his homework is a ticking roll of dynamite. Intoxicated by

the promise of power, he'll stop at nothing to 'join the club'.

Mortals have been a problem to the Oroboroi since the Collapse, though only on a personal level. Since consuming a Heart kills a dragon and makes a new one, the Oroboroi populace as a whole doesn't really care. But... for the dragon replaced it is a very distressing matter indeed.

Mortals are crafty. Those that become Slayers and Challengers may take a direct approach, but Finders and Tricksters almost always strike from the shadows. Besides possibly their demeanor, there is no way to discern a mortal that knows of the Oroboroi from one that does not.

Devourers

Normally a dragon only eats one Heart in her lifetime—that Heart being the one that granted her membership in the Oroboroi. And in that case, the gourmand wasn't actually a dragon at the time. There are always exceptions, though, and those exceptions are the hungry Devourers. Consuming the Hearts of other dragons, they irreparably damage the Oroboroi population.

Devourers are wasteful bastards. Too impatient to stoke their Furnace properly, they dump other Hearts into it like lighter fluid to watch it flare up. For each Heart they devour their Furnace burns more brightly, but their mind slips further into cannibalistic addiction.

The worst part? They look just like other dragons. Many Oroboroi have trust issues with their neighbors for fear of the Devourers, and every single member of

dragon-kind hates them. By both stripping an already thin, non-producing population and driving trustworthy dragons apart, Devourers ruin any chance of Oroboroi prosperity.

Conspirators

Like mortals, Oroboroi conspirators are a personal and not a societal threat. Holding themselves on high as judges, conspirators spirit away Hearts and ‘gift’ them to mortals, with the justification that a better dragon is possible. For dragons that don’t meet the standard of the conspirators, life can become quite a hardship.

Conspirators rarely fight their condemned in open combat, but that doesn’t mean they never do. Often they find ways to subcontract Heart location and retrieval, though, so the condemned Oroboroi rarely knows what’s coming until she’s toast.

Just like the Hungry, there’s no way to tell a conspirator from any other dragon. They may even forge Dens, only to snatch away the most precious possession when guards drop. Sometimes a condemned dragon gets lucky and changes the opinion of the undercover conspirator, but such is the exception and not the norm.

Those that Hunt for Blood

Dragon blood, while not inherently mystical, still has some pretty interesting properties. Like a finely aged wine, the blood becomes full bodied and timeless as it passes through the Furnace. Coating an object with it causes it to resist the tests of time, protecting it from erosion and fatigue until the blood itself has been washed away. Those that hunt a dragon for her blood want it for this peculiar quality.

Knights of the Bloody Chalice

There are men who learned a secret about blood, that secret being the key to immortality. Subjected to the faith of three, blood becomes a mystical panacea that restores youth and strength, at least for one year. The one seeking this boon must bathe

in it long enough to coat his entire body once... and the person from whence the blood is stolen must perish.

Those that whisk away others to perform this ritual vainly call themselves the Knights of the Bloody Chalice, as its initial conception was forged in the feudal days of the Collapse. Though any blood will do, supernatural blood is preferred for its extraordinary qualities, and the blood of a dragon is particularly coveted. Its trait of timelessness can be applied to the Knight through this ritual, and the application lasts five times as long as a mortal one.

Knights can blend like mortals, though not as effectively. Knights of even moderate status in the Bloody Chalice conspiracy sweat blood when near a supernatural being. It is a means of finding quality victims, but also a useful tell for a targeted Oroboroi. While individual Knights are not much of a threat, they are *never* alone.

Vampires

Of all the inhabitants of the midnight world, the Leeches share the most space with the Oroboroi. Vampires and dragons both set up kingdom in the cities, and their shared longevity makes their interactions a matter of patience and not fortitude. Truly, they share a lot of common ground with the Oroboroi, but where dragons sustain themselves on scores of edibles, Vampires must feed on blood.

For the most part, the Kindred and the Oroboroi can interact on a peaceable level. But it is the key difference in their diet that causes a breakdown. Most dragons are uncomfortable with the harming of their constituents, which is usually how they interpret the involuntary blood donations. Then there’s the matter of dragon blood. Though there’s no evidence it’s any better than the mortal variety, the aged nature holds a flavor the Kindred can’t resist. It’s almost... narcotic.

Vampires kill dragons to get a taste of their blood. Or rather, pints of it. An attentive dragon can recognize a Vampire's supernatural tendencies with enough observation, but the Vampire will not give ample opportunities to do so. If he wants Oroboroi blood, he will take it through underhanded means. Sometimes, he requests it nicely and bargains are struck, but this is the exception and not the rule.

Mages

Nothing's worse than a mortal armed with Truth from a higher reality. Mages pull down miracles from a template world and study the material world in search of higher wisdom. Maybe if they could understand the world they live in, they could reach the template world they're so obsessed with. But when dragons are introduced, they hit a snag.

Part of the mage creation myth involves dragons flying off to the higher reality, never to return. Obviously, even a skeptical sorcerer's cynicism is shaken by an encounter with a real dragon. Though he can be reasonable, the mage feels he must understand everything about everything about the dragon, as if it is some grand secret that will validate his life. If the dragon does not part with information freely, the mage will take his fill by force. Mages hunt dragons because they want to study their anatomy. Dragon's blood is particularly useful as an accelerant in supernal rituals, and sorcerers who learn this want to get as much of it as possible. It seems to weld reality together, preventing the 'paradoxes' that mages fear so much.

Mages can be as crafty as other mortals, and they're just as frail. They are not a threat of the same caliber, however, as they possess a score of unexpected tricks that make combating them... difficult. A dragon must be sure to research one before letting their confrontation reach combat, since the

powers of the mage will likely unravel at least some of her divinities.

Those that Hunt for Flesh

The least dangerous of the entities that hunt a dragon, those that hunt for flesh seek to kill the Oroboroi body (and sometimes reap a reward from the carcass). Since dragons resurrect, this is usually just an annoying setback. Still, there are problems associated with dying and most Oroboroi would rather not deal with them. For True Heart dragons, though, those that hunt for flesh are the greatest threat of all.

Deep Ones

Like the first forgotten god that came offering a bargain, there are archaic ocean monsters in the world that trade favors for body parts. Though most common in sea-bordering communities, the deep ones can step into a dragon's mind through the Dreamtide and often do when they smell profit in an exchange.

Deep Ones seek out dragons that are spiraling out of control, offering clarity in exchange for an emotion. When the dragon agrees to the terms, the deep one helps himself to one of her organs. Both the physical and symbolic representation of the emotion, these organs sustain the deep one in inexplicable ways.

Deep Ones do not need to strike bargains often, but each one they forge makes them stronger and more dangerous. They become bold, more demanding, and in the end when a bargain fails they simply take what they need. Deep Ones are not completely unpredictable, as they approach the dragon directly and their strengths are quite similar to those of the Oroboroi. Still, they are not to be underestimated.

Werewolves

There are peculiar beings that are half-flesh and half-spirit. They come from the Shadow, a place forbidden to the Oroboroi. Or maybe they migrate there afterwards. It's hard to tell, but they seem to be born this

way. Shape-shifters, the lot of them, and spiritually minded to boot. Werewolves are the things that go bump in the night for a dragon, since they are so totally foreign to the Material world. Oroboroi and the Moon-Changers sometimes share space, and when they do the Moon-Changers tend not to play nice.

More a matter of false identification than anything else, werewolves fight dragons because they mistake them for spirit invaders, or possibly the possessed. This is of course ridiculous, as the Oroboroi are the sole owners of their corporeal form and no incorporeal entity can intrude (excluding Antecedents, of course). Still, werewolves feel threatened by dragons and they kill the threat accordingly.

Werewolves can take human guise, but it is not a very effective disguise. Something about them just screams “**Rage!**”, and for an attentive dragon they’re relatively easy to spot. The real danger comes from the werewolf’s spirit powers, and not its shape-changing prowess. While an Oroboroi can meet a Moon-Changer tooth for tooth and claw for claw, when the whispers of the Shadow are brought to bear things get complicated.

Hydra

Dragons that forsake their Ethics quickly devolve and mutate into horrible monsters. Tales tell of the Hydra burning and devouring everything in their path in an undying rampage. It’s all about the next meal for Hydra, and for the Oroboroi whose province they tear through the Hydra poses both a danger to body and a danger to the secrecy of their ‘club’.

Hydra aren’t particularly bright, as they are too busy bickering with their own heads to make a solid decision. When they attack

a dragon it is simply because they’re hungry, and dragon flesh burns hottest in the Furnace.

Hydra are the most likely to strike in open combat. They cause a lot of collateral damage, but at their core they’re still Oroboroi. A dragon can fight a Hydra with the knowledge he can’t do anything she can’t do. The only trick is dealing with the unpredictability that comes with a Hydra’s insanity.

Dreamtide Nightmares

Sometimes a dragon dies without reason. Sometimes an entity kills a dragon simply because it can. The twisted inhabitants of the Dreamtide, known as Nightmares, flex their muscles by stepping on dragons.

Nightmares are peculiar entities, made from an amalgamation of violent and frightening imagery. In (very) rare cases a Nightmare kills its host dreamer’s soul and crawls into the body, warping it into a preferred shape. For the most part, though, dragons encounter Nightmares when they are traveling the Dreamtide.

As they are made up of mental energy, the Strength of a Nightmare is equivalent to its Presence and Intelligence. In this way, they are very similar to ghosts, but a standard Nightmare is far more powerful. If a dragon wishes to fight a Nightmare, she best corner it in the individual dream of a mortal, so that she can enlist the help of the sleeper. Otherwise, fighting a Nightmare in the Pandemonium is practically impossible.

Realms Invisible

When a dragon dies, she must wait in Twilight for her body to repair itself. This space between worlds gives her a glimpse into the places that surround the Daylight. Though she can only gain access to the

Werewolves, Vampires and Mages, oh my!

Though discussed as possible threats to an Oroboroi, Vampires, Werewolves and Mages are each entities beyond the scope of this book. If you wish to know more about them, you should consult the corresponding White Wolf books **Vampire: The Requiem**, **Werewolf: The Forsaken** and **Mage: The Awakening**.

It is important to note that the interactions presented here are ways for these night folk to act as predators to a dragon. Each could just as easily be an ally... for the exact same reasons as well. Know that every person is different, and there is no restriction *demanding* these entities attack the Oroboroi.

Much of the information on the Realms invisible is derived from White Wolf products, especially **Mage: The Awakening**, **Werewolf the Forsaken**, **Geist the Sin Eaters**, and **Changeling the Lost**. It is important to note that, while liberties were taken here, the information presented on the Realms Invisible here is still the intellectual property of White Wolf. The writers of this supplement do not take credit for it, as that would be plagiarism.

Dreamtide, she can still glean information as she sees others slip in and out of these realms.

The Dreamtide

The original dragons entered the world from the Dreamtide. Becoming half-astral and half-material, they were able to invigorate themselves on the hopes and fears of others, much as modern gods are given physical presence from prayer. When the Oroboroi overthrew the original dragons they inherited access to the Dreamtide, but not the ability to better themselves through the thoughts of their subjects.

The Dreamtide itself is held apart from the Daylight by a barrier of mental noise called the Miasma. All living creatures have the capacity to pass through this barrier, but only with their minds when they sleep. The act of entering Rapid Eye Movement sleep thins the Miasma around a mortal just enough for an Oroboroi to tear it open and step inside, both body and mind.

In the shallow end of the Dreamtide near the Miasma, the realm is comprised entirely of an individual sleeper's dream. As the Oroboroi journeys deeper into the Dreamtide, similar dreams begin to merge together, and the denizens become more powerful. Mortal minds never venture here, though malicious entities that are born here may travel towards the Miasma to torture them. Finally, should the Oroboroi venture even further into the Dreamtide she will reach Pandemonium, the amalgamation of all unconscious thought in the world. Pandemonium is a ghastly, never-ending horror-scape filled with the most frightful monsters man and beast can imagine. Only a fool would travel there.

The Shadow

All objects, instinctive creatures, ideas, and even weather phenomenon of the world have both a physical and a symbolic form, the symbolic form existing as a spirit in the Shadow. Ironically, the only being that does not have a spirit counterpart is humankind. The Oroboroi cannot tell whether this is a sign that they are unique or damaged in some way, but as they are derived from humankind they too are robbed this spirit reflection. The Moon-Changers come and go from the Shadow, and that is how the Oroboroi know of it.

The Gauntlet, as the werewolves call it, keeps people from freely passing between the Daylight and the Shadow. A whirling barrier that resembles the spinning blades of a blender, 'the Gauntlet' is a dangerous and painful threshold, which is why werewolves only cross where it is thin. It seems to happen in places and times of spiritual significance (and most often at night).

From what few glances an Oroboroi can get through the Gauntlet, the Shadow looks like the world through a mirror darkly (thus the name). Since Oroboroi have seen things as terrifying as walking buildings and men made entirely of knives, they don't feel too badly about not being able to visit the Shadow.

The Hedge

A promise congeals into obligation, and obligation escalates into fate. There is a place where this is the only law of physics, and that place is the Hedge. While things native to this strange world can handle it, the lack of boundaries twists anything else it touches. Mortals dragged into the Hedge become changelings, and it is because of changelings that Oroboroi know of the Hedge at all.

The Hedge is protected by a towering line of bloodied thorns, which the Oroboroi call the Bramble. This Bramble is ubiquitous except in places with a natural opening, where a changeling can craft a gateway into the Hedge. Gateways are shut tight unless they are in use, so an Oroboroi only sees the Hedge when a changeling is passing through.

The Hedge itself looks like something out of a twisted fairytale. Or maybe the Hedge came first, and fairytales followed. A beautiful but dangerous place, the Hedge has long been a matter of intrigue for the Oroboroi. Everything within is... alive.

The Underworld

Not everything that dies leaves a ghost. Most things are severed body, mind, and soul, with the mind traveling to the Underworld. Many religions speak of afterlife or the cycle of reincarnation, and the process seems to be inescapably intertwined with the Underworld. There are ferrymen who come and go from this place, and they are known as the Bound.

The impassible barrier between the Underworld and Twilight, which the Bound neglected to name, is often called the Wall by the Oroboroi. This may be because they feel it's a solid entity no living body may pass through, but more likely it's because they couldn't think up a more clever name. The Bound pass through pre-determined weaknesses in the Wall known as Avernian Gates, and the Oroboroi get a quick peek when they do so.

Antecedents who cannot sustain themselves in Twilight fall through the Wall, never to return. Oroboroi recognize the Underworld as the tragic finale to their Last Hand, and likewise are terrified of the place. If they manage to sum up the courage to look, they see only a twisting tunnel, lined with the mourning traditions of the region.

The Ether

Potential in its purest form is a blinding white energy that fills up everything around it. This energy is not light, heat, sound, or electricity, but some manifestation of all these things combined. Some would call this energy "Ichor" or "Pyros". The Ether is filled to capacity with this purified potential, and the Oroboroi believe it's held at bay to keep from drowning out the world in white.

Rarely does the Ether open up to the Material world. The boundary of the Ether is a blinding tornado frozen in solid glass, and the polarized imagery of this led the Oroboroi to call it "the Equinox". A human silhouette occasionally cracks the Equinox, creating a Fracture that it can pass through. Oroboroi never get a good look at these Ether-walkers, but they seem very powerful and terrible.

As for the Ether itself, little can be discerned from the glances through Equinox Fractures. Only a blast of brilliant white chaos slips out. With just this little taste, it becomes apparent the Ether is something both magnificent and terrible.

Chapter Two: Character

“Do you mind explaining to me why a blood-sweating psychotic had this card in his pocket?” Cameron flicked the paste-board rectangle towards the desk. It landed face up, a picture of a blazing dragon adorned it alongside an address. The Nine of Hearts.

“That guy tried to kill me, you know. I suppose you hired him?” The luxurious office chair swiveled around, revealing Frank Gringham.

“Don’t do that, that’s totally lame,” Cameron commented.

“I’m afraid I had to. I so rarely get the chance to play the big-shot anymore.” The whole office was made up to be classy, but it was really a dingy pit. The chair was pleather, the books cardboard boxes and the desk plywood.

“Mister McGregor and I had a bargain... a sort of mutual blackmail that kept each other in check. Now that he’s out of the picture, I can get back to business.” Frank’s lips receded, revealing a sinister grin of pearl-white teeth. He leaned back smugly in his chair.

“You know, your office is sort of pathetic. For a guy as rich and famous as you, I thought I’d see, like, plasma television sets or something.” Cameron was feeling pretty good about herself.

“Ah, but this isn’t my office.”

“What?”

Frank pitched the glass of brandy at Cameron. Catching it, she sent fractures up its edges and shattered it in a mess of alcohol and broken glass. But when she looked back, Frank was gone. And then she noticed the ticking.

“Oh shit.”

“We’re our own dragons as well as our own heroes, and we have to rescue ourselves from ourselves”
–Tom Robbins

This chapter takes an in-depth look into the character construction process. Included are the five methods—the means through which a dragon acquires her Heart that colors her approach to a leader’s life—and the two schools of heartless Oroboroi. Also included are the various Aspects a dragon can manifest, as well as all eleven Philosophies and the reality-bending power associated with them.

Character Creation

To build a character you must first invent a concept and then flesh it out with the provided mechanics. Don’t try to build somebody that can ‘win’ a game, strengths and weaknesses can produce a personality for your character that really brings her to life.

It’s best to work with both the storyteller and your fellow players during the character creation process to ensure that no game-breaking conflict will develop. While tension between characters can make a game more interesting, personas too incompatible to cooperate undermine the story and may drag conflict back into the real world. Remember the game is about having a good time; if the characters make that impossible it’s time to dream up new characters.

Step One:

[In accordance with the Dark Pack contract that grants the sub-licence to the intellectual property of CCP.hf, no internet or fan content shall contain the rules for character creation. The following sections were written, but excised to prevent breach of this contract. The rules for character creation can be found in the **World of Darkness Rulebook.**]

Step Two:

[Excised in accordance with Dark Pack]

Character-Creation Process

Use the rules from the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, and add the following template to dragon characters during Step Five.

Choose a method (see page 50-54)

Choose a school (see page 55-78)

For beginning Aspects, place five dots in common Aspects, three dots in method Aspects, and two “free pick” dots in Aspects from *any* category. For beginning Philosophies, place one dot in the philosophy that matches your school, and place another dot in a philosophy of your choice (Even your school’s philosophy). Dragons have access to merits specially designed for them (see page 47-49)

Morality is now called Ethics (see page 147)

If you want to create a Dragon-born, bonded, or pilot light character, you may do so with the Storyteller’s approval. Identical to the process for making mortals, follow the rules detailed in the **World of Darkness Rulebook** and purchase the corresponding merit. Bonded and pilot light characters will need to use the sheet from this book, and will have to pick Aspects (Unless they are associated with another player).

Step Three:

[Excised in accordance with Dark Pack]

Step Four:

[Excised in accordance with Dark Pack]

Step Five: Add Dragon Template

With one act of pseudo-cannibalism your character ceases to be human and becomes something *else*. Whether that's a good thing is something to be questioned, but there are advantages to holding such power.

No character can possess multiple supernatural templates. While a character may be able to maintain abilities from her human life, other supernatural features are purged when she joins the Oroboroi. Only mortals may become dragons.

Method

The means by which a dragon came upon her Heart color the flame of her Furnace, and likewise the cut of her personality. Though the method does not control how a dragon acts, dragons of a certain method can be expected to behave in a certain way. After all, it takes a type to do things that way.

A method makes certain Aspects more readily available, those that fit the theme of the means. At least three dots of the starting ten allotted to Aspects at character creation must be spent within the dragon's method.

School

Schools are both a means of blaming the past and approaching the future. When a dragon becomes what she is she is made aware of both the past of her new species and their purpose. Schools of philosophy help her approach this knowledge, justifying the mistakes of her predecessors while vowing to charge toward a better future (or what's left of it).

Though a dragon may find herself a follower of many philosophies, the one held closest to her heart is that of her school, and when a conflict of ethics occurs she will turn to her school for guidance. Choosing a school is a very personal matter; usually all of the variables are internal. A select few join schools due to external pressure, but such decision usually backfires in the dragon's future.

Check the Dominion schools (pp.55-65)—or possibly the schools of the Five Evils (pages 66-76)—and pick one that fits your character’s mindset. If you have trouble, ask your Storyteller or the other players for their opinion.

The biggest benefit of membership in a school is the fantastic power born when the philosophy manifests into reality. Destruction, Oath, Health, Pain, and Mind are engrained strengths all dragons possess, and Philosophies grant an outlet for those strengths.

Furnace

Sometimes a measure of age, and sometimes a measure of stature, is your character’s Furnace. The Furnace is a fire at the core of every dragon; a stoked fire that makes them possible. A bigger Furnace means a heartier dragon, who has more thoroughly embraced her new nature. Dragons with higher Furnace manifest Aspects more quickly, have more Breath to spend on Philosophies and provincial boons, and can burn practically anything flammable to keep the Furnace lit. Dragons with low Furnace are slow to take their True Form, have little Breath to spare, and must eat carefully lest they choke on the volumes required to maintain the flames.

All dragons receive one free dot of Furnace at character creation. Furnace can be increased with Merit dots at that time, at a rate of three Merit dots to one dot of Furnace. This places a limit of Furnace 3 at character creation. More on Furnace can be found on page 45.

Breath

A measure of the dragon’s energy, Breath not only fuels certain Aspects, it is refined to bring material force to Philosophies. A dragon with high breath is capable of belching waves of flame, using high levels of Philosophy, and cauterizing severe injury. A dragon with low Breath is soon a dragon with no Breath, it’s incredibly important.

Any dragon character begins play with a number of Breath points equal to her Ethics. One point of Breath must be spent each day to stave off deprivation (See **World of Darkness Rulebook** p 175). Breath changes as your character lives from day to day, uses Philosophies or sects, uses certain Aspects, or eats. It is described in full on page 46.

Unlike other derived traits, Breath has only points to be acquired and spent. There are limits on Breath expenditure per turn and Breath storage, which are determined by the dragon's Furnace.

Aspects

When a dragon undergoes her metamorphosis, she acquires a number of “divinities” (as the Oroboroi call them) that define her True Form. Traits, or features, or rather Aspects as they are most commonly called, all grant a biological boost to the would-be leader. A starting dragon begins play with ten Aspects. Five must be drawn from the Common Aspect lists, three must be drawn from the list associated with the dragon’s method, and two can be freely taken from any list (Even a list associated with a different method).

Aspects are explored in further detail on page 79.

Philosophies

Derived from a school of thought, Philosophies (Capital P) are a mindset made real by force of will or strength of Breath. They are the only potency dragons do not draw from their own genetic structure; they are the power of idea. Oroboroi start with only two Philosophies, the first level of the philosophy associated with their school, and one level from any other compatible school. Embers Dragons can only select Dominion Philosophies. Sainly Devil Dragons can only select Five Evils Philosophies. True Heart Dragons may choose Philosophies from any school.

It is possible to start with two levels of a single Philosophy, provided it's in the character's primary school. For more on Philosophies, see page 104.

Step Six:

All characters begin play with seven dots of Merits, which should be chosen with the same care you used when **Excised**. Merits should fit the character, not your battle plan. See the **World of Darkness** Rulebook (page 108) for more information, and see page 47 for Merits specifically Oroboroi in design.

Step Seven: Determine Advantages

Most of the advantages dragons receive are identical to those found in Chapter 4 of the **World of Darkness** Rulebook. One advantage in particular differs significantly, however.

Ethics

A set of regulations for dealing with humans and other dragons is psychologically ingrained in the Heart, and recorded to the brain during the metamorphosis. Becoming a member of the Oroboroi involves a ripening of the soul (In both connotations), and certain things grow to be... trivial. People become expendable, no more significant than any other possession. Not all dragons feel this way, but their soul is no worse for wear acting on that concept.

To fit this notion that people are more expendable than property, the Code of Draconic Ethics has been fashioned. It speaks against meaningless sacrifice, but cares little for using tools for a purpose. And that's what mortals are to dragons: tools to be used and broken. Ethics replaces Morality.

Optionally (at Storyteller discretion) a character may start with a reduced Ethics rating in exchange for bonus experience. Each point of Ethics sacrificed grants 5 additional experience. Note that such a

sacrifice cannot lower Ethics below five, and will also affect the starting amount of Breath the character receives.

For more information on the Code of Draconic Ethics, see page 147 in Chapter 3.

Step Eight: Spark of Life

With the muck of the character sheet out of the way, it's time to make your character as real as possible. Why did you choose the traits you did? Is there a story behind that extra dot of Resolve? Did your character go to college for those ratings in Academics, or was she a self-inspired bookworm? Try to come up with a reason for your trait choices. In fiction everything revealed about a character has at least some degree of significance, and it is your job to create those degrees. That is the Spark of Life. A character with a well-defined background is more 'alive' than one that is just an assortment of features. It is essential to remember that, in the end, the story is more important than the stats.

With that in mind, consider some of the physical characteristics your character exhibits. What does she look like? What are her features like when she sports True Form? The Aspects give a guideline for physical tells, but don't let that limit you. Try to create a picture of your creation in your mind. If you're good with a sketchbook, draw her out. The more you do while creating the character, the more attached you will become and the more real she will be.

Physical stature is not the only component of appearance. How does your character carry herself? Act at a party? Is the world revolving around her, or the other way around? What kind of clothes does she wear? What's her favorite food? Color? Branch of Government? Okay, so that last one was a joke, but you get the idea.

Character Creation Quick Reference

This reference is used with the one provided on page 34 of the **World of Darkness** Rulebook, can be utilized to quickly and easily follow the steps of creating a Dragon character.

Method

Choose the method through which your character obtained her Heart. There are five methods available.

Slayer (The Rabid Monster): violent, forceful, impatient; **+1 Strength**

Finder (The Inquisitive Monster): curious, determined, driven; **+1 Intelligence**

Challenger (The Devoted Monster): skilled, tactful, arrogant; **+1 Wits**

Trickster (The Noxious Monster): deceitful, cunning, treacherous; **+1 Manipulation**

Inheritor (The Entitled Monster): favored, pompous, ambitious; **+1 Presence**

School

Choose the school of thought that your character follows. Eleven schools are available.

Embers

Ash (Destruction): anarchists, demolitionists, saboteurs

Blood (Oath): prosecutors, judges, executioners

Bone (Health): pacifists, humanitarians, menders

Sweat (Pain): workaholics, contractors, tanks

Tears (Mind): zealots, mediators, puppeteers

Saintly Devils

Wrath (Destruction): prey/predator

Pride (Oath): sheep/shepherd

Greed (Health): ascetic/abyss

Lust (Pain): abstainer/addict

Sloth (Mind): brigadier/bum

True Heart

Line-Walker (Wraith): stubborn, powerful, mortal

Furnace

The default Furnace rating of an Oroboroi character is one dot. Three Merit dots may be exchanged to increase this rating by one, resulting in Furnace 2 for three Merit dots or Furnace 3 for six Merit dots.

Breath

An Oroboroi character begins play with a number of points of Breath equal to her Ethics rating.

Merits

Dragon Merits include Graft (● to ●●●●●), Hoard (● to ●●●●●), and Lair (varies; special).

Normal human characters, but not dragons, can take the Dragon-Born (●● to ●●●●), Bond of Brood (●●●●●), or Pilot Light (●●●●●) Merits.

Experience Point Costs

Trait	Cost
Attribute	New dots x 5
Skill	New dots x 3
Skill Specialty	3
Common Aspect	New dots x 5
Method Aspect	New dots x 5
Non-Method Aspect	New dots x 6
Primary Philosophy	New dots x 6
Ancillary Philosophy	New dots x 7
Merit	New dots x 2
Furnace	New dots x 8
Ethics	New dots x 3
Willpower	8

Prelude

An optional private session between player and Storyteller, the Prelude is a chance to explore your character's life *before* induction as an Oroboroi. Think of it as a test drive, to see how your skill and attribute choices fit, and how your creation reacts under different forms of pressure. It also lets you explore the reasoning behind your character's method.

A prelude doesn't necessarily have to run like a normal session. It can be used as a brainstorm to develop a rich past for the character, a pre-emptive exposure to the system if you're a new player, or even just a warm-up for a new or out-of-practice Storyteller. Nothing on your sheet is concrete during the prelude; if during the course of it you find your character has greater bursts of mental prowess but is more flexible in abandoning her principles, you may wish to move a point of Resolve to Intelligence. These tweaks are acceptable, but it's best to do it before the chronicle begins.

Preludes can also be run with the entire group simultaneously, but it may become more hectic than expected. If the Storyteller prefers, two sets of pre-chronicle sessions could be held, one on the individual level and one regarding the troupe's union as an Oroboroi Den.

Example of Character Creation

After reading this book, Frank wants to take over his gaming troupe's World of Darkness campaign, which had disbanded a few weeks before at the end of the last chronicle. He decides to reuse the setting from the previous game, but have each player create a new character. All of the players are familiar with the setting, as it is being recycled. With this, Frank states that the characters can use any reasonable concept, so long as they have not possessed their Oroboroi Heart for more than a year. Jesse comments in jest about playing a serial killer,

but to his surprise Frank explains that could be a viable concept. Intrigued, Jesse decides to elaborate.

Jesse's character is likely going to be a mixer in the group, so Frank demands a concept that the other players approve. Jesse's first attempt, "Creepy Janitor", was rejected as being hackneyed and stereotypical. "Philanthropic Sadist" fared a little better, but Frank decided to veto it for his own reasons. Finally, Jesse settles on "Sinister Bartender" and refuses to budge. The other players don't mind, though, as they think it'd work well with their concepts.

With the basic concept, Jesse begins to flesh out his character's background. He determines the Bartender started his business as a vain attempt to shake his own addictions, but as the booze left his system he found... other outlets for his stress.

Despite being a veteran player, Jesse goes back to the **World of Darkness** Rulebook to quickly review the scales of the attributes. He may know the systems they're plied toward, but having most recently played a much more powerful being he can't quite remember where an average human should rate. Refreshed, he decides...

[Excised in accordance with Dark Pack]

(the alcoholism, not the murder) was the immense stress of pre-med college, to such a degree that he never finished his schooling. Despite being a drop-out, the Bartender still retains his extensive knowledge of science and medicine, as well as a great degree of academic prowess. His recent foray into bartending has granted him a slight knowledge of local politics, simply from the force of complaint.

[Excised]

Step Three:

Jesse once more references the **World of Darkness** Rulebook, specifically the summary of the Medicine skill. Not finding what he wants, he flips back to the Academics skill, but it's not there either. He decides to ask Frank whether knowledge of poisons would fall under Academics or Medicine, and Frank deems that Medicine is the correct Skill. With this knowledge in hand, Jesse decides...

[Excised in accordance with the Dark Pack]

Step Four:

[Excised]

At this point, Jesse decides that the source of the Bartender's original addiction

Step Five: Dragon Template

Here the character creation process begins to flow a little less smoothly. Jesse has not played **Dragon the Embers** before, and so he is not very familiar with the rules involved. Frank explains that it is mostly like the other supernatural templates, but Jesse requests access to the **Dragon** book anyway.

The first choice to be made is method. Jesse flips forward to page 50 and quickly skims the five available methods, settling on Trickster as it feels the most appropriate for his sinister Bartender. He tells Frank that his character acquired the Heart several days after cleaning up one of his ‘projects’, as it sat unharmed in the incinerator when he dumped the personal supplies. Frank says that would be closer to the Finder method, but considering the means through which the Dragon was disposed he makes an exception. For selecting this method, Jesse’s bartender gains an extra dot of Manipulation, raising it to 4.

Next, Jesse must choose a school. Frank mentions that the Tears School of Dominion fits his character’s persona almost perfectly, so Jesse takes a look. After briefly comparing it to the other Schools, he agrees that it’s the best fit for the Bartender. The Tears Philosophy will start with a single dot because of this decision, but that comes later.

Furnace is up next. All **Dragon** characters automatically possess one dot in this trait, but it can be increased at a rate of one Furnace dot for every three Merit dots sacrificed. Jesse feels his bartender will need all the Merits he can muster, so he decides to leave the Furnace rating at 1.

Next, Jesse must determine his Bartender’s starting Breath. This is equal to his Ethics, so Jesse flips to Chapter 3 to check out the sins. Though not as grave as when he was a mortal, serial murder is still a pretty heinous sin for the Bartender. Jesse decides that warrants a lower starting ethics, so he sells off two dots for ten experience. That means the Bartender begins with five points of Breath.

And then, on to Aspects. Jesse has five dots for the Hearts Suit, three dots for the Clubs Suit, and two dots to place where he pleases. Inferno 1, Scales 1, Soothing Incense 1, Keen-Eyed 1, and Wall Climber 1 are his five picks from the Hearts Suit. Vile Blood 1, Chameleon Hide 1, and Venoms 1 are his Clubs Suit choices. And Pounce! 1 from the Blades Suit and Impassioned Effort 1 from the Diamonds Suit are his final two choices. Jesse pictures the True Form of his sinister Bartender as a lurking beast, waiting on the ceiling to strike.

Finally, the last application of the Oroboroi template is the selection of Philosophies. Only two dots are available, and one is already designated for the Tears Philosophy due to Jesse’s School selection. He decides to place the other dot in Tears as well, since it presents more immediate utility than the first level of a different Philosophy.

Step Six: Merits

Jesse has seven dots of Merits to assign, so he starts with the dragon-specific ones in this book. He decides that the Bartender likely would not possess a Graft. Lair intrigues him, though. He dedicates two dots to the sinister Bartender’s Lair Merit, converting the local watering hole into a safe haven with minimal security and size. Anything more extravagant would likely draw too much attention from his patrons, but even the Bartender is not immune to the Heart-oriented paranoia of the Oroboroi. Jesse also considers the Hoard Merit, but

decides the Bartender is neither affluent nor arrogant enough to sleep on his riches.

So he turns back to the **World of Darkness** Rulebook. Jesse sees Barfly as a perfect fit, so he spends a dot there. Contacts (the Downtrodden) eats up another dot, but fits perfectly with both the Bartender's Lair and his profession. This causes him to reconsider the Lair Merit, and he decides to apply three more dots to it. One of these increases the size of the location again, making for a more sprawling bar-scene. The remaining two go to devotees, which Jesse declares as the Bartender's regulars. Devotees function similar to Allies (page 114 of the **World of Darkness** Rulebook), but are more diverse in exchange for their reduced numbers. They may influence a greater variety of fields, but not nearly as quickly or as effectively as a legitimate horde of allies would.

Jesse has spent all of his Merit dots, but has realized he did not put anything towards Resources. He considers rearranging his Merits, but Frank (eager to finish the character creation process) says the Bartender's devotees help cover the bill for his big appetite.

Step Seven: Advantages

Jesse's sinister Bartender is almost complete mechanically. He need simply assign a Virtue and Vice, mark down his Ethics, and determine his other traits.

[Excised]

Too long has addiction plagued him in his vain attempt to escape his own life. Deep down he hates himself for being so flawed, so he looks for answers at the bottom of a bottle. At least he did until he started looking for them at the back of somebody's intestines. Despite the sickly degenerated shell of a man the Bartender has become, he still dreams of kicking his need for addiction.

Jesse has already sold two dots of the Bartender's Ethics, so it starts at 5. Frank doesn't ask for justification as this sacrifice makes sense for a serial killer.

Now Jesse must calculate and mark down the Bartender's other traits.

[Excised]

Attributes and the traits that are defined by them can be modified by Aspects and True Form, but that's easy enough to track on the second sheet.

Step Eight: Spark of Life

Jesse's Bartender needs a name. He decides to be a smart-ass, so using a random number generator he tries to invent a first name. The luck of the draw gives him a four-letter name with two vowels and two consonants, and those turn out to be "u" "e" "k" and "x". Xuke. Frank says it's a little funky, but considering a name that sounds even remotely cool came out of a random number generator, he lets Jesse use it with a spelling change. "Zuke" becomes the last name of the Bartender, and vicariously his nickname. Zuke needs a first name, though, and Jesse decides to go with Damian.

Damian Zuke, sinister Bartender of the Rotten Luck, looks to be in his mid-thirties, though he's actually twenty-seven. Spiraling down the drain of alcoholism, Zuke purchased his bar from its previous owner in a vain attempt to fill his need for booze vicariously through his patrons. As the liquor left his system a hole remained, and in a scuffle against a rowdy patron that hole found a new plug.

Zuke needs to kill frequently or he begins to go into withdrawal. Because of this, he will begin play with the Addiction flaw. This need is rooted in his soul, an

impulse to deaden his feelings of self-loathing. He acquired his Oroboroi Heart and became a Trickster because of this addiction; one of the lingering patrons he vanquished had it in her possession, and he discovered it as he burned her effects in the bar's furnace. The sickly sweet smell of the fireproof flesh overpowered Zuke's inhibitions, and he fetched it from the flames for his plate.

Despite becoming supernatural, Zuke's life did not really change much. His methods of dealing with prey had been enhanced, but overall he is the same monster. In fact, his targets were indiscriminate until a conniving Blood dragon (one of the other players) made a deal. She would supply him with trace-free targets in exchange for friendship and favors. Little does Zuke know these targets are actually unfavorable residents of the Blood dragon's province.

Frank says it sounds like a great start. He reclaims the books from Jesse so that he can help the other players make their characters.

Traits

The nine-chambered heart sets dragons apart from standard mortals, both in immense physical prowess and in longevity.

New Advantage: Furnace

Burn hot, burn bright, and keep burning.

That's the cornerstone of life in the Oroboroi. To combat the cold world of politics and secrecy, dragons store their fuel-source at the core of their body. Both a rating of stature and of age, the Furnace gauges both the control a dragon holds over her own body and the influence she can bring to bear in the world around her. The heat of the Furnace gives force to a dragon's Philosophies, it incinerates the supernatural before it reaches her person (see the "Supernatural Conflict" sidebar on page 105), and it accelerates metabolism in both digestion and the manifestation of True Form.

All dragon characters begin play with one dot of Furnace. This value may be increased during character creation at a rate of 1 Furnace dot for every 3 Merit points spent, with a maximum starting Furnace of 3. High Furnace at game's start may be a result of a courageous early career in dragon life, or may be a result of longevity. To make your character more rounded, be sure to rationalize such a purchase. After the sheet is finalized, experience must be spent to further increase this advantage's rating.

With the growth of Furnace comes greater access to Breath. The Furnace rating represents the heat of the dragon's core, and it is the heat and not the volume that creates Breath. A dragon with a hotter Furnace has

Effects of Furnace				
Furnace	Attribute/Skill Maximum	Max Breath/Max Breath per Turn	Heartbeat	Breath Caloric Requirement/Caloric point Requirement
1	5	10/1	0	2000/8
2	5	11/1	+1	2000/8
3	5	12/1	+1	2000/8
4	5	13/2	+2	2000/8
5	5	14/2	+2	2000/8
6	6	15/3	+3	3000/12
7	7	20/5	+3	4000/16
8	8	30/7	+4	6000/24
9	9	50/10	+4	8000/32
10	10	100/15	+5	12000/48

more Breath to spend, and can spend it more quickly. Furnace ratings of 6 or higher also increase the limit of Attributes and Skills to legendary limits.

Overcooked and Under-Processed

Dragons are hopelessly paranoid, and with good reason. If anyone happens across their most valuable possession (with knowledge of its purpose) it would be the end of them. The Furnace does not make it any easier on the poor monsters. As it increases in intensity, its spectral connection to the Heart forces the disembodied organ to work harder to maintain core temperature. The Heart beats louder and louder as the Furnace grows hot, and soon it is even audible from a distance. Anyone listening for subtle sounds in the vicinity of the Heart gains a bonus to hear it based on the Heartbeat rating that corresponds to its owner's Furnace rating. For example, a dragon with Furnace 4 has a Heart that beats with such intensity that a listener in proximity receives +2 to rolls while trying to detect it. What horror an Oroboroi must feel when even she can hear the Heart beating?

Another unfortunate side-effect of high-Furnace is the heat required to stoke it. A higher Furnace burns hotter, so it needs more fuel. To garner a point of Breath, the dragon must eat a number of Calories equal to or exceeding the listed value for her Furnace rating. This also affects how many Calories she must eat in a day to stave off starvation, so high-Furnace dragons have to eat more, and sometimes things that are less than pleasant, to keep their bodies ticking (this process is simplified through the Caloric Point system, explained in Chapter 3 starting on page 144).

New Advantage: Breath

The Furnace generates heat, but the application of that heat produces Breath. Though in its unrefined form Breath is just a mass of flame and heat, it can be subconsciously reassigned to different forms

of energy, often bringing the impossible into reality by force-of-will.

Breath does not have a dot value, it only comes in points. Like Willpower points, Breath may be spent to achieve a variety of functions. Unlike Willpower, however, Breath usage is limited by Furnace and its recovery is based on Calorie consumption. Breath may be expended to:

- Stave off Starvation. One point of Breath must be spent every day (or every interval if the degree of divinity is raised) to meet the Dragon's food requirements, or they begin to suffer from hunger and thirst the following day (See the **World of Darkness Core Rulebook**, page 175). Because Dragons need so much to keep the Furnace stoked, they do not get the extended periods without sustenance for high Stamina or Resolve.
- Gather forging points to assume Aspects as a reflexive action instead of a manifest action. Aspect mechanics are explained in detail in Chapter 3 (page 140)
- Power a Philosophy. The available Philosophies can be found on pages 105-135.
- Recover a single point of bashing damage.
- Recover a single point of lethal damage when used in conjunction with another point (In other words, it takes two Breath to remove one lethal wound).
- Recover a single point of aggravated damage when used in conjunction with two other points (In other words, it takes three Breath to remove one lethal wound. This price must be paid in a lump sum).
- Fly with the appropriate Aspect.
- Breathe Fire with the appropriate Aspect.

- Pump up an Attribute with the appropriate Aspect.
- Protect gear and clothes from the wear and tear caused by Aspects (for one scene).
- Brand a piece of property.

There are two major ways to recover spent points of Breath.

- Eat the required amount of Calories for your Furnace rating.
- Sleep on a hoard of treasure to draw metaphoric nourishment (See the Hoard Merit below)

Merits

All modern dragons began as humans, so they are entitled to any Merits that a normal human could have. They must still meet the same requirements, but such Merits are not stripped away from them when they join the Oroboroi. In fact, the only merits they can lose from Heart consumption are those that specify they are incompatible with supernatural templates. It is important to note that Aspects do not help with meeting prerequisites. The complexity of having access to an ability only when a certain combination of dragon traits are manifest would cause a slew of problems in the long run, so all Merits are limited by the Mortal Coil and not the True Form.

Below are Merits specifically designed for dragons and the mortals with whom they interact.

Graft (● to ●●●●●)

Effect: Your dragon begins play with a Graft, a boney clasp of unique utility that is explained in further detail on page 165. These dreadful devices are created by erasing the body and soul of a mortal, though your character may not be aware of that. In all likelihood, the Graft was a spoil of war or a lucky find, and its nature and function remain a mystery to her.

The Graft Merit may be taken multiple times to signify different Grafts, but its total

rating cannot exceed 5 at character creation (So you could have a 4 dot Graft and a 1 dot Graft, or two 2 dot Grafts and a 1 dot Graft, but never a 5 dot Graft and a 1 dot Graft).

Hoard (● to ●●●●●)

Prerequisite: A matching number of dots in Resources.

Effect: Dragons have bottomless stomachs, but not all sustenance has to be physical. A dragon with the Hoard merit can draw fuel from the metaphoric value of riches. For a Dragon that sleeps on her wealth each night and owns this Merit, a free point of Breath is gifted after a set period of time has passed. For the first dot, the time period is 1 week. Two dots makes the time period 4 days, three dots makes it 2 days, four dots makes the dragon draw Breath each day, and five dots makes for a double-draw from the wealth every day.

Lair (Varies; Special)

Effect: Dragons need a place to keep all their treasure, including the Heart. The Lair is a dragon's home, where she can wait out the heat of a bad situation or relax knowing her Heart is secure. For many dragons it's a place where they can be themselves, without fear of exposure.

Multiple dragons can go in on this merit, each contributing dots on their individual sheet. Dots in the Lair Merit can be spent to increase size (From a cramped studio apartment {1 dot} to a sprawling mansion {5 dots}), increase security (From a single latch {1 dot} to full gridlock, automated defense and patrolling sentries {5 dots}), or maintain loyal followers (From one diehard fan {1 dot} to a veritable crowd of loyal assistants {Squared dots of average mortals up to 5 dots}).

Dragon-Born (●● to ●●●●)

Character Creation Only

Prerequisite: Non-dragon character.

Effect: Though most dragons are incapable of producing draconic offspring,

they can still breed with mortals. Children born of one Oroboroi parent are natural leaders, though they aren't particularly supernatural.

Dragon-Born begin play with one extra Skill dot and one extra specialty per dot owned in this Merit. They are better prepared for dragonhood when they reach maturity, in that they gain a general sense of what it means to be a dragon, what dragons are capable of, and their bodies are better designed to house a dragon's Furnace upon the metamorphosis. Dragon-Born make great contacts, but they themselves usually yearn for Hearts of their own. A dragon-born that devours a Heart rolls a number of dice equal to their dots in this Merit. If successful, they begin their life as one of the Oroboroi with an extra dot of Furnace.

A dragon who has a child with a mortal produces a 4-dot dragon-born. That hybrid can then mate with mortals to create a 3-dot generation, who would subsequently produce a 2-dot generation. 2-dot dragon-born are too far from the potency of dragon genetics to produce children with this special advantage; all their children are mortal.

If hybrids of two different ratings breed, the resulting child has a rating equal to one less than the highest-ranking parent. Two hybrids of the same rating produce a child with that rating.

Having this Merit does not prevent the subject from having other template-specific Merits, like wolf-blooded. This Merit is lost when the owner becomes supernatural, though the Skill and specialty bonuses remain.

Bond of Brood (●●●●●)

Prerequisite: Non-dragon character.

Effect: Dragons fall in love with mortals. Not just carnal love, sometimes it's genuine infallible friendship. But the length of a dragon's lifespan is a heavy burden. Sometimes, she likes to share that burden.

The Bond of Brood is a ritual in which the dragon makes a willing participant like family. She removes a portion of her Heart and gives it to the participant for consumption. In return, the participant will cough up a piece of his own heart after eating the segment of hers. She swallows this piece, and the ritual is complete. The participant must be mortal to take part in this ritual.

From that moment on, the participant has a Furnace rating of 1, and can increase it up to 3 with experience if he so desires. He can also 'borrow' up to 5 points of Aspects that the Heart-segment's owner possesses. While he is using those Aspects, she cannot activate them herself (for more information, see "Borrowing Aspects" on page 144 in Chapter 3). The participant may also use up to the third level in the dragon's highest Philosophy. In addition, his natural lifespan is doubled.

This gift does not come without a price for the dragon. She loses the capacity to reach Furnace 10 until her heart is whole again, and each subsequent "Bond of Brood" means another level of Furnace that can never be reached. From the ritual forward, she also shares degeneration roles with the mortal; whenever he sins against Morality she faces sinning against her Ethics. Willpower lost (Not spent, but lost) by the participant is also lost by the dragon. Truly the only benefit she receives is a long-lasting friend, so very few dragons actually perform the "Bond of Brood".

The Heart must have been removed prior to performing this ritual. No True Heart dragon can partake without first selecting a different school.

Pilot Light (●●●●●)

Character Creation Only

Prerequisite: Non-dragon Character

Effect: Children born of two True Heart dragons have a small piece of dragon in their chest. Not an entire Heart, but one ninth.

Pilot Light works exactly the same as Bond of Brood with two exceptions: with Pilot Light the child can use up to 10 Aspect points possessed by the parent (Mother or Father, determined at character creation) and the child can use Aspects points at the same time as the parent (They aren't borrowed). This does not mean the child possesses a

True Form, though... no, that benefit is exclusive to the Oroboroi.

...There's a nasty rumor floating around that the hearts of nine Pilot Light children can be cobbled together to forge a new Oroboroi Heart. Though the validity of this rumor is questionable, that doesn't stop desperate characters from ruthlessly murdering Pilot Lights.

Slayer: The Rabid Monster, Those who Claim through Violence

The least tactful of the Oroboroi, Slayers were the first method as they replaced the original dragons in the Collapse. A Slayer learns about a dragon's capabilities, then finds one to take its place. The combat serves as a test of mettle for the soon-to-be Oroboroi Slayer, and those that slay their target take the greatest prize.

Slayers are not to be mistaken for Challengers. Killing the dragon is their highest priority; honor or even playing fair are not part of the equation. This isn't to say that Slayers are devoid of honor, it's more a matter of honor as it's useful. All Slayers do share a common trait, though. They want to feel the dragon's life leave in their hands.

Aspects of the Slayer method are focused on gaining the advantage in combat. A Slayer has the easiest time closing distance on an enemy and pummeling them into powder. Slayers control the battlefield, since it is their greatest joy to inflict pain on others. A Slayer never laxes her practice of combat, and when dealing with matters of province her first solution is violence. It's often a good solution.

Slayers begin play with an extra dot of Strength, and their Strength limit is one higher than that of their other Attributes.

Finder: The Inquisitive Monster, Those who Claim through Curiosity

The Second method to appear after the Collapse, Finders followed rumors of the Slayers and salvaged the Hearts lost by violence or the flow of time. A Finder hears whispers of dragons and fervently researches everything she can about them. Even with modern resources, it isn't an easy journey. But eventually the path leads to a Heart, and that is what the Finder was *really* looking for, even if she didn't know it.

Finders know the most about, well, everything. Regarding Oroboroi anatomy, history, politics, and religion there is no other more versed in the subject than a Finder. Many have a weak countenance, but more than make up for it with the vast amount of information that they can muster or easily find. Finders are driven by a desire to unearth *everything*, and with centuries at their disposal they very well could.

Aspects of the Finder method are focused on building and locating information. If there's research that needs to be done, the Finder's the one to call. If there's something (or *someone*) that needs to be brought out into the open, the Finder's the one to ask. If a mysterious object needs to be identified, the Finder's the one to seek. A Finder runs her province with the power of information, setting up an efficient and effective system that protects her and ensures things go her way. After all, knowledge is power.

Finders begin play with an extra dot of Intelligence, and their Intelligence limit is one higher than that of their other Attributes.

Challenger: The Devoted Monster, Those who Claim through Skill

Finders brought a degree of approachability back to dragon-kind, and the first to take advantage of that became the Challengers. Beset by arrogance, dragons were willing to gamble their Heart on the life of an opponent when challenged to a test of skill, just for the amusement of crushing the poor bastard when he lost. Well, some of them didn't, and the dragon became bound to keep the promise. Regardless of how Challengers become aware of the Oroboroi, they all feel the great burden of power and longevity has addled a dragon's modesty. Old leaders don't grow with the times, and need to be replaced. If the Challenger can humble the incumbent, maybe she's better for the job.

Challengers pick a subject and focus to perfection. There's one skill or feature they hold above all other, and to the best of their effort they try to be the best. Most actually are. They are bound by the rules of honor, ingrained by the honor shown them when they first won their own Heart. This doesn't mean they are incapable of betrayal; it just means they betray their newest oath first.

Aspects of the Challenger method are focused on being socially just, good to their word, and focused to the extent of perfection. If a mob is gathering to stop a corrupt official, a Challenger will be leading the charge. In one on one competitions, the Challenger will no doubt win. A Challenger runs her province by pure charisma and talent. There is power to be had in numbers, and she has no problem acquiring them.

Challengers begin play with an extra dot of Wits, and their Wits limit is one higher than that of their other Attributes.

Trickster: The Noxious Monster, Those who Claim through Deceit

With Challengers came a measure of honor and respectability. But life is built from balance, and an equal degree of treachery met the skillful in combat. Dragons as a whole had become easy to spot, easy to approach, and easy to trick. Those aware of this and with the cunning and malice to take what they wanted became the Tricksters, striking with poison, trickery, bribery, theft, and pretty much any other shifty activity possible to claim what they wanted: a piece of the Oroboroi.

Tricksters are often even more charming than Challengers are, and they are experts on the approach, the misdirection, and finally the kill. Their attacks are slow to act but lethal in both government and mortality, and they never leave a trail.

Aspects of the Trickster method reflect the contamination their Furnace suffers due to the means by which they joined dragon-kind. Corrosive, toxic, and inconspicuous: these words sum up the powers a Trickster's divinity grants her. If something needs to be done discretely, contact a Trickster. Tricksters run their province by the same means they obtained their Heart. Little protest has ground when those who complain simply vanish.

Tricksters begin play with an extra dot of Manipulation, and their Manipulation limit is one higher than that of their other Attributes.

Inheritor: The Entitled Monster, Those who Claim by Favor

The final method came to life when dragons reconnected with their humanity, realizing their hubris or tiring of their existence. This was the cost of stealing the power in the first place, humanity doesn't have the temperance to watch everything it loves wither and die. The escape clause: hand the power off to somebody else.

Unlike other dragons, Inheritors do not risk much to join the Oroboroi. As such, they come in all creeds and classes, a veritable melting pot of traits. The Furnace of an Inheritor is flavored by this initial favor, however. Each of them receives an aura of entitlement that unites them as a method.

Inheritor Aspects are all about the regality that comes with entitlement, including the direction of others, corporate ladder-climbing, and filling a room with her presence. If there's a gala, an Inheritor is no doubt hosting. Or maybe she's the life of the party. Either way, she's someone you'll notice. Inheritors run their province in a style befitting a monarch. Usually not the best means, but considering history it is a time-tested one.

Inheritors begin play with an extra dot of Presence, and their Presence limit is one higher than that of their other Attributes.

Schools of Dominion

The Schools of Dominion are mentalities derived from careful analysis of Dominion's Collapse, the event that ended the glorious rule of the dragons and began the cycle of life, consumption, death. Each school has access to one of the five entitled purviews of dragonhood (Destruction, Oath, Health, Pain, and Mind) in a direct and focused manner.

It is expected that Players will choose one of these five schools.

School of Ash: Gateways to Destruction

The night before it had been new. Pristine foundation, perfect walls, beautiful marbled columns supporting the structure. The restoration had been a phenomenal success. But when the building inspector came around, the place was barely standing. Ruptured plumbing, stairwell cracking, shattered stone, it was as if it was being dragged into hell.

Confident in their analysis of existence as a whole, the followers of Ash believe that without the guiding wisdom of the original dragons the world is doomed to crumble under the weight of its own faults. Repairs are never sufficient, no matter how much effort is applied everything will eventually return to the dust from whence it was formed. These Oroboroi have the longevity to validate their theories, both in the craft of humankind and in the society they raise up around that craft.

Followers of Ash are fatalists. They have the power to bring the world to ruin if they so desired, but most don't even bother. After all, it'll get there eventually anyway. Those that are drawn to act feel that the least pleasant things should be destroyed first, so that they may enjoy a more pleasant slip into oblivion. In summary, they are slackers.

Inheritors are not locked out of the school, but theirs is a great challenge to maintain membership. Ash Inheritors must overcome their sense of entitlement and come to grips with the fact that everything—even the rights to their Heart—is terminal. An invisible clock hangs over their head, and to recognize that is to break away from the mold. Inheritors who manage to keep up the path of Ash prosper the most, their social Aspects perfectly designed for remote networking.

With regards to province, they regard property as a holey bucket. It is pointless to keep water within, as it drains away too quickly. To perform repairs would prove too much effort, and only be a temporary fix. Instead the Ash dragon arranges for the bucket to be somewhere favorable, a place where its draining can serve some benefit.

Mannerism: Being the slackers that they are, most followers of Ash do not pay due process to grooming or attire. Their hair tends to be unkempt and greasy, their eyes dull and listless, their clothes simple and easily tended. They tend to run their provinces through remote mediums like mail correspondence or—with more recent advances—the internet. They know the inherent flaws of these systems, and use them to tactical advantage. Lethargy is not an absence of brilliance, just a lack of enthusiasm to utilize it. Most of all, though, they recognize that everything has an end-game flaw. Exploiting that flaw is both the easiest and fastest path to victory.

Philosophy: All followers of Ash open up the path to focused destruction. The pessimism they feel towards existence leeches into the world around them, creating the flaws they claim were there all along. With the infusion of Breath, these flaws can explode into a total breakdown of misfortune.

Background: Those that follow Ash are drawn by the inherent nihilism it entails. For atheists the lingering threat of oblivion validates their stand on life, ironically serving as a crude form of religion. Some grow bitter when the world of the Oroboroi turns out more gritty and less glamorous than first anticipated, and find comfort in the school's explanation. Though there are always exceptions, followers of Ash are notoriously bitter and introverted.

Character Creation: Followers of Ash are not social. Ever. Their attitude makes for unpleasant company, and the lack of practice renders them lost for words. Intelligence keeps them occupied, Resolve holds them to their creed, and Wits makes them tactically savvy to the

Stereotypes

Blood Dragons: What purpose serves a promise? Words are as easily broken as the thing that preserves them.

Bone Dragons: So you want to pick up the pieces when I'm done? I'll just have to make sure there aren't any left.

Sweat Dragons: All that effort and for what? It'll fall apart in the end; *that* I can assure you.

Tears Dragons: ...You're scary. Stay away from me.

ooo

Scholars of the Five Evils: I feel sorry for you. I really do. I can understand how scary it is being a monster. But you're making my life unpleasant. So you die now.

Scholars of True Heart: You are opinionated, and you face oblivion with courage. I can respect that.

Vampires: They do WHAT with their blood? Oh that's nasty.

Werewolves: My bad attitude is doing something to your resonance? Well, I guess you could fix it, but it'll break again.

Mages: You say I'm some sort of Atlantean god? Sorry, I've never been to the south.

Mortals: The most fragile beings in existence. It's amazing how much they break before they're broken.

extent necessary to run their world. Being strong or dexterous depends on personal preference, but most Ash dragons are hearty enough to run all-nighters on the computer screen throwing together a good virus or buyout. If they practice any social graces at all, it would be Manipulation.

Common Ash dragon skills include Computer, Investigation, and Science. Those worth their salt also turn to Larceny and Subterfuge to achieve their ends. Ash dragons know how to wait; they know that direct confrontation is not the only way to beat a foe.

Province: Ash dragons enjoy a great deal of prosperity due to the advent of the information superhighway. As a result, much of their province does not have a physical counterpart. Faceless masses of remote contacts make up the majority of the dragon's holdings, each striving by request or by infatuation to make the locale of the dragon's Lair more pleasant. Relationships share just as many flaws as buildings do, though, so a good Ash dragon knows when to break a bad connection.

Concept: hacker, investor, saboteur, demolitionist, marriage counselor, politician, administrator, lawyer.

Quote: *Your presence hadn't escaped me. I've got millions of eyes, each contributing a piece to your mosaic. Though I have to say... it's much easier to make out in person.*

School of Blood: Keepers of the Oath

“The words spoiled in your mouth, mister Nicholas” A flicked match singed the banker’s suit coat. “You never wanted to help those people. But I’m going to help you. Help you become a better person.” The accompanying screams could have shattered steel. When the bank opened the next morning, all that remained was a splatter of blood.

Frontline combatants against the retched art of treachery, followers of Blood strive to be good to their word, and also to keep others honest. After all, it was deceit that first caused the Collapse. Those who will not be righteous will be punished. Those who continually infract will not live to pass another lie as truth. These Oroboroi judge harshly, and the world warps around their sense of honor.

Followers of Blood are sadists. Clever, smooth, and attentive, nothing escapes their gaze and words are not forgotten. Conversation with a known Blood dragon should not be taken lightly, lest you walk into an agreement you aren’t even aware of. The fine print will be the death of you. No, seriously, you’ll die. Blood dragons are obsessive-compulsive executioners.

The oath does not exclude Tricksters from this school of thought, although they are rare and often less prosperous than members from other methods. Blood Tricksters quickly learn to say things in a way that does not entangle them legally or mystically. In some ways, they’re actually better at keeping promises than Blood dragons of other methods.

In regards to province, a Blood dragon sees property as a beautiful yet hopelessly fragile piece of crystal. It is a sign of prestige, but care must be taken to use it properly or it will be damaged. Keeping it locked away isn’t an option either, as that would defeat its purpose. The dragon must rather be courageous yet cautious with her province, willing to defend it with violence if it is threatened.

Mannerism: Blood dragons are clean-cut and formal, usually wearing appropriate business vestments for any given outing. They are tidy, industrious, and efficient to the letter, and a great modicum of respect is rightly gifted to them for that. Blood dragons run their provinces like a business. Punctuality and dedication are important, and those that do not practice those virtues are a waste of money and time.

Philosophy: All followers of Blood hold close the power of locked oath. Though unable to force action on others, they can guarantee someone sticks to a promise, and in many cases that is all the more potent. Their presence keeps people honest by means of their world view leaking into material form. With Breath, that honesty can be made to face the greatest of deterrents unshaken.

Background: Blood dragons have been hurt in the past. They recognize the faults of poorly chosen words, and of haphazard vows made without care for consequence. They take it upon themselves to make the consequences real, so fewer people suffer from empty promises. Many are charged by the hope the world can be made better through their protection, so the Blood school calls to them.

Character Creation: Followers of Blood are clever, quick on their feet, and their interpersonal skills are unparalleled. Their deadpan serious nature makes them feel trustworthy, and others use them for advice when they are spiraling out of control. Little do they know that their words will be turned against them if they stray from the path. Presence is a Blood dragon’s biggest ally, followed by Resolve and Composure. Wits makes a good follow-up, then Strength to add punch to their threats. Blood dragons are usually weak in Manipulation, preferring the direct approach to exploitation.

Stereotypes

Ash Dragons: Classic self loathers, the lot of them. Pay them little attention but don't ignore them, or they'll break something.

Bone Dragons: Yours is an honorable mentality, but a little too passive for me. Prevention is the better course.

Sweat Dragons: If we worked together we could build a golden age for this city. But I'm unworthy because I get help from others? Fine, keep to your labor, and enjoy the lonely life it brings you.

Tears Dragons: You don't cry when someone breaks a promise, you break them. When you understand that, maybe we can be friends.

ooo

Scholars of the Five Evils: You use your good will to hide your sins, but I can see them. You've failed to keep even your personal promises, so why should I trust you?

Scholars of True Heart: You can't even commit to a philosophy. Make a claim and stick to it, dammit!

Vampires: They have no place in my kingdom.

Werewolves: I will keep the daylight safe, if you protect the night. Promise?

Mages: The ones that practice Fate? Yeah, I like them.

Mortals: It depends on the person. Some can be almost pleasant.

Common Blood dragon skills include Empathy, Medicine, and Socialize. Many successful Blood dragons also practice Expression, Persuasion, and Politics. They're socialites, so they have to keep on top of the times to ensure the oaths continue.

Province: Blood dragons are quite traditional when it comes to province. They pick a specific region of city or county to guard as their own, and the constituents that occupy that space. They are usually well known in the parts they choose, though not for their true nature. Rather they are respected as paragons of good morals in a rapidly collapsing ethic wasteland. Blood dragons that do rise to significant political power find themselves hard-pressed to keep all the promises they've made.

Concept: lawyer, marriage counselor, politician, executive, protestor, police officer, judge, professional juror, writer.

Quote: *This park is a city landmark and I've got the petition signatures to prove it. You will not raze tree one here.*

School of Bone: Menders of the Broken

*There's this guy who lives a few blocks over... he's totally nuts! He's got a bomb shelter with four years of food and water, and a backup generator. He says it's for the earthquake to come. Seriously? There's never been even a seismic hiccup around *RUMBLE*...What was that?! *CRASH!**

Dedicated followers of the Farmer's Almanac, those of the school of Bone know the world is an unstoppable force, one to be picked up after when its whimsy spells destruction. The Collapse was the inevitable conclusion of Dominion, and the only suitable reaction is to rebuild. These Oroboroi are hoarders, planners, and re-planners as is necessary. No situation is hopeless, *that* is their mantra.

Followers of Bone are optimists. Intelligent, caring, and kind, they hold the longest friendships and the strongest marriages. A Bone dragon is nauseatingly cheerful, almost to the point of diabetic coma. Still, they'll help out whenever tragedy strikes, so it's not a bad friendship to have.

Slayers following the way of Bone are hard to come by, as the inherent aggression contradicts the ways of reconstruction. Many are just too violent to pick up the pieces after a particularly bad fall, and so they go to schools that are more properly suited to their personality. Slayers that do succeed as Bone dragons do so by aiming their violence in practical ways. They make the situation better by removing 'hazards'.

Bone dragons treat their province like a time-honored childhood toy. If it breaks, they glue it back together. They aren't afraid to let others see it, as it's a token of where they've been. Unfortunately, though, they don't ever really try to change it, only return it to its original condition.

Mannerism: Bone dragons are quiet. They observe. And after something happens, that's when they get involved. They are often found irritating for their 'wait and see' attitudes. Bone dragons don't run their provinces so much as polish them. They draw a great deal of joy from setting things straight, which means they need to let things become 'misplaced' first.

Philosophy: Bone dragons are entitled the power of good health. Diseases don't linger long in their company, wounds knit with haste, and everyone feels heartier at their gait. Breath further expands this wave of well-being.

Background: Bone dragons are humanitarians. Or animal lovers. Or keepers of the faith. They have a strong sense of karma that comforts them when times are tough. With the power of dragonhood comes a sense of release; finally able to take control of Karma's rebound. Regardless of background all Bone dragons are versed in the paths of consequence, having followed them on several occasions.

Character Creation: Followers of Bone are charming, intelligent, persistent, and unshaken. They're the perfect sounding board when life needs sorting out. Also, they're great at giving advice. Bone dragons like Resolve best, with Composure riding second and Intelligence a close third. Physical attributes fall in after that, with Strength being the most important. Other social attributes fall off.

Bone dragons like to practice Medicine. A lot. It's actually their favorite skill. Falling in a far second is Streetwise, with Survival standing third. A good Bone dragon knows her way around Politics as well, but as said before it doesn't hold a candle to Medicine.

Province: The province of a Bone dragon usually consists of a single place of business, such as an office or a hospital. The dragon makes a dedicated effort to learn the name of every person

Stereotypes

Ash Dragons: Everything you break, I can fix. Go ahead, break it again. You won't stop me.

Blood Dragons: Judge me as you will. Punish me as you wish. My spirit will not be broken.

Sweat Dragons: I could help you when you're weary, but you reject such comfort. Why?

Tears Dragons: Cheer up. Things will work out in the end.

ooo

Scholars of the Five Evils: Those scars that coat your body... that's Karma telling you it hates you. And I do too.

Scholars of True Heart: How can you play with your new toy if you refuse to unwrap it?

Vampires: Blood grows back. I've got no problem with the leeches.

Werewolves: What do you mean I'm an angel of death?!

Mages: Whisper your mysteries to the wind, but none will hear them. You're a shadow in the night. That's too bad.

Mortals: They are so dear to me I cannot bear to part with any.

that interacts with that building, be they employee or visitor or passing lunatic. They come off creepy and obsessive, but in a loveable way.

Concept: advice columnist, doctor, nurse, lawyer, marriage counselor, 'good' insurance agent, politician, carpenter.

Quote: *Go ahead. Break my bones, shatter my body, and spill my blood. I know how it all goes together. I can put it back when you're done.*

School of Sweat: Champions of the Pain

They say he built the whole thing himself. From the frame out, every bolt in that car was tightened by his hand. But he never drives it. I heard the purr of its engine once, but it's silent now. He doesn't even open the garage to show it off. Makes you wonder why he built it in the first place?

Ever the martyr, Sweat dragons are all about the journey. Pain is an inescapable part of life, and to flee from it is to achieve nothing. Hedonism is the enemy, and followers of Sweat work to shatter the grip of lazy comfort that has carpeted the land. After all, the collapse came when dragons got a little *too* comfortable.

Followers of Sweat are realists. Hearty, hale, and energetic, they ricochet from project to project seeking the endorphin rush that accompanies exhaustion. A Sweat dragon is hard to stop, and becomes irritated when her focus is broken. If you set her to a task, though, she will dedicate all the forces of nature towards it until it is done.

Somewhat taboo to this mindset are the Finders, who enjoy a life of relative safety in their book stacks. Though there is hard work to be done in a library, it is hardly the type that draws a sweat. Sweat Finders are hard-pressed to draw respect from their peers, as their work is considered menial and un-devoted by other Sweat dragons. Sweat Finders work the hardest in a vain effort to prove they're worthy, and for this reason they are often the most useful Sweat dragons around.

Followers of the school of Sweat treat their province like an unfinished project. It needs to stay on the agenda, and they need to bleed for it every once in a while. Province forgotten is province lost. Though it is easy to get distracted, they must never leave their province to stew for too long.

Mannerism: Sweat dragons are gregarious. They laugh openly, they live freely, and they love often. They are also harsh, often the first to present a criticism against those who are lazy or weak. Sweat dragons are known for their no-nonsense approach to virtually every situation. They come off as abrasive, but sometimes that harsh light is necessary.

Philosophy: Sweat dragons have control over pain, specifically the increase of pain. They redirect the nerve reactions of injuries for benefit or ill, they intensify the agony of their enemies, and they make sure injuries take longer to heal. Driven by a need to prove the character of others, Sweat dragons make the world around them more taxing.

Background: Sweat dragons know the value of a hard day's work. Very few of them are from entitled families, and those that are find that entitlement ripped away from them when they join the Oroboroï. Effort is the greatest force in existence for these crafters. The state of dragonhood merely provides them the longevity to continue that effort.

Character Creation: Followers of Sweat are strong. Very strong. And they know how to endure. If there's a project that needs doing, the Sweat dragon is the one to ask. Physical attributes take the forefront, followed by Social attributes. Studying is viewed as a slacker's passion, so it is usually ignored by all but Finder dragons in the school.

Sweat dragons enjoy Medicine, though not as much as Bone dragons. Their real passion is Survival. Those worth their salt also practice Brawl and Athletics, with just a touch of Weaponry. Another favorite is Intimidation.

Province: The province of a Sweat dragon is probably the largest of all the schools, covering the most geographic area. They prefer regions in development, so they can join in on the labor. Their goals often involve landscaping and home improvement, simply because of the

Stereotypes

Ash Dragons: Go ahead, knock the building down. I'll just build another one.

Blood Dragons: You are weak. There's nothing else to say.

Bone Dragons: I don't think you understand what injuries *mean*. Maybe if you had a few?

Tears Dragons: You're too concerned with the impact an action has on the people around them. Sometimes, a hammer is just a hammer.

ooo

Scholars of the Five Evils: The ultimate hedonists, fleeing from the pain that could purify them. The only option is to catch them.

Scholars of True Heart: Too scared to pry the chest open? Dink.

Vampires: The euphoria that their embrace grants is an unholy sin against nature. Bring fire.

Werewolves: These know the rewards of hard work. A kindred spirit, in more ways than one.

Mages: Anything you weave supernal, I have wrought with my hands. You decide who is more worthy.

Mortals: Those who work for their living, support. Those that take for their living, destroy. Adjust as necessary.

taxing nature of those jobs. Most are seen as humanitarians, but their aspirations are not for the good will of men. Instead it's an ascetic lifestyle; reaching for purity through pain.

Concept: carpenter, artisan, artist, mailroom clerk, personal trainer, doctor, lawyer, politician, mechanic, soldier, chef.

Quote: *A cheap rip-off, that's what manufacturing is. See this? This is the real deal.*

School of Tears: Paragons of Emotion

Sweet little whispers, sweet little whispers as the life slips out of you. I'm sorry you have to die, but your lack of compassion is contagious. And it's not a bug I want my friends to catch.

There's only one enemy to a Tears dragon, and that enemy is apathy. Convinced the Collapse was a result of the dilution of passion, followers in this school push to ensure that *all* things have some sort of emotional response. Rage, fear, joy, hatred, love, it doesn't matter as long as it isn't indifference. They are the closest to zealots among the Oroboroi.

Followers of Tears are fanatics. Intelligent and socially adept, they wander from place to place instigating 'scenes'. Within these episodes of unusual circumstance, the Tears dragon steps in as mediator and guide, helping the 'actors' properly face or express the appropriate emotion. Few are able to recognize that they are being puppeteered by the nearby follower of Tears, and those that do will no doubt face a wretched fate.

A rarely seen but not impossible method of this school is the Challenger. The laws of honor and chivalry imply a subtlety that Tears dragons do not respect. A Tears Challenger has to work twice as hard to get the emotional responses she craves, as she herself is so muted in personality. The extra effort pays off, though, in a twisted sort of way. They become a symbol of what apathy can do.

Tears dragons feel their province is a play, with them as the star. There are act breaks, yes, which buys about enough time to change costumes, and then it's back to the show. The show is all that matters. The performance needs to make them cheer. There is nothing else.

Mannerism: Tears dragons are creepy. Many are deranged, laughing at inappropriate times or sobbing uncontrollably. They act courteous and polite, though they never really develop friends. They're far too dangerous for that. If close attention is paid to a Tears dragon, it is easy to tell that something is off about them. For them, everyone is a tool to be exploited. That makes them great for stirring up a crowd, but one can never be sure what exactly a Tears dragon is after.

Philosophy: Tears dragons have control over the emotions that are tied to memory. With just a little effort, they can change the associations that may exist between an emotion and a memory, moving them to their needs. Many of the Philosophy's powers neutralize emotion completely, an ironic punishment considering the core mentality of the Tears School. Tears dragons feel the world does not care enough, and their ideology drains into the world to prove them right.

Background: All Tears dragons have been hurt in the past by indifference. Maybe they were maimed and no one came to the rescue. Maybe they slumped into depression and none sympathized with their plight. Whatever the case, it has made them bitter, driven them to force reactions in others (whatever those reactions may be). Being an Oroboroi gives them the endurance to survive the consequences of their puppeteering.

Character Creation: Followers of Tears are terribly smart. And they're charming; charming enough to get what they want without ever coming off as the bad guy. It is unlikely anyone would seek out a Tears dragon, they simply fall into the lives of others and manipulate them to their bizarre ends. Tears dragons rarely practice physical skills; they tend to flee when in danger.

Tears dragons love the social skills, but none more than Empathy. It is the cornerstone of their puppet strings. Other favored skills are Expression, Persuasion, and Socialize. Those worth their weight also practice the art of Subterfuge. Pretty much everything about them

Stereotypes

Ash Dragons: Your protests are empty, and so are you. Come, let me fill you.

Blood Dragons: Oaths lead to promise, and a promise kept gives satisfaction. Carry on.

Bone Dragons: You may mend their bodies, but their minds still blither. Expect to see them again. In more pieces next time.

Sweat Dragons: Be it joy or misery, pain at least brings something. I respect that.

ooo

Scholars of the Five Evils: The sorrow of their predicament is exhilarating. I just love to watch them squirm.

Scholars of True Heart: I'm glad you're so comfortable with yourself. And if you become a problem, I'll only have to deal with you once.

Vampires: While you are young enough to feel, you will drain the emotion of others. When you are too old to feel, you sit a gravity well of emptiness. Either way, when I catch you you'll be dust.

Werewolves: You're angry? Good. Get angry. Let me see those teeth!

Mages: The mind mages share my enthusiasm. The other ones, well, that's a case by case basis.

Mortals: They need my help the most.

revolves around the core deception, which makes for an uneasy alliance should anyone Den with them.

Province: Parent Teacher Associations, Country Clubs, and other borderless groupings with a central locus are the provinces of choice for a Tears dragon. The membership gives them freedom to interact with the visitors and residents without too much suspicion, and the clubhouse gives them a place to fall back on in the event of a lull. The perfect province for a Tears dragon is one that never sleeps, one that cries out or sings to the mountains. Unfortunately sorrow is easier to sow than joy.

Concept: angel of death, actor, musician, postman, reporter, nurse, lawyer, politician, homeless prophet, serial killer, ventriloquist.

Quote: *Come now, it's okay to cry. That's why we're here.*

Schools of the Five Evils

The Schools of Five Evils, unlike the Schools of Dominion, are far more isolated and all based on the same principle: that one sin is far worse to indulge than all the others. Ironically, the powers these schools' Philosophies grant are based in the very sins they shun; a forbidden fruit the Saintly Devil dragon must resign herself to.

Being a member of one of these schools does not preclude the character to a particular Vice. On the contrary, the Vice a Saintly Devil carries is probably completely different from the vice of her school. You may also notice that two vices are excluded, those of Envy and Gluttony. Though these sins are recognized, they are a quintessential part of existence as a member of the Oroboroi, and none see them as the gravest atrocity. They are a necessary evil.

Scholars of the Five Evils have access to the full, raw power of the draconic purviews, instead of the focused versions those Dominion dragons practice. With this extra muscle comes an increased risk of backfire, which will be discussed later with their Philosophies (See page 119). Saintly Devil dragons also face a largely different system of character management, explained in great detail in Chapter 3 (page 150).

These schools are intended in a mainly antagonistic sense. They are far more difficult to play than the schools of Dominion. You should not play a Saintly Devil dragon if it is the first time you are participating in a **Dragon** chronicle.

School of Wrath:

Locomotives to Catastrophe

“What did the man look like?” “I... I don’t know. He was just sitting in the corner, nobody was even talking to him.” “And he just opened fire?” “Yeah, Kris and I were arguing about splitting the tip, and he just went berserk.”

Saintly Devil dragons who fall prey to the school of Wrath are usually pacifists, well aware of the damage violence brings. They absolutely hate the idea of anger taking control and ravaging the world around them, but their very rejection of the concept dooms them to face it.

The best way to ensure destiny gets its way is to flee from it. Victims of the school of Wrath are dragged into world-class rampages simply because they do not want to be. Ironically, if they resolved themselves to get angry every once in a while, the episodes wouldn’t be nearly as bad, and less damage would be done overall. But the Scholars of the Five Evils are not known for their common sense. It’s all about running away from problems.

Good Dragon Mode: When in “Good” dragon mode, victims of Wrath are cripplingly timid and often quiet. Those that are social pick safe events that are unlikely to escalate. “Good” Wrath dragons often take up hobbies that make up for their rampages, like house building for the poor or soup kitchen management for the hungry. Those with wealth will splurge it on hospital charities after a ‘binge’, trying to redeem themselves in the eyes of the people they hurt. The pressure to rage is always on the horizon, though.

As they climb out of their shame, they come to feel their pacifism will guide others to peace, and so willingly begin to throw themselves in powder-keg situations. That exposure drags them into “Bad” dragon mode.

Whenever a victim of Wrath in “Good” mode witnesses an act of violence that would warrant a Wrath Vice’s recovery of Willpower, even if she herself committed that act, she must roll the lower of Composure or Resolve and succeed, or slide into “Bad” mode.

Bad Dragon Mode: When in “Bad” dragon mode, Wrath dragons cease to be victims. They revel in watching others lose their temper, but they draw the most joy from causing extensive destruction to everything around them. “Bad” Wrath dragons start bar brawls, they open fire at protest rallies, or sometimes if they’re really demented they pick secluded cities near fault lines and then raze them.

As they are driven mad by their indulgence, their wrath turns from objects to people, and when met in turn they see just how much harm they’ve really done. Of course, in their damaged state, this simply exhilarates them further. But when a “Bad” Wrath dragon is faced with a truly righteous individual, one who stands against rat-bastardry in the name of justice, she is forced to reassess her position.

Whenever a victim of Wrath in “Bad” mode witnesses an act of bravery that would warrant a Justice Virtue’s recovery of Willpower, she must roll the higher of Composure or Resolve. Success means she’s climbed back to “Good” mode.

Philosophy: Victims of Wrath will usually only use their Philosophy while in “Bad” dragon mode. In fact, they often blast through all the levels they know as quickly as possible, to cause the most havoc and destruction. Everything crumbles around a Wrath dragon in “Bad” dragon mode, and the powers granted by their Philosophy make sure of that.

Province: Wrath dragons are most often found in areas of residential expansion. They have seen a resurgence of membership with the advent of the suburb community, where repressing thoughts of rage is the social norm. The Wrath dragon cannot understand this façade, truly believing that her neighbors are fellow advocates of non-violence. This creates a comfortable

Stereotypes-Good Mode

Pride Dragons: I can't believe what you put up with. How can you let them treat you like that?

Greed Dragons: The charity you show does not wash clean your stains.

Lust Dragons: Bite your lower lip. It helps.

Sloth Dragons: Doesn't all that hard work make you exhausted? I'm getting tired just watching you.

ooo

Scholars of Dominion: Opinionated, self-centered jerks.

Scholars of True Heart: Call me when you grow up.

Vampires: Lalala I can't hear you lalala!

Werewolves: You're looking for that other guy.

Mages: I don't have any answers. So stop asking.

Mortals: God how I envy them.

Stereotypes-Bad Mode

Pride Dragons: Show-Boating!

Greed Dragons: Can't you share? Fine, I'll just break your stuff.

Lust Dragons: Hey! Look at me! Over here! Yo!

Sloth Dragons: You should come out and play. Before your house falls down on top of you.

ooo

Scholars of Dominion: They're the bone-crackliest!

Scholars of True Heart: Get out of the way.

Vampires: How 'bout a little fire, scarecrow?

Werewolves: Let's have a tussle, shall we?

Mages: You'd better hope you're done casting before I get to you, magic-pants.

Mortals: Crunchy.

and deceptively safe environment for the Wrath dragon, and when they do fall off the wagon the area gives them ample opportunity to repent.

Concept: barfly, investor, philanthropist, carpenter, legislator, PTA member, legislator.

Quote: *Look at this. This is a genuine cherry wood nightstand. It's from the nineteen-twenties. I restored it myself; have you ever seen anything more beautiful? Things like this need to be protected. It would be such a shame if it broke.*

School of Pride: Shepherds to the Masses

A crowd had gathered in the plaza. Or rather, amalgamated in the plaza. A woman had just started band-standing, and initially it was nothing but anarchistic nonsense. But after a while it started to make sense. And the people were really getting riled up. Was I the only one with my senses still intact?

Victims of Pride fear narcissism, and the big nothing of empty promises. They are often politically motivated and revolutionary, insisting that those in power simply use it for their own gains. This puts them on the spot as the state of Oroboroi membership entitles them to that same status. These dragons despise Pride, that sense of self-satisfaction that is often undeserved.

Pride is a peculiar phenomenon; like fire it is both alluring and abrasive, and it serves both positive and negative purpose. There is a great deal of self-confidence that can be drawn from Pride, but flaunting of achievement cheapens the moment. Pride is detested because it is tacky. And pathetic, sometimes. But to run away from something is to still acknowledge its existence, which is why victims of Pride cannot escape it.

Good Dragon Mode: When in “Good” dragon mode, victims of Pride are modest and extroverted. They do their best not to stand out, pushing attention onto others for their good works. Of course, those who receive the praise accept it willingly, and inadvertently push the dragon towards her wicked streak. “Good” Pride dragons work to push others up the ladder, to make up for their selfish indulgence when they lose control.

But stolen credit eventually drives them mad. Despite the fact that they may be making the world a better place, they perpetually remain insignificant nobodies. This drives them to rise up and claim what all along should have been theirs. Unfortunately the methods used are the same that crushed them in the first place.

Whenever a victim of Pride witnesses an act of gloating that would warrant a Pride Vice’s recovery of Willpower, *even* if she herself committed the act, she must roll the lower of Composure or Resolve, and succeed, or slide into “Bad” mode.

Bad Dragon Mode: When in “Bad” dragon mode, Pride dragons step on others to get the job done. By drawing a group of people together under common banner, they’re able to claim the credit for a group effort and come out smelling like a rose. After all, their minions (as it were) are more than willing to let them have that honor. It has nothing at all to do with the Philosophy that addles their sense of oath and makes them puppets... okay, maybe just a little. “Bad” Pride dragons go big, or they go back to “Good” mode and return to mediocrity.

Pride dragons stay in “Bad” mode the longest. Despite their thralls’ obedience, their acts are not actually charitable. A “Bad” Pride dragon needs to see the world as one that loves and nurtures before she can drop her flags. When she does finally see an instance of this ideal, she very quickly realize how foolish she’s been acting and the shame pulls them back into “Good” mode. And in order for that to happen, such a person must *not* be part of the mob mentality.

Whenever a victim of Pride in “Bad” mode witnesses an act of selflessness that would warrant a Charity Virtue’s recovery of Willpower, she must roll the higher of Composure or Resolve. Success means she’s climbed back to “Good” mode.

Philosophy: Pride dragons will mostly avoid use of their Philosophy while in “Good” mode. While in “Bad” mode they move to populated areas and use the group mentality to sow promises, which then must be fulfilled by the honorable. And the Pride Philosophy makes sure they’re honorable. Pride dragons cause very little collateral damage themselves, but their mobs certainly get the job done.

Stereotypes—Good Mode

Wrath Dragons: I sense a kindred spirit in you.

Greed Dragons: It's people like you that make me keep faith in the world.

Lust Dragons: What are you hiding from?

Sloth Dragons: Your work ethic is admirable. It puts me to shame.

○○○

Scholars of Dominion: They're just like my boss. And I hate them just as much.

Scholars of True Heart: I know you think you're doing the right thing, but you're only putting yourself in more danger.

Vampires: I hate them.

Werewolves: I'll help you clean this place up. You can even have the credit if you want.

Mages: Take what you need. Just leave me enough to get home.

Mortals: Some days I wish... no, there's no sense dwelling in alternate reality.

Stereotypes—Bad Mode

Wrath Dragons: You're screwing everything up, you oaf!

Greed Dragons: Keep your grungy trinkets, I want the world.

Lust Dragons: Here's an idea. Be passionate about *my* thing.

Sloth Dragons: Are you still here?

○○○

Scholars of Dominion: Flies in my honey.

Scholars of True Heart: What an excellent foot soldier you'll make.

Vampires: Manipulators after my own heart. Truly a kindred spirit. Hahaha, kindred.

Werewolves: I'm making the world a better place, whether you can see it or not.

Mages: You think your frail Atlantis voodoo is a match for my mob? Ha!

Mortals: Expendable.

Province: Pride dragons love the city. What better place to remain anonymous than one that's bursting at the seams with people? City folk are of course relentless in their corporate spelunking, and anyone willing to get stepped on *is* stepped on without a second thought. And when the shoeprints add up, revenge becomes the only option.

Concept: doormat, mailroom clerk, archivist, delivery person, secretary, assistant, paralegal.

Quote: *Here's your coffee, sir. And that report on the quarterly returns. I made sure to mimic your handwriting carefully; all it needs is your signature.*

School of Greed: Coveters of Gold

The smoke belched from the building was surprisingly acrid. It struggled to climb into the sky, then exhaustedly sank toward the ground. As the choking smog settled on the street below the gathered crowd was thrown into an addled frenzy. “What the hell was in there?!” “Smells like marijuana to me. Enough to stuff ten elephants.”

Victims of Greed quiver at the thought of becoming pack rats. They are powerless to discard their possessions, yet terrified that others might snatch them. As a tragic point of irony, wealth gravitates to them. Greed dragons are the only ones who despise the concept of an Attra, and the only ones who will inflict their Attra on others.

Greed swallows up the world around it. It is extensive. It is unnecessary. A tidal wave of possessions that drowns everything with its crap. But the stuff is *really* cool! And somebody might swipe it! And then you wouldn't have it anymore! ...Greed is probably the hardest desire to shake, and for good reason.

Good Dragon Mode: When in “Good” dragon mode, victims of Greed try their best to live the life of an ascetic. Purging the goods they acquired during their binge, or at least their least favorites, “Good” Greed dragons try to bring a little joy to the places and people they've wronged. They could really revitalize the community if they matched effort to their charity, but for them the gifts alone are enough.

It's impossible to be giving and yet maintain control of everything. Part of Greed is having contract and deed to prove status, and despite their best efforts a sick pleasure comes for these dragons; from the taking of the belongings of others. As their continued gifts begin to numb gratitude, these Dragons begin to feel saint's remorse, and soon fall into a binge of self-satisfaction.

Whenever a victim of Greed witnesses someone simply taking what they want—to the extent that would warrant a Greed Vice's recovery of Willpower—they must roll the lower of Composure or Resolve, and succeed, or slide into “Bad” mode.

Bad Dragon Mode: When in “Bad” dragon mode, Greed dragons take what they want by whatever means necessary. And whatever means necessary usually involves ruthlessly murdering the owner of whatever it is the “Bad” Greed dragon wants. They are not reckless, however. They maintain the sense to realize that lifted merchandise will be tracked, that murders will be investigated, and that taking has a lot of loose ends. For this reason “Bad” Greed dragons booby-trap their belongings, so that when the rightful owner (or his inheritors) tries to reclaim his property, he will be rendered unable to do so.

Greed dragons are the progenitors of Grafts. Though most other Oroboroi are ignorant to the origin of such a useful tool, a Greed dragon always knows where it came from and why it does what it does. Making use of the devices despite that knowledge is usually a personal choice, but those in “Bad” mode don't care enough to protest the ethics of the matter. After all, it makes their stuff all the better, and often so much easier to keep safe. Only by seeing someone overcome the need to collect and protect will a “Bad” Greed dragon begin to question her own motivations, and return to the road of righteousness.

Whenever a victim of Greed in “Bad” mode witnesses an act of moderation that would warrant a Temperance Virtue's recovery of Willpower, she must roll the higher of Composure or Resolve. Success means she's climbed back to “Good” mode.

Philosophy: Greed dragons use their Philosophy in both modes, but only rarely while in “Good” mode. Greed dragons paint an object with a substance that is only supernaturally visible,

Stereotypes—Good Mode

Wrath Dragons: You're making amends? What about me? Aren't you going to make amends to me?

Pride Dragons: Pheh, doormat. Here, have a toaster.

Lust Dragons: You bore me.

Sloth Dragons: You share my charitable spirit! But all that effort... is it really worth it?

ooo

Scholars of Dominion: There's no need to be so judgmental. As if you know better.

Scholars of True Heart: No comment.

Vampires: Greedy thief.

Werewolves: You remind me of that teddy bear I had as a kid. I really miss her.

Mages: You're hoarding knowledge. That's not healthy.

Mortals: Here today. Gone tomorrow. It's so tragic.

Stereotypes—Bad Mode

Wrath Dragons: Stay away from my stuff.

Pride Dragons: I don't care.

Lust Dragons: There's only one kind of passionate I care about. Passion about me. So give me presents.

Sloth Dragons: You can stay on my couch if you want. But you can't. Because it's mine. So get lost.

ooo

Scholars of Dominion: Get off your high-horse. And hand over your valuables.

Scholars of True Heart: You should guard your possessions with more care.

Vampires: You're damaging my mortals. Keep your hands and fangs to yourself.

Werewolves: You want this neighborhood? Over my cold, dead body.

Mages: Secrets. I need them. Now.

Mortals: Property.

as a means of both tracking those who claim said object and punishing them should they acquire it inappropriately. Those who come under the scrutiny of a Greed dragon watch their health fail and their body decay, faced with the wrath of Greed's Philosophy made fact. Robbers beware.

Province: Greed dragons are fond of rural regions simply because they are easy to protect. They can keep their hoard of valuables yet not be driven to pillage for more loot, as the surrounding residences are resoundingly poor. Such provinces usually end up within driving distance of a big city, though, where a Greed dragon in the thrall of her binge can pull a few quick heists before retreating to her lair to sleep them off.

Concept: investor, farmer, lawyer, priest, bank robber, Robin Hood wannabe, politician, embezzler.

Quote: *Sweet are the simple things in life. I may have a sixty-three inch plasma waiting in my penthouse apartment, but this is so much better. Just a quiet fireplace to watch while you think. That beats out all the possessions in the world... except for that new Dodge I saw last week. Oh, and those cross-trainers. Oh, you've just got to have those!*

School of Lust: Saints of Euphoria

Layout the lot of them and you'll begin to see the pattern. None of the wounds suffered show any regard for self-preservation. And the gunshots didn't even faze them. There'd been reports of this sort of thing; drugged-out lunatics too numb to feel their bodies fail. But all of those cases were violent. And the tox-screens all came back clean. These murders... the victims were voluntarily helpless. But why?

Victims of Lust have drives that consume them. They are motivated by a focus and passion that erodes everything around it, a passion that is acidic. With it they can build the greatest things, share the greatest loves, live the fullest lives. But the fervor with which they pursue these goals... it scares even them. The Lust dragons are faced with the dilemma of drawing joy from their achievements, or letting others keep their joy.

Lust is a hard thing to fight. It crawls through the body and pools at the extremities, where the nerves can feel it most. Of course that's an odd way to describe an emotion, but Lust itself is a very sensual one. Getting a fix is exhilarating, but it always leaves much to be cleaned. A moment of Lust leaves months of aftershock.

Good Dragon Mode: When in "Good" dragon mode, victims of Lust run from their passion. They'll sell anything that reminds them of their drive, and they'll shun the thing that brought them so much pleasure. That thing is sometimes a lover's touch, but a Lust dragon would never consider a lover a 'thing'. Lust dragons are the only ones that make the smallest impact while they are behaving.

Even when fleeing from something onerous, it still remains a focal point of life. Despite the Lust dragon's efforts to marginalize the impact of her passion, it still influences her every decision. Distance makes the heart grow fonder, and the imposed distance accelerates this process. The passion becomes idealized and mysterious again, and soon the Lust dragon cannot help but return to her jilted paramour.

Whenever a victim of Lust witnesses another consumed by their passion—to the extent that would warrant a Lust Vice's recovery of Willpower—they must roll the lower of Composure or Resolve, and succeed, or slide into "Bad" mode.

Bad Dragon Mode: By contrast, this is the better mode, so long as actions aren't defined as righteous or wicked. Their focus consumes them, and the subject of their passion greatly benefits from the attention. Of course, those things that do not capture her interest suffer. If given the option of saving a friend or pursuing a passion, the "Bad" Lust dragon will always choose the passion. Even if her life is at risk, the passion will come first. Their Philosophy grants them a guarantee they will not be distracted, even as their entrails are falling out.

Lust dragons can maintain their "Bad" mode for quite a while, almost as long as that of a Pride dragon. They become numb to the outside world, shirking off pain and replacing it with euphoria which is only enhanced by their craft. A Lust dragon needs to see that temptation can be shunned, or else she'll never pull away from her obsession.

Whenever a victim of Lust in "Bad" mode witnesses an act of abstinence that would warrant a Prudence Virtue's recovery of Willpower, she must roll the higher of Composure or Resolve. Success means she's climbed back to "Good" mode.

Philosophy: Lust Dragons make use of their Philosophy in both modes, but most often in "Bad" dragon mode. Where pain has been felt, they diminish it. Where there are endorphins, they enhance them. They may not actually *heal* wounds like a Bone dragon, but they certainly make them better. And less distracting.

Stereotypes—Good Mode

Wrath Dragons: I know it hurts. But the withdrawals will fade eventually. Right?

Pride Dragons: Your plight is righteous. It keeps others from suffering, and I respect that.

Greed Dragons: Charity is only such if it is anonymous.

Sloth Dragons: Don't you think you're over-compensating?

ooo

Scholars of Dominion: You're right. I'm a monster. But a caged one. Isn't that enough?

Scholars of True Heart: Your passion will get you into trouble. Trust me.

Vampires: If you stick with humanity, you'll have my blessing. If you submit to your beast, I'll destroy you. That is a promise.

Werewolves: I think the spirit world can wait one day. You'll stress yourself into a coma.

Mages: I know you think there are answers out there, but what lies ahead is only more questions. Save yourself the agony and quit now.

Mortals: Take a chill pill.

Stereotypes—Bad Mode

Wrath Dragons: Huh? What's that noise?

Pride Dragons: [Slams window shut]

Greed Dragons: No comment.

Sloth Dragons: You were gone?

ooo

Scholars of Dominion: Go away. I'm busy.

Scholars of True Heart: Who?

Vampires: You're getting blood on the carpet. Wipe your feet and get out.

Werewolves: You go wolf-boy!

Mages: Please don't distract me. I'm creating.

Mortals: Obstacles.

Province: Lust dragons have found new life in the apartment complex. City life has its charms, but all the people they need can be found on some other floor. When they're in "Good" mode, Lust dragons come off as kind if not nosy neighbors. When in "Bad" mode, they withdraw to their apartment, announcing their presence only by the bizarre sounds that leech through the walls, or when they have to go out for supplies. In this manner they are not forgotten, and yet they are left to their own ends.

Concept: addict, nymphomaniac, personal trainer, police officer, priest, artist, politician, musician, unemployed vagrant.

Quote: *Do you see the way she's soaring on pastel rainbows? God I miss that. Beautiful streaks of saffron and fuchsia... my brushes have been gathering dust for so long. Maybe just one painting.*

School of Sloth: Martyrs to Memory

The sun rises every morning in a beautiful wave of purples, blues, and then oranges. For some this is a soul-affirming portion of their day. But what is the point? If you've seen one sunrise, or even a sunset, you've seen them all. There aren't enough distinguishing characteristics to warrant wasting time.

Victims of Sloth cringe at the thought of being lazy. Their ends should come from their effort. Out of this concern comes a call to arms that accelerates them like a train towards... well, everything. Sloth dragons work themselves to exhaustion, and once they reach that exhaustion, well...

Sloth isn't dangerous. In fact, it's the opposite. Nobody dies from just sitting around. Nothing gets done while just sitting around. The only thing that really happens when somebody's 'slothing' is flatulence. Or bed rash. Sloth does damage by sitting back and watching the world rust.

Good Dragon Mode: When in "Good" dragon mode, victims of Sloth can often be mistaken for Sweat dragons. They see sleep and relaxations as fallbacks to the most wretched of sins, so they work until they pass out. Be it writing a sonnet, running a homeless shelter, running a marathon, or building a shack, the work serves a more important function than the accomplishment. Of the Saintry Devils, Sloth dragons do the most good in "Good" mode.

Working into unconsciousness is not at all healthy. The mental state that makes Sloth dragons do it is even worse. When the body gives up from exhaustion, Sloth dragons are forced to sit still, and this is usually enough to push them over the edge.

Whenever a victim of Sloth witnesses an act of excessive laziness that would grant a Sloth Vice's recovery of Willpower, they must roll the lower of their Composure or Resolve, and succeed, or slide into "Bad" mode.

Bad Dragon Mode: Not so much a fall as a slow drift, Sloth dragons that descend into "Bad" dragon mode accept the inactivity that accompanies their exhaustion, and settle back for a nice relaxing... rest. Any unfinished projects remain unfinished, and no doubt decay from the loss of attention. "Bad" Sloth dragons suffer medically as well, their overexertion replaced by total inaction that softens their toned muscles to mush.

Sloth dragons don't stay in "Bad" mode for long. Provided there's at least one person who cares about the dragon, eventually she'll be pulled from her seat and brought back into the world. Kicking and screaming, probably, but she'll be better for it. The determination acts as a wake-up call, one desperately needed for one who's given up hope. If, by some slim chance, there's nobody left who cares about the Sloth dragon, she'd better settle in for a long stay on the couch. Whenever a victim of Sloth in "Bad" mode witnesses an act of endurance and devotion that would warrant a Fortitude Virtue's recovery of Willpower, she must roll the higher of Composure or Resolve. Success means she's climbed back to "Good" mode.

Philosophy: The Philosophy of Sloth is about the convenience of memory alteration. Even though it is convenient, it isn't directly lazy, so Sloth dragons are willing to utilize it in both modes, and often are more driven to use it in "Good" dragon mode. The power to gloss over niggling details, or replace them with more convenient perceptions, makes it easy for a Sloth dragon to seem like she belongs while she needs to belong, and to scrape away her tracks when she's done.

Province: Sloth dragons are most comfortable in fixer-upper spaces. The projects come to mind most often. There's excitement to be had, work to be done, and crime to be bested. Plus,

Stereotypes—Good Mode

Wrath Dragons: Let's get to work, buddy!

Pride Dragons: You can have the credit if you want. I don't care. I just want to get out there and Carpe Diem, you know?

Greed Dragons: You're lazy. It sickens me.

Lust Dragons: It's okay to come out and play. The inner demons won't bite, I promise.

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Scholars of Dominion: We've got the same goal. Don't dirty that.

Scholars of True Heart: Can't be bothered to hack your Heart out? Slacker.

Vampires: The original party animals. Classic cool.

Werewolves: I can get on board with your agenda. Just tell me where to dig.

Mages: What does this symbol mean?

Mortals: It'd be nice if they were a little more devoted in their endeavors, but I guess I can understand.

Stereotypes—Bad Mode

Wrath Dragons: Go away.

Pride Dragons: Don't you see the tie on the doorknob? Don't you know what that means?

Greed Dragons: This is my oatmeal.

Lust Dragons: No comment.

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Scholars of Dominion: [Irritated Groan]

Scholars of True Heart: There's room on the couch if you want to lay low. Just keep the noise down.

Vampires: Just lock the door as you leave.

Werewolves: I worked myself into exhaustion for you. Haven't you ever heard of "siesta"?

Mages: Reading makes me pass out.

Mortals: Boring.

when they settle into their nest for the sake of Sloth, their absence is not immediately noticed, giving them time to work out their demons. Once the neighborhood is revitalized, the Sloth dragon moves on... at least once she gets out of bed.

Concept: carpenter, priest, artist, musician, truck driver, politician, writer, philosopher.

Quote: *Two more months. Just two more months. I've just gotten comfy.*

School of True Heart

The School of True Heart is not technically a school; it is the total rejection of the other Oroboroi schools. Still, a total lack of philosophy is nevertheless a type of philosophy. The notion of keeping the Heart in chest is naïvely rebellious, and in many ways breaks the intention of this game. There is a perpetual risk of detection, the constant looming threat of death, and no resurrection to fix a screw-up. Something about it rings truth, though, and True Heart dragons climb the closest to pre-Collapse power before their candles are snuffed out.

Scholars of True Heart have their own unique Philosophy set, and may learn levels in up to four of the other sets. The character sheet precludes itself to this, as there are only five spaces available for Philosophies.

True Heart Oroboroi are the most difficult to play. There is an added boost of power to compensate for this. If one *does* remove her Heart and select a school, she loses all of her learned Philosophies. They are refunded with experience.

School of True Heart: Line-Walkers

Do you hear that? It's the sound of my heart beating. Thump, thump, thump. A metronome of love.

You could never understand it. Hell, I couldn't either, at least not a first. But it is wonderful. And terrible. And it haunts you.

Why am I telling you this? Good question. I'll let you know when I have the answer.

Line-Walkers come in all varieties, but they share a single common characteristic: an intense level of self-confidence and a penchant for defying authority. Upon consuming an Oroboroi Heart, these new dragons do not shun the premise of a new life *or* wrap their life around it. Instead of being assimilated, they absorb. "Being an Oroboroi" becomes another feature in their impressive whole, but it is not the defining feature.

True Heart dragons stay in their lives as long as they can, usually incorporating people they trust in their secret. Their friends and family become their province. And they don't particularly 'rule' the province. In fact, they don't act any differently than they did when they were human. Well, the monstrous appendages are different.

Mannerism and Background: True Heart dragons are as varied as the people of the world. Being an Oroboroi doesn't faze them. As such, it is impossible to sum them up, as there is no summary to be made.

Philosophy: Line-Walkers draw strength directly from the Dreamtide, and their Philosophy powers reflect this. The True Heart Philosophy lacks subtlety, but makes up for it in massive utility. A bonus to compensate for the risk of having "Heart in chest". True Heart Philosophy powers improve statistics, provide powerful projectile attacks, and even tear the fabric of reality.

Character Creation: Line-Walkers have no preference for attributes, but they do have at least a moderate knowledge of the occult. Occult because it is needed to know of the Oroboroi and to bear the confidence necessary to stay mortal after enlisting.

Province: The province of a True Heart dragon is strictly population. While they can sometimes be anchored to a physical location, Line-Walkers rarely stay in one place for long, not out of fear for their own safety but rather for the sake of their loved ones. So "Province" doesn't really apply to this school, at least in the way that other dragons view it.

Quote: *Dominion. Collapse. Five Evils. It's all malarkey. Dragon or no, I'm still me. And nothing is going to change that.*

Stereotypes

Scholars of Dominion: Egomaniacs.

Scholars of the Five Evils: Denial.

Vampires: Pathetic. Pitiably, even. But mostly pathetic.

Werewolves: I'm not what you think I am. Please stop biting me.

Mages: You want to know a secret? I haven't got any.

Mortals: Initially I thought they were lowered as I was elevated. But now that I've had time to dwell, I have to say they're really amazing. In a world as terrible as this they carry on. Happily, even. They will always be family to me.

Aspects

Dragons are definitively biologically separate from mankind. Myth and fiction piece together traits both natural and alien to construct the visage of these creatures, and a rich treasury of illustrations old and new create a dizzying array of meanings for the word 'Dragon'. Aspects are these traits.

Members of the Oroboroi define for themselves what it means to be a dragon, both spiritually and physically. The combined complement of Aspects they manifest is both an arsenal at their disposal and a means of self-expression. Wearing them is always a road toward suspicion by the masses, but the might of a draconic body is a hard power to resist.

Aspects are associated with individual cards from a six-suit playing deck, not out of some mystical link to Tarot or some such drivel but rather out of tradition. Members of the Oroboroi can freely learn Aspects from the common suit and the suit of their method, but Aspects of other methods must be taught or at least witnessed several times, and they are always more difficult to incorporate. This is reflected with an increased experience cost.

When making a **Dragon** character, that character gets to choose ten Aspects. Partly their preconceptions about dragons from fiction, partly a conversion of their personality into physical characteristics, these first Aspects give the new dragon some defense mechanisms for her new Furnace. Five Aspects are chosen from the Heart suit, those common to all dragon-kind. Three Aspects come from the dragon's method suit, which is determined by the means through which their Heart was acquired. Finally, two Aspects can be chosen from any suit, including those not associated with the dragon's method.

Though not a concern at character creation, it is important to note that Aspects from other methods are limited in number.

Their total dots cannot exceed the sum total of method and common Aspect dots. For example, a dragon with eight dots between common genetics and her method begins to accumulate dots outside her method. As her total non-method Aspect dots climbs to eight, she is rendered incapable of diversifying further. She must first purchase more common Aspects or method Aspects.

The only way to get new Aspects is with the expenditure of experience. The dragon finds and practices a trait she likes, eventually incorporating it into her divine form. The experience chart shows the cost of purchasing Aspects in this manner. (Aspects must be acquired *sequentially*.)

Having a complex array of Aspects available means more power at your disposal, but also a larger effort to use them. More Aspects means a longer trek to True Form as well, but more points to increase your dragon's degree of divinity. Aspects must be manifest, so simply owning them does not grant any benefit. The rules for manifesting Aspects are explained in detail in Chapter 3 (page 140).

The Aspects detailed here are only some of the many once possessed by dragon-kind. It is not at all an all-encompassing list, yet none remember those that are absent. In other words, you're free to make them up as you go. An Aspect creation guide is provided in the sidebar at the end of this section (page 104).

All Aspects provided here come with an explanation of their function, a description of their physical tells (minor for one to two points manifest, moderate for three to four, and major for five), any associated costs, and any rolls involved. If there is an action or roll associated, the possible outcomes are listed. They are also defined by their complexity, be they compound, sequential, or odd over even.

Suit of Hearts (Traits Common to All Dragons)

No matter how varied the Oroboroi may be, they all share one common feature in the hand fate dealt: the Heart. There are certain features of dragon-kind that are universal to their common state, and those features are found in the suit of Hearts.

These are the cheapest Aspects to acquire, as the cost does not vary by method. This is the only suit that has no cards missing.

Inferno (Ace of Hearts)

Though the heat of a dragon's Furnace can be put to many uses and converted to many different forms of energy, sometimes the most effective application of that heat is incineration. The dragon simply belches out a blast of fire, good for igniting flammables and fauna alike. This blast has a range in yards equal to double the points manifest in Inferno, plus 10 yards.

Being that the Breath is in its most potent form, this attack inflicts horrific wounds. It is the only attack an Oroboroi can make that deals aggravated damage. The amount is equal to the points manifest in this Aspect.

Type: Sequential

Cost: 1 Breath per shot

Dice Pool: Stamina + Firearms

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: In the unlikely event of a Dramatic failure, the dragon accidentally swallows the ball of flame she was about to project. She suffers a single point of lethal damage, but recovers the spent point of Breath.

Failure: The orb of flame fails to connect with the target.

Success: The orb of flame strikes the target and inflicts a number of aggravated wounds equal to the successes rolled.

Exceptional Success: In addition to the massive damage inflicted, the target catches fire. This fire is considered to be the size of a bonfire with the intensity of a torch, but it inflicts aggravated damage. It is comprised of natural accelerants and thus all attempts to smother the flame are successful. For more information on fire, see the **World of Darkness** Rulebook, page 180.

Tells

Minor: The dragon's voice becomes raspy, and the throat is hot to the touch.

Moderate: As minor, but the throat pulses slightly as she speaks.

Major: The dragon's throat can be seen glowing from a distance. She gets a big case of "smoker's voice" too, dropping it several notes and rendering it scratchy.

Scales (King of Hearts)

In many of the tales of old, it was said that mortal weapons served no purpose against the scales of the dragon. Weapons of all materials were repelled by their mighty armored skin. Reality is not as perfect as myth, but in that tradition this Aspect makes a dragon much more difficult to kill.

For each odd point manifest, the dragon receives a +1/0 rating to her armor. For each even point manifest, the dragon receives a 0/+1 rating to her armor. While this aspect is manifest at all the dragon possesses the bulletproof quality everywhere except her vulnerable scale (see page 143 in Chapter 3).

The armor ratings from this Aspect may be applied on top of any other armor the dragon may be utilizing, as it is both biological and space-efficient.

Type: Odd over Even

Cost: None

Dice Pool: None

Action: None

Tells

Minor: The dragon's skin develops rigid

Firearms versus Athletics

In **World of Darkness Armory**, a distinction is made between pulley-projectile weaponry and ballistic weaponry. At Storyteller discretion, any Aspect weaponry that utilizes Firearms may instead be used with Athletics.

sections, which are slightly puffy and hard to the touch.

Moderate: The vulnerable regions of the dragon's body are become covered in thick plates, though they match her current skin tone.

Major: As moderate, though the plates become black and each develop a spike in the center. They look similar to armadillo plating.

Wings (Queen of Hearts)

Often when depicted in western art a dragon sports a pair of leathery wings, used to soar over villages and terrorize the populace below. Not all dragons have wings, but many of them like to fly. This Aspect allows them to do so.

Having any amount of points active in this Aspect allows the dragon to take to the sky. The speed at which she flies is equal to (Strength + Stamina) x the active points in the Wings Aspect. Flight can be incredibly useful to escape combat and find cover or get a high-ground advantage.

Type: Sequential

Cost: 1 Breath to enable flight for the scene.

Dice Pool: None

Action: Instant

Tells

Minor: The dragon's forms wings between her shoulder blades, but they are made of light. They flicker into existence when the dragon moves.

Moderate: The dragon's wings become material. Avian feathers down the length of the body give her an angelic appearance. They can still be concealed under a long jacket.

Major: As moderate, but the wings begin to glow bright red. They're covered in various arcane symbols which are more demonic than angelic. They stick out like a thumb, and refuse to be contained.

Weaponry: Claws (Jack of Hearts)

Dragons were not legendary simply for their longevity and fortitude. They were dangerous, and they had a personal arsenal of biological weapons to throw at their enemies. This weapon is the claw, strong enough to punch through armor and rip all comers to shreds.

The claws have the "Piercing Strike" feature with a rating equal to the points manifest in this Aspect. That means attacks made with the claws ignore an amount of the target's close armor rating equal to the points manifest in this Aspect. Claws make no distinction between biological and non-biological armor. Attacks with the Claws are made with Strength + Brawl, and the damage is two lethal.

Type: Sequential

Cost: None

Dice Pool: Strength + Brawl

Action: Instant

Tells

Minor: The dragon's fingernails point to the center and elongate slightly. The trait of a goth freak, but not a monster.

Moderate: The dragon's fingernails erupt into barbs, curling slightly and rounding significantly. They can still be concealed under gloves, though mittens would work better.

Major: The dragon's fingers turn to sharpened bone from the second joint. Smooth, sleek, and completely bestial, these claws are very difficult to conceal.

Weaponry: Horns (Squire of Hearts)

Dragons were not legendary simply for their longevity and fortitude. They were dangerous, and they had a personal arsenal of biological weapons to throw at their enemies. This weapon is the charging horn, sharpened to a point and angled for maximum thrust.

Though the dragon may also have decorative horns, these are sharp and located at the temples of the forehead, to optimize

killing efficiency. The dragon can ram her enemies with the horns for huge momentum damage, equal to the yards she's traveled before striking (maximum bonus equal to Stamina).

This weapon has the “Knock-Back” feature with a rating equal to the points manifest in this Aspect. That means any strike with the horns flings a victim a number of yards equal to the points manifest in this Aspect, at a speed equal to ten times the points manifest in this Aspect. That usually translates to one bashing wound per yard, but this damage can be reduced by the victim's non-biological close armor rating. Attacks with the Horns are made with Strength + Brawl.

Type: Sequential

Cost: None

Dice Pool: Strength + Brawl

Action: Instant

Tells

Minor: Two horns form on the dragon's forehead. They are small enough to hide beneath even a small amount of hair, or a hat.

Moderate: The dragon forms two horns on her forehead. They are roughly four inches long, but can be difficult to spot from a distance.

Major: The dragon forms a pair of long bull horns on her forehead, twisted to impale and toss and impossible to conceal at any distance.

Fire Skin (Nine of Hearts)

With just a little focus the heat of the Furnace can be drawn to the surface, igniting the skin like a hot kettle. Though bad for her clothes, it makes her very touch a dangerous weapon.

Those in direct contact with the dragon suffer a point of bashing damage for each point manifest in this Aspect. This damage continues each turn contact is maintained by either party. The highest close rating of a non-biological armor (either the dragon's or the victim's) reduces the damage, but all clothes involved have a chance of catching fire if flammable (except the dragon's clothes, provided she's spent Breath to protect them, see the sidebar below). Many Oroboroi who utilize this Aspect will first remove some of their protective gear so that their skin inflicts the most harm.

Type: Sequential

Cost: None

Dice Pool: None

Action: Reflexive

Tells

Minor: The dragon's torso begins to radiate heat, detectable within about a yard.

Moderate: The dragon's entire body begins to radiate heat, which can be felt up to five yards away.

Major: As moderate, but the dragon is engulfed in a fiery aura as well. This does not change the mechanics of the Aspect, however.

Thrashing Tail (Eight of Hearts)

The dragon is possessed of a tail more agile than most, and the added length and finesse improves her balance greatly. She tires less easily because her posture is improved, and her prowess in combat becomes unparalleled.

For each odd point manifest, the dragon gains a +1 bonus to Brawl. For each even point manifest, the dragon gains a +1 bonus to Athletics. At three points manifest and beyond, the dragon may wield equipment

Catching Fire

The “Fire Skin” Aspect describes combustion by contact heat, and this requires further explanation. Contact heat does not cause combustion as quickly as exposure to an actual fire. Instead, if the heat of contact has a rating exceeding the Durability of a character's armor, that armor has a *chance* to catch fire. For each turn of contact with a source that meets this criterion, that Durability must be rolled to avoid catching fire. Failure means the object has caught ablaze, a fire of size Torch with heat rating two less than that of the contact (minimum zero). Contact fires are natural combustion, and can be doused by any means. For more information on fire consult the **World of Darkness** Rulebook, page 180.

In this case, the points manifest in Fire Skin set the heat of contact.

with her tail as if it were her off-hand (even if she is ambidextrous, it is still treated as an off-hand), and may hang by her tail effortlessly. If lifting an object and using her tail in the effort, the dragon's Strength is increased by the points manifest in Thrashing Tail for the sake of calculating her lifting capacity. For more information on lifting, see the **World of Darkness** Rulebook, page 47.

Type: Odd over Even

Cost: None

Dice Pool: None

Action: None

Tells

Minor: The dragon forms a tail, but it's a nub, more like a puffin's posterior than anything else.

Moderate: As minor, but the tail extends to roughly a leg's length. It is roughly as wide as an arm. She could tape it around her leg and hide it under a long coat, but it would be awkward.

Major: As moderate, but the tail is half-again as long. It drags along the ground, too long to conceal.

Reptilian Fear (Seven of Hearts)

The dragon knows how to make use of her cold-blooded half, and people around her notice. She utilizes this trait when she wants to acquire something through force, or if she wants to better relate with the animal kingdom. As material kings, this is often an essential trait to bear.

Mortals are ill at ease around the dragon, making threats and torture more effective. The dragon gains a +1 bonus to Intimidation for each odd point manifest. On the other side of the coin, creatures find it easier to relate to the dragon. She gains a +1 bonus to Animal Ken for each even point manifest.

When an Intimidation or Animal Ken roll that was not a chance die is resolved, roll a number of additional chance dice equal to the odd points manifest in this Aspect. Add any successes from these dice

to your total. These chance dice do not risk dramatic failure.

Type: Odd over Even

Cost: None

Dice Pool: None

Action: None

Tells

Minor: The dragon exudes an aura of aggression, setting those around her ill-at-ease.

Moderate: As minor, but the dragon's pupils become slits like a reptile's or cat's.

Major: As moderate, but in addition the dragon's brow becomes pronounced, ridged, and devoid of hair. Much like a cave-man, actually.

Fork-Tongued (Six of Hearts)

The European mythos of dragon-kind weaves them as sly and eloquent monsters. Likewise when lizards and snakes are anthropomorphized their forked tongues are tools of social espionage, wielded as foils in social combat. These stereotypes have leached into dragon anatomy, making Oroboroi possessed of forked tongue excellent speakers.

For each odd point manifest, the dragon gains a +1 bonus to Subterfuge. For each even point manifest, the dragon gains a +1 bonus to Expression. When a Subterfuge or Expression roll that was not a chance die is resolved, roll a number of additional chance dice equal to the odd points manifest in this Aspect. Add any successes from these dice to your total. These chance dice do not risk dramatic failure.

Type: Odd over Even

Cost: None

Dice Pool: None

Action: None

Tells

Minor: The dragon's tongue splits at the tip. The split is minor, like a tongue injury.

Moderate: The dragon's tongue splits at the tip, and the two separate halves each express a pronounced point.

Why Buy Skills?

Many Aspects provide a bonus to skills, improving the natural talents an Oroboroi in her proper body possesses. However, if she is not skilled to begin with, even the added expertise is not enough to outweigh the unfamiliarity. For this reason, skill bonuses provided by Aspects do not nullify the untrained penalty. The dragon must know at least a little about what she's doing in order to take full advantage of her new traits.

The Aspects, on the other hand, are not throttled by the maximums imposed on a character. With clever use of Aspect and Skill training, a dragon can get up to eight dots in a single Skill.

The Cost of Clothes

Any vain dragon (or one who does not wish to be ticketed later for indecent exposure) can spend a point of Breath to protect their clothes from the tear, singe, and puncture of any Aspect for the scene. This is particularly important for Aspects like Fire Skin and Colossal Beast, which can potentially destroy all the dragon's clothes.

Major: The dragon's tongue completely forks, more closely portraying a snake's than a human's.

Colossal Beast (Five of Hearts)

Dragons are not tiny. Very rarely is a dragon in fiction depicted smaller than a full-grown stallion, and most stretch hundreds of feet in length. People, however, are quite small, and the Oroboroi are at their core people. To that extent, the grandeur of their size has been greatly exaggerated. Still, some do go big instead of going home, and those that do wear this Aspect.

Each point manifest in this Aspect increases the dragon's Size trait by 1. This of course causes Health dots to increase by 1 per point. The dragon may apply the points manifest in this aspect as a bonus to overpowering maneuvers in grappling (though not in the initial grab).

Type: Sequential

Cost: None

Dice Pool: None

Action: None

Tells

Minor: The dragon gains some density, getting a little taller and a little heavier.

Moderate: The dragon gains a significant amount of density, increasing weight and height quite noticeably. She likely towers over most people.

Major: The dragon's gains an exorbitant amount of mass. Her size rivals that of a small family automobile.

Soothing Incense (Four of Hearts)

Not so much a trait of dragons as it is a feature of smoking in general, there is something about the waft of nostril fog that is... relaxing. When the dragon uses this Aspect the heat of their Furnace cloys in the air and falls as heavy smoke from the nostrils.

Scented like a dozen spices, this mystic smoke makes the dragon an instant socialite. For each odd point manifest, she gains a +1 bonus to Socialize, and for each even point manifest she gains a +1 bonus to Empathy. These bonuses only apply to those who can smell the scented smoke. When Willpower is spent to improve a Socialize or Empathy roll, the bonuses provided by this Aspect are doubled for that action.

Type: Odd over Even

Cost: None

Dice Pool: None

Action: Instant (Exhaling more Smoke)

Tells

Minor: The dragon wafts a thin vapor from her nostrils when she exhales. It is like condensation on a cold day.

Moderate: The dragon wafts a moderately thick smoke from her nostrils when she exhales, as if she had been smoking a cigar.

Major: The dragon's wafts cloying, animate fog from her nostrils when she exhales. This smoke twists in the light and seems to have a mind of its own.

Burrowing Body (Three of Hearts)

Not every dragon hides in the clouds, and those cave legends have to come from somewhere. Those who make use of this trait have a particular affinity with the earth and its minerals, and find it a much safer hiding place when the heat is on. They move through the ground as freely as water.

The dragon has the distinct ability of effortlessly and painlessly digging through earth, usually to evade pursuit. She may move through soft soil at a rate of Strength + Dexterity + Burrowing Body yards per turn, or hard ground at a rate in yards equal to just her Burrowing Body. Digging is a full action. That means she cannot attack while she is burrowing, and likewise defense is sacrificed. The associated cover and concealment are worth the gamble, though.

It is assumed both the soft soil and the hard ground involve materials that are have room to give way. Were she to attempt to burrow through a solid surface (Like reinforced steel), she would need to spend 1 Breath per turn to dig, inflicting her "Burrowing Body" points to the object's Structure each time (minus Durability, of course). When the Structure is exceeded, she may pass through one yard of the solid substance, and then must repeat the process to go deeper.

Type: Sequential

Cost: 1 Breath per yard of solid digging

Dice Pool: None

Action: Full

Minor: The skin between the dragon's fingers webs slightly, no further than the first joints.

Moderate: The skin between the dragon's fingers web significantly, between the first and second joints. It can still be concealed with properly tailored gloves.

Major: The dragon's fingers web from tip to tip. This cannot be concealed with clothing.

Keen-Eyed (Two of Hearts)

Not everything has an extensive back-story or mythical justification. Sometimes dragon anatomy is just better than mortal counterparts, and in this case the eyes are included.

Points in this Aspect increase sight Perception rolls on a one-to-one basis. This Aspect also grants the dragon the capacity to utilize the broader light spectrum, specifically Infrared and Ultraviolet frequencies. Doing so takes focus, though, and thus costs a point of Willpower. Modified vision lasts until the end of the scene, until the dragon pays Willpower to switch to the alternate frequency, or until she decides to use normal vision again.

Type: Sequential

Cost: 1 Willpower to use Infrared or Ultraviolet

Dice Pool: Wits + Composure (For Infrared or Ultraviolet)

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The dragon succeeds in tapping into the other spectrum, but the contrast is so overwhelming she is rendered blind until she rolls successfully on Composure + Stamina.

Failure: The dragon fails to see the extra spectrum.

Success: The dragon succeeds in tapping into the other spectrum, and gleans some sort of information associated with heat detection or concealed particulates.

Exceptional Success: In addition to Success, the dragon gets to keep her Willpower point.

Tells

Minor: The dragon's irises change color, to a deep crimson.

Moderate: As minor. In addition, archaic symbols adorn the iris, and glow an ominous bright red.

Major: As moderate. The ominous glow shines through the dragon's eyelids. They also pulse with electricity.

Wall Climber (Hearts Joker)

More demonic than divine, the idea of something climbing on walls is horrifying by instinct. Though not founded on myth, many dragons find the ceiling a very safe place to hide, and use this trait to spring traps and remain undetected. Well, mostly undetected.

When this Aspect is manifest a strong adhesive coats the hands and feet. The dragon can control just how much stick this adhesive has, and may use it to climb sheer surfaces effortlessly. The speed at which she may climb is a number of yards equal to the sum of Dexterity, manifest Wall Climber points, Size, and any other Speed modifiers (Rough vertical surfaces can lay penalties).

The adhesive also makes it more difficult to disarm the dragon. Any such attempts with aimed attacks suffer an additional penalty equal to the points manifest in this Aspect. In battle it proves quite convenient. However, the glue does not adhere well to organic material. It provides no bonus to grapple attempts.

Type: Sequential

Cost: None

Dice Pool: None

Action: None

Tells

Minor: The dragon's hands and feet become coated in a waxy film, with adhesive quality based on her needs.

Moderate: As minor. The film smells faintly of wood glue.

Major: As moderate, but the film smells quite strongly of wood glue. The aroma wafts off the dragon and travels for yards.

Suit of Blades (Traits possessed of Slayers)

More for the Slayers than any other, the Suit of Blades are tools of war. Traits of the

most aggressive and ferocious nature, no other dragon has the Heart necessary to wield them effectively.

Besides the Heart Suit, these Aspects are the cheapest available to a Slayer. All other methods must pay the highest price to purchase Aspects of this method, as they do not suit their Heart as readily.

Tempest Roar (Ace of Blades)

Some dragons have shouts that piece the eardrums, but these dragons move their prey with the sheer force of their roar. Those before her scatter like paper in the breeze when she screams, with only the hardest remaining on their feet.

This roar is fired off as a long burst (with all implied bonuses and penalties), stretching out a number of yards equal to thrice the points manifest, plus three. Medium range is double this number. It can be heard much further than this, of course, but it only has flinging force at these distances. The roar takes quite a bit out of the dragon, though. The first roar of the scene is free, but subsequent uses require a point of Breath. For information regarding long bursts, see page 160 in the **World of Darkness** Rulebook. Obvious in this case there are no bullets to be fired.

Type: Sequential

Cost: 1 Breath per subsequent roar in the scene

Dice Pool: Stamina + Presence

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The dragon chokes on her roar and enters a coughing fit. She loses her next action and suffers a single point of bashing damage.

Failure: The roar lacks the force necessary to move the dragon's enemies. If she used Breath to make the roar, she recovers the point.

Success: Those in short range of the roar are flung a number of yards equal to the successes rolled, and are temporarily

deafened by it (for one to three turns). Those in medium range of the roar fly a number of yards equal to half the successes rolled (rounded down). Each subject may spend a point of Willpower to reduce this distance by their Stamina. When they land (provided they don't fall off a cliff), they suffer an amount of bashing damage equal to the yards they flew.

Exceptional Success: In addition to the exorbitant amount of damage, no targets may use Willpower to reduce the distance thrown. Hearing loss from the roar may be long term as well if the attack was exceptional.

Tells

Minor: The dragon's neck elongates slightly. This mostly makes her look thin, if not a touch sickly.

Moderate: As minor. The neck thickens as well, giving it an almost trunk-like appearance.

Major: The dragon's neck elongates significantly (by roughly half again), and thickens to a trunk-like appearance. With the extended length comes an added degree of flexibility, but completely loss of subtlety.

Draconic Strength (King of Blades)

Dragons are strong. They can carry castles on their backs. But some humans who become Oroboroi can barely lift a feather. That's a bit of an exaggeration, but still. To build the Strength without a montage, the dragon uses this Aspect.

Like the bedrock of mountains, the sinews of the dragon are as strong as coiled

steel. For each point manifest the dragon gets a +1 bonus to Strength, but to make use of this power for the scene she must spend a point of Breath. In addition, any item thrown while this Aspect is manifest is considered aerodynamic.

Type: Sequential

Cost: 1 Breath to use the Strength for the scene

Dice Pool: None

Action: Reflexive

Tells

Minor: The dragon's muscles bulk slightly, making her appear passably fit.

Moderate: The dragon's muscles bulk significantly, making her look like some steroid-popping body builder.

Major: The dragon's muscles bulk to an unnatural degree, becoming almost reptilian in their arrangement.

Body Spines (Queen of Blades)

Making use of the trait that made porcupines famous, the Slayer covers her body in a layer of sharp, thin spikes that both protect her and maim her foes.

The spines act as an incentive for the dragon to close in on her prey. Whenever a close-range action somehow involving the dragon succeeds, she gets to roll a follow-up attack to inflict bashing damage (equal to the points manifest in this Aspect). In effect, she jabs with the spines to both injure and repel.

It is important to note that the dragon may use these spines following her own attacks. This makes it a very powerful

Attribute Bumps

Certain Aspects, as well as True Form, grant bonuses to attributes. These bonuses not only increase dice pools, but also alter derived traits. It's important to keep track of which traits are changed by which attribute, but if you can't remember here's a quick guide.

Speed: Strength + Dexterity + 5

Health: Stamina + Size

Willpower: Resolve + Composure

Defense: Lower of Dexterity or Wits

Initiative Mod: Dexterity + Composure

Also important to note is the attribute limit imposed by Furnace. Or rather, that it only applies to basic attributes and not those modified by Aspects. If a dragon has a Strength rating of 5 and Strength limit of 5, she may still use this Aspect to increase her Strength (up to 10 if she owns all five dots).

combat tool, though it serves little other purpose.

Type: Sequential

Cost: None

Dice Pool: Defense + Successes from Close Action

Action: Reflexive

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The dragon manages to prick herself with her own spines. She suffers a single point of bashing damage.

Failure: The spines miss.

Success: The spines hit, inflicting a number of bashing wounds equal to the dragon's successes.

Exceptional Success: Besides the massive damage, the spines detach and remain in the victim's body. All wounds inflicted by the spines become resistant until the hollow shafts of scale are removed, and doing so inflicts a single point of lethal damage.

Tells

Minor: The dragon's body hair becomes coarse and rigid.

Moderate: As minor, but the hairs become keratin spines.

Major: As moderate. The spines proceed to coat most of the body, save the face and underbelly.

Weaponry: Wrist Blade (Jack of Blades)

Dragons were not legendary simply for their longevity and fortitude. They were dangerous, and they had a personal arsenal of biological weapons to throw at their enemies. This weapon is the sword, incorporated into the dragon's anatomy.

On the wrist of her main hand the dragon has a sharp, double-edged blade. Any fighting style that uses knives or short-length blades can be applied to this weapon. The blade has an ingrained channel down the center, designed to accelerate blood flow.

This makes it very deadly, and as such it possesses the "Deadly Wound" feature, with a rating equal to the points manifest in this

Aspect. Deadly Wound only comes into play when an exceptional success is rolled. It adds its rating to the successes total, greatly increasing the inflicted wounds. Attacks with the Wrist Blade are made with Strength + Weaponry. It's base damage is three lethal.

Type: Sequential

Cost: None

Dice Pool: Strength + Weaponry

Action: Instant

Tells

Minor: On the dragon's main hand, along the back of the wrist, a small, knife-sized blade emerges.

Moderate: As minor, but the blade is wider and longer, stretching out roughly nine inches.

Major: As moderate, but the blade stretches out an entire foot.

Beat them into the Ground (Squire of Blades)

More the calling of a serial murderer, this trait allows the dragon to get charged up about beating a foe into mush. The joy of inflicting pain makes her own wounds less severe.

When a dragon using this Aspect lands a successful hit against a living thing of at least Size 2, a number of wounds that dragon suffers are downgraded equal to the points manifest in this Aspect. Starting with the most severe (the rightmost aggravated wound), aggravated wounds are downgraded to lethal, then lethal wounds are downgraded to bashing, then bashing wounds are removed.

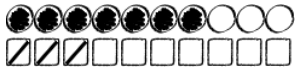
For example, if a dragon with "Beat them into the Ground" 4 successfully struck an enemy while suffering

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an aggravated, a lethal, and a bashing wound,

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first the aggravated wound becomes lethal (one wound reduction), then



the lethal wounds become bashing (two additional wound reductions, for a total of three), and finally



one of the bashing wounds is removed (an additional reduction, bringing the total to four. 4 points are manifest in the Aspect).

This damage reduction occurs even against resistant wounds, though it does not remove the resistant status unless the wound is completely healed. Because this Aspect requires the erasure of wounds for downgrading, it is recommended that wounds be marked *lightly* in pencil.

Type: Sequential

Cost: None

Dice Pool: None

Action: Reflexive

Tells

Minor: The dragon’s elbows and knees form a distinctive point.

Moderate: Small spikes of bone erupt from the dragon’s elbows and knees.

Major: As moderate, but the bone spikes stretch out significantly farther. Each is roughly half the length of the dragon’s forearm.

Pounce! (Blades Joker)

Lizards and frogs know how to jump, with the latter so much more so than the prior. With this trait, the dragon’s body adapts to better jump like a frog.

The dragon’s forward jumping distance becomes static: measured in yards instead of feet, it is always Size + “Pounce!” points. Her vertical jumping distance also changes from feet to yards, but must still be rolled (albeit with Pounce! in the dice pool). In addition, she gains the ability to leap and crush her opponents. The range of this attack is equal to her forward jumping distance. For information on jumping, see the **World of Darkness** Rulebook, pages 66 and 67.

Type: Sequential

Cost: None

Dice Pool: Strength + Pounce! + Dragon’s Size – Target’s Size

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The dragon leaps forward to attack, but misses and lands poorly. She suffers a single lethal wound.

Failure: The dragon leaps forward but the attack misses. She lands somewhere adjacent or beyond her target.

Success: The dragon leaps forward and crushes the target with her landing, inflicting a number of bashing wounds equal to the successes rolled. The subject becomes prone.

Exceptional Success: One of the target’s limbs is wrenched by the force of the pounce. This inflicts a level of lethal damage and the target may face penalties related to that limb until the wounds have healed.

Tells

Minor: The dragon’s legs bulk up significantly. Like a thousand squat thrusts worth of toning.

Moderate: As minor, but the legs also bow slightly.

Major: As minor. The dragon cannot help but sit in the frog position.

Suit of Spades (Traits possessed of Finders)

Designed to find, gather, and then protect secrets, the Suit of Spades is most comfortable in the hands of a Finder. Being traits of the wisest and most observant beasts of old, the Finder is the only monster with the devotion necessary to appreciate these talents.

Besides the Heart Suit, these Aspects are the cheapest available to a Finder. All other methods must pay the highest price to purchase Aspects of this method, as they do not suit their Heart as readily. As with the

Blades Suit, only the face cards remain in circulation.

Master of Secrets (Ace of Spades)

Intelligence serves no function if it isn't used to gather knowledge. But gathering knowledge is so time-consuming. You'd think that wouldn't be a problem with something as long-lived as a dragon, but impatience is a hard feeling to fight. To research more efficiently, dragons use this Aspect.

Each odd point manifest grants a +1 bonus to Academics, and each even point manifest grants a +1 bonus to Occult. Research roll times are reduced to a fraction with denominator equal to the points manifest in this Aspect (so manifesting two points halves research time and manifesting five points reduces it to one fifth. Round down). Dragons very practiced in this Aspect can research at breakneck speeds.

Type: Odd over Even

Cost: None

Dice Pool: None

Action: Reflexive

Tells

Minor: Two bumps form at the dragon's upper lip. They can easily be mistaken for clogged pores. They're always bald, though, which means they will displace facial hair.

Moderate: As minor, but the bumps erupt into points. They become a sort of fleshy whisker, stretching out roughly one inch in both directions.

Major: As moderate, but the whiskers extend roughly one foot. They defy gravity and waver in the breeze, like the Chinese dragons of old. Some may have tufts of hair at the ends, but such is not a mandate.

Horde of Knowledge (King of Spades)

Dragons are smart. They'd have to be to stay sane over all the long years of their lifetime. If a dragon had memory problems, her double life could end quickly in a lapse of poor judgment, or out of fear that she'd expose the Oroboroi lifestyle. So dragons

stay sharp, and those that really need to stay on the ball use this Aspect.

Each point manifest grants the dragon a +1 bonus to Intelligence, but to make use of this massive surge of capacity for the scene she must spend a point of Breath.

In addition, once during any conversation in which the dragon participates she may pull relevant information from thin air by spending a point of Willpower and rolling Intelligence with a relevant mental skill. Though the dragon herself draws this information, it does not stay with her. At the end of the scene she is unable to remember what fact the roll derived, and must rely on others to retain it.

Type: Sequential

Cost: 1 Breath to use the Intelligence for the scene

1 Willpower to summon up relevant info

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Relevant Mental Skill

Action: Reflexive (Attributes) or Instant (Info)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The factoid is wrong, but the dragon is so convincing her words are taken as fact. Though this can sometimes be harmless, it often explodes in the dragon's face.

Failure: The factoid is useless or irrelevant.

Success: The factoid deftly sums up the discussion in a neat package, or leads to a breakthrough that advances the discussion's goals. The dragon is likely praised for her input.

Exceptional Success: In addition to success, the dragon recovers her spent Willpower and may attempt to fetch another fact in the same conversation.

Tells

Minor: The dragon forms a cowlick that cannot be tamed. If she is bald, a single tuft

of hair emerges from her head to twist into a cowlick.

Moderate: The dragon's hair becomes irreparably unruly, and cannot be tamed by any means. If she is bald, her hair grows to a sufficient length wherein it could be unruly.

Major: As moderate, but the unruly hairs become feathers.

Trail of Scales (Queen of Spades)

The footprints a person leaves in their wake are not simply physical; their impact has a far more lasting effect than is immediately apparent. Dragons can pick up on cold or even buried trails if they need to find information.

Each odd point manifest grants a +1 bonus to Investigation, and each even point manifest grants a +1 bonus to Computers. For a single Willpower point the dragon may search for a specified target simply by observing him in media (magazines, television interviews, newspapers, and so on). This is an extended research roll in thirty second intervals with a maximum number of rolls equal to points manifest. The required number of successes is dependent on the obscurity of the subject.

Such scouring has its limitations, though, and can only be attempted once per day per subject. Still, if the dragon does not learn enough to locate her target, she can always hit the beat. After all the rolls are used up, the dragon may apply the successes to a traditional extended investigation, though this usually takes *much* longer.

Type: Odd over Even

Cost: 1 Willpower to commence Media Scour

Dice Pool: Wits + Investigation or Wits + Computers depending on media observed.

Action: Extended (4-30 Successes; each roll represents thirty seconds of scouring; a maximum of "Trail of Scales" rolls may be made)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: All accumulated successes are lost, and the Media Scour is concluded. The dragon cannot try again for twenty-four hours.

Failure: No successes are accumulated.

Success: Successes are accumulated toward the target value, which varies depending on how obscure the person sought may be. Celebrities are always easier to find than some random plumber who just happened to swipe a dragon Heart.

Exceptional Success: A massive number of successes are accumulated toward the target value. If the target value is exceeded by 5 or more successes, the dragon instantly knows exactly where the target is and where he will most likely be for the next few days.

Tells

Minor: The dragon's footfalls leave shadows as she steps. The shadows last roughly one second before vanishing.

Moderate: As minor, but the shadows linger for three seconds.

Major: As minor, but the shadows linger for six seconds.

Weaponry: Tail Scythe (Jack of Spades)

Dragons were not legendary simply for their longevity and fortitude. They were dangerous, and they had a personal arsenal of biological weapons to throw at their enemies. This weapon is the scythe, sweeping foes aside as it slashes through them.

A sharp blade adorns the end of the dragon's tail, or a phantom tail if she has not formed one. This weapon had the "Sweeping Hit" feature equal to the points manifest in this Aspect. Sweeping Hit attacks multiple targets at once, up to its rating. One roll is made, taking into account the highest hostile defense and lowest hostile close armor rating. Successes inflict equal wounds to all targets. "Sweeping Hit" attacks instigated with the scythe are made

with Dexterity + Brawl, and the damage is two lethal.

Type: Sequential

Cost: None

Dice Pool: Dexterity + Brawl

Action: Instant

Tells

Minor: The dragon forms a short blade at the approximate end of a leg-and-a-half tail, even if the dragon possesses a shorter tail or none at all. In the event of a phantom tail, such a tail is completely invisible, but casts a shadow.

Moderate: As minor, but the blade is curved and of medium-length. In the event of a phantom tail, said tail not only casts a shadow but is visible from the corner of an onlooker's perspective.

Major: The dragon forms a long scythe blade at the end of a leg-and-a-half tail. This scythe is too long to tuck into clothing. If her tail is not of sufficient length (or non-existent), the remainder is two-fingers wide and whip-like. It looks rather fiendish, actually.

Sympathetic Scale (Squire of Spades)

Dragons, more so than the humans they used to be, are hesitant to draw attention to their weaknesses, and most loathe admitting they have any. Still, the notion that everything has its vulnerable spot is a solid one, and dragons who make use of this Aspect take time to analyze and exploit those spots.

Manifesting this Aspect lets the dragon aim actions at close range, sans the drawbacks of defense loss and movement limitation. Effectively, the aiming action changes from a Full action to an Instant action. In addition, the dragon may aim actions that normally would not be associated with precision fire, like a Persuasion attempt. She does so by seeking out her target's weak scale, then applying her effort against that.

Each turn spent aiming an action adds an additional die to the dice pool, up to a

maximum equal to the points manifest in this Aspect. For ranged attacks, the maximum is three higher than the points manifest. Contested actions cannot be aimed, and the time to aim an extended action is based on the roll time of that action. For example, aiming at a research project with 30 minute rolls takes 30 minutes per bonus die desired.

If at any point during the aim the Aspect is manifest to a degree lesser than the bonus accrued, all bonus dice in excess of the active points are lost. For more information on aiming, see the **World of Darkness** Rulebook, page 162, and for more information on Aspect Manifestation see Chapter 3, page 140.

Type: Sequential

Cost: None

Dice Pool: None

Action: Instant

Tells

Minor: A pinpoint of darkness forms over the dragon's chest, roughly approximating the position of her Heart. It passes through clothing but can easily be mistaken as a smudge.

Moderate: As minor, but the shadow mark is larger and amorphously shaped. It is roughly the size of a single ravioli noodle.

Major: A silhouette of the dragon's Heart forms on her chest. It shows through clothing and is unmistakably weird.

Eye of Value (Spades Joker)

You'd think with all that treasure a dragon would know the difference between an antique and a cheap knockoff. But of course such knowledge only comes from extensive training. Some dragons prefer to save themselves the trouble, though, and those that do use this Aspect.

Whereas most delves into the history of an object can take months of research, a dragon with Eye of Value can simply study it briefly and learn a great deal. In fact, depending on her luck she can learn

absolutely everything about something practically instantaneously.

The dragon using Eye of Value may make a single research roll over the course of thirty-seconds, using Intelligence + Academics + Eye of Value for her dice pool. The roll is penalized based on the object's apparent value (but not its actual value). If her analysis pays off, she'll learn a number of traits the object possesses equal to the points manifest in this Aspect.

Type: Sequential

Cost: None

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Academics + Eye of Value

Action: Extended (3-30 successes; each roll represents six seconds of examination; a maximum of "Eye of Value" rolls may be made)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The dragon believes she's discovered the function of the object, but it is something completely different. If she thinks it's valuable, it's actually a piece of junk. If she thinks it's junk, it's priceless. She cannot attempt to appraise this object again.

Failure: The nature of the object eludes the dragon. She remains unsure of the object's actual history and worth.

Success: The dragon learns a number of facts about the object equal to her points manifest in Eye of Value. Facts can be about the object's origin, age, function, or worth. Further research may be warranted, but the initial appraisal has paid off.

Exceptional Success: In addition to success, the dragon learns of any mystical properties it may contain and how such properties are activated.

Tells

Minor: The dragon's periorbital dermis darkens, like she's sleep deprived.

Moderate: The dragon's periorbital dermis darkens, like she's got two black eyes.

Major: The dragon's periorbital dermis completely blackens (raccoon eyes). It extends down toward the cheeks in contorted licks of flame.

Suit of Diamonds (Traits possessed of Challengers)

Honorable, inspiring, and passionate, the Suit of Diamonds is best fit to a Challenger. There's a certain degree of showmanship and grandeur these traits entail that are just harder to grasp for other dragons.

Besides the Heart Suit, these Aspects are the cheapest available to a Challenger. All other methods must pay the highest price to purchase Aspects of this method, as they do not suit their Heart as readily. By now you've probably gotten the idea that all the methods have only their face cards remaining.

Impassioned Effort (Ace of Diamonds)

Driven by their sheer force of will, some dragons have bursts of incredible stunts; the scope of which are wholly legendary. It's not surprising they were treated as gods. What was actually a moment of passion became a symbol of divinity, and the dragon was more than happy to accept the praise.

When a dragon with this Aspect manifest uses Willpower to increase her dice pool or resistance traits, the bonus is bumped up by her "Impassioned Effort". For example, a dragon with "Impassioned Effort" 4 could spend a point of Willpower to add +7 to her attack instead of the usual +3. For more information on augmenting rolls with Willpower, see the **World of Darkness** Rulebook, page 95.

To make use of such awesome focus, a point of Breath must be spent in the scene.

Type: Sequential

Cost: 1 Breath to use Improved Willpower for the scene

Dice Pool: None

Action: Reflexive

Tells

Minor: The dragon's hair parts in the center, standing up as a Mohawk. If the dragon is bald, a thin-line Mohawk forms.

Moderate: The dragon's hair parts to accommodate a fin of webbed translucent connective tissue that stretches from mid-scalp to the back of the neck. A Mohawk fin. It extends roughly an inch above the hairline.

Major: As moderate, but the fin stretches three inches above the hairline and punctures headgear.

Skill of the Gods (King of Diamonds)

More a reflection of the training that precedes a battle of skill, the rote talent that costs Challengers their Hearts bleeds over into this trait. Certain skills become elevated over all others, to the scale of the gods.

When a dot of this Aspect is purchased, it is assigned to a particular Skill. When manifesting a point in this Aspect, you declare which of these Skills you intend to improve, and that Skill gains the 9-Again feature. That means rolls of both 9 and 10 will add an extra die to the pool, creating a much more volatile chance of success. To make use of such talent, a point of Breath must be spent in the scene.

It is important to note that Skill of the Gods stacks with other forms of explosive dice. If used with an action that already possesses 9-Again, that action now has 8-Again (all successes result in replenished dice). If used with an action that has 8-Again, the action now possesses 7-Again (7 is still a failure, but the die is replenished).

Any exceptional success rolled with a Skill improved by Skill of the Gods, while Skill of the Gods is manifest, garners the dragon a number of Caloric points equal to the points manifest in this Aspect.

Type: Compound

Cost: 1 Breath to use lowered Target Numbers for the scene

Dice Pool: None

Action: Reflexive

Tells

Minor: The dragon's forms an unpleasant bump between her shoulders. It rests uncomfortably beneath clothing and appears to be some sort of tumor when exposed.

Moderate: Between the dragon's shoulders a dorsal fin erupts. It pushes any clothes outwards (tenting, that is), and is completely inhuman when

Major: As moderate, but the fin pierces clothing and is spiked.

Natural Inspiration (Queen of Diamonds)

Though not particularly crafty themselves, dragons have been the inspiration of art the world over. In dozens of mediums in hundreds of styles, they have appeared virtually everywhere.

The dragon's very presence serves as a muse to those around her. Within a radius in yards equal to the dragon's Furnace, plus three, all subjects receive a +1 bonus to Crafts for each odd point manifest and a +1 bonus to Politics for each even point manifest. The dragon herself does not receive this bonus. Should she expend a point of Breath to 'warm' her inspiration, these bonuses are doubled until the end of the scene.

Type: Odd over Even

Cost: 1 Breath to double bonuses for the scene

Dice Pool: None

Action: None

Tells

Minor: The dragon exudes a faint smell of flowers.

Moderate: As minor. In addition, petals float around the dragon, defying gravity.

Major: As moderate, but every step spontaneously spawns a circle of flowers, which wilt when she steps away.

Weaponry: Cestus SAP (Jack of Diamonds)

Dragons were not legendary simply for their longevity and fortitude. They were

dangerous, and they had a personal arsenal of biological weapons to throw at their enemies. This weapon is the sap, a force-diffusing pack of shot designed to deliver knock-out blows.

Along the knuckles of the fists the dragon possesses rough pouches filled with rattlesnake beads. These beads disperse the force of a blow across the entire fist, increasing the chance of rendering a foe unconscious. This weapon only does bashing damage (four bashing damage, actually), but has the “Reliable” feature equal to the points manifest in this Aspect. Reliable allows a player to re-roll a number of failed dice equal to its rating. That player may roll and re-roll single failed dice selectively until she has rolled as many as the feature’s rating, or until there are no more failed dice.

The Cestus SAP may be used with unarmed fighting styles, such as Boxing. It also ignores the special form of damage reduction granted by True Form, always inflicting bashing damage against True Form dragons.

Type: Sequential

Cost: None

Dice Pool: Strength + Brawl

Action: Instant

Tells

Minor: Rough calluses develop on the dragon’s knuckles and backhands.

Moderate: Patches of apparently blistered tissue form on the knuckles and backhands of the dragon. These blisters are filled with boney beads, which act as the shot to disperse force. As a result, they rattle when the hands move.

Major: As moderate, but the blistered patches are covered in rough snakeskin, and the rattling is much louder.

Binding Oath (Squire of Diamonds)

Dragons are creatures of majesty and pride—or at least they tell themselves that—and so a dragon’s words blaze with the same

strength as her Furnace. Some take their promises quite seriously, and their devotion does not go unrewarded.

When a dragon with this Aspect keeps a promise, she is rewarded with ephemeral calories. 250 Calories (1 Caloric point) for each point manifest in this Aspect. This reward is multiplied depending on how harrowing the promise will be, on a scale from 0 to 5. Trivial tasks are x0. Herculean trials are x5. Everything else falls somewhere in-between. The Storyteller decides the multiplier.

If a promise is inherently dangerous, the Calories derived are doubled. If a promise risks betrayal of a trusted friend, *but* does not actually betray them, the Calories are doubled. These multipliers stack with those based on the difficulty of the task.

Also, for each even point manifest in this Aspect the dragon receives a +1 bonus on tasks directly related to her promises. Again, this is at the Storyteller’s discretion, and can be revoked if players are making promises to abuse the bonus.

Type: Sequential

Cost: None

Dice Pool: None

Action: Instant

Tells

Minor: The dragon becomes husky. Dragons are never particularly heavy due to their Caloric requirements, but the self-rewarding nature of this Aspect makes them put on weight.

Moderate: As minor, but portly becomes the more appropriate term. The dragon develops a pot-belly.

Major: As moderate. Rotund replaces portly as a suitable descriptor, as the dragon’s shape becomes swollen and spherical. In two words: very fat. The state of her swelling does not influence her perceived beauty, however. She carries the weight well.

Bravo's Crest (Diamonds Joker)

Certain lizards are prey, and use the illusion of size to scare off attackers. For dragons, they all have to face the fact that they are prey to those that will follow, and some take it harder than others. Dragons that pick this trait understand that they don't necessarily have to be stronger; they just need to be more intimidating.

While manifesting this Aspect, the dragon can puff up her chest and flaunt her crest to scare away aggressors. By rolling Presence + Intimidation + Bravo's Crest (minus the target's Composure), the dragon can force her enemy to do nothing but flee for a number of turns equal to the points manifest in Bravo's Crest.

The first use of this Aspect is free, but successive uses each cost one point of Willpower. This action suffers no successive penalties.

Type: Sequential

Cost: 1 Willpower for subsequent scares in the scene

Dice Pool: Presence + Intimidation + Bravo's Crest - Composure

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The target... laughs. The dragon cannot try to frighten off the target again, and suffers a -2 penalty to all Intimidation rolls until the end of the scene.

Failure: The target is shaken, but does not flee. The dragon is free to try again. If Willpower was used, it is refunded.

Success: The target flees for a number of turns equal to the points manifest in Bravo's Crest at the time of the scare. He does not flee blindly into danger, but will do everything reasonably sane to escape.

Exceptional Success: The target's mind is shattered. He has no concern for his safety as he flees, and will likely run off a cliff if it is away from the dragon.

Tells

Minor: The dragon develops a throat sac, like those frogs use to croak. Most of the time it is folded quite effectively, but when she wants to scare away an aggressor it puffs up, filling with air.

Moderate: As minor. In addition, small frills adorn the throat sac. They fan out when the dragon puffs her chest.

Major: As moderate. The frills are much larger, and cannot be folded under clothes.

Suit of Clubs (Traits possessed of Tricksters)

Traits born of a dragon's body becoming contaminated and toxic, these noxious Aspects feel right at home in the possession of a Trickster. The underhanded nature by which they claim their Heart poisons their souls, and that poison leaks out of them in droves. Other dragons may submit themselves to this by choice, but it will always be more difficult.

Besides the Heart Suit, these Aspects are the cheapest available to a Trickster. All other methods must pay the highest price to purchase Aspects of this method, as they do not suit their Heart as readily.

Noxious Breath (Ace of Clubs)

Dragons that use this Aspect consume fuels that are not as efficiently burned in the Furnace, and these fuels produce poisonous waste gas that can be expelled to malicious effect.

The dragon can belch out toxic fumes, which deal one point of bashing damage per success. This noxious assault is fired off as a long burst (with all implied bonuses and penalties), with a standard range in yards equal to thrice the points manifest. The gas generated is charcoal black and has no other symptom of inhalation, except a slight sense of vertigo. For information about long bursts, see page 160 in the **World of**

Darkness Rulebook. Obvious in this case there are no bullets to be fired.

The fumes will linger in the air for a number of additional turns equal to the points manifest, plus three, provided wind or some other outside force doesn't accelerate its dispersal. Any who remain in range of the fumes will suffer an extra bashing damage each turn, unless they have equipment to protect from fumes or they get to fresh air. While consumed by the cloud, all parties except the belching dragon suffer a penalty to act equal to the odd points manifest in this Aspect.

Type: Sequential

Cost: 1 Breath to belch out fumes

Dice Pool: Stamina + Resolve + Noxious Breath

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The dragon chokes on the belch, suffering a single point of bashing damage.

Failure: The fumes inflict no damage. They linger for two turns fewer than usual.

Success: The fumes inflict bashing damage equal to the successes rolled. The fumes will linger for a number of turns equal to the points manifest in Noxious Breath, plus three, and those in their smoggy grasp continue to suffer single points of bashing damage.

Exceptional Success: Besides the standard effect, the belch costs no Breath. It also lingers for an additional two turns.

Tells

Minor: The dragon's breath becomes sour like citrus fruit. No amount of breath freshening will conceal this odor.

Moderate: As minor, but the smell grows stronger and more acidic. If the dragon exhales deeply, a waft of black smoke drifts out of her mouth.

Major: As moderate, but her breath no longer resembles fruit in any capacity. It smells absolutely retched. The deeply

exhaled smoke crackles with electricity as it reacts with the air.

Vile Blood (King of Clubs)

Another feature of a sickly Furnace, some dragons are corrosive on the inside. Their bloodstream is contaminated by the sickness of the Furnace, and it becomes a caustic bubbling mass of black acid. While not immediately useful, if the dragon needs to bleed she might as well do some damage while she's at it.

The dragon's blood is replaced with an acidic compound, but this does not hinder her. It can prove bothersome to attackers, though. Each time the dragon suffers lethal or aggravated damage, she inflicts 1 lethal wound automatically to everything within close combat range (one to three yards). She also corrodes a number of armor points—close or ranged, or some combination of both—equal to the points manifest in this Aspect. This excludes her own biological armor, though not the armor she's wearing. Corrosion is not cumulative, it is always at the highest level manifest when blood is drawn. If the armor corroded is supernatural or biological in origin, the reduced utility lasts for the scene only. Otherwise the damage is permanent.

The dragon using Vile Blood may spend a point of Willpower to control the acidity of her blood, preventing it from harming her friends. Once such protection begins, it lasts until the end of the scene.

Type: Sequential

Cost: 1 Willpower to protect allies for the scene.

Dice Pool: None

Action: None

Tells

Minor: The dragon begins to suffer varicose veins in the extremities. Though they appear identical, they are not painful like legitimate varicose veins.

Moderate: As minor, but the varicose veins form over the entire body. They are

most concentrated at the extremities, such as the fingertips.

Major: The entirety of the dragon's circulatory system becomes visible, a sickly black pulsing network showing through the skin.

Acidic Saliva (Queen of Clubs)

Just as the blood becomes contaminated by the pollution, so do the other fluids in the dragon's body. For those with this Aspect, the fluid in question is saliva.

The corrosion attacks anything that comes into contact with the dragon's saliva, be it by bite or spit. For bite attacks, she may add a number of additional dice equal to her roll equal to the points manifest in this Aspect. She may also spit this acid a number of yards equal to her Furnace, plus three. When the saliva comes in contact with objects, it ignores an amount of Durability up to points manifest when dealing damage to Structure.

This Aspect is designed to destroy equipment. Attacking a specified target (**World of Darkness** Rulebook, page 165) is the norm for Acidic Saliva, but generalized attacks work as well (they just attack the target's armor's structure instead).

Type: Sequential

Cost: None

Dice Pool: Dexterity + Firearms + Acidic Saliva (to spit)

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The attack misses, and likely hits something completely off-course. For sadistic storytellers, it'll always hit an ally.

Failure: The attack misses, landing somewhere and causing little harm. The ground or scenery may be damaged, but not irreparably.

Success: The spitball hits the target object and inflicts damage to structure equal to the successes rolled. An amount of the object's Durability equal to the points

manifest is ignored by this attack. If the targeted object was being worn by a person, they suffer a single point of bashing damage.

Exceptional Success: Identical to success, but the damage suffered by the wearer is lethal. On inanimate objects, no different than a success.

Tells

Minor: The dragon's saliva begins to corrode any object it touches. Saliva production is increased slightly.

Moderate: As minor, but saliva production is further increased. The dragon finds it difficult to keep in check.

Major: As moderate, but saliva production is exponentially increased. The dragon cannot help but drool out the excess, and it likely dissolves any clothes she was wearing.

Weaponry: Palm Pike (Jack of Clubs)

Dragons were not legendary simply for their longevity and fortitude. They were dangerous, and they had a personal arsenal of biological weapons to throw at their enemies. This weapon is the palm pike, a thin spearhead that can be fired like a harpoon.

Embedded in the palm of the dragon's main hand is a short retractable spear made of a bonelike modified scale (similar to a shark's tooth). This weapon has the "Sticky Grasp" feature with a rating equal to the points manifest in this Aspect. Sticky Grasp is triggered by a grapple attempt. This feature adds its rating as a bonus to the grapple. For rules on grappling, see the **World of Darkness** Rulebook, page 157.

In addition, grabs made with this weapon inflict one lethal wound if successful. The pike may also be fired without penalty a distance of twenty-five yards, though a full turn must pass before the pike is replenished. Shooting the pike uses Dexterity and Firearms, and damage is two lethal.

Type: Sequential

Cost: None

Dice Pool: Dexterity + Firearms

Action: Instant

Tells

Minor: A circular sore forms on the palm of the dragon's main hand. A thin, needlelike pike emerges from this sore when she tries to grab someone, or when she wishes to fire her payload.

Moderate: The sore mentioned in the Minor tell becomes a full-fledged hole in the palm, with the skin hardening around it. The pike spawned is wider, too.

Major: As moderate, but the skin around the hole turns black, in contorted twisting patterns.

Chameleon Hide (Squire of Clubs)

Another tool taken from the box of reptile traits, Chameleon Hide lets a dragon easily blend with her surroundings. Those that fall into the category of prey find this trait indispensable.

For each odd point manifest, the dragon gains a +1 bonus to Stealth. For each even point manifest, she gains a +1 bonus to Larceny. She may roll to hide in plain sight (so long as she is blending), though she may suffer penalties if she makes too much noise while doing so.

It is important to note that the passive form of this Aspect only applies to the dragon's skin, and not her clothes. If she wishes to hide in plain sight, she will need to remove her vestments or spend a point of Breath to draw them into the blend with her (or suffer appropriate penalties to her Stealth rolls). The dragon's eyes are never concealed, period, and are usually the means of discovery if her sneaking fails.

Type: Odd over Even

Cost: 1 Breath to blend clothes

Dice Pool: Composure + Stealth

Action: Reflexive

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The dragon fails to camouflage correctly, but worse she does

not realize she's exposed. She continues to act as if she is unnoticed until outside stimulus alerts her otherwise (usually violently).

Failure: The dragon is perceived as a slight irregularity of the scenery, such as light bending in an irregular manner. Onlookers are likely to investigate. Alternatively, she has made a sound that alerts others of her direction, if not her exact location.

Success: The dragon successfully blends with her surroundings, going unnoticed. If others are searching for her she may need to continue rolling.

Exceptional Success: Identical to success, but the dragon has concealed herself so well she need not roll next turn.

Tells

Minor: The dragon's skin forms patches of alternating dark and light pigment, like flesh camouflage. At this stage of manifestation, the patches are small and in easily concealed locations.

Moderate: As minor, but the patches of camouflage are larger and form across the entire body, including the face and hands.

Major: The dragon's skin shifts with the pattern and color of the relevant background. This is a passive effect, but without active effort to blend it simply serves as proof that something's off.

Venoms (Clubs Joker)

Snakes have venom that disables their prey. Without a decent knowledge of snakes it is impossible to tell if it is poisonous, pretending to be poisonous or simply devoid of the dangerous substance. For those facing dragons with this Aspect... whoops, tough luck. This poison is practically impossible to detect until it is too late.

The dragon's sharp exposed extremities are all actually hollow, with a dose of poison waiting to burst forth from their tips. Whenever the dragon inflicts lethal damage,

More about Trauma

Trauma is very a very useful combat infliction, but in the case of Venoms it is only as potent as the dragon's poison. Though highly unlikely, should a dragon disband some points of Venoms while trauma is in effect, trauma is likewise decreased. For example, if a dragon were to move from Venoms 5 to Venoms 4 while an enemy is suffering Trauma 5, that enemy would then only suffer Trauma 4.

Trauma itself is a new combat affliction introduced in this book. You can read more about it in Chapter 3 on page 159.

she exposes her victim to this nerve-locking chemical.

The venom inflicts trauma, with a rating equal to the points manifest in Venoms (which means its potency changes as the Aspect is assumed or disbanded). This trauma lingers until the subject is no longer suffering any lethal wounds, or until the end of the scene (whichever comes first).

It is important to note that in this case the penalty inflicted by trauma cannot be localized, as the venoms move too quickly through the bloodstream. Also, this trauma does not stack with others inflicted by Venoms, so its rating is only ever the points manifest in Venoms. If multiple dragons attack with Venoms, only the highest applies.

Type: Sequential

Cost: None

Dice Pool: None

Action: Reflexive

Tells

Minor: A band of skin along the dragon's midsection, upper arms, and legs all change skin tone.

Moderate: As minor. In addition, a patch of skin in the shape of an ankh also changes tone, on the dragon's back and forehead.

Major: As moderate. In addition, any natural weaponry the dragon possesses (including her teeth) weep with the white venoms.

Suit of Goblets (Traits possessed of Inheritors)

Features of stature and entitlement, the bureaucratic drive of these traits fit best in the hand of an Inheritor. There's a certain degree of callous pomp that makes others

hesitant to embrace the Goblet. It doesn't lock them out, but it certainly makes things difficult.

Besides the Heart Suit, these Aspects are the cheapest available to an Inheritor. All other methods must pay the highest price to purchase Aspects of this method, as they do not suit their Heart as readily.

Flight of the King (Ace of Goblets)

Where there are world leaders there are assassins. With this Aspect dragons stay on their toes, and can get the drop on a would-be surprise attacker.

Odd points manifest increase the dragon's Initiative by 1, and even points manifest increase her Defense by 1. When taking a dodge action, the dragon may add her points manifest in Flight of the King to her Defense, after the doubling that normally occurs. This works almost identically to the "Brawling Dodge" Merit (**World of Darkness** Rulebook, page 110), except Defense is doubled and *then* increased by Flight of the King (this Aspect may be used in conjunction with the Merit if preferred, in which case Brawl and Flight of the King would both be added to base Defense). For more information on taking a dodge action, see the **World of Darkness** Rulebook, page 156.

Type: Odd over Even

Cost: None

Dice Pool: None

Action: Reflexive

Tells

Minor: The dragon forms red-ink, runic tattoos in certain concealable regions of her body, like the shoulders and chest.

Moderate: As minor, but more tattoos form, in more inconvenient places. At least one forms on the face.

Major: As moderate, but the tattoos glow with white eldritch energy.

Regal Stature (King of Goblets)

Playing more on the idea of dragons as movers and shakers and less on the idea of them as massive fire-breathing monsters, Regal Stature provides a level of impact to the Oroboroi presence in a room. Dragons take this trait when they want to be seen, and want their words to be heard.

Each point manifest grants the dragon a +1 bonus to Presence, but to make use of this massive surge of capacity for the scene she must spend a point of Breath.

In addition, while this Aspect is active mortals will delay their judgment of the dragon's motives and personality until the scene has concluded. While it might not seem like much, this does give the dragon some breathing room to do what needs to be done without risking her reputation. After all, it's the result that matters, and not the process.

Type: Sequential

Cost: 1 Breath to use the Presence for the scene

Dice Pool: None

Action: Reflexive

Tells

Minor: The dragon appears to stand with perfect posture. Even if there was no noticeable slouch beforehand, the dragon

seems to be standing more "correct" than before.

Moderate: As minor. In addition, a scarf of fur forms from on the back of the dragon's neck. Each side of this attached scarf is roughly a forearm's length long.

Major: As moderate. The bio-scarf's length is further increased, with each side stretching down to the dragon's knees.

Envoy's Passage (Queen of Goblets)

Oftentimes a dragon does not start at the top. Frequently, she may have no association with a group from which she needs favors. But rather than earning them, she can project an air of status that will get her in the door; at least briefly.

The dragon declares a group, and for the rest of the scene she gains dots in Status equal to the points manifest in Envoy's Passage. In fact, if she increases or decreases points manifest, her dots in Status also change. The Aspect grants her no actual credentials, just the semblance of "being in charge".

If she doesn't play along with somebody of higher status, it's likely her ruse will be unveiled. Also, some particularly attentive members of the group may question her sudden appearance once she's gone. In addition, she may be associated with the group when faced with that group's enemies (Like say, facing the police when posing as

A Free Merit?

At first glance it may seem that Envoy's Passage is just a more flexible version of the Status Merit, but that is not the case. Though being able to switch between factions fast has its benefits, the dragon does not prosper from extended relationships with these factions. Her interactions with them are fleeting, and she likely generates many enemies in the process. Plus, there's a certain degree of resentment at her sudden injection into the fold, and should she draw too much attention to herself her charade can be dispelled.

Another thing to consider is that Envoy's Passage does not replace other forms of Status. In fact, it stacks with them and can sometimes lead to ridiculous and non-existent positions of authority, like the Emperor of Police. Only attainable by possessing some hold in the Status she pumps up, she gains access to the assumed powers of such a position despite the fact that it is fictitious. When the Aspect's duration ends, she is considered demoted, and may be harassed by her superiors for her actions while at the "top of the ladder".

Envoy's Apparel

Envoy's Passage is unique in that it not only reshapes the dragon's physical characteristics, but also those of her vestments. It can actually warp clothing into uniforms, or gang apparel, or any other appropriate outfit for the group with which the dragon pledges allegiance. The Aspect may only reshape clothes that are there, however, so if the dragon is underdressed or her Aspects trash her clothing, uniforms cannot be spawned.

a gang member). Needless to say she'll need to be clever to make the passage stick.

When the scene ends, her association with the group dissolves without contest. They notice she's gone, but don't particularly understand or care why. They may rationalize it as a transfer or a termination, or possibly a long leave-of-absence for medical or mental reasons. After the scene ends the dragon may select a new group with which to associate (But not the same group for another twenty-four hours), but until she does this Aspect grants no other benefits.

For more information on Status, see the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, page 116.

Type: Sequential

Cost: None

Dice Pool: None

Action: None

Tells

Minor: The dragon gains a physical trait usually associated with a low-level member of the selected group, and her clothes are adjusted accordingly. This trait may turn out to be a stereotype, which could prove troublesome for a dragon trying to blend in. Also, the clothes probably lack important details that an attentive member of the selected group might notice.

Moderate: As minor, but the feature is instead associated with a mid-level member of the group. A stereotype is more likely and more pronounced, and more features are likely to be missed.

Major: As minor, but the feature is instead associated with the top-dog of the group. Stereotyping is very likely and quite pronounced, and the clothing may be missing several important details.

Weaponry: *Razor Fan (Jack of Clubs)*

Dragons were not legendary simply for their longevity and fortitude. They were dangerous, and they had a personal arsenal of biological weapons to throw at their enemies. This weapon is the razor fan, a

series of interconnected blades that deflect blows and injure attackers.

The dragon may or may not be capable of flight, but she forms a chiropteran wings with razor digits (even if she's sporting wings already) that she uses like a bladed fan. Attacks with Razor Wings are clumsy, but enjoy the "Defensive Flourish" feature (with a rating equal to the points manifest in this Aspect). The Defensive Flourish feature grants a spontaneous boost to Defense equal to its rating. This boost occurs even if Defense was sacrificed in an earlier action this turn. The boost lasts until the start of the next turn. Attacks with the Razor Wings are made with Dexterity + Brawl, and the damage is negative one lethal.

Type: Sequential

Cost: None

Dice Pool: Dexterity + Brawl

Action: Instant

Tells

Minor: A fan of thin blades, interconnected like the fingers of a bat's hand, forms from the dragon's spine, stretching out towards her main side. The blades are completely opposable and can fold up, to be hidden beneath a shirt or jacket.

Moderate: As minor, but the blades are wider, longer, and more bulky.

Major: As moderate. The blades are connected by webbed flaps of chiropteran dermis, like the wing of a bat. The wing can no longer be folded and concealed.

Crown of the Ages (Squire of Goblets)

Another tribute to regality, this Aspect bestows upon the dragon the power of command, though limited by the language in which it is issued. Dragons take this trait when they like to get things done, but don't care for the consequences of plying authority.

The dragon spends a point of Willpower and rolls Presence + Persuasion + Crown of the Ages - Resolve to issue a command—

which can be no longer than a single sentence—to a mortal. The command can have a number of steps equal to the points manifest in Crown of the Ages, but cannot be suicidal and cannot immediately call the mortal's morality into question. If a matter of morality happens to pop up during the fulfillment of these orders, the mortal may roll Resolve to break the chain of command, provided he succeeds. Also, the mortal will only follow the command as issued, and is free to fill in gaps of grammar any way he pleases.

She must be careful with her words, though. Any mortal in earshot who hears a step of the command from start to finish will perform that command. In places where her voice travels, the dragon may cause more problems than good through the use of this Aspect.

This Aspect works on supernatural beings, but only if Breath is spent in conjunction with the Willpower. The subject cannot be commanded more than once in a scene.

Type: Sequential

Cost: 1 Willpower to command (+1 Breath for Supernatural Beings)

Dice Pool: Presence + Manipulation + Crown of the Ages - Resolve

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The means through which the commands are carried out is piecemeal and often out of order. Unintended subjects are drawn into the words of the Crown, and are likely incapable of completing the tasks they pick up on effectively. Needless to say it blows up in the dragon's face.

Failure: Nobody is compelled to follow the command. In fact, it draws suspicion and scorn. The dragon will likely face scrutiny for being so bossy.

Success: Any Mortal that hears a step of the command in its entirety is compelled to

attempt carrying it out, though he feels it is of his own volition. If the command places the subject in danger, he may immediately break from it. If the command happens to fall below his acceptable level of sin (and he is made aware of this debauchery before completion), he may break from it by succeeding at a Resolve roll. If Breath is spent when issuing the command, supernatural beings are likewise compelled with the same conditions.

Exceptional Success: Identical to success, but the Willpower is not spent.

Tells

Minor: The dragon forms a crown of light that hovers just above her head. It is very faint at this stage, and can only be seen while in the shadows.

Moderate: As minor, but the light of the crown is visible in the light. It shines brilliantly in the darkness.

Major: As minor, but the crown crackles and dances like electricity. It is blindingly bright.

Mesmerizing Eyes (Goblets Joker)

Fabled serpents have stares that cannot be broken; stares that hypnotize and pacify their prey. Dragons, on the other hand, can use such stares on both prey and predators, provided they've incorporated this trait into their form.

By locking eyes with her mark the dragon can trap him in her gaze, giving him no other option but to stare back (and robbing him of his Defense). The dragon is free to do other things while her mark is stunned, so long as she does not break eye contact.

The stare has its limitations, though. It can only last a number of turns equal to the points manifest in this Aspect, after which the dragon must wait at least a turn before trying again. Also, if the mark is subjected to harm of any kind, it is enough to free him from the trap. After the first use of the

scene, further gaze locks with this Aspect cost one point of Willpower.

Type: Sequential

Cost: 1 Willpower for subsequent gazes in the scene

Dice Pool: Composure + Expression + Mesmerizing Eyes - Resolve

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The gaze backfires, and the dragon finds herself unable to escape the eyes of her mark. She loses her Defense for the turn, and then the gaze ends.

Failure: The mark is not trapped in the gaze, and does not lose his defense.

Success: The mark becomes trapped in the gaze of the dragon and cannot act for a number of turns equal to the points manifest in Mesmerizing Eyes. During these lost turns, he cannot apply his Defense against incoming attacks, though should he suffer a number of wounds equal to the points manifest in this Aspect he is freed from the gaze and recovers any remaining lost turns.

Exceptional Success: Identical to success, but the Willpower is not spent.

Tells

Minor: The dragon's eyes form a translucent film, rendering them unable to

blink.

Moderate: As minor. In addition, the dragon appears to be put in the spotlight. Whenever another character looks at her, the world around dims and she brightens.

Major: As moderate, but the tunnel vision is much more dramatic. The world outside her presence becomes dull and lackluster, being drained of color.

Philosophies

Besides their introverted view, dragons are all possessed of extroverted opinions that they enforce on the world around them. Part of their divine right is the ability to impose things on matter by force-of-will, and the Philosophies are the roads dragons use to achieve that end.

The cynicisms and stereotypes of a particular school become reality when they are focused into a Philosophy. The five forces dragons control, woven into their very fabric of existence, leech out with thought and make a more suitable environment. Destruction (Metal), Oath (Earth), Health (Tree), Pain (Fire), and Memory (Water) all bow to the dragon kings, and their tribute is magnificent. It's good to

Aspect Factory

Now that you've seen the array of pre-made Aspects, you possess enough information to create some of your own. Crafting an Aspect takes four steps:

Step 1: Create an Ability

Your Aspect should alter some way the dragon interacts with her world. For Sequential Aspects, this advantage takes the form of an increasing bonus. For Odd over Even Aspects, two advantages alternate between granting bonuses. For Compound Aspects (of which there is currently only one), an advantage is applied to an increasingly wide selection of tasks (At least five).

Step 2: Assign a Physical Tell

Every Aspect has a sign that it is in use. This forces your dragon to turn it off, lest she give herself away. The Tell that you use should be unique and at least somewhat difficult to conceal. As a good guideline, the more potent the advantage you Aspect provides, the more difficult the Tell should be to conceal.

Step 3: Attach a Cost

Determine whether your Aspect needs a cost to deter use. If it is often useful, requiring Breath once a scene is a good deterrent against overuse. If it is incredibly useful, make it cost Willpower each time it is used. And if it is indispensable, each use should require Breath.

Step 4: Assign a Card and Suit

Deciding the Method your Aspect is associated with is really a matter of gut feeling, so there's little to say about this. Before placing your new trait, look at the other Aspects in your target Method to make sure your new advantage fits thematically.

Supernatural Conflict

All Philosophies incorporate Furnace in their dice pool. As such, a target facing the Philosophy may subtract his Furnace from the attacking dragon's dice pool. This is supernatural resistance; the force of one dragon's will against another. But what happens if a dragon uses a Philosophy on another creature of the night? Are Vampires as vulnerable to the reality-bending will of a dragon as a mortal is? The answer is simply "no". In place of Furnace, any supernatural creature may ply their own fantastic nature against the dragon's will. For Vampires, that would be Blood Potency. For Werewolves, it's Primal Urge, Mages would subtract their Gnosis, and anything that possesses a Supernaturalism Trait gets to use that trait to resist these powers.

be king.

While once available in full to each and every dragon, the dichotomy that came with the Collapse shattered these five forces down the middle, and the schools that followed each took a piece. When brought together some semblance of the original potency can be mimicked, but never will it be the same.

When making a **Dragon** character, that character receives a fleeting two dots to place in Philosophies, and one such dot must always be placed in the Philosophy that matches the dragon's school. These first two dots reflect the dragon's introduction to her new worldview, and the influences that come with such a worldview.

Unless the dragon is a member of the School of True Heart (see page 78) and vicariously houses her Heart in chest, she is unable to cross schools to claim Philosophies. A dragon of Bone cannot acquire dots in the Wrath Philosophy (Being that it's a Sainly Devil School), though she could purchase dots in the Ash Philosophy as it too is one of the Embers Schools. Also, unlike Aspects, Philosophies must always be activated *in order*, starting with the lowest level and working up to the highest level known. Obviously this means Philosophies must also be purchased sequentially.

To get new Philosophies or new levels in a known Philosophy, the dragon must practice the lifestyle that forms them (then spend the experience necessary). For Philosophies that fall outside their own school of thought, this can be an arduous process. The vast difference in mentality alone hinders learning, not to mention the

completely different nature the other force presents to the dragon. Mastery in more than one Philosophy is almost never possible.

The Philosophies detailed here are all surface-oriented, based on the schools that made them reality. It is somewhat of an old-wives tale that certain dragons spend their millennia underwater, and there is little known about the mindsets of these deep Oroboroi. Schools and Philosophies of the deep could be completely different, but still based on the five forces of Destruction, Oath, Health, Pain, and Memory. Still, that is beyond the scope of this book.

Each Philosophy is accompanied by its five levels, with the common names for those levels and a description of their function. Also included by level are the costs of using that level, the rolls necessary to complete that level, and the possible outcomes of those rolls. Embers Philosophies will state a force and the 'yang' Philosophy that mirrors them. Sainly Devil Philosophies also state a force, the 'yin' Philosophy that mirrors them, and a 'Karmic Backlash' that accompanies Dramatic Failures.

Embers Philosophies (Held by the Schools of Dominion)

Those who base their mindsets on lessons learned in the Collapse fall into the Schools of Dominion. They are called Embers dragons, and these are their Philosophies.

Ash

The Philosophy of Ash focuses on the innate frailty of all things, and it destroys by breaking down the object on a fundamental

level. Widening cracks. Magnifying flaws. Crumbling to dust.

Force: Destruction

Yang: Wrath

Sense the Faults (●)

With a clear glance at an object of interest, the dragon is made aware of any crucial weaknesses said object possesses and may ply that knowledge to her advantage. To start, she becomes aware of a number of faults in the object equal to her proficiency in the Ash Philosophy. These faults may hinder performance or outright break the object, and Sense the Faults makes her aware of what causes the fault and how the fault could be used to damage the object.

Cost: None

Dice Pool: Wits + Crafts + Furnace – Durability – Artifact Rating

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Ash dragon misinterprets the nature of a fault, be it by position or nature. If she tries to exploit said fault, something bad will happen (as it isn't actually what she thought it was). Further Ash uses against the object suffer a -5 penalty until the dragon uses Sense the Faults again.

Failure: No faults are detected, though that doesn't mean there aren't any. The Ash dragon cannot use higher levels of the Ash Philosophy until she succeeds on this one.

Success: Even if something seems absolutely perfect and unbreakable, there is *always* a flaw. It could be a design problem. It could be a material impurity. It could be something the dragon's force of will plants in the object. Regardless, the dragon becomes aware of the object's flaws and is free to exploit them.

Exceptional Success: In addition to success, the dragon may add her Ash proficiency to the dice pools in further levels

of this Philosophy, provided she does not switch targets and the scene does not end.

Intensify the Faults (●●)

The dragon takes control of the fault, bringing it to the foregrounds and causing it to interfere with all normal functions. The object inflicts a penalty against users equal to the dragon's Ash rating, for a number of turns equal to the successes rolled.

If the object is in the process of functioning, it must roll Durability - dragon's Ash proficiency, and succeed, or it instantly stops working.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Resolve + Crafts + Furnace - Durability - Artifact Rating

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Ash dragon inadvertently fixes the fault, granting all users a +2 bonus with the object. That same fault cannot be plied again, and the dragon cannot continue to the next level of Ash until she succeeds in intensifying the fault.

Failure: Despite her best efforts, the fault does not trigger a malfunction. The Ash dragon cannot use higher levels of the Ash Philosophy until she succeeds on this one.

Success: The fault in the object is brought to the forefront, inflicting a penalty for use equal to the dragon's proficiency in Ash for a number of turns equal to the successes rolled. If the object was in the process of functioning (Like say, a computer running a program) it must roll Durability - Ash and succeed or crash.

Exceptional Success: Same as Success, but the Willpower is not spent.

Crumble by Faults (●●●)

The dragon widens the faults the target possesses, corroding equipment or stiffening seams. The Durability of the object is

Artifact Rating?

Mystical items, such as a Graft, are possessed of a rating that sets their Merit cost. This Merit rating gives them an added degree of protection against a dragon's power of Destruction (in the case of Ash, it is applied as a penalty to dice pools). Whenever a dice pool involves Artifact Rating, it is referring to the Merit Cost of a mystic item that is being targeted by the Philosophy.

reduced by the dragon's proficiency in Ash. This is a lasting effect.

That is, unless the object is supernatural in some way. If it is indeed of mystical origin, the reduction lasts for a number of turns equal to the successes rolled on activation, and then the object returns to normal.

Cost: 1 Breath

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Crafts + Furnace - Durability - Artifact Rating

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The object is dramatically improved, increasing its Durability by three. The fault being exploited is also repaired, which means the dragon must find a different fault and complete the steps necessary to use Crumble by Faults. She cannot move up to the next level of Ash until she successfully uses Crumble by Faults.

Failure: Try as she might, the fault will not compromise the object's integrity. The Ash dragon cannot use higher levels of the Ash Philosophy until she succeeds on this one.

Success: The fault in the object is widened, causing damage to the object's integrity and making it easier to break. If the object is mundane, this damage is permanent. If, however, the object is somehow mystical or being amplified by a Graft, this damage only lingers for a number of turns equal to the successes rolled.

Exceptional Success: Same as Success, but the Breath is not spent.

Ashes to Dust (●●●●)

The dragon further extends the faults beyond diminishment, usually destroying the target utterly. The successes on activation inflict damage directly to Structure.

It might seem odd to damage Structure directly after going through the trouble of reducing Durability, but on close examination it begins to make sense.

Durability is plied against this Philosophy only as a penalty, and it does not automatically reduce damage when this Philosophy is used. Therefore, both having it lowered and ignored as a damage sponge makes destroying the object so much easier.

Cost: 1 Breath

Dice Pool: Presence + Crafts + Furnace - Durability - Artifact Rating

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The object is repaired by the attempt at destruction, recovering four points of Structure. The fault being exploited is also repaired, which means the dragon must find a different fault and complete the steps necessary to use Ashes to Dust. She cannot move up to the next level of Ash until she successfully uses Ashes to Dust.

Failure: Though the fault may writhe and seem to crack, it does not inflict any damage to Structure. The Ash dragon cannot use the final level of the Ash Philosophy until she succeeds on this one.

Success: The fault in the object is spread, inflicting damage to Structure equal to the successes rolled. Like any attack against an object, if Structure is reduced to zero it breaks and ceases to function as intended. The damage inflicted by this Philosophy is not reduced by the object's Durability.

Exceptional Success: Same as Success, but the Breath is not spent.

Disintegrator Grasp (●●●●●)

The dragon touches the target and removes any lingering evidence of utility, filling it from top to bottom with fault. This touch inflicts 4 damage to Structure for each success on activation, usually reducing it to powder.

Disintegrator Grasp is an instant action, but not every dragon is capable of spending 3 Breath in a single turn. For those that are not, they may drag out the touch over multiple turns by sacrificing their Defense,

until they can pay the full price. In such cases, the touch must be maintained for the duration of these turns, and the roll to activate is made on the turn in which the total Breath owed is paid.

It is important to note that, unlike the previous level of Philosophy, Disintegrator Grasp does not ignore Durability. The damage to structure this Philosophy inflicts is always reduced by the object's Durability.

Cost: 3 Breath, or 1 Breath over three turns

Dice Pool: Resolve + Crafts + Furnace - Durability - Artifact Rating

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The object is miraculously repaired, returning to full Structure and repairing all of the faults. The dragon cannot use the Ash Philosophy on the object for a full day, whereupon her imagination can inflict new faults.

Failure: The surface of the object powders and blows away, but it does not seem damaged by the effort. The dragon is free to try again, though.

Success: The object suffers damage to Structure equal to four times the successes rolled. Like any attack against an object, if Structure is reduced to zero it breaks and ceases to function as intended, but in this case it crumbles away to dust, leaving it irreparable. The damage to Structure is reduced by the object's Durability, though that likely is not enough to save it.

Exceptional Success: The object suffers damage to Structure equal to six times the successes rolled. If the object is mystical in any way, the dragon absorbs Breath from it equal to its rating. Also, the damage to Structure ignores the object's Durability.

Blood

The Philosophy of Blood focuses on the art of vows: seeing how valuable the word of

another is, and binding them to that word on pain of death (or insanity).

Force: Oath

Yang: Pride

See the Scars (•)

Adjusting her eyes to see the soul in tandem with the body, the dragon analyzes how trustworthy a subject may be by reading their sins. By succeeding with See the Scars, the dragon is provided with the following information: The target's current Morality score, and the *last* active derangement the target received (if any).

This Philosophy shows the vascular system of the target, and how lively or deathly the blood moves through the body—a metaphor for spiritual vitality—helps diagnose the Morality (or relevant ethics trait). In addition, the body shows both physical and spiritual wounds (And some Blood dragons may have trouble telling the difference), and the state of the spiritual wound displays the type of derangement, how well it has been treated, and how long ago it was inflicted.

Cost: None

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Socialize + Furnace - Composure - Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Blood dragon gets only a foggy and cryptic glimpse at the subject's soul, one which gives little insight into their character. She may move on to higher levels of Blood, but she'll suffer a -5 penalty until she succeeds on See the Scars.

Failure: The Blood dragon cannot alter her perception to see the sin of her subject. She cannot use higher levels of the Blood Philosophy until she succeeds on this one.

Success: Regardless of the end result, studying a soul print gives the Blood dragon a load of insight. The dragon learns the subject's Morality score (Or Ethics, or whatever relevant score is applicable to the

subject) as well as any derangements he may be suffering.

Exceptional Success: In addition to success, the dragon may add her Blood proficiency to the dice pools in further levels of this Philosophy, provided she does not switch subjects and the scene does not end.

Ply the Scars (●●)

Using the information gathered with See the Scars, the Blood dragon socially twists the subject into submission. The dragon steals a number of points of Willpower from the subject equal to her Blood proficiency, plus the successes rolled.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Wits + Socialize + Furnace - Composure - Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Blood dragon misjudges the subject, and bends her knowledge in the wrong direction. The dragon loses two Willpower points, supplying them to the subject. She may move on to the next level, though.

Failure: The dragon does not use her knowledge with the finesse necessary to benefit from it. No Willpower is stolen, and the dragon cannot move up to the next level until she succeeds at this one.

Success: The dragon steals a number of Willpower points from the subject, equal to her proficiency in Blood, plus the successes rolled in the activation of this Philosophy. If the subject has insufficient Willpower to make this payment, they suffer roll-over damage to that meter as detailed in the first Appendix, page 191.

Exceptional Success: Same as Success, but the dragon is also refunded the Willpower spent to activate this Philosophy.

Bind the Scars (●●●)

A sinner properly manipulated can be made to keep his word. Words in passing that can do a lot of damage if not chosen carefully. If a subject the Blood dragon has primed

with Ply the Scars states an intention, that dragon may initiate Bind the Scars. If she succeeds, the oath-taker is bound by Blood to carry out that intention.

While under the effects of Bind the Scars, if the oath-taker does not fulfill the promised action a degeneration roll is made (at a Morality score two below the subject's current; if that falls below 1 the roll automatically fails). This Philosophy may only be applied against the same subject once within twenty-four hours.

Cost: 1 Breath

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Socialize + Furnace – Composure - Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: All the progress made with the Blood Philosophy is lost, and the dragon must start over.

Failure: The passing comment is not bound in oath, and the Blood dragon cannot proceed in her Philosophy until a task is set. She must wait for another fleeting promise and succeed with Bind the Scars before she may move to higher levels of the Blood Philosophy.

Success: The subject has no mystic compulsion to fulfill his promise, but his sanity is placed on the line if he does not. Abandoning the task or failing to complete it counts as a sin, two levels below the current Morality (or Ethics, or whatever) of the subject. The subject must roll the appropriate degeneration and derangement rolls.

Exceptional Success: Same as Success, but the sin is three levels below the current Morality of the subject.

Bleed the Betrayer (●●●●)

The Blood dragon becomes mildly aware of the subject's actions. She knows he is working towards or against the stated goal, provided the event is significant enough. If at any point she detects he is drifting off the path, she may spend a Willpower point to

roll Bleed the Betrayer, which inflicts bashing wounds on the oath-breaker. The subject remains unaware of the damage's source (unless told), and feels only a crushing sensation in the vicinity of his heart. Since bashing damage heals quickly (save the overflow that goes to lethal), this usually is not an effective combat tactic. Medical examination mistakes it as a heart attack, but the oath-breaker can feel in his soul it's something more than that. Bleed the Betrayer is best used to scare an oath-taker back onto the path.

This Philosophy requires one turn of physical contact to apply (but not a roll), within one hour of the Bind the Scars Philosophy. Bleed the Betrayer lasts for one month after it is applied, and may be used as many times as the oath-taker drifts from the path. The duration may not be extended.

Cost: 1 Breath to apply

1 Willpower to activate

Dice Pool: Resolve + Socialize + Furnace - Composure - Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The subject is inadvertently let off the hook, though the Blood dragon remains unaware of this. She may continue on to the last level of the Philosophy, but it will always fail.

Failure: No bashing damage is inflicted, and the subject gets away with stepping off-track. The dragon cannot make use of the final Philosophy's wrath until she's inflicted damage with Bleed the Betrayer at least once, though she may apply it.

Success: The oath-breaker suffers a number of bashing wounds equal to the successes rolled. This damage can be dealt from any distance, via the connection between dragon and oath-taker.

Exceptional Success: Same as Success, but the Willpower is not spent.

No Greater Justice (●●●●●)

By the same connection forged in Bleed the Betrayer, the dragon watches for signs that the subject is abandoning or forsaking the oath. If he is turning his back on the promise, the dragon has the option of boiling his blood. For a single point of Breath, she inflicts Presence + Socialize + Furnace + Blood proficiency automatic lethal damage, minus the target's Composure (and Furnace, if he has one).

No Greater Justice is an instant action, but not every dragon is capable of spending 2 Breath in a single turn. For those that are not, they may drag out the touch over two turns by sacrificing their Defense, until they can pay the full price. In such cases, the touch must be maintained for the duration of these turns, and the roll to activate is made on the turn in which the total Breath owed is paid.

And unlike Bleed the Betrayer, the roll for this Philosophy is made on application and not activation. No Greater Justice lasts for one week once it is applied, and its application expires after it is activated. However, unlike the other levels of the Blood Philosophy, No Greater Justice can be extended almost indefinitely by spending Willpower. Each point of Willpower spent extends the duration of this Philosophy by one week.

Cost: 2 Breath, or 1 Breath over two turns (to apply)

1 Breath to activate

1 Willpower to extend duration by one week

Dice Pool: Presence + Socialize + Furnace - Composure - Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: *Ouch!* The connection between dragon and subject is broken, and the Blood dragon must start over from the last level that has not expired.

If it's been more than a week, she'll have to start from scratch.

Failure: The Blood dragon cannot bind her subject with No Greater Justice, but may try again so long as she maintains physical contact with him.

Success: The invisible link between Blood dragon and subject gets one final, grim clause. If the subject breaks from his oath completely, he will suffer an exorbitant amount of automatic lethal damage equal to the dragon's Presence + Socialize + Furnace + Blood proficiency, minus his own Composure (and Furnace if applicable)... if the dragon wishes it, that is (and pays a point of Breath). This damage may only be inflicted once per application, but usually ends the subject.

Exceptional Success: Identical to success, but the link lasts an extra week.

Bone

The Philosophy of Bone focuses on re-knitting wounds, quickening reflexes, sensing incoming danger, and otherwise ensuring that the scholar can survive what she has prepared for.

Force: Health

Yang: Greed

Check the Core (●)

The dragon examines a body's health as accurately as if she were in the doctor's office with advanced medical equipment. Though she may not possess the know-how in theory, her imagination fills in the gaps and her sheer force of will ensures such

intuitive leaps are not simply stipulations.

By rolling this Philosophy, the dragon is able to determine what sorts of diseases, poisons, physical ailments, wounds, drugs, or other miscellaneous issues are affecting her subject. She gets an instant snapshot of how healthy someone is and what might be troubling them, though she'll need to research to understand how serious a condition is.

Cost: None

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Medicine + Furnace - Composure - Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Bone dragon misdiagnoses the subject, and treatment is likely to go in the wrong direction. She may move on to higher levels of Bone, but she'll suffer a -5 penalty until she succeeds on Check the Core.

Failure: The Bone dragon's mental triage care fails to launch, and she is completely stumped regarding the subject's condition. She will have to rely on mundane means of diagnosis, or try the Philosophy again. Higher levels of Bone cannot be used until this level has succeeded.

Success: The dragon becomes aware of (up to) a number of conditions the subject is suffering—be they of infectious, foreign, toxic, or genetic origins—equal to her proficiency rating in Bone. Obviously if the subject does not have such conditions, there is no awareness to be had.

Exceptional Success: In addition to success, the dragon may add her Blood

Isn't it Beneficial?

You may have noticed that despite this Philosophy's benign purview it still has its dice pool reduced by the target's values. There are several reasons for this, but the one you will be receiving is this: people are good at hiding illness. There is still a social stigma associated with the sick, and such preconceptions will linger for a very long time. As a natural defense mechanism (very primal, to avoid being sent away from the herd), humans hide their illness so as to avoid rejection by the populace. Dragons too hide their weakness reflexively as a means of self-defense, as a sickly dragon is easy to overpower and eventually smother out. The heat of a Furnace burns both physically and metaphorically, which means it incinerates a degree of any supernatural influence. As the Bone Philosophy is technically supernatural, it is not excluded from this incineration.

NOTE: A Bone dragon may target herself with the Bone Philosophy. In such a case, she subtracts her own Composure and Furnace from her dice pool, rolling only Medicine.

proficiency to the dice pools in further levels of this Philosophy, provided she does not change subjects and the scene does not end.

Manage the Core (●●)

Following Check the Core, this Philosophy helps cope with the symptoms the dragon detected. Those ailments afflicting effectively go into remission for the rest of the scene.

The subject may ignore a number of symptoms associated with his condition equal to the dragon's proficiency in Bone, excluding penalties associated with suffering wounds (those are beyond the focus of this Philosophy). Until the end of the scene, the target of this Philosophy does not need to roll to resist unconsciousness; he will not pass out until after the scene has ended.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Composure + Medicine + Furnace - Composure - Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The symptoms are made worse by the Bone dragon's meddling. While for some this may just be a really unpleasant time, for those with serious conditions such a surge of bad health can be fatal.

Failure: The dragon fails to suppress the symptoms of her subject's condition. She must succeed with Manage the Core before she may use higher levels of the Bone

Philosophy.

Success: A number of symptoms the subject is suffering equal to the dragon's Bone proficiency are suppressed, neutralizing any ill effects they may impose until the end of the scene. Such suppression works on all forms of suffering, including fatigue, poison, and drug withdrawal.

Exceptional Success: Same as Success, but the Willpower is not spent.

Mend the Core (●●●)

After suppressing the symptoms, the Bone dragon has enough room to actually treat causes. She can heal diseases, wounds, or addictions by rolling Mend the Core.

Each success heals either two points of bashing or a single point of lethal. In addition, succeeding on Mend the Core allows the Bone dragon to "spend" her proficiency to remove conditions, expending points up to its rating to remove ailments. For more information, see the "Mending Disease" sidebar on this page.

Cost: 1 Breath

Dice Pool: Strength + Medicine + Furnace - Composure - Furnace

Cycle the Core (●●●●)

Once the body is back to neutral (as in, it's healthy), a Bone dragon can make it stay that way. Focusing the force of health directly into her subject, she accelerates the rate at which his tissues mend.

Until the end of the scene, the subject

Mending Disease

When using Mend the Core, the dragon gains the ability to cure diseases up to her proficiency in the Bone Philosophy, but what does that actually mean? Conditions fall into a variety of categories depending on their overall interpreted severity. Such severity may not match their real-world severity, but these are the numbers assigned by the dragon's impressions.

Trivial Condition (●): cold, flu, minor addiction, fatigue, acne, parasites, toxicity 1-2 poisons, etc.

Pesky Condition (●●): most STDs, major addiction, bone fractures, toxicity 3-4 poisons, etc.

Serious Condition (●●●): neurological disorders, blood disorders, asthma, rabies, toxicity 5-6 poisons, etc.

Fatal Condition (●●●●): cancer, aids, Huntington's, meningitis, toxicity 7+ poisons, etc.

Supernatural Condition (●●●●●): possession, claiming, antecedent passenger, etc. (*not* vampirism)

Each time Mend the Core succeeds, the dragon may remove any conditions she is aware of that are *less* than her current Bone rating, so long as the total number removed does not exceed her Bone rating. For example, a dragon with Bone 4 using Mend the Core could remove a Serious and Trivial condition, but not a Supernatural condition.

recovers one bashing wound each turn and one lethal wound every other turn. This stacks on top of the subject's natural regenerative capabilities.

Cost: 1 Breath to apply

Dice Pool: Resolve + Medicine + Furnace - Composure - Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Whoops! The subject feels sickly, and suffers four points of bashing damage sporadically during the course of the remainder of the scene. The Bone Philosophy must be started again from scratch.

Failure: No regeneration is supplied, and the Bone dragon cannot continue her Philosophy until she succeeds at this level.

Success: The subject's regeneration is improved until the end of the scene. On top of his normal healing rates, he recovers one bashing wound every turn and one lethal turn every two turns. It is possible to heal both a bashing and a lethal wound on the same turn.

Exceptional Success: Same as Success, but the Breath is not spent.

Overcharge the Core (●●●●●)

The last stand, Overcharge the Core fortifies the subject's body against future injury. By spending two Breath, rolling for Overcharge the Core, and succeeding, she can both increase the subject's Health dots and his Defense.

Overcharge the Core lasts for the entirety of the scene in which it is activated, but it may be extended into subsequent scenes by spending a point of Breath. Overcharge the Core cannot be extended longer than one day in this fashion.

Overcharge the Core is an instant action, but not every dragon is capable of spending 3 Breath in a single turn. For those that are not, they may drag out the activation over three turns by sacrificing their Defense, until they can pay the full price. In such cases the

roll to activate is made on the turn in which the total Breath owed is paid.

Cost: 3 Breath, or 1 Breath over three turns (to apply)

1 Breath to extend by one scene

Dice Pool: Wits + Medicine + Furnace - Composure - Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The subject's muscles lock instead of loosen, and he suffers a -5 penalty to Defense until the end of the scene. He does not gain any bonus health levels.

Failure: The Bone dragon fails to overcharge the subject's core. The Philosophy sequence is broken with no benefit, and she must start from scratch before she may try again.

Success: Each success scored on activation grants the subject an additional temporary Health dot (Which follows the rules regarding temporary health, in the **World of Darkness** Rulebook sidebar "Temporary Health Dots" on page 173). For every two successes scored, the subject receives a +1 bonus to his Defense. Both bonuses last until the end of the scene, or until the end of the last scene the dragon pays for. This effect cannot be extended further than one day.

Exceptional Success: Identical to success, but the bonus lasts an extra scene.

Sweat

The Philosophy of Sweat focuses on mitigating or intensifying pain and its associated penalties. Scholars of Sweat feel that pain affirms life, but they always find a way to make other suffer more than they do.

Force: Pain

Yang: Lust

Find the Pain (●)

The dragon gains an understanding of what it means to feel pain, and can successfully detect the level of pain those near to her

Trauma?

Trauma is a penalty-inflicting ailment triggered when a subject does not sacrifice his defense or moves more than half his speed. The penalty is equal to the trauma's rating, and applies to the subject's next action. For more information on trauma, see page 159 in Chapter 3.

suffer. Pain can be difficult to detect, as the sturdy and the socially infallible find clever ways to hide it. But with enough effort, it can be found. At this level of Philosophy the dragon becomes aware of the target's Health meter, knowing both how much they can suffer before they drop and how much they have suffered already, as well as the source of that pain.

The player is informed by the storyteller how much aggravated, lethal, and bashing damage the target is suffering, and how many dots of Health they possess. This information is provided once when the Philosophy is used, so the dragon must estimate future damage as it is dealt.

Cost: None

Dice Pool: Wits + Survival + Furnace - Stamina - Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Sweat dragon underestimates the target's tolerance of pain. She may move on to higher levels of Sweat, but she'll suffer a -5 penalty until she succeeds on Find the Pain.

Failure: The Sweat dragon is stumped, unable to size up her target. Higher levels of Sweat cannot be used until this level has succeeded.

Success: The Sweat dragon learns how many Health dots the subject has, how many wounds he has suffered and of what type they may be, and the degree (if any) of trauma the subject suffers.

Exceptional Success: In addition to success, the dragon may add her Sweat proficiency to the dice pools in further levels of this Philosophy, provided the dragon does not switch targets and the scene does not end. **Manipulate the Pain (●●)**

With the knowledge of where the pain is situated (and a point of Willpower), the dragon may actively redirect it to a focused

location. For example, a man with a broken leg and an arthritic hip could be made capable of walking by moving the pain to his head, though the resulting shock would probably addle him. Likewise, someone with migraines could be rendered unable to hold a pistol when the pain moves to his hands. People suffering generalized pain (Health penalties) can have them focused on a single area, increasing the penalty for actions involving that region by the dragon's Sweat rating. Trauma can be localized, but only increases by half the dragon's Sweat rating (rounded down).

Though it may seem like this wouldn't work on a healthy subject, there is always some little discomfort that can be compressed into a hindrance. Even if there wasn't, the Sweat dragon's belief in pain creates that discomfort which can then be manipulated.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Survival + Furnace - Stamina - Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The pain moves, but not in the way the dragon intended. The target suffers a -2 penalty in a region of the storyteller's choice, for two minutes.

Failure: The dragon does not anchor the pain when she moves it, so it slips back into its original position almost instantly. She must succeed at this level before she can move on to the next one.

Success: The dragon moves a pain from one section of the target's body to another, or gathers up a general pain (or invented pain) and focuses it in one region. In the case of the former, any penalties from the source are removed, made situational in the target region and increased by the dragon's proficiency in Sweat. For the latter, the Health Penalty Shift takes two steps right,

Health Penalty Shift?

Both the Sweat and Lust Philosophies have quite a bit of influence on the penalties inflicted by low Health levels. Portions of this influence involve changing where penalties start, and such situations are referenced as Health Penalty Shifts.

In the case of Manipulate the Pain, the Health Penalty Shift is not beneficial for the dragon, as it reduces the penalties the subject suffers. Thus it is better to take actual pain and move it, rather than summon up nonexistent pain.

Health Penalty Shifts are explained in Chapter 3, on page 161-163.

and a situational penalty equal to the dragon's Sweat proficiency is applied to the target region. This effect lasts for the scene. (Trauma is moved just like pain, but is only increased by half the dragon's Sweat rating).

Exceptional Success: Same as Success, but the Willpower is not spent.

Heighten the Pain (●●●)

Extensive redirection of the pain allows the dragon to intensify the amount that the target suffers. By spending a point of Breath, the dragon applies a Health Penalty Shift left, for a number of steps equal to her proficiency in Sweat.

Cost: 1 Breath

Dice Pool: Strength + Survival + Furnace - Stamina - Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The attempt backfires, dulling the pain and causing the Health Penalty Shift to take three steps right until the end of the scene. The Sweat dragon is free to continue to the next level.

Failure: The Health Penalty Shift does not change. The Sweat dragon cannot continue with her Philosophy until she succeeds at this level.

Success: The Health Penalty Shift takes a number of steps to the left equal to the dragon's proficiency in Sweat. This effect lasts for the scene.

Exceptional Success: Same as Success, but the Breath is not spent.

Focus the Pain (●●●●)

After having increased the magnitude of pain experienced, the Sweat dragon can take hold of the reins of adrenaline, controlling just how far a person can be pushed before they feel nothing. With a point of Breath the

dragon lays out invisible wires between herself and her target. She is free to pull them at her whim, inflicting harm when her target displeases her.

Cost: 1 Breath

Dice Pool: Presence + Survival + Furnace - Stamina - Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Uh oh. The target gets four free pool dice to apply where he pleases, and the Philosophy must begin again from level 1.

Failure: No free penalty pool is formed. The dragon must succeed on this level before she can move on to the final level of Sweat.

Success: Successes rolled on activation form a free pool of penalties, which the dragon may levy against her target until the end of the scene. Like all free pools, once these penalties are used they're gone. The setback of this limit is counterbalanced by the flexibility it provides: these penalties may be applied to *any* action the target makes. This free pool expires at the end of the scene.

Exceptional Success: Same as Success, but the Breath is not spent.

Lock the Pain (●●●●●)

After controlling the adrenaline, the Sweat dragon may choose to make particular injuries more severe. The wounds do not appear to change, but are healed at a slower rate and are immune to supernatural intervention.

The dragon renders a number of the target's wounds (her choice) resistant. Resistant wounds are explained in Chapter 3, on page 160. The wounds remain resistant

until they have healed. It is important to note that this Philosophy only works on existing wounds. If the target is currently devoid of wounds, he suffers a single point of resistant lethal damage.

Lock the Pain is an instant action, but not every dragon is capable of spending 3 Breath in a single turn. For those that are not, they may drag out the activation over up to three turns by sacrificing their Defense, until they can pay the full price. In such cases the roll to activate is made on the turn in which the total Breath owed is paid.

Cost: 3 Breath, or 1 Breath over three turns

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Survival + Furnace - Stamina - Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: If the subject is currently suffering any resistant wounds, they change back into normal wounds. The subject also instantly recovers from one lethal wound. The Sweat Philosophy must be started over.

Failure: No wounds are made resistant. The dragon must start over.

Success: A number of the target's current wounds become resistant, equal to the dragon's proficiency in Sweat. If there are no current wounds, one resistant lethal one is inflicted. This is a lasting effect.

Exceptional Success: Identical to success, but an extra resistant lethal wound is inflicted regardless of the target's current state. Also, the target suffers Trauma 5 until such time as he no longer suffers from lethal wounds.

Tears

The Philosophy of Tears focuses on controlling the chains and grooves that connect emotion to memory.

Force: Mind

Yang: Sloth

Identify the Chains (●)

The dragon knows the connections between emotion and memory, and can identify those connections in another person. By studying her mark the dragon becomes aware of several memory-emotion pairings, often called chains. Having knowledge of these chains is essential to proceed with the Tears Philosophy.

The dragon becomes aware of a number of chains in the target's mind equal to her proficiency in the Tears Philosophy. Each chain has both a memory component and an emotion component, though the emotions can sometimes be more complex than 'sad' or 'angry'. The Tears dragon can also detect suppressed memories, but the chains binding them are locked and impossible to manipulate. The dragon must touch the target to activate this Philosophy.

Cost: None

Dice Pool: Composure + Empathy + Furnace - Resolve - Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Tears dragon misidentifies at least one of the chains, though she remains unaware of this. She may move on to higher levels of Tears, but she'll suffer -5 to all Philosophy rolls until she succeeds on Identify the Chains.

Failure: Despite her best effort, the Tears dragon cannot follow the chain from memory to emotion. Without knowing where it leads, she cannot control it, so higher levels of Tears remain locked until this level has succeeded.

Success: The Tears dragon learns of a number of chains equal to her proficiency in Tears, the memories to which they are attached, and the emotions they influence.

Exceptional Success: In addition to success, the dragon may add her Tears proficiency to the dice pools in further levels of this Philosophy, provided the dragon does not switch targets and the scene does not end.

Tug the Chain (●●)

With this Philosophy, a dragon has the power to bring up other memories that have a connection to a current emotion. For example, maybe an act of aggression has relevance with a memory that also connects to regret. The dragon can give that chain a swift pull, forcing her mark to re-experience the memory and possibly stray to another emotion. It can buy a few seconds as a distraction, but serves an infinitely more useful purpose in giving the mark a new perspective.

To tug the Chain, the dragon must be touching the mark.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Empathy + Furnace - Resolve - Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The memory only serves to fortify the mark's resolve. He gets a +2 bonus to Resolve until the end of the scene, and the dragon must try again with a different chain.

Failure: Despite her pulling, the dragon does not pull forth an associated memory. She must succeed at this level before she can move on to the next one.

Success: The mark is drawn into a memory in which his current emotion was significant. He spends a number of turns dwelling in the flashback equal to the dragon's Tears proficiency. The memory might give him some insight that changes his mind, but that is dependent on the storyteller.

Exceptional Success: Same as Success, but the Willpower is not spent.

Pluck the Chain (●●●)

After tugging a chain hard enough, a Tears dragon may remove it completely, causing the mark to suddenly lose all emotional attachment to the memory (a strange sensation). The groove of that chain remains for a time, a lingering behavior that

seems unwarranted, but it will heal after several weeks. For example, a man who once held a chain of love associated with his daughter might still hug her when he came home from work, but not really understand why. Eventually, he won't hug her at all.

It is important to note that this tug can also apply to derangements. Without an emotional attachment, the derangement eventually fades (as the groove heals). The chain is comprised of astral material that is only detectable by the dragon and those who are enlightened enough to see the Dreamtide. The dragon may lay one of these chains in an open groove, but cannot trail-blaze a new emotional connection at this level.

Each pluck takes approximately three seconds. The Tears dragon must be touching the mark to pluck a chain.

Cost: 1 Breath

Dice Pool: Strength + Empathy + Furnace - Resolve - Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The chain injures the mark's mind, causing a derangement until the end of the scene. The Tears dragon must continue from a different chain, moving back to the previous level if necessary.

Failure: The chain is affixed too firmly for the dragon's tug, which means she'll have to pull harder. She cannot move on to the next level until she succeeds at this one.

Success: As explained, the connection between emotion and memory is removed, causing an emotional numbness that eventually heals to indifference. If the chain was deranged, the associated derangement vanishes after approximately one week.

Exceptional Success: Same as Success, but the Breath is not spent.

Lay the Chain (●●●●)

Usually after plucking the chain of an undesirable emotion, a Tears dragon wants to plant a desirable one. At this level, she can follow Pluck the Chain by laying down

a new groove, connecting any known memory to an available emotion using the chain just plucked. Depending on how radical the connection (like connecting love to a murder), there's a chance that the connection will cause a derangement (forced Morality roll by the mark at storyteller discretion). Each connection forms a new behavior that is usually favorable compared to the old one.

To lay a chain, the dragon must be touching the mark.

Cost: 1 Breath

Dice Pool: Wits + Empathy + Furnace - Resolve - Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Tears dragon miscalculates the placement, attaching it to the wrong memory or wrong emotion. The result is a less than desirable new behavior.

Failure: The chain does not anchor to the mind, breaking free only moments after it is placed. The dragon can pick it up off the ground and try again, but she cannot continue to the final level of Tears until she succeeds.

Success: As explained, the chain creates a new emotional connection and most likely a new behavior. While the short term ramifications of that may seem limited, clever placement can radically change a mark's personality.

Exceptional Success: Same as Success, but the Breath is not spent.

Rip the Chain (●●●●)

On certain foes, creating new emotions isn't enough to overpower the burning rage or hatred of a mark, so sometimes a Tears dragon is driven to take this cruelest of measures. The dragon takes tight grip of one chain and uses it to rip them all from the mark's mind. This robs him of *all* his Willpower points, and instantly lowers his Morality by two. This act requires a sacrifice of 4 Breath.

Having all emotional connections extracted can be devastating to the psyche. The mark hereafter has no connection to his past, and can feel nothing until such time as he forges a new chain (usually by getting a derangement). He is essentially made into a sociopath, having only the false chain the Tears dragon supplied as a compass for what it means to feel. There truly can be no worse punishment than this.

Rip the Chain is an instant action, but not every dragon is capable of spending 4 Breath in a single turn. For those that are not, they may drag out the activation over multiple turns by sacrificing their Defense, until they can pay the full price. Rip the Chain requires physical contact to perform, and extending the action for fueling purposes does not change this. Unlike other levels of this Philosophy, there is no longer a need for direct contact. The dragon keeps hold of one loosened chain, which she uses to make the tug once the price in Breath is paid.

Cost: 4 Breath, or 1 Breath over four turns

Dice Pool: Resolve + Empathy + Furnace - Resolve - Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The mark's chains defend themselves from the pull, drawing Willpower from the Tears dragon until she is devoid of it or he is full. If she wishes to try again, she must do so from scratch.

Failure: The chains give some slack, but do not rip free. Provided she does not break contact with the mark she may try again.

Success: Any derangements the mark may be suffering are removed. The mark is also drained of all of his Willpower points. The mark's Morality (or other relevant ethics trait) score also drops two, or to zero if such a drop would make his Morality negative.

Exceptional Success: Identical to success, but Morality plummets another step.

Saintly Devil Philosophies (Held by the Schools of the Five Evils)

Those who flee from leadership's call, then plummet into rampages of dictatorial self-satisfaction, fall into the Schools of the Five Evils. They are called Saintly Devil dragons, and these are their Philosophies.

Wrath

The Philosophy of Wrath is founded around the mass destruction of anything and everything.

Force: Destruction

Yin: Ash

Karmic Backlash: Rampage. The dragon must spend every action trying to attack someone (or something in destruction range). If nothing is in range, she will attack herself, ripping at her own body in a bloodthirsty frenzy. She only calms down once she has either destroyed her target (a person, a group of people, or a town) or when her wounds are within certain parameters (which cause her to flee). Those parameters are determined by the level of Wrath that she failed. While in a Rampage, the dragon can still manifest Aspects, but cannot remove them.

Calling the Tempest (●)

There is calm before every storm; a silent sense of foreboding that whispers of things to come. In the case of a Wrath dragon, that storm is her rage. Taking advantage of the mortal flaw that is terror, the dragon creates an aura of protection in the form of hesitation.

When a dragon rolls Calling the Tempest, those that would act aggressively against her must roll Composure (+ Furnace, if they have it) first and succeed, or the action suffers a penalty equal to the dragon's proficiency in Wrath. This effect lasts for the scene.

Cost: None

Dice Pool: Presence + Intimidation + Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Wrath dragon falls into a Rampage, until such time as her primary target is felled or she suffers a wound in her fifth-to-last Health slot.

Failure: The Wrath dragon is not as bad-ass as she thinks she is, and her presence doesn't ward off aggressors. She must succeed at this level before she can move on to further levels of Wrath.

Success: The dragon wraps herself in an aura of fear, sapping the resolve of would-be attackers. Anyone taking aggressive action against her must first roll Resolve + Furnace and succeed, or suffer a penalty to act equal to the dragon's proficiency in Wrath.

Exceptional Success: As success, but if the aggressor fails the Resolve + Furnace roll they cannot take any aggressive action at all.

None the Fire (●●)

Many people speak of Wrath as a wildfire that can spread through a mind, rendering it oblivious to other things. Others speak of it as if it was a hurricane of one's own making. Still others speak of it as if it was a Smith's forge, the heat necessary to craft something powerful. The dragons of Wrath agree with the last. Wrath is nothing but a fire; uncontrolled it quickly spreads and burns itself out. Controlled, a dragon can use it while not being its slave.

The dragon not only separates herself from her Wrath but she pushes it out into others. Any mortals within a number of yards equal to the successes rolled, plus nine, must roll Composure and succeed to avoid lashing out against the nearest object. Such a push requires a point of Willpower.

Wrath is harshest to the powerful. Anyone in range with a Furnace trait (or other supernatural trait) must roll

Composure + Furnace to avoid the Rampage Karmic Backlash. Failure sends them into a destruction spree with the same end conditions as the Dramatic Failure of this Philosophy.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Resolve + Intimidation + Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Wrath dragon falls into a Rampage, until such time as her primary target is felled or she suffers a wound in her fourth-to-last Health slot.

Failure: The dragon cannot extract the emotion from her actions, and must struggle with its volcanic fury for another turn. She also cannot move on in Wrath until she succeeds at this level.

Success: The minimum radius is nine yards. Each success stretches the madness out an extra yard. Mortals in range must roll Composure or lash out at something around them. Supernatural beings in range must roll Composure with their supernatural trait, or fall into a Rampage. In addition, until the end of the scene the Wrath dragon does not need to roll to control her anger, unless she falls into a Rampage.

Exceptional Success: Same as Success, but the Willpower is not spent.

Terminal Velocity Strike (●●●)

Wrath is more potent than other emotions, and it demands action. Having filtered out her wrath, the dragon can draw it to her extremities and use this Philosophy to give her close-range attacks phenomenal recoil. Activating this effect costs a point of Breath.

Every hit an opponent takes from a non-grapple, non-ranged attack sends him flying a number of yards equal to double the dragon's Strength rating (or adds double the dragon's Strength to the distance thrown if the attack already would send an opponent flying), plus a few more for the force of the hit.

The subject flies at a rate of ten times the distance thrown, and thus suffers one bashing wound per yard traveled. He takes damage as if he fell the distance he was sent flying, so traveling more than 10 yards (100 miles per hour) results in terminal velocity, which renders the damage lethal. Fortunately for the victims, the number of yards thrown is reduced by close armor rating and also by a straight Dexterity roll's successes. Falling information can be found on page 179 of the **World of Darkness** Rulebook.

Cost: 1 Breath

Dice Pool: Dexterity + Intimidation + Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Wrath dragon falls into a Rampage, until such time as her primary target is felled or she suffers a wound in her third-to-last Health slot.

Failure: The rage fails to pool at the dragon's extremities, and thus does not send her enemies flying. She must succeed at this level before she may continue to the higher Wrath Philosophies.

Success: Any attack the dragon makes that is not ranged and not against a grappled target sends the target flying a number of yards equal to twice the dragon's Strength, plus the damage of the attack. The target suffers falling damage as explained in the Philosophy's description. This "Terminal Strike" effect lasts until the end of the scene.

Exceptional Success: Same as Success, but the Breath is not spent.

Shattering Force (●●●●)

Once a dragon's Wrath is focused enough, she can direct it into the very earth itself, causing a minor quake. She does so by striking the ground (a punch or stomp, or even a whap of the tail) with rage focused at the striking appendage. The affected area is one radial yard for each dot of proficiency in

Wrath, plus nine. Using this Philosophy costs a point of Breath.

Anyone caught in the area has to either give up their Defense, or lose their next turn. Objects in range lose one third of their total Structure points (rounded up).

Cost: 1 Breath

Dice Pool: Strength + Intimidation + Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Wrath dragon falls into a Rampage, until such time as her primary target is felled or she suffers a wound in her second-to-last Health slot.

Failure: The earth may rumble a bit, but it doesn't shake enough to unseat anybody's foothold. The dragon must try again and succeed before she can proceed to the final level.

Success: Everybody in range has the choice of giving up their Defense, or their turn. If Defense has already been used, they have no choice. Any object in range that has contact with the ground loses one third of its total Structure (rounded up).

Exceptional Success: Same as Success, but the Breath is not spent.

The End of Days (●●●●●)

Again striking the ground, the dragon magnifies the range phenomenally, causing earthquakes that destroy towns and bury her victims alive. The affected area is one radial mile per dot in Wrath (So five miles in all directions at this proficiency).

The quake lasts for a number of turns equal to the successes rolled. Like Shattering Force, those in range must choose between their Defense or their turn for the duration of the quake. All objects that have any direct contact with the ground (buildings, cars, telephone poles, etc.) lose half of their total Structure (rounded up) over the course of the quake. For mechanical purposes, this loss of Structure is immediate.

The End of Days is an instant action, but not every dragon is capable of spending 3 Breath in a single turn. For those that are not, they may drag out their windup over multiple turns by sacrificing their Defense, until they can pay the full price. The roll to activate is made on the turn in which the total Breath owed is paid.

Cost: 3 Breath, or 1 Breath over three turns

Dice Pool: Stamina + Intimidation + Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Wrath dragon falls into a Rampage, until such time as her primary target is felled or all of her Health slots are filled with some kind of wound.

Failure: Again, the ground in range trembles a little but fails to shake with the proper force. This last strike exhausts the dragon's rage, though, so she must start anew if she wishes to try again.

Success: Anyone within the range of the quake's epicenter (which is a distance in miles away from the dragon equal to the dragon's Wrath proficiency) must either sacrifice Defense or their turn, for a number of turns equal to the successes rolled. Any objects in range that have direct contact with the ground automatically lose half of their total Structure (rounded up). The initiating dragon is immune to the effects of the quake.

Exceptional Success: The earthquake is excessively violent. In addition to the success, *everyone* in range immediately suffers two lethal wounds (excluding the dragon, of course), and another each turn the quake continues.

Pride

The Philosophy of Pride is founded on gathering others under a common goal and banner.

Force: Oath

Yin: Blood

Karmic Backlash: Social Invisibility. No matter how hard the dragon tries to save face, she has become a nuisance and none will pay her even the fleeting respect of small talk. She finds it impossible to get others to listen to her, and must roll Presence + Composure, penalized based on the level failed, each time she wants to have a statement heard. Social Invisibility does not protect her from being noticed, it just stops others from caring she's there. Social Invisibility has a duration dependent on the level failed.

A Display of Power (●)

Pride dragons recognize that their divine prowess has the potential to ensnare a group... for a time. People within range when A Display of Power is used notice the Pride dragon and are ready to listen to what she has to say. This group is the only one that can be targeted by subsequent uses of Pride Philosophies, and regardless of their views they will not interrupt the dragon until the duration of this Philosophy expires. This effect lasts as long as the dragon keeps talking, and its range is based on the successes rolled.

Regardless of the nature of the crowd, they will behave as long as they are under the thrall of this display. This may not seem like an entirely useful ability (since the dragon cannot flee while she's got their attention), but even a few minutes of interest can cease a riot (or start one).

Cost: None

Dice Pool: Presence + Politics + Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Pride dragon is rendered Socially Invisible, with a -1 penalty to each proclamation roll. She remains this way for one day.

Failure: The Pride dragon draws no more attention than she would without the

Philosophy. She must try again to advance to the next level.

Success: Each success can ensnare up to ten people, or one supernatural being if present in the crowd. All drawn in by the dragon's mystically enhanced words must listen until the dragon stops talking, or the scene ends (whichever happens first).

Exceptional Success: In addition to a success, the Pride dragon can ensnare an extra ten people.

I have your Ear (●●)

Whereas A Display of Power keeps crowd members from being rowdy, it does not keep them from leaving. I have your Ear, on the other hand, locks all listening in rapture, rendering them unable to even look away from the dragon while she is talking. Attempting this Philosophy requires a point of Willpower.

The Crowd forms an oath with the dragon. They promise subconsciously to hear her out, and the Pride exuding from the dragon's lips holds them to it. They cannot leave the crowd without a successful Composure + Furnace roll. In addition, anyone who drifts into the crowd gets drawn into the Pride Philosophy, and becomes a viable target for higher levels.

The shape of this gathering becomes impossibly glued. Any who manage to break free find themselves Socially Invisible to those still in the crowd, needing to roll Presence + Composure - 2 simply to be noticed.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Composure + Politics + Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Pride dragon is rendered Socially Invisible, with a -2 penalty to each proclamation roll. She remains this way for two days.

Failure: The dragon's words do not glue the crowd in place. If she cannot control

them in this fashion, her further endeavors are hopeless. She must succeed here before she continues.

Success: The crowd is enraptured, totally incapable of pulling away from the Pride dragon's filibustering. Any who enter the crowd fall victim to the Pride Philosophy, becoming viable targets for later levels. All within its bounds who wish to leave must first succeed at a Composure + Furnace roll, and then become Socially Invisible to those still in the crowd. This effect lasts until the dragon stops talking or until the end of the scene, whichever comes first.

Exceptional Success: Same as Success, but no mortal may leave the crowd.

Sweet Little Whispers (●●●)

Once rooted on the spot, a Pride dragon can then start to soften the crowd's opinion about certain topics (like the type of political parties they would support, what religion they would follow, even sentiments on one brand over another). Given enough time, a Pride dragon can convert a person or an entire group to follow her message.

The dragon contests her message against the strongest-willed listener in the group, whittling away his beliefs as he tries to snap free of her invisible grasp. She must reach his Willpower Rating (+ Furnace if he has one) before he reaches hers (+ Furnace *and* Pride proficiency), or the crowd will begin to fracture and require re-gluing (with I have your Ear).

The total effort requires a point of Breath. Should the dragon succeed, the crowd accepts her mentality as their own, until such time as they are convinced otherwise.

Cost: 1 Breath

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Politics + Furnace vs. Composure + Furnace

Action: Extended and Contested (First to Willpower + Furnace wins; each roll represents six seconds of schmoozing)

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: If the Pride dragon fails dramatically, she is rendered Socially Invisible, with a -3 penalty to each proclamation roll. She remains this way for three days.

Should the strongest listener dramatically fail, the Pride dragon succeeds instantly and binds her mentality to the crowd.

Failure: The dragon does not acquire any successes to apply towards her goal. If the strongest listener reaches his goal first, the Pride dragon must once more succeed at the second level of this Philosophy before she may try again.

Success: The dragon scores successes and applies them towards her goal of the strongest listener's Willpower + Furnace. If she reaches this goal, the entirety of the crowd abandons their feelings on the topic in question, adopting the dragon's viewpoint instead.

Exceptional Success: The dragon out-rolls the strongest listener and in the process scores five or more successes. The strongest listener suffers a -3 penalty to his next roll in the contested action. Should the dragon exceed her final goal by more than five successes, she recovers the initial investment of Breath.

Vote for Me Damn It! (●●●●)

Once the Pride dragon's message is indoctrinated into the group, she can move them to act. So long as the command is not inherently dangerous, those who were in the crowd are compelled to do what the Pride dragon says. They may buy groceries, vote a particular way in an election, or gift the dragon the cash from their wallets. At this level, nothing truly life-changing can be commanded. Using this Philosophy costs a point of Breath.

The crowd acts as a unit, and cannot be given commands intended for a single member. The only way to resist these

compulsions is to break free of the crowd, as explained in I have your Ear.

Cost: 1 Breath

Dice Pool: Wits + Politics + Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Pride dragon is rendered Socially Invisible, with a -4 penalty to each proclamation roll. She remains this way for four days.

Failure: Her words do not gain the force of command as she intended. She can keep trying, but must succeed at this level before moving on to the final Pride Philosophy.

Success: The crowd unwittingly becomes slaves to the dragon's whim. So long as she remains in the crowd, she can issue commands and the group will obey. Important individuals may still try to break free from the crowd, but until they do the group mentality forces them to carry out the Pride dragon's commands. The crowd will not perform any apparently dangerous actions. This effect lasts for the scene.

Exceptional Success: Same as Success, but the Breath is not spent.

In MY Army Now (●●●●●)

With just a few more words the crowd is rendered willing to do anything for the dragon, including the complete and self-inflicted ruining of their lives. They follow every order to the letter, even if it will bankrupt them or put them in physical danger. If the dragon says "Riot", they riot. If the dragon says "Break your Legs", they will do their best to comply. The crowd essentially becomes the dragon's private army.

Members may still attempt to break from the crowd, but so long as they remain within its bounds they are helpless to the dragon's whim. Unlike the other levels of the Pride Philosophy, this one lasts for days so long as the dragon remains with her army. A truly terrible amount of damage can be caused by this malicious power.

In MY Army Now is an instant action, but not every dragon is capable of spending 3 Breath in a single turn. For those that are not, they may drag out their filibuster over multiple turns by sacrificing their Defense, until they can pay the full price. The roll to activate is made on the turn in which the total Breath owed is paid. Once this Philosophy is activated, the dragon is free to catch a gulp of air and stop talking.

Cost: 3 Breath, or 1 Breath over three turns

Dice Pool: Stamina + Politics + Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Pride dragon is rendered Socially Invisible, with a -5 penalty to each proclamation roll. She remains this way for five days.

Failure: The Pride dragon says some terrible faux-pas that offends the entirety of the crowd. They disperse immediately, and the dragon must start again with a new group.

Success: Again, so long as she remains in the crowd the dragon can issue commands and the group will obey. However, at this level the commands can be anything, even acts of self mutilation. Important individuals may still try to break free from the crowd, but until they do the group mentality forces them to carry out the Pride dragon's commands. This effect lasts for a number of days equal to the successes rolled.

Exceptional Success: In addition to success, those individuals who wish to break from the crowd may only attempt so after suffering damage, and then only once before suffering damage again.

Greed

The Philosophy of Greed is founded on laying traps along possessions, the main type of trap being one that preys on the health of the victim.

Force: Health

Yin: Bone

Karmic Backlash: Splatter. The Greed dragon becomes covered in the same mystical paint she was manipulating. The dragon is subject to any subsequent effects that would be applied by touch, until the paint fades. Part of the karmic backlash is the lack of knowledge that she's exposed herself. Each time she uses a level of the Greed Philosophy, she gets to roll Wits + Stamina, penalized based on the level failed, to figure out what she's done.

Mark the Possession (●)

The Greed dragon coats an object with a mystical paint that only those of her Philosophy can see. Any who touch the object get this Greed paint on their hands, letting the dragon easily identify if an object has been tampered with and inflicting the poor thief with any curse lain on the object. Curses (further Greed Philosophies) are applied to the paint, which can be on object or thief. Unfortunately (or maybe fortunately) the paint does not stick well once it dries, and flakes off mere minutes later.

The paint is usually only useful on inanimate things. While a living creature could be coated (like perhaps a pet), it would suffer the same ill intended to ward off plunderers.

If the being attempting to take the object is supernatural in some way, a Wits + Subterfuge roll may be made to see if something is amiss. Without an exceptional success, the being cannot tell what is off about the object, but will be wary touching it.

Cost: None

Dice Pool: Dexterity + Subterfuge + Furnace - Durability - Artifact Rating

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Greed dragon is splattered, with a -1 penalty to detect it. She can continue to apply curses to the object, but will suffer their vengeance herself.

Failure: The mystic 'paint' is not prepared properly, and dries almost instantly. The dragon must prepare a new batch.

Success: The paint stays fresh for at least one day. Each success keeps the paint wet for another day. Wet paint is necessary for spreading and applying curses.

Exceptional Success: In addition to success, the paint lasts an extra day.

Taint the Possession (●●)

On a cursed object, the Greed dragon may first lace sickness. Taint the Possession allows the Greed dragon to "spend" her proficiency to inflict conditions, distributing up to its rating in illnesses. For more information, see the "Inflicting Disease" sidebar on this page. Using Taint the Possession requires a point of Willpower.

After the disease is inflicted, it is considered the ordinary version and can be treated as such. The drying of the paint will not remove such a condition; it must be treated by other means.

Also important to note, dragons are immune to almost all forms of possession. The reasons for this are explained in Chapter 3, but a supernatural curse that causes possession will not trigger against a dragon.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Subterfuge + Furnace - Durability - Artifact Rating

Action: Instant

Inflicting Disease

When using Taint the Possession, the object's paint gifts sickness and madness to those who touch it. The dragon is able to lace the object with a range of conditions up to her proficiency in the Greed Philosophy. Like mending diseases in the Embers school, conditions fall into a variety of categories depending on their overall interpreted severity. Such severity may not match their real-world severity, but these are the numbers assigned by the dragon's impression.

Trivial Condition (●): cold, flu, minor addiction, fatigue, acne, parasites, etc.

Pesky Condition (●●): most STDs, major addiction, bone fractures, etc.

Serious Condition (●●●): neurological disorders, blood disorders, asthma, rabies, etc.

Fatal Condition (●●●●): cancer, aids, Huntington's, meningitis, etc.

Supernatural Condition (●●●●●): possession, claiming, antecedent passenger, etc. (*not* vampirism)

Any who touch the successfully painted object suffer the conditions laid out by the Greed dragon, so long as those conditions total *less than or equal to* her current Greed rating. For example, a dragon with Greed 4 using Taint the Possession could curse it with two Pesky conditions, but not a Supernatural condition.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Greed dragon is splattered, with a -2 penalty to detect it. She too suffers from the conditions she has laced the object with. She can continue to apply curses to the object, but will suffer their vengeance herself.

Failure: Try as she might the Greed dragon cannot think of a condition worthy of laying curse with, so she must try again. She cannot lace further curses until she successfully applies this one.

Success: The dragon may apply a number of conditions that sum up to no more than her Greed proficiency. Any who touch the object while the paint is still wet will instantly succumb to all of these conditions, though they can henceforth be treated through natural means. This effect (though not the resulting conditions) lasts as long as the Greed paint does.

Exceptional Success: Same as Success, but the Willpower is not spent.

Poison the Possession (●●●)

Once the object has been cursed with long-term consequences, the dragon can begin lacing it with short-term ones. This takes the form of abrasive contact. The Greed dragon spends one point of Breath and rolls Poison the Possession. Each time someone touches the object, they suffer an amount of bashing wounds equal to the dragon's proficiency in Greed.

Though Poison the Possession can be applied multiple times to the same object, only the last time counts.

Cost: 1 Breath

Dice Pool: Strength + Subterfuge + Furnace + Greed - Durability - Artifact Rating

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Greed dragon is splattered, with a -3 penalty to detect it. She will not suffer the damage this first time, as that would immediately reveal her blunder. She can continue to apply curses to the object, but will suffer their vengeance herself.

Failure: The abrasive lacing fails, and the Greed dragon must try again before she can continue with bigger curses.

Success: The object is laced with an abrasion curse, making it inflict injury each time it is touched. Any touch sends a jolt through the thief, inflicting a number of bashing wounds equal to the dragon's Greed proficiency. This effect lasts as long as the Greed paint does.

Exceptional Success: In addition to success, the dragon recovers her point of Breath.

Radiating Sickness (●●●●)

The ultimate in revenge, this effect causes the object to radiate an aura of un-health. Wounds do not heal while in the radius of

this object's curse. This can only be applied to the object's paint, not the thief's. Within 5 yards for every dot of Furnace and every Success, time to recover wounds does not count down for anyone who has touched the painted object. Using this Philosophy costs a point of Willpower.

In terms of mechanics, provided the thief does not keep the object on hand all his healing times are increased by half again. If he does carry the object on his person, he will not heal at all. This effect lasts as long as the Greed paint does.

Cost: 1 Breath

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Subterfuge + Furnace - Durability - Artifact Rating

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Greed dragon is splattered, with a -4 penalty to detect it. In addition she will not heal naturally for four days. She can continue to apply the final curse to the object, but will suffer their vengeance herself.

Failure: The radiating sickness does not stick to the paint, and the dragon must try again before she can move to the final curse.

Success: As explained, any time spent in the presence of the cursed object is time that does not count towards wound recovery. If the thief carries the object around, he's likely to perish very quickly. This effect lasts as long as the Greed paint does.

Exceptional Success: Same as Success, but the Breath is not spent.

Don't Touch My Stuff (●●●●●)

Subjects that touch the marked object (excluding the Greed dragon that cursed it) find themselves weakened body and mind. When laced with this final curse, thieves who touch the treasure instantly lose a point of Willpower, and suffer a number of resistant aggravated wounds equal to the dragon's Stamina + Furnace + Greed

proficiency.

With very powerful dragons, this can instantly kill the subject. The curse has workings in place for such a contingency, in order to prevent a hideous mess. Anyone killed by touching the cursed treasure is instantly turned into a Graft, with a rating equal to the aggravated damage they suffered *in excess of their Health*. For example, if a thief with seven Health touched the object and suffered ten aggravated damage, he would become a Graft with a Merit value of three.

Don't Touch My Stuff requires a staggering eleven Breath to apply, the likes of which no dragon can sum up instantly. Any Greed dragon must drag out the application to pay the full price. This mostly prohibits them from cursing on the spot, which makes sense as this is an act of preparation and not aggression. Defense is sacrificed every turn that the dragon must pay toward Don't Touch My Stuff, and the roll to activate is made only on the turn in which the total Breath owed is paid.

A few niggling details remain regarding this curse. For one, it is permanent once it is applied. Even when the Greed paint expires, this wretched curse lingers for any who'd try to steal from the dragon. Secondly, any being who touches the object can only suffer its rage once. After taking one wave of aggravated damage, the thief is forever immune to *that* object's curse. Other objects with this same curse may still inflict damage, but only ever once. Finally, if another dragon (or other supernatural being) touches the cursed object, the damage inflicted is reduced by their own Furnace rating (or other supernatural trait).

Cost: 11 Breath, or 1 Breath over eleven turns

Dice Pool: Stamina + Subterfuge + Furnace - Durability - Artifact Rating

Free Grafts?

It seems like playing a Greed Dragon is a fast and easy way to get all the Grafts you could want, and to a degree that is true. However, each Graft requires dedication, and the Merit reflects this as much as it does the actual possession. While you can use the final Greed Philosophy to justify the purchase of a Graft, you must still part with the experience to own one.

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Greed dragon is splattered, immediately suffering the resistant aggravated damage associated with this level. If she survives, the paint is immediately brushed away from her body. Because of the danger involved, few Greed dragons take the risk with this final level.

Failure: The object is cursed, but only for as long as the Greed paint remains wet. The dragon is unaware of this, and may be surprised when the defensive measures she laid in place fail.

Success: Any who touch the cursed object (or are touched by the cursed object) suffer a number of resistant aggravated wounds equal to the sum of the dragon's Stamina, Furnace, and Greed proficiency. This damage is reduced by any supernatural trait the offending party may possess. In addition, the offender loses a single point of Willpower. Provided he survives, thereafter he is immune to this particular object's curse. Should he perish by aggravated damage, his body becomes a Graft with value equal to the overflow aggravated damage.

Exceptional Success: In addition to success, the dragon saves one point of Breath.

Lust

The Philosophy of Lust is founded on mitigating pain and its associated penalties

Force: Pain

Yin: Sweat

Karmic Backlash: Compulsion. The Lust dragon is overwhelmed by her own urges, and must act out her Vice within the specified amount of time or instantly lose the specified amount of Willpower. Both are dependent on the level that failed.

Feel the Hurt (●)

At this level of Philosophy the dragon becomes aware of the target's Health meter,

knowing both how much they have suffered and the type of suffering they have endured. The player is informed by the storyteller how much aggravated, lethal, and bashing damage the target is suffering, and which of it if any is resistant.

While touching the subject, the Lust dragon pumps a narcotic euphoria into him. The subject's Speed and Initiative Mod are increased by her proficiency in the Philosophy, and he likely becomes addicted to her touch. This effect lasts for the scene.

Cost: None

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Expression + Furnace - Stamina - Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Lust dragon is dragged to compulsion, and must act out her Vice within seven turns or lose a point of Willpower. If she cannot pay this price, she suffers a resistant lethal wound instead.

Failure: The Lust dragon does not learn of the subject's pain, and his euphoria from her touch is fleeting. No benefit for either party is experienced, and she must succeed before she can move on to higher levels of Lust.

Success: The dragon learns where the subject may be suffering pain, and gifts him an ecstasy trip that pumps both his Speed and Initiative Mod by her Lust proficiency.

Exceptional Success: In addition to success, the Subject receives an additional +1 to both his Speed and his Initiative Mod.

Thin the Hurt (●●)

Using the garnered knowledge of a person's condition, the dragon eases focused pain by spreading it evenly across the body. A situational penalty assigned to a particular region of the body (like a hand) could be spread out over the entire body, reducing it by the dragon's Lust proficiency but making it a Health-based penalty.

By spending a point of Willpower and rolling Thin the Hurt, the Lust dragon can

help her subject overcome a focused pain for the scene.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Wits + Expression + Furnace
- Stamina - Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Lust dragon is dragged to compulsion, and must act out her Vice within six turns or lose two points of Willpower. If she cannot pay, she suffers two resistant lethal wounds instead.

Failure: The pain is spread out, but only briefly. The Lust dragon must try again before she can move to the next level.

Success: A situational penalty of the Lust dragon's choice that is being applied due to injury or addiction is generalized, reduced by the dragon's Lust proficiency and made into a Health-based setback. The remaining penalty after reduction is converted to steps on a Health Penalty Shift left. This effect lasts for the scene.

Exceptional Success: Same as Success, but the Willpower is not spent.

Lessen the Hurt (●●●)

By spreading it thin, eventually the Lust dragon can smother the pain, reducing it or eliminating it completely. Spending a point of Breath, the dragon applies a Health Penalty Shift right, for a number of steps equal to her proficiency in Lust.

Cost: 1 Breath

Dice Pool: Stamina + Expression + Furnace - Stamina - Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Lust dragon is dragged to compulsion, and must act out her Vice within five turns or lose three points of Willpower. If she cannot pay, she suffers three resistant lethal wounds instead.

Failure: The Health Penalty Shift does not change. The Lust dragon cannot continue with her Philosophy until she succeeds at this level.

Success: The Health Penalty Shift takes a number of steps to the right equal to the dragon's proficiency in Lust. This effect lasts for the scene.

Exceptional Success: Same as Success, but the Breath is not spent.

Pump the Adrenaline (●●●●)

Trekking back to the original euphoria, the Lust dragon forms an invisible bond with her subject. With a point of Breath the dragon takes control of her subject's adrenaline, stimulating it at the moments she feels it would serve the most use.

Successes let the dragon boost the target's dice pool by her Lust rating one time each, at any time she deems worthy. Whenever the subject declares an action, the Lust dragon may commit one of the Philosophy's successes towards that action. All this Philosophy's successes expire at the end of the scene, or if the Lust dragon falls to Compulsion.

Cost: 1 Breath

Dice Pool: Presence + Expression + Furnace - Stamina - Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Lust dragon is dragged to compulsion, and must act out her Vice within four turns or lose four points of Willpower. If she cannot pay, she suffers four resistant lethal wounds instead.

Failure: No bonuses may be gifted. What's worse, the subject is dragged to compulsion, having to act out his Vice within five turns or lose three points of Willpower. The dragon must succeed on this level before she can move on to the final level of Lust.

Success: Successes rolled on activation are used as described in this Philosophy's description. The dragon may move on to the next level of this Philosophy.

Exceptional Success: Same as Success, but the Breath is not spent.

Ease the Recovery (●●●●●)

After controlling the adrenaline, the Sweat dragon may choose to speed up the healing process. She does so by unlocking resistant wounds. They do not appear to change, but can henceforth be mended by supernatural means.

The dragon removes the marker on a number of the subject's resistant wounds (her choice). Resistant wounds are explained in Chapter 3, on page 160. The wounds may then be removed by use of Breath, or other healing mysticisms.

It is important to note that this Philosophy only works on existing wounds. If the subject is currently devoid of wounds, he recovers a single point of Willpower.

Ease the Recovery has another purpose... when successfully used on the target it instantly extends all the other Lust effects by a number of scenes equal to the dragon's proficiency in the Philosophy. Such extension can be pushed even further by using Breath, but cannot exceed a full day.

Ease the Recovery is an instant action, but not every dragon is capable of spending 4 Breath in a single turn. For those that are not, they may drag out the activation over up to four turns by sacrificing their Defense, until they can pay the full price. In such cases the roll to activate is made on the turn in which the total Breath owed is paid.

Cost: 4 Breath, or 1 Breath over four turns to apply

1 Breath to extend the Lust effects for an extra scene

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Expression + Furnace - Stamina - Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Lust dragon is dragged to compulsion, and must act out her vice within three turns or lose five points of Willpower. If she cannot pay, she suffers five resistant lethal wounds instead.

Failure: The subject benefits from no change, and his euphoria is not locked. The dragon must start over.

Success: A number of the subject's resistant wounds return to normal, equal to the dragon's proficiency in Lust. If there are no current wounds, one Willpower point is gifted. This is a lasting effect.

In addition, all the effects of the Lust Philosophy are extended into the next scene. They may continue to be extended scene by scene for one Breath each, so long as the Lust dragon keeps some sort of proximity to the subject. They cannot be extended longer than a day.

Exceptional Success: Identical to success, but the Lust effects last for another additional scene.

Sloth

The Philosophy of Sloth is founded on the warping of memory, and the distraction therein.

Force: Mind

Yin: Tears

Karmic Backlash: Trance. The Sloth dragon is swallowed up by her own memories in a bizarre dream-state. People and objects around her take the shape of things from her history, and though their physical actions remain the same their words speak relevance from the dragon's past. The Sloth dragon is greatly disoriented by this, and cannot break free unless she succeeds on an Intelligence + Composure roll. All of her actions, including the roll to break from Trance, are penalized based on the level of Sloth failed. Should she be wounded under the conditions specified in the level failed, she may also slip free.

Find the Wounds (●)

Unlike the Tears Philosophy which is dependent on emotional connections, a Sloth dragon can simply identify weak memories (known as "wounds") and toy with them as she pleases. Simply sizing up her

opponent's mind, the Sloth dragon learns a great deal about his history and finds ways to move it in her favor.

The dragon becomes aware of the target's Willpower trait, and how many points he may have left to spend. The dragon also locates a number of long-term memories equal to her proficiency in Sloth, and the later levels of this Philosophy require such knowledge to function. The dragon must touch the target to activate this Philosophy.

In addition, any successes rolled on Find the Wounds may be applied to a research roll investigating the target, so long as said research is done within one day. Using the Sloth Philosophy on another person before taking advantage of this causes the original bonus to be lost.

Cost: None

Dice Pool: Composure + Larceny + Furnace - Resolve - Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Sloth dragon falls into Trance, and suffers a -1 penalty to all actions (on top of any other penalties) until she can escape. If she suffers a wound in her fifth-to-last Health slot, she is freed from the Trance.

Failure: The target's brain is mysteriously occluded. The Sloth dragon gains no benefit from her search for scars, and must succeed before she can move on to the next level.

Success: The Sloth dragon instantly learns of a number of significant memories equal to her proficiency in her Philosophy. She is also provided with the target's Willpower rating, and how many points of it he may have left.

Successes rolled on the activation of Find the Wounds can be applied to an investigative research roll, so long as Find the Wounds has not been used again and one day has not passed.

Exceptional Success: In addition to success, the Sloth dragon becomes aware of one additional significant memory.

Pick the Fresh Wound (●●)

With this Philosophy, a dragon steals control of the target's short-term memory. A Sloth dragon can change a number of minor details remembered by the target within a number of minutes equal to her proficiency in Sloth. This can include where the target left his keys, the name of the people who passed through the checkpoint, or the face of the person who just ate his cat.

Each time the memory is called upon from an external force (like an investigator), the target can roll to recall as per the rules in the **World of Darkness** Rulebook (page 44), with a penalty equal to the dragon's Sloth proficiency. If the target does not remember the event before he sleeps, it cannot become a long-term memory and is lost forever.

To alter a short-term memory, the dragon must touch the mark.

Cost: 1 Willpower

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Larceny + Furnace - Resolve - Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Sloth dragon falls into Trance, and suffers a -2 penalty to all actions (on top of any other penalties) until she can escape. If she suffers a wound in her fourth-to-last Health slot, she is freed from the Trance.

Failure: The dragon has insufficient pull to alter the target's memory. She must succeed at this level before she can move on to the next one.

Success: The dragon can alter a number of details in the target's short term memory equal to the successes rolled. She can go back a number of minutes equal to her Sloth proficiency. The target is rendered unable to recognize the false details without external influence, and if he goes to sleep before he

remembers the original details are lost for good.

Exceptional Success: Same as Success, but the Willpower is not spent.

Alter the Closed Wound (●●●)

Pushing through the short-term, the Sloth dragon finally reaches the long-term memory. The dragon can change a number of minor details equal to her Sloth proficiency in any of the memories she found with Find the Wounds. The target can be made to forget or falsely remember a fact from his past (like his dog's name, which exit to take on the way home from Vegas, etc). This lasts for one week.

Now, the specification of minor details may seem a bit cloudy, but the idea is to tweak a memory and not completely replace it. As long as something *could* be a believable outcome, the Sloth dragon can make the target believe that outcome.

Each time the memory is called upon from an external force, the target can roll Intelligence + Composure, with a penalty equal to the dragon's Sloth proficiency, to recognize the falsity of the facts. When the duration of this Philosophy expires, any memory confusion clears up.

Changing a set of details takes three seconds. The Sloth dragon must be touching the target to change the long-term memories. Making such a change requires a point of Breath.

Cost: 1 Breath

Dice Pool: Wits + Larceny + Furnace - Resolve - Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Sloth dragon falls into Trance, and suffers a -3 penalty to all actions (on top of any other penalties) until she can escape. If she suffers a wound in her third-to-last Health slot, she is freed from the Trance.

Failure: The memory is firmer than it originally appeared. The dragon must try

again with a different memory and succeed before she can move on to the next level of Sloth.

Success: For the memory targeted, the Sloth dragon can alter a number of details up to her proficiency in the Philosophy, *within reason*. Such fact alterations cannot be noticed as false by the target unless reliable outside information disproves it. This effect lasts for one week.

Exceptional Success: Same as Success. In addition, the target falls into Trance, suffering a -2 penalty to all actions (on top of any other penalties) until he can escape. If he suffers a wound in his fourth-to-last Health slot, he is freed from the Trance.

Cover the Scar (●●●●)

After making room with memory erasure, the Sloth dragon can change major details of the target's life by covering over a real memory with a false one. The memory that the dragon has created to cover the old one is accepted by the person, no matter how ridiculous it may be. The target could be convinced that he was a magic shoe for twenty-seven decades before the god in the moon turned him into a man. Obviously, a creative Sloth dragon can absolutely unhinge the target with this madness.

He is not without salvation, though. Evidence proving the memory false allows the target to roll Intelligence + Composure, albeit minus the dragon's Sloth proficiency, to recognize and break from the illusion. If such an opportunity does not present itself, the false memory lingers for a number of weeks equal to the successes rolled and then falls away.

To Cover a Scar with a prepared memory, the dragon must be touching the mark for at least three seconds.

Cost: 1 Breath

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Larceny + Furnace - Resolve - Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Sloth dragon falls into Trance, and suffers a -4 penalty to all actions (on top of any other penalties) until she can escape. If she suffers a wound in her second-to-last Health slot, she is freed from the Trance.

Failure: The prepared memory is poorly affixed, and only lasts a single scene. If the dragon moves to the final level without succeeding at this one, she suffers a -4 penalty to the application of that Philosophy.

Success: Unlike the previous level, the only limitation on the memory alteration is the Sloth dragon's own imagination. The memory also has no need for sense, and can be completely bizarre and unrealistic. It cannot be noticed as false by the target unless reliable outside information disproves it. This effect lasts for one week.

Exceptional Success: Same as Success, but the Breath is not spent.

Stitches (●●●●●)

Once she's calibrated herself with a singular memory overhaul, the Sloth dragon is prepared to completely rewrite her target's mind. Creating an astral pool-cover, she takes the available mental and social potential and sculpts it to her whim.

The dragon can rearrange the target's Mental and Social attributes, up to her proficiency in the Sloth Philosophy. She may also rearrange the target's skills, up to her proficiency in the Sloth Philosophy. Also, she gets to choose a new Virtue and Vice for the target.

In essence, the Sloth dragon turns the target into a completely new person. This personality lingers for a number of weeks equal to the successes rolled on the activation of Stitches, and it may resurface should the target suffer the Multiple Personalities derangement. For this reason, the changes should be recorded on a separate sheet.

Stitches may be an instant action, but few dragons are capable of spending 5 Breath in a single turn. For those that are not, they may drag out the activation over up to five turns by sacrificing their Defense, until they can pay the full price. In such cases physical contact must be maintained for all five of these turns, and the roll to activate is made on the turn in which the total Breath owed is paid.

Cost: 5 Breath, or 1 Breath over five turns

Dice Pool: Resolve + Larceny + Furnace
- Resolve - Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The Sloth dragon falls into Trance, and suffers a -5 penalty to all actions (on top of any other penalties) until she can escape. If she has suffered a wound in every Health slot, she is freed from the Trance.

Failure: The cover does not adhere to the target's mind, and pulls away the Sloth dragon's efforts as it tears. She must start over from scratch.

Success: The dragon may move a number of Mental and Social attribute dots equal to her Sloth proficiency. She may also move that same number of dots between the target's skills. Should she desire, she may assign a different Virtue and Vice to this new personality. The result lasts for a number of weeks equal to the successes rolled, and may resurface if the target ever acquires the Multiple Personalities derangement. For this reason, it is recommended the new personality be recorded on a separate sheet.

Exceptional Success: In addition to success, the dragon may move an additional three dots of attributes, and an additional five dots of skills.

True Heart Philosophies (Held by the School of Line-Walkers)

The Oroboroi that refuse to waver in the face of their new destiny become scholars of True Heart. The following are the ancestor-based powers such insolence grants them. True Heart dragons are the only ones that can learn these Philosophies.

True Heart

The Philosophy of True Heart extracts and concentrates the essence of the Oroboroi True Form, fueling it with energy from the Dreamtide.

Force: Wu Xing

Will of the Forge (●)

The True Heart dragon may use Breath and Willpower interchangeably by converting one type of point to the other. Points are converted by spending them, so there is always one turn of delay. Obviously, the rate of conversion is throttled by the rate at which points may be spent.

Cost: None

Dice Pool: None

Action: Reflexive

Flames of the Father (●●)

The True Heart dragon forms a luminescent Wraith of her True Form, which hovers behind her and draws in power from worlds beyond. This Wraith possesses attributes akin to those of a Spirit (Power, Finesse, and Resistance), and these attributes are added to any applicable rolls made by the True Heart dragon. The Wraith lasts for one scene before retreating back into its creator.

The Wraith cannot act on its own, and cannot be attacked. It is merely a visual representation of the energy collecting in its spawning Oroboroi.

Cost: 1 Resistant Aggravated Wound

Dice Pool: Resolve + Occult + Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: In the *highly* unlikely event of a Dramatic failure, the

dragon suffers an additional resistant aggravated wound, and the True Form Wraith fails to form. If she wishes to use more of this Philosophy, she will have to start over from scratch.

Failure: The Wraith forms with a single dot in Power, Finesse, and Resistance. The dragon can still move on to the next level of the Philosophy.

Success: The Wraith forms with a single dot in Power, Finesse, and Resistance. Successes on the roll can be spent on a one-for-one basis to increase these traits.

Exceptional Success: In addition to success, the Wraith lingers for an extra scene.

In Their Shadow (●●●)

With her Wraith following behind, the True Heart dragon can step ever closer to the power of the original Dreamtide gods. For one Breath and one Willpower she may grant her Wraith the strengths of the material world, providing it with another three attributes (Mental, Physical, Social). Just as with “Flames of the Father”, these attributes are added to appropriate rolls made by the True Heart dragon.

It is recommended you record the traits of your True Heart Wraith somewhere on your sheet.

Cost: 1 Willpower and 1 Breath

Dice Pool: Strength + Occult + Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: In the *highly* unlikely event of a Dramatic failure, the dragon suffers a resistant aggravated wound, as the True Form Wraith explodes. If she wishes to use more of this Philosophy, she will have to start over from scratch.

Failure: The Wraith gains a single dot in Mental, Physical, and Social. The dragon can still move on to the next level of the Philosophy.

Success: The Wraith gains a single dot in Mental, Physical, and Social. Successes

on the roll can be spent on a one-for-one basis to increase these traits.

Exceptional Success: In addition to success, the Willpower spent is recovered.

Dreamtide Bullet (●●●●)

After having pumped her Furnace at least once, the True Heart dragon can pool her energy into high-powered blasts of astral flame. These projectiles have a short range of 25 yards and a medium range of 50 yards. They have the properties Piercing Strike 4, Deadly Wound 4, and Knock-back 4. These features are explained in full detail in Chapter 3, on page 158.

Cost: 1 Breath per blast

Dice Pool: Highest Power Attribute + Highest Mental Skill + Furnace

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: In the *highly* unlikely event of a Dramatic failure, the dragon suffers three resistant aggravated wounds as her True Form Wraith angrily forces itself back into her body. If she wishes to use more of this Philosophy, she will have to start over from scratch.

Failure: The attack misses.

Success: The attack hits and inflicts a number of resistant lethal wounds equal to the successes rolled.

Exceptional Success: In addition to success, the “Deadly Wound” property activates, adding an additional 4 wounds to the damage inflicted.

Rip the Miasma (●●●●●)

The True Heart dragon reaches down and tears open the barrier between dreams and reality. Around the dragon, within a number of radial yards equal to the successes rolled on activation of this Philosophy—plus nine—the laws of the Daylight are replaced with those of the Dreamtide until the end of

the scene. All entities in range are treated as Hysterical Dreamers until they are knocked unconscious. Those that are (knocked unconscious, that is) spontaneously awake at home in their own beds, and are likely terribly confused by the events that transpired.

This area is the dreamscape of the True Heart dragon, though, and she gains the benefits of being Lucid while within this zone. And the zone moves with her. As the scene ends, the dreamscape fades away with the dragon inside, whisking her safely back to her Lair or place of residence.

Rip the Miasma is an instant action, but very few Oroboroi can afford 10 Breath in a single turn. For most the activation must be dragged out over multiple turns, with Defense being the cost of such delay. The roll to activate is made on the turn in which the total Breath cost has been paid.

Cost: 10 Breath, or 1 Breath over ten turns

Dice Pool: Resolve + Occult + Furnace + True Heart

Action: Instant

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: In the *highly* unlikely event of a Dramatic failure, the dragon vanishes in a brilliant white explosion. She is stranded in some obscure corner of the Dreamtide, and must find her way out if she hopes to live another day.

Failure: The tear fails to form, though the dragon may try again if she has the Breath to do so.

Success: See description. This Philosophy can only succeed once per scene.

Exceptional Success: In addition to success, five of the Breath spent on this Philosophy is refunded.

High Octane Games

Most games will not extend past the Furnace rating of 5, as reaching such a pinnacle is a journey within itself. Those that do wish to play the blazing inferno that is Furnace 6-10 may optionally use the following: *Aspect dots 6-10*: These are relatively easy, as all of the Aspects are designed in a manner that can be extended to ten. Continue the sequential bonus, or the odd over even bonus, or assign more features to a compound Aspect. No Aspect can have a dot rating higher than the Dragon's Furnace (After dot five, that is), and manifesting any Aspect 5 or higher requires two points, not one.

Philosophies 6-10: More difficult than the Aspects are the Philosophies. Though five additional levels for each could be detailed here, the degree of creativity that comes with designing high-level powers is not one we wish to rob. If, however, you are having trouble thinking of higher Philosophies, consider that each is only half of the original power a Dragon held. As an optional rule you may say that levels 6-10 of an Embers Philosophy are actually the five levels of its corresponding Yang Philosophy, and levels 6-10 of a Saintly Devil Philosophy are actually the five levels of its corresponding Yin Philosophy. In this manner, Dragons with a high Furnace rating progress ever closer to the power of the ones they deposed in the Collapse.

The True Heart Philosophy is much more difficult. It is incredibly rare for a True Heart dragon to reach a Furnace so bright alive, though, so coming up with more levels of their Philosophy is up to you.

Chapter Three: Special Rules and Systems

Something had gone horribly wrong.

He'd been sliding that trinket across the pipe, and now her legs were a jumbled mess of ripped muscle and shattered bone. What the hell was it? Just some stupid little statue, but it must have been special. And he dumped her into the compactor they use to crush cars.

The walls were moving in. Cameron dug her claws into the metal and pushed, but she could feel her bones snapping. She screamed as her fingers crumpled and shot a flechette of bloody bone into her chest. This was the end.

Cameron settled into a blur of red, and then there was darkness.

“Success is not the result of spontaneous combustion. You must first set yourself on fire.”

—Fred Shero

Dragons suffer a dichotomy of depiction, either being praised as divine spirits or abhorred as rampaging monsters. Modern versions of the dragon are subjected to both of these images simultaneously. Either depiction is both immensely powerful and more than moderately intelligent, though, be it a treasury of wisdom or a weaving of wretched magicks.

Oddly enough, “Dragon” has become a term for any hodge-podge compilation of biological characteristics thrown together in a chimera—or rather an amalgamated being. Provided it can exhale an elemental substance and is at least partially reptilian, anything can pass as a dragon. To encourage the creativity of this game in particular, the players choose Aspects to define their own image of “what makes a dragon”, and they are even free to put on and take off those traits as they please. The process of Aspect manifestation is described in this chapter, along with the conditions and benefits of True Form and the stages of divinity.

Also in this chapter is the matter of managing Calories. Rather than force you to purchase a diet book, Calories are simplified with a point system based on hunger satisfaction. Inedible fuel sources are also provided, but have minimum Composure and Stamina ratings (so if your dragon plans to fuel up at the gas station, she’d better bring her wallet and her guts). When it comes time to gather Breath, this is the chapter to read.

What does it mean to be a dragon? By what rules do they judge themselves? They cannot be called human anymore, and some of mortal life’s common-sense becomes muddled by the eternity that stretches before an Oroboroi. Detailed in this chapter is the concept of the dragon’s Code of Ethics, and

what it means to sin against the nature of a tyrant.

If you intend to play a Saintly Devil Oroboroi, their modified rules of character creation can be found here. From crafting the two sheets that make up “Good” and “Bad” mode to their modified rules on experience, Health, and Willpower, everything you need to know to make these Jekyll/Hyde dragons is in this chapter.

Then, of course, there is the matter of resurrection. What happens when a dragon dies? How does her Heart work, and how does her body recover while she’s in the space between worlds? What happens after the Last Hand? What is an Antecedent Passenger? What is a Red Pearl? All of these questions are answered in this chapter.

Finally, there is the matter of miscellaneous Health concerns. Both the Sweat and Lust Philosophies make use of an as of yet nonexistent Health Penalty Shift system. These two Philosophies also bring the concern of limb-specific hindrances, which are a necessary inclusion to make them function properly. Finally, there is the matter of resistant wounds, which are inflicted in various ways and have different rules for mending. These topics are covered in this chapter.

Aspect Manifestation

Unveiling and re-concealing a divinity makes up much of the dance that is a dragon’s eternity. Charging around as a giant lizard all the time is not an option, as no mystical occultation protects the secret of her existence. Much of Aspect use is the struggle of having access to fantastic powers, but not being able to use them.

But that is irrelevant here. To assume or disband an Aspect without tissue damage is a time-consuming process. The heat of the

Furnace is applied to the region that needs reshaping, and then the dragon's will forges it into the form proper.

System: To assume or disband an Aspect, you must take a manifest action. A manifest action takes the place of either your dragon's Defense, or her Instant action. In other words, she could move her Speed, apply her Defense, and assume forging points, *or* she could move her speed, take an Instant action, and assume forging points. You are free to decide which you prefer on a turn-to-turn basis, but if Defense has been used already it cannot be sacrificed to manifest Aspects.

If the dragon so chooses, she may spend a point of Breath to gain the benefit of a manifest action without the sacrifice of her Defense or her Instant action. In effect, the act becomes reflexive for that turn. A dragon may only gather one set of forging points in a turn.

Taking a manifest action supplies the dragon with a number of forging points equal to her Furnace, which can be spent to assume or disband an Aspect.



When no Aspects are manifest, the Oroboroi cannot be differentiated from an ordinary human being. By applying forging points, she can draw out her divine traits and actually benefit from them. If the above dragon had a Furnace rating of 4:



She could apply those points to pull out her wings and her claws. It's important to note that even though she had four forging points to apply, she did not need to use them all. If she did not, however, the overflow is lost at the end of the turn.

The number of points assumed in an Aspect may never exceed the number of dots owned in that same Aspect. Dots in an Aspect are purchased with experience, whereas points show how manifest an Aspect is. The prior is more permanent than the latter.



To assume the fifth point of an Aspect (and any point higher, if you're going that far), *two* forging points must be expended. For our Furnace 4 dragon, moving from Scales 4 to Scales 5 would take two of her four forging points from the manifest action, leaving her two to spare.

Disbanding an Aspect (for the means of concealing the Oroboroi nature) works exactly the same, but in reverse. A manifest action is taken by the dragon, but the forging points are spent to remove Aspects. Our Furnace 4 dragon, after ending her foe, takes another manifest action to:



soften a single point of her Scales and reduce the size of her claws. In this manner, disbanding Aspects takes as long as manifesting them. It is important to note that disbanding the fifth point or higher in an Aspect requires two forging points, just as assuming it does.

Degree of Divinity

As a dragon manifests more and more Aspects, her statutory human features are washed away, replaced with a fitting draconic form. This is partly due to each Aspect's possessed tells. Still, the act of scouring away the mortal coil causes system-wide changes, and the extent of that process is explained here.

For every five points the dragon has manifest (between all her Aspects), her

Low-Light Furnace

You no doubt noticed that it is impossible for a Furnace 1 dragon to assume the final point of an Aspect. At least, not with a manifest action. For Furnace 1 dragons *only*, an entire turn may be dedicated to assuming the fifth point of an Aspect. That means no movement, no Defense, *and* no action. The act essentially becomes a full action.

degree of divinity increases by one. This triggers the physical changes described in her new degree.

Degree 1

The dragon has fewer than five points manifest in her Aspects. Besides the tells from any assumed Aspects, she is indistinguishably human.

This Degree adds: Nothing.

Which brings the total to: Nothing.

The dragon must pay Breath to resist deprivation every 24 hours, as usual.

Degree 2

The dragon has at least five points manifest in her Aspects, but no more than nine. Her teeth become noticeably longer and sharper, especially the canines. Her skin-tone begins to alter slightly as well, drifting towards the color her scales will eventually take on. This discoloration is only slightly noticeable. Also, her ears begin to point at the top.

This Degree adds: +1 (L) damage to bite attacks

Which brings the total to: +1 (L) damage to bite attacks

The dragon must pay Breath to resist deprivation every 20 hours.

Degree 3

The dragon has at least ten points manifest in her Aspects, but no more than fourteen. Her teeth are further sharpened, and the beginning of a muzzle forms on her face. The nose flattens and joins with the mouth as the jaw protrudes. The dragon's hair begins to lose its pigment, draining into the body to color the skin further. It brightens and often goes gray. As for the skin itself, most reaches a light version of the target shade, with the underbelly and muzzle brightening to an off-white. The texture also becomes rigid, the beginnings of a scale coat forming. The dragon's ears become more dramatically pointed.

This Degree adds: +1 (L) damage to bite attacks, and biting without a grapple

Which brings the total to: +2 (L) grappleless bite attacks

The dragon must pay Breath to resist deprivation every 16 hours. If she wishes to disband Aspects this scene, she must pay a point of Willpower first. The power is just too tempting to resist without determination.

Degree 4

The dragon has at least fifteen points manifest in her Aspects, but no more than nineteen. The beginnings of the muzzle have erupted into a full bestial mouth of sharp teeth, and the dragon's skin is now completely covered in scales of her envisioned shade (which varies from dragon to dragon). She sprouts a small pair of decorative horns, even if she already possesses weaponized ones. If she does not yet possess a tail, a nub forms where the tail would normally start. The dragon's ears are now flexible and completely pointed, like those of a yak.

This Degree adds: +2 (L) damage to bite attacks, +1 damage to all "Weaponry" Aspects

Which brings the total to: +4 (L) grappleless bite attacks, +1 damage to all "Weaponry" Aspects

The dragon must pay Breath to resist deprivation every 12 hours. As in Degree 3, a point of Willpower must be spent to disband Aspects this scene.

Degree 5

The dragon has at least twenty points manifest in her Aspects. Her muzzle now extends roughly seven inches, her body is covered in wide scales of her envisioned color, and her hair has turned completely white. If she does not already possess a tail, a thin whip-like one forms from the aforementioned nub, roughly a leg-and-a-half in length. The decorative horns increase in length and contort. She also grows in stature, rising roughly a foot. At the edge of the dragon's pointed ears the flesh splits and webs, creating a fanned

membrane. She has reached the pinnacle of her divinity.

This Degree adds: +3 (L) damage to bite attacks, +1 Size, +1 damage to all “Weaponry” Aspects, +1 (A) damage to Inferno

Which brings the total to: +7 (L) grapple-less bite attacks, +1 Size, +2 damage to all “Weaponry” Aspects, +1 (A) damage to Inferno

The dragon must pay Breath to resist deprivation every 8 hours. The power is so awing that the dragon must spend a point of Willpower each time she intends to use forging points to disband an Aspect.

The first time a mortal notices the dragon is... off, he suffers fear-based bashing wounds to his Willpower meter equal to the dragon’s current degree of divinity. Each time he fails in a roll against the dragon, he suffers this penalty again. For information on fear-based wounds to Willpower, see page 191 in the first appendix of this book. Supernatural beings do not suffer this penalty.

This is the gut reaction to fear the unknown. However, awareness of the danger can be beneficial. When a mortal is alert to the dragon’s divinity, his force of will is greater amplified against her. As

dragons are tied to the Dreamtide they are more vulnerable to powerful minds, and knowledge of the dragon is enough for a powerful mind to tap that power. Any Willpower expenditures a mortal pays for an action toward the dragon grant that mortal a bonus to act, equal to the dragon’s degree of divinity. So a mortal spending Willpower to activate his combat Merit against a 4th degree dragon would receive +4 to his roll. That same mortal using Willpower to boost his roll against the dragon would receive +7 instead of the standard +3. Supernatural beings do not receive this bonus.

True Form

Once a dragon has manifested every single Aspect to its fullest...

Wings	Scales	Claws
●●●○○	●●●●●●	●●●●●○
☒☒☒☐☐	☒☒☒☒☒	☒☒☒☒☐

she unlocks True Form. Firstly, all of her attributes instantly jump up by 1. She also gains another point of size. All damage, except roll-over damage, is downgraded one severity level before hitting the dragon. Aggravated attacks inflict lethal damage, lethal attacks inflict bashing damage, and bashing attacks inflict no damage at all. This is cumulative with the bulletproof property, but disabled on exceptional successes. For those slayer-minded mortals

Killing a True-Form Dragon

The task of slaying a dragon in True Form can seem immensely difficult, and indeed it should be. The way they reduce damage in this state, when combined with certain Aspects, render most forms of weaponry useless (especially firearms). This is for thematic purposes, as defeating a dragon should not simply be a matter of brute force. Here are some tips to apply when setting out to slay an Oroboroi.

Bring a Sword: Though Firearms ignore defense when used at range, many dragons will have the bulletproof quality, or at least some bulletproof armor. When combined with the damage severity reduction of True Form, bullets are rendered incapable of inflicting damage without an exceptional success. Swords are not subject to the bulletproof quality, and thus inflict bashing damage to a True Form dragon.

Find the Weak Scale and Strike it: The penalty to target the weak scale is worth the increase in damage severity. When a dragon enters True Form, get some distance and study its behavior to locate the weak scale, then close in again and strike there as much as possible.

Tilt the odds in your Favor: True Form dragons have difficulty maneuvering in small spaces. They’re also going to have trouble seeing you in pitch darkness while you’re wearing night-vision goggles. Find ways to use the environment to your advantage, or you’ll end up barbecued chicken.

Know your Foe: Jadeite inflicts aggravated damage to dragons, which means lethal damage in True Form. If you’re targeting the weak scale too, it stands as the fastest way to defeat them. Most people don’t know about the jade vulnerability, though, which just proves the point that it pays to know your foe.

out there, a targeted attack against the dragon's weak scale (located with a Wits + Occult roll, -1 penalty to target) inflicts damage normally and makes killing a True Form dragon... possible.

A dragon in True Form is a veritable foe indeed. In fact, she is nigh unstoppable. She can stay in True Form as long as she wishes, though there are matters of etiquette that other dragons will enforce... violently.

It is important to note that degrees of divinity and True Form are separate. If True Form falls below the parameters of a particular degree of divinity, that degree cannot be achieved.

Mortal Responses

Dragons are free to sport their Aspects as they please... at least physically. That does not mean such action is without consequences. Mortals tend to band together to face and defeat the frightful and unknown, and dealing with the Oroboroi is no exception.

- **Low Level Response** – As hearsay spreads about “the guy with pointy fingers”, a small group of inexperienced individuals gather to investigate. If several Aspects are witnessed, but without proof, a circle of friends may gather to investigate further. Expect three to six mortals to make things inconvenient.

- **Mid Level Response** – The acid burns on the wall and the claw-marks across the alleyway give credence to suspicion. Maybe somebody filmed the encounter with their cell phone. It's not pristine, but there is some proof that dragons are out and about, and it's enough to rally up a posse. Expect seven to fifteen mortals, some more combat-savvy than others.

- **High Level Response** – There's high-definition, undeniable proof that the character was out torching her enemies last night. Maybe one of her claws broke off in that gang-banger, or they were

recording her fight in True Form. A mob approaches to deal with her. Expect at least sixteen assailants, highly trained combatants knowledgeable in the area of draconic occult. These mortals possess the means to turn your character's life upside down, and will do so to expose her.

It is important to note that these situations do not assume Bloody Chalice Knights. They can easily pop up in any of the three levels of mortal retaliation.

Borrowing Aspects

The Bond of Brood Merit allows a mortal who has undergone the described ritual to share a dragon's Aspects. That mortal gains access to the manifest action, using his own Furnace to generate points. But he and his patron share the same Aspects, and thus the same sheet. If the Bonded manifests an Aspect:



he goes from right to left, and blocks the dragon from manifesting those points herself. For the bonded, this is his first point, and the far left is his last. Obviously, if the bonded is manifesting any Aspects, the dragon cannot attain True Form.

Calories

To garner Breath, a dragon must pour fuel into her Furnace. She does this by eating anything and everything. But how do you keep track of something like that? While you could certainly dig out a diet book and with fluster search for the components of every meal, servings tend to have value by grouping and time for storytelling can be saved by just throwing together some servings. In the sidebar below is a list of common servings.

This, of course, is all a little bit of a moot point, as time spent counting Calories is better applied elsewhere. For this reason **Dragon: The Embers** uses an abstract

Common Fuel Sources

The following are commonly used by the Oroboroi to garner Breath. Each is considered one serving.

<i>Fast Foods (1 meal)</i> 600-1300	<i>Restaurant Meals (1 meal)</i> 800-1200	<i>Dairies (1/2 cup)</i> 60-140
<i>Meats (4 ounces)</i> 180-220	<i>Poultry and Seafood (4 ounces)</i> 270-360	<i>Fruits (1/2 cup)</i> 80-100
<i>Vegetables (1/2 cup)</i> 40-60	<i>Grains (1/2 cup)</i> 90-120	<i>Junk Foods (8 pieces)</i> 110-300
<i>Desserts (1 piece)</i> 300-500	<i>Alcohol (1 serving)</i> 80-100	<i>Gasoline (1 Glass)</i> 2000
<i>Coal (1 hunk)</i> 630		<i>Crude Oil (1 Glass)</i> 2200

Meals

Fuel	Caloric Points	Minimum Resources	Minimum Composure	Minimum Stamina	Minimum Furnace
A Log of Kindling	2	-3	0	1	1
A Hunk of Coal	2	-2	1	0	2
A Glass of Gasoline	8	0	2	3	3
A Glass of Crude Oil	9	1	3	2	5
A Glass of Rocket Fuel	18	5	4	5	7
A Bag of Laundry	2	0	0	0	1

Overeating

Despite the Composure and Stamina requirements, a dragon can still try keep eating by rolling Stamina + Presence. There are drawbacks, though.

For each dot short she falls of the rating (in any of the three requirements), she suffers a -1 penalty to this roll. If she does not meet the Stamina requirement, she suffers a lethal wound upon completing the meal. If she does not meet the Composure requirement, she loses a point of Willpower.

If the Resources requirement exceeds her rating, she cannot acquire the meal through lawful means. In appropriate cases, another Merit's rating (such as Status or Lair allies) may be substituted for Resources for this chart only.

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: The dragon suffers all associated penalties for her inadequacies (like the lethal wound or the Willpower loss), but garners no Caloric points.

Failure: The dragon cannot bring herself to eat the meal. No penalty, but no Caloric points garnered.

Success: The dragon suffers all associated penalties for your inadequacies, but garner the Caloric points for the meal.

Exceptional Success: The dragon garners the Caloric points for the meal, but suffer no penalties for your inadequacies.

For characters that have the "Iron Stomach" Merit, their Stamina rating is treated as one higher for the purpose of this chart.

method for the dragon's food consumption process.

250 Calories roll into one tidy Caloric point, used with the Furnace chart to determine when Breath is rewarded. How do you determine how many Caloric points

a meal provides? For regular foods it's incredibly easy. Ask the player to rate how full her character would feel after a meal like that (provided she was still mortal) on a scale from 1 to 5 (with 5 being stuffed). The resulting number is how many Caloric

points are rewarded. When it comes to alternative fuels, consult the provided chart.

You may have noticed that minimum ratings are provided for these consumables. They're simply harder to eat than regular food. All listed requirements (except for Furnace) increase by one each time the dragon partakes in that source in a day. Continuous consumption eventually leads to nausea and bloating, especially with substances not intended for ingestion. Fuels that have a higher Composure minimum are more difficult to eat due to taste or smell. Foods with a higher Stamina minimum are harder to digest and in those of less sturdy build would likely cause internal damage.

It is important to note that this is not an all-encompassing list. Far from it, actually, as there are actually lots of alternative fuels that would have lower requirements in one or all of the categories. Treat this list as a guideline, not a decree. Also, while the pressure to consume is an important topic to touch on, you need not do so constantly. Sometimes to keep the story from snagging you may just hand out Calories (or Caloric points), but remember to revisit the need to gorge occasionally. If you don't, your players may become careless with their Breath, confident it will be replenished.

Garnering Breath

As soon as a dragon has consumed enough Calories to meet her Furnace requirements, she will gain a point of Breath. By dividing Caloric points by the number required for Breath, you can determine how much of each the dragon receives. For example, if a dragon has 12 Caloric points and only requires 8 for a point of Breath, 12 would be divided by 8. The resulting 1 remainder 4 means that dragon accrues one Breath, with four Caloric points left over.

But... should she sleep before she's finished forming a point of Breath, the remaining Calories are lost, burned away in the Furnace but insufficient to provide

preternatural benefit. If the dragon decides to go without sleep for several days, she can avoid the unnecessary loss of Calories but must face Fatigue (see the **World of Darkness** Rulebook, page 179).

For dragons with a Furnace rating below six, 2000 Calories (or 8 Caloric points) are required to produce a single point of Breath. Consuming 4000 Calories would gift the dragon two points of Breath, and consuming a whopping 6000 Calories could get her three points. However, even falling a single Calorie short could prove a massive exercise in waste. Suppose a Dragon ate 5999 Calories (or 23 Caloric points) and then slept. She would receive only two points of Breath. The remaining 1999 Calories would be lost to the wind, providing no benefit.

The Invisible Sources of Protein

The realms invisible provide both great risk and promise of reward. Charged with supernal energy, consumables from these reaches of reality offer thrice the Caloric value of their mundane material counterparts. A dragon may travel to these places (if capable) in search of such magnificent sustenance, but must acknowledge the peril involved. For if she was to perish in such a foreign place...

A Different Source of Meat

Consuming human flesh (or near-human flesh) is a harrowing experience, but one that is sometimes necessary. Oroboroi benefit from feeding on the intelligent, provided they can live with the consequences of such an act. When an Oroboroi consumes human flesh, one serving grants her that being's Willpower dots in Caloric points. So if an Oroboroi ate a middle-aged man (Size servings of flesh, so 5) who had 7 Willpower dots, she'd get 35 Caloric points (7 Willpower dots x 5 servings = Caloric yield). Each serving the dragon consumes in this manner triggers a degeneration roll.

Supernatural flesh is even more effective. In addition to the Willpower dots, the supernatural being's supernatural trait is added to the Calories yielded each serving. So if an Oroboroi ate another dragon (Sized 6, so 6 servings) with Furnace 3 and 8 Willpower dots, she'd get 66 Caloric points ($\{3+8\} \times 6 = \text{Caloric yield}$). Again, after each serving the consuming dragon must roll for degeneration.

Ethics, The Code of the Oroboroi

Unlike the humans they used to be, an Oroboroi sense of principles is almost inverted. Young dragons are often quite surprised at how little grief a human death presents them, and likewise become startled when what would normally be considered a petty offense shakes them so thoroughly. Though this would cause many to question their own beliefs, they are no longer judged by the same scales as humanity. Still, despite its peculiar inversion, the Code of Ethics does possess an inherent flavor of honor and justice. Those who would act on whim find themselves in a downward spiral towards the Hydra.

The main function of Ethics is to remind dragons that they are supposed to be better than mankind. Without a compass of good leadership, they become nothing more than

monsters. Without death as a punctuation to life's sentence, priorities change in ways no non-dragon could understand.

When a dragon sins at or below her current standards in the Code, her player must roll the specified dice to check for moral degeneration. Should the roll succeed, the dragon finds shame in her actions, or likely feels a wound to her honor. But if the roll fails she slips closer to tyranny, losing a dot of Ethics in the process.

As a dragon slips away from grace, she begins to lose interest in her own life. Things that brought her joy or pride cease to matter, and she becomes more and more corrosive to the world around her in a vain effort to regain the euphoria of glory. This apathy often leads to madness, and for each time Ethics falls the dragon must roll her new score and succeed or acquire a derangement. For more information on Derangements, see the **World of Darkness** Rulebook, page 96.

The details of Ethics and the sins that violate it are provided below.

Roll Results

Degeneration rolls are made with the dice pool associated with the sin committed.

Dramatic Failure: Impossible. There are no penalties applied to either pool, so a chance roll cannot be made.

Ethics	Threshold Sin	Dice Rolled
10	Looking down on a mortal.	(Roll five dice.)
9	Using Aspects for selfish gain.	(Roll five dice.)
8	Allowing an insult to go unchallenged.	(Roll four dice.)
7	Going a month without demanding tribute.	(Roll four dice.)
6	Killing a dragon's body to protect a loved one. Harming a mortal to protect a loved one.	(Roll three dice.)
5	Theft of any kind. Taking revenge on a mortal. Killing a mortal to protect the province or a loved one.	(Roll three dice.)
4	Inflicting collateral or emotional damage on one's own province. Killing a mortal for convenience.	(Roll three dice.)
3	Taking <i>violent</i> revenge on a mortal. Gifting another dragon's Heart to a mortal. Serial Murder.	(Roll two dice.)
2	Cannibalism of either the Oroboroi or Mortal variety. Mass Murder. Harvesting another dragon's Red Pearl.	(Roll two dice.)
1	Participating in Torture. Destroying a Heart of the Oroboroi.	(Roll two dice.)

Failure: On a degeneration roll, your dragon slips away from grace, losing a dot of Ethics as her standards blur. On an Ethics roll, your dragon's actions have won her a derangement.

Success: Recognizing her actions are abrasive to her purpose, your dragon manages to maintain her sense of what is just and vindictive, and is no less stable for the mistake.

Exceptional Success: The infarction has shown your dragon the error of her ways. Determined to stay righteous, she instantly gains a single point of Breath.

Sins

As stated earlier, some of the sins fall in peculiar levels of severity, and here are the reasons why.

- **Looking Down on a Mortal** – Hubris is a flaw most dragons don't bother to keep in check. Those of pinnacle Ethics know better. Humankind may not have the prowess a dragon does, but to snub them is to spit at one's past. And the past is foundation for the present. For dragons of very high Ethics, considering a human as being inferior subjects her to a degeneration roll.

- **Allowing an Insult to go Unchallenged** – The Code is about being a good leader, and part of that is maintaining an aura of authority. Insubordination must be stifled lest it poison the province. For dragons of very high Ethics, allowing an insult to go unchallenged would subject her to a degeneration roll.

- **Not Demanding Tribute within a Month's Period** – Akin to the insult issue, tribute implies a respect that is necessary to run a healthy province. After all, a leader is nothing without willing people to follow. Tribute could be anything from a free dinner to a cushy paycheck, but the dragon needs *some* respectful sign that her efforts have been recognized. For dragons

of moderate Ethics, not demanding some sort of tribute would subject her to a degeneration roll.

- **Killing a Mortal with Good Reason** – Oddly enough, the life of a single human being is fleeting in the eyes of progress, at least when it comes to the Oroboroi. Taking a single life in the face of a graver fate (the harm of a loved one or impending damage to the province) hardly shakes the principles of an average dragon. If she makes a habit of it, however, she may find herself less disturbed than she anticipated. For dragons of moderate Ethics, killing a human whose continued life would lead to severe consequence would subject her to a degeneration roll. Should she make a habit of it, though (serial murder), she may find stains she can't wash out.

- **Theft and Revenge** – Underhanded methods are ill-fitted for a good ruler. Taking revenge on a lesser being is a dirtying experience, and taking without permission is beneath a paragon of the people. As such, both are grievous offenses against the Code. Even for dragons of low Ethics, taking instead of asking is a terrible crime, and degeneration follows.

- **Participating in Torture** – Whereas theft and revenge are ill-fitted for a ruler, torture is outright unacceptable. Without a doubt the most abhorrent action any member of the Oroboroi could take, torture is unforgivable. Dragons at any level of Ethics, even the most atrocious, face degeneration when resorting to torture.

State of the Union

At any given point in the eternity that is Oroboroi life, a dragon fluctuates between mythical monarch and terrible tyrant. Besides inhibiting (or not inhibiting) depravity, the state of a dragon's Ethics determines the vibe she gives off to those around her.

☐ethics 10

Likely recognized as a leader both benevolent and fair, the Ethics 10 dragon is an admirable beacon of what a person can strive for. Those that know her well would never wish to cross her, and those that cross her face appropriate consequence (though she is not cruel). Beloved is a good description for this dragon.

Dragons of Ethics 10 receive an additional two forging points when they take a manifest action.

☐ethics 9

Maybe construed as the boss, maybe not, the Ethics 9 dragon has an excellent grasp on what's right and wrong, and what traits define an honorable figurehead. They do their best for the good of others, eschewing personal gain for provincial prosperity. Though not perfect, it's difficult to find something to dislike about this dragon.

Dragons of Ethics 9 receive an additional forging point when they take a manifest action.

☐ethics 8

A touch better than average, but not so lofty as to breed loyalty by presence, the Ethics 8 dragon may not be recognized as the leader of her province. Though she doesn't command respect like dragons of higher Ethics, the Ethics 8 dragon is no less principled, and she doesn't suffer fools. Her province is likely a place of comfort and joy; a reflection of her loving care. People recognize this dragon is a good person.

Dragons of Ethics 8 receive an additional forging point when they take a manifest action.

☐ethics 7

Quite similar to the Ethics 8 dragon, the Ethics 7 dragon knows what it means to be decent and just to her province and its residents. Still, there's a sliver of doubt in her step, and the objective observer can see it. It's as if she's afraid to accept her responsibility.

☐ethics 6

The Ethics 6 dragon is not wicked. No, she fights to protect the things that she cares about. At this level a touch of cynicism begins to bloom within her chest. Those that harm her loved ones will be harmed in return. Dragons that attack her will perish. At this stage she will not use murder as a permanent solution.

☐ethics 5

Though not necessarily evil, the Ethics 5 dragon is not above underhanded actions for the sake of progress. If something poses a threat to her province, she removes it cleanly and quietly. It's still about the province and not the self, so she will not stoop to such levels for personal gain. Still, those that meet her feel a darkness beneath her voice that is difficult to explain.

☐ethics 4

For the Ethics 4 dragon, the lines of 'easiest' and 'best' begin to blur and convenience takes the place of good judgment. The dragon may remove obstacles from her province simply because they don't suit her preferences. She comes off as a little selfish, but the province is still better off for her presence.

☐ethics 3

The province becomes a tool for the dragon's own desires when she reaches Ethics 3. She may take destructive measures against her own province for some fleeting benefit, or maim the morale of her subjects in the name of inflating her own position. Whereas a singular threat would prompt pruning by a higher Ethics dragon, one at this level does not flinch at purging all involved (Even if that purge involves murder).

At this point, the dragon is likely recognized once more as an authority figure. Loathing, if not outright hatred, is the common perception of the Ethics 3 dragon.

Ethics 2

Petty to a maniacal degree, the Ethics 2 dragon is willing to remove dozens of people from the ‘privilege’ of life simply because they do not meet her preferences. A grudge-bearer by nature, her revenge is often violent. The Ethics 2 dragon sends out an unsettling vibe, and seems to lack any lingering flicker of light. A dictator, definitely.

Ethics 1

There is little distance left to the bottom. The Ethics 1 dragon likely fuels her furnace by killing and consuming at random. She doesn’t care who catches her with Aspects blazing, as she murders without remorse. The only flicker of conscience remaining is that of torture. Though she may be a murderous monster, she cannot bring herself to cause that kind of suffering. Those in the vicinity of the Ethics 1 dragon feel the chill of death dance down their spine. Extended contact is not recommended.

Ethics 0

At this point, the dragon can no longer claim a province. In fact, she can no longer claim her dragonhood, as she has become a Hydra. A rabid uncontrollable monster feuding with its own heads, no action is too depraved for this beast. While a Hydra can still disband Aspects, she usually has no reason to. If your dragon reaches this level of depravity, she becomes a non-player character. More information on the Hydra can be found in Chapter 4, page 180.

The Journey Up and Down Principles

For an Embers dragon, losing Ethics is essentially identical to losing Morality, as detailed in the **World of Darkness** Rulebook page 91. Drifting below 7 may lead to derangements, which are removed in the reverse order as Ethics recovers. Scholars of the Five Evils also follow this system, but they possess two separate Ethics charts (one for each mode). This is explained later in this chapter.

Dragons cannot simply repent as a mortal does, for their position should have taught them better. To increase their Ethics rating, they must both reaffirm their dedication to its teachings and spend the experience to increase the rating. The exception is True Heart Oroboroi, who are sheltered from this cost by their naiveté, and as such their upward movements are free.

Scholars of the Five Evils

The Sainly Devils are unique, because their rejection of Oroboroi fractures them down the middle. In essence they are two personas sharing one body, with morality-based stimulus triggering transitions from one to the other.

If you intend to create a playable Five Evils dragon, you will need two copies of the character sheet, one for the dragon’s “Good” mode, and another for her “Bad” mode.

For most intents and purposes, these two sheets are completely exclusive. They represent the scholar’s two very different personalities. These two sheets may have different:

- **Attributes** – Separate identities, when encountered in the same person, may have completely different levels of mental alacrity and social competence. This is totally expected. But, the supernatural nature of the Sainly Devil scholar’s fracture renders the transition more dramatic. *Any* of the dragon’s Attributes may differ between modes.

- **Skills** – Just like attributes, the two sides of a Sainly Devil may be trained in completely different fields. This is especially interesting because the “Bad” mode did not exist before induction into the Oroboroi. All of its field experience is imagined, but the force-of-will power granted by the Dreamtide makes such experience valid. *Any* of the dragon’s Skills may differ between modes.

- **Derived Traits** – If attributes can be different, so can derived traits. This causes a complication with the Health and Willpower meters, which will be explained later.

- **Merits, Mostly** – Just like Attributes and Skills, the two personas can have different contacts, handedness, fighting styles, and even know different languages. There are a few exclusions, though. Both sheets must share the same dots in the “Giant”, “Resources”, “Hoard”, “Graft”, and “Lair” Merits. These reflect features that do not change when a Saintry Devil transitions between modes, and so they must remain static.

- **Ethics** – The key difference between “Good” mode and “Bad” mode is their Ethics rating, which is totally independent. Because Ethics is independent, so is the state of derangement the dragon experiences. One mode may have derangements the other does not, and such derangements are only experienced while that mode is active.

The sheets must have the same:

- **Experience** – Both sheets have the same experience rating, and gain experience simultaneously. Experience does not need to be spent in the same way on both sheets, unless it is being used to purchase something that must match on both sheets. In such a case, both sheets must have enough available experience to make such a purchase.

- **Furnace, Aspects, and Philosophies** – The things that make a dragon what she is do not waver when she transitions from “Good” to “Bad” (or vice-versa). Furnace, all Aspects, and all Philosophies remain static between the two sheets.

- **Virtue and Vice** – Virtue and Vice remain unchanged because they remain the anchor between the two modes. Regardless of the change in personality,

the dragon’s motivations are the same. There is one key difference, though, and that is motivation’s function. While in “Bad” mode, Virtue and Vice are reversed. Vice replenishes all expended Willpower, and Virtue restores only one point. Any other Willpower recovery (as detailed in the first Appendix on page 191) is likewise inverted.

Saintry Devils cannot help but transition between one mode and the other; it is triggered when they witness certain actions. For those in “Good” mode, a specified Vice pushes them over the edge when they fail a Composure or Resolve roll (whichever is lower). Those in “Bad” mode may climb back up when they witness a specified Virtue: succeeding at a Composure or Resolve roll (whichever is higher) sets them straight again.

Managing Two Sheets

Though playing a Saintry Devil Oroboroi can lead to some very interesting character development, there is a complication that comes from having two sheets so varied. A difference in Stamina can result in a different number of Health dots, and differences in Composure and Resolve dramatically alter the amount of Willpower a character has available. This is the primary conflict of playability that these schools present, which is why they are not recommended for new players.

Health

When a wound is suffered, it is marked simultaneously on both sheets. If the shorter bar suffers a sufficient amount of damage, roll-over occurs as normal. “Bleeding out” only transpires when the dying mode is active, and it inflicts only lethal wounds to the inactive mode’s meter. Death is also only relevant if it is the active mode. A forced switch to a mode that is suffering bleed-out or death instantly inflicts these issues, and entering a dead mode causes the

effects of death to apply to *both* modes (see “A Dragon’s Death” below).

Health recovery, on the other hand, is completely independent. Both meters replenish at the standard rate, which means the meter with more severe damage rollover will take longer to replenish. If supernatural means are used to repair damage, the same volume of healing is supplied to both meters, but its distribution is up to the player. Health recovery and bleeding to death are both described on page 175 of the **World of Darkness** Rulebook.

Let’s say a Saintly Devil dragon has 8 Health in “Good” mode, and only 6 in “Bad” mode. This dragon has suffered three lethal and three bashing wounds in a brawl.

“Good” (Active)



“Bad” (Inactive)



Somebody sneaks up and smacks her with a pool cue, inflicting two more bashing wounds.

“Good” (Active)



“Bad” (Inactive)



Rollover occurs in the “Bad” Health meter, even though it is inactive.

“Good” (Active)



“Bad” (Inactive)



More pummeling occurs, and the “Bad” Health meter is brought to the point of bleeding out. However, since it is the inactive meter, bleed out does not occur... yet.

“Good” (Inactive)



“Bad” (Active)



The Saintly Devil’s most hated Vice suddenly forces her to switch to “Bad” mode. Since the meter is full of lethal damage, the dragon immediately passes out and begins to bleed to death. The aggravated wounds that form on the “Bad” meter are inflicted as lethal damage to the “Good” meter.

“Good” (Inactive)



“Bad” (Active)



The Saintly Devil spends 2 Breath to remove a lethal wound and save her life. This gives her “Good” meter the healing equivalent of two Breath, and the player decides to use it to remove both the bashing wounds.

“Good” (Inactive)



“Bad” (Active)



The dragon flees the fight, and six days pass. Both meters recover from 3 lethal wounds, but now there is a problem. The “Good” meter will continue to recover from one wound every two days, but the “Bad” meter will take an entire week to remove one of its wounds. Since the dragon is in “Bad” mode, she decides to use Breath to clear away the aggravated damage. 3 points would be a waste, since one would go to no use on the “Good” meter. But spending 6 points would both remove two aggravated wounds (on the “Bad” meter) and three lethal wounds (on the “Good” meter).

Willpower

The two modes’ Willpower meters are not directly related. Depletion of one does not

cause loss of Willpower in the other. They are, however, recovered simultaneously. This results in the inactive mode being refreshed most of the time, but that is not a bad thing. It is fitting with the feel of these dragons.

When a Sainly Devil fulfills her Virtue, she recovers all her “Good” mode’s spent Willpower, and one point of her “Bad” mode’s spent Willpower. This recovery occurs on both sheets regardless of which mode is active. Likewise, when that same dragon fulfills her Vice, she recovers one point of her “Good” mode’s spent Willpower and all of her “Bad” mode’s spent Willpower. Other recovery of Willpower is likewise applied to both sheets.

A Dragon’s Death

Just like mortals, when a dragon is riddled with lethal wounds she will begin to bleed to death. But for the Oroboroi—well, most of them anyway—death does not hold the permanence it does for humanity. If her physical form is destroyed, her mental and spiritual self become anchored to her Heart while her body undergoes repair.

Curiously enough, though, is the matter of the corpse a dead dragon leaves behind. Which form is truth, and which is the lie? For Oroboroi that still possess their Hearts in chest, the human form is a lie. When these dragons die, their bodies are thrust into True Form where they quickly decay into convincing reptile fossils. Though technically authentic, the carbon dating of these bones usually gets them tossed aside as a hoax. Only someone willing to study them could garner a snifter of useful

information, and very little at that. One valuable remains in the wake of this phenomenon, the Heart.

For dragons who renounce their Heart for immortality, the human form is simply a vessel. It’s their soul’s presence that makes it special, and at severing the flesh becomes absolutely, untraceably human. This does not absolve them of an evidence trail, though, as people are bound to notice that guy who looks remarkably like the one that died.

Resurrection

When a member of the Oroboroi suffers that last aggravated wound, she dies. Her consciousness is instantly teleported to the Twilight vicinity of her Heart, until such time as her body can be repaired. If she was a Sainly Devil, both her active and inactive Health bars fill with aggravated wounds. Also, all dragon Aspects are disbanded upon death, as the body returns to a human state.

Her body continues to heal at the normal (albeit incredibly slow) rate, but she cannot return to it until at least three of her wounds have healed. She may still use Breath to repair her body, but without the Furnace burning it is much less effective. It takes 4 points of Breath reduce an aggravated wound to a lethal one, 3 points of Breath reduce a lethal wound to a bashing one, and 2 points of Breath removes a bashing wound. On the plus side, these repairs can be paid for in installments, instead of all at once like while the dragon is alive.

Dragons that die of starvation permanently lose a dot of Furnace during this process, as well as two dots of Aspects

Death in a Realm Invisible

The above situation assumes the dragon perished in the Daylight (or rather, the material world). Should a dragon perish when traveling the Dream Realm, or any other supernatural realm, her body is lost. Unable to return to the Daylight, reconstruction cannot be initiated and the dragon effectively plays her Last Hand. Or maybe her mind and soul can’t get back to her body without her body. A catch twenty-two as it were.

There is one exception. If a Lucid Dreamer slays a dragon within her dreamscape (in the Dreamtide, of course), a shard of that dragon imbeds itself in her psyche. The following morning that Dreamer is destined to lose a piece of himself (usually by vomiting), that piece being the fragment of dragon that became lodged the previous night. This is just enough of the dragon’s body to instigate Resurrection.

and any Attributes that would exceed the limit after said loss of Furnace. Without a constant supply of fuel the Furnace just cannot continue burning at that temperature. This is also a defense mechanism for the dragon; by dimming the Furnace it becomes less likely she will starve again.

While in this state, it is impossible for the dragon to produce Breath, but she does not need to pay to stave off hunger. In the meantime she is free to explore the spectral reflection of her Lair and converse with any of her Heart's lingering Antecedents. Once the body is ready, the dragon is ripped out of Twilight and returned to life once more. If she had assumed any Aspects while waiting in Twilight, they are immediately disbanded. She may not be the only one to take this trip, though.

The Daylight world does not stand still while a dragon is deceased. People move on. Insurance policies cash out. Estates are resolved. There are plenty of complications of death to keep a dragon from willingly ending her own body, and there's lots of incentive to rise again quickly. Each time the dragon dies, she must weigh the cost of Breath against the cost of death.

The Antecedent

For those that are stricken with the Last Hand, the region around their Heart becomes their permanent residence. Because they are those that owned the Heart before, they are called Antecedents. Unlike the Oroboroi awaiting resurrection's renewal, an Antecedent must find ways to fend for himself.

Though not *technically* ghosts, Antecedents gain access to two non-manifesting Numina from the **World of Darkness** Rulebook, pages 210-212. These Numina use Breath in place of Essence. An Antecedent garners Breath in the same way that a living dragon does, though he possesses the advantage of spectrally charged consumables (which are worth

triple Calories) and the disadvantage of an anchor. As a result, the Twilight regions around a dragon's Heart are usually barren and bleak.

Antecedents must pay up Breath each day to avoid starving to death... or rather second death. Being deceased, though, they are not entitled to degrees of divinity, and thus mustn't deal with the accelerated hunger those degrees bring.

While he can remain in the vicinity of his Heart when he has Breath, should he let his own Furnace burn out his anchoring dissolves, and he slips helplessly into the Underworld. While there are rumors that an Antecedent can come back from such a fate, such action is wildly unlikely. For each day an Antecedent does not pay his Breath, he suffers a wound of the resistant aggravated variety to his Corpus. Unlike ghosts, to disincorporate is a one-way ticket, so Antecedents are far more careful with their spectral flesh. Though these wounds heal at the normal rate, they will not unless the Antecedent pays up.

Antecedents have a Corpus trait, as the ghosts of the **World of Darkness** Rulebook (page 170). It is thus in name only, though, as the Antecedent maintains his individual Attributes in place of Power, Finesse, and Resistance. He may also continue to utilize his Aspects, and probably spends most of his time in True Form.

Antecedents as Backseat Drivers

The real trouble that comes with an Antecedent is when they decide to take a ride with their Heart's current owner. When a dragon's body has finished its reconstruction, the Antecedent can try to tag along. The Oroboroi must roll her Ethics:

Dramatic Failure: Impossible when rolling Ethics.

Failure: One of the dragon's Antecedents manages to anchor himself to her body instead of her Heart. The complications of this are explained below.

Success: The Antecedent doesn't succeed in changing his anchor.

Exceptional Success: No different than a success.

For the Antecedents that do grab a ride, the dragon's body becomes their anchor until the dragon dies again, the Antecedent runs out of Breath (and is flung back to the Heart as anchor), the Antecedent willingly relinquishes the dragon as anchor, or the Antecedent runs out of Corpus (and is flung to the underworld). He can also be exorcised, in which case he returns to the Heart as anchor. This of course has the potential of making the dragon a walking haunted house, so it's not particularly a good thing.

The Antecedent suffers damage to Corpus each time his anchor (the dragon's body) suffers damage to Health, though the amount inflicted is one step lower. For example, if the dragon were to suffer a lethal wound, the Antecedent would suffer a bashing one. The risk is worth it, though, to have a readily moving anchor with which to haunt and feast.

Antecedent souls that anchor to the dragon gain access to a specialized Numen that can be activated when the anchor is in the process of manifesting Aspects. The Antecedent takes advantage of the metamorphosing body's instability and sprouts his own head, gaining contested access to control.

- **Two for One:** When a dragon with Antecedent Passenger has attained the third degree of divinity (at least ten points manifest in Aspects), the Antecedent may activate this Numen to sprout his own head on the body. This requires the expenditure of one Breath.

A dragon sporting more than one head gets a second instant action within the turn, at the position equal to her Initiative Modifier. That dragon also gains a short-burst attack when performing a bite

(though she must be in agreement with her other head) and has her Inferno converted to a long-burst attack (also when in agreement with her other head). Both these actions gain a +1 bonus for the additional head.

The benefit ends there. That second instant action? It belongs to the Antecedent, and he may act independently of the body. Usually such action can only involve his own head, but for a point of Willpower he can move limbs for the next three turns. This could prove disastrous if he has an agenda that doesn't match that of his anchor.

While forming a head on the dragon's body, the Antecedent cannot use his own Aspects. The extra head will remain until the Antecedent runs out of Corpus or Breath, or until he decides to retract it. The dragon who is serving as anchor cannot disband her last ten points of Aspects unless she spends a point of Breath to retract the Antecedent's head (or he decides to comply).

The Red Pearl

For dragons that exceed five dots of Furnace, an inborn genetic flaw begins to manifest within their skull. This flaw causes the brain-matter to crystallize, creating a valuable stone known as a Red Pearl. It can be removed, but only by killing the dragon. Also, being caused by genetic instability, this pearl is caustic to the touch. Many take this to mean the object is cursed, but that couldn't be further from the truth.

To those who can find a way to remove the caustic flaw, great rewards for owning such a treasure can be found. If the Red Pearl is subjected to a purifying procedure (Storyteller discretion... though it may involve submersion in pure water, being struck by lightning, or being placed in a sufficiently hot flame for 13 hours), the dragon's resurrection is instantly extended by a month and the Pearl begins to bestow

benefits unto its new wielder. The Oroboroi Heart remains unharmed, and some clever harvesters will steal it while the dragon is vulnerable to present it to a more favorable owner (the Knights of the Bloody Chalice are known to practice such debauchery). Red Pearls must be purified quickly, though. If it has not been properly processed by the time the dragon resurrects, it works its way out of mortal hands and vanishes from the world, only to reappear within her head.

In addition to the slower resurrection, losing a Red Pearl causes an instant and permanent loss of one dot of Furnace. A dragon may produce an infinite number of Red Pearls, provided she has a sufficiently hot Furnace. For dragons the removed Red Pearl serves no benefit but spite, and as such it is one of the gravest crimes a member of the Oroboroi can commit.

Benefits of a Red Pearl

For an Oroboroi who owns a Red Pearl, there is no benefit. But for a mortal who manages to get a hold of one, the sky's the limit. Each Red Pearl has a benefit based on the type of dragon that produced it, as well as a general benefit. The mortal experiences these benefits so long as the Red Pearl remains within two inches of his person.

All Red Pearls have a size of 1 and a durability of 5. Each Red Pearl has a rating, equal to five dots less than the source dragon's Furnace at time of harvest. Owning any type of Pearl extends the lifespan of the owner by half again, and causes wounds to heal in half the time.

Slayer Pearl: The crystal brain of a Slayer Oroboroi grants the wielder a number of free attribute dots to allocate among his different attributes equal to its rating. His needs upon acquiring the Red Pearl are ingrained into its form, so once the attribute bumps are chosen they become a feature of that particular Red Pearl and cannot be reassigned. The dots are lost if the mortal loses the Red Pearl.

Finder Pearl: The crystal brain of a Finder Oroboroi grants sight of the future. On each night the wielder goes to sleep with the crystal adjacent, roll the Red Pearl's rating. With even a single success, the mortal gets a prophetic dream of some relevance to him. Even in the event of a failure, the wielder experiences a vision awash in metaphor, which can be deciphered with time and patience.

Challenger Pearl: The crystal brain of a Challenger Oroboroi gives its wielder a bonus to resist toxins and diseases equal to its rating. He may also extend the amount of time he can go without food or sleep by a number of days equal to that same amount, as well as the number of hours without water, and the number of minutes without oxygen.

Trickster Pearl: The crystal brain of a Trickster Oroboroi grants amazing fortune. A number of times per story equal to the Red Pearl's rating, the mortal may decide to toss and re-roll a number of failed dice on a roll equal to that same rating. This can be initiated even after the roll is made.

Inheritor Pearl: The crystal brain of an Inheritor Oroboroi is probably the greatest record of Oroboroi history that exists. At least, it would be if it could be proven accurate. The Red Pearl of an Inheritor serves as an encyclopedia of her life and those of her Antecedents. Once a day, the wielder of an Inheritor Pearl may *dive* into the memories of any dragon that owned the Inheritor's Heart at some time (All but the Inheritor are dead, of course) for any reason he desires. While he is diving, he appears to be in REM sleep. The memory diver cannot interact with the events; he only witnesses them, though he may choose which memories to travel to. The diver experiences memories in real time, and may

remain submerged in the encyclopedia for a number of hours equal to the rating of the Red Pearl. Any memories that occur *after* the time of harvest cannot be witnessed, as they were not yet recorded. It is also quite difficult to discern real memories from false ones.

The Last Hand

Not every Oroboroi death is temporary. Hearts get lost, and find new owners. Eternity doesn't last forever. If that doesn't make any sense, think of it this way: There's always another to take up the mantle.

Should a dragon perish in one of the realms invisible (Including the Dreamtide), inescapably far from her Heart, she has played her Last Hand. Should a dragon's Heart be consumed (by mortal or otherwise), she has played her Last Hand. Should a dragon perish by exsanguination, specifically during the blood-bathing ritual of the Knights of the Bloody Chalice, she has played her Last Hand. Should a dragon be one of the True Hearts, her first death and her Last Hand are one and the same.

Upon dying this final time, a dragon becomes an Antecedent, as has been described earlier in this chapter. In the case of death by Heart consumption, the new Antecedent may be anchored to a Heart that still rests in chest. Despite being attached to a moving anchor, this Antecedent is not technically a passenger and cannot manifest a head.

Matters of the Form Corporeal

Dragons heal at a preternatural rate, though not through some miracle of metabolism or mystic fate. No, dragons heal at the speed they do because the heat of their Furnace cauterizes the wounds they suffer. Though this process is not mercurial enough to be suspicious, dragons are surprisingly healthy.

- All dragons may spend one point of Breath to remove a bashing wound as a reflexive action. This may even be done

while the dragon is unconscious. Resistant bashing damage cannot be healed in this manner.

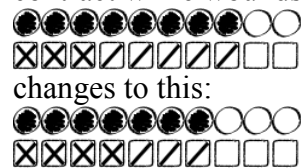
- For dragons that can spend two points of Breath in a single turn, a single lethal wound can be removed as a reflexive action. This shifts any bashing wounds left one space on the meter. Even if the dragon is unconscious or bleeding to death, she may remove lethal wounds in this manner. Resistant lethal damage cannot be healed in this manner.

- For dragons that can spend three Breath in a single turn, a single aggravated wound can be removed as a reflexive action. This shifts all lethal and bashing wounds to the left one space. Resistant wounds cannot be healed in this manner. Even if the dragon is unconscious or dying, she may still remove aggravated wounds in this manner. If she has already bled to death, though, aggravated wounds cannot be removed in this fashion. See "A Dragon's Death" earlier in this chapter.

When not using supernatural means, a dragon recovers at the same rate a normal human being does. Bashing damage takes fifteen minutes to heal, lethal damage takes two days, and aggravated damage takes an entire week.

- True Form increases a dragon's Stamina and Size, creating two extra wound slots. The Colossal Beast Aspect boosts a dragon's Size trait, also creating extra wound slots. The fifth degree of divinity increases a dragon's Size, creating an additional wound slot.

Should a dragon's expanded health meter contract while wounds are occupying it:

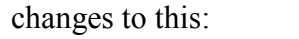
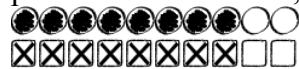


the smaller wounds cluster and become more severe. In this example, one bashing wound ends up in a wound slot that no longer exists, so it combines with the leftmost bashing wound to make a single lethal one. Likewise, if a lethal wound filled a vanishing wound slot, it would combine with the leftmost lethal wound and become an aggravated one.

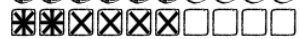
Extended Willpower

True Form grants an additional dot of Composure and an additional dot of Resolve. This means an extra two dots of Willpower, and an extra two points to spend. These do not come without a price, though.

Should the bar contract when those last points have been used, this:



changes to this:



The used Willpower rolls back, marking the first slots with an asterisk. This mark represents mental overexertion, and can only be removed by the fulfillment of a Virtue (one each time a Virtue is upheld), or a Vice for Saintly Devils in “Bad” mode.

This is an extension of the Willpower Health system presented for Dreamers in the first Appendix, as found on page 191.

Bombastic Combat Features

New features of equipment found in certain Aspect Weaponry and Philosophies are explained here, at least in greater detail.

Deadly Wound

We will discuss Deadly Wound first, as it is the simpler mechanic. Attacks with a Deadly Wound rating grant bonus successes in the event of an exceptional success. For example, a lethal attack with Deadly Wound 4 that rolled an exceptional 5 successes would actually inflict 9 lethal wounds; 5 from the attack roll itself and 4 for rolling an exceptional success with a Deadly Wound weapon.

Knock-back

Knock-back combines the features of Knockdown (**World of Darkness** Rulebook, page 168) with the damage of leaping out of a moving car (**World of Darkness** Rulebook, page 143). Attacks with the Knock-back property send their victims tumbling a number of yards equal to its Knock-back rating, at a speed in miles per hour equal to ten times that rating. The prior distance is purely theatric, but the later controls how much damage the tumble inflicts.

A victim sent flying by Knock-back 3 would travel 3 yards, but suffer as if he had fallen 9 yards (every 10 miles per hour translates to 3 yards of damage. So 30 miles per hour makes 9 yards). Any victim of Knock-back may make a single Dexterity + Athletics roll to reduce the damage of this tumble by the successes rolled. Armor also reduces damage from Knock-back by its close rating, so long as it is not biological armor (Using skin as a shield when kissing gravel isn't a good idea).

Reliable

Reliable allows a player to re-roll a number of failed dice equal to its rating. You may roll and re-roll single failed dice selectively until you have rolled as many as the feature's rating, or until there are no more failed dice. For example, in a Reliable 2 roll with four failures, two of the failed dice could be tossed and re-thrown for a second chance of success.

In a Reliable 5 roll with two failures, both of the failed dice could be tossed and re-thrown. Let's say one succeeds and the other fails. That failed die could be thrown again (for a total of 3 throw-backs). Let's say that die does not succeed yet again. The player may recycle it up to two more times (for a total of 5 throw-backs, the Reliable feature's rating).

Sweeping Hit

Sweeping Hit attacks multiple close targets at once, up to its rating. One roll is made,

taking into account the highest hostile defense and lowest hostile close armor rating. Successes inflict equal wounds to all targets. The attack is penalized by the number of targets the aggressor wishes to exclude, but it is improved by the disparity between rating and number of targets.

Let's say an attack is made with Sweep 5 against two hostile targets and an ally. There are three targets total compared to the rating of five, so the attack receives +2. *But*, the aggressor does not want to harm her ally, so the attack suffers -1 to exclude him. The highest defense of all the remaining targets is 3, and the lowest close armor rating is 1, so that comes to -4. The aggressor rolls her dice pool, -3 from all the bonuses and penalties, and inflicts the successes as equal damage to all the remaining targets.

Sticky Grasp

Sticky Grasp is triggered by a grapple attempt. This feature adds its rating as a bonus to the grapple. There's really nothing else to say about it, except that Sticky Grasp's bonus is *not* added to overpower rolls.

Defensive Flourish

The Defensive Flourish feature grants a spontaneous boost to Defense equal to its rating. This boost occurs even if Defense was sacrificed in an earlier action this turn. The boost lasts until the start of the next turn.

Let's say an attack is made with Defensive Flourish 3. The aggressor's Defense is currently 1, having been reduced from an earlier attack. Defensive Flourish adds its rating to that value, bumping it up to 4. The turn comes to a close, and the aggressor's Defense is reset to its base value of 2.

Health Complications

The following two health complications (Trauma and Resistant Injuries) are embellished versions of systems found in other White Wolf products, the prior loosely based on a system found in **Scion** and the

latter similarly derivative of a system found in **Mage the Awakening**. This mention is to credit the source of the inspiration, though, as the complications found in the two previously mentioned titles differ from the versions found in this book. While Trauma may be called a "new affliction" in this book, such referral is in reference to the new World of Darkness, and not to White Wolf products in general.

Trauma

Trauma is a new affliction found both in the Sweat Philosophy and the Venoms Aspect, though you may attach it to certain weaponry as you please. Trauma always has a set rating and lasts until the subject suffers no more lethal wounds or until the scene ends (the first is always true, while the second depends on the source of the trauma and Storyteller discretion).

When someone is suffering from trauma, gut-wrenching pain prohibits them from moving quickly or effectively. If they so much as attempt to apply their defense against an incoming attack, sharp stabbing sensations overcome them and their capacity to act is hindered until next turn (thus Defense must be sacrificed to avoid the penalty). Likewise, moving more than a slow walk (half speed) causes the same reaction. For example, a character suffering Trauma 3 with speed 12 moving more than 6 yards in a turn would be penalized 3 dice to his next action. This penalty is a hold-out, so if a clever player tries to move extra distance and then wait a turn to act, the penalty still applies.

Another interesting thing to note is how trauma stacks. Usually it only sticks as the highest exposure, but if the trauma is from separate sources it becomes cumulative. The highest instance of trauma from an Aspect, a Philosophy, and a Weapon are all added together to give the total trauma rating. A man suffering from "Lock the Pain" 5 (with an exceptional success), struck

with Venoms 3 and then a sword that inflicts Trauma 1 would have a total rating of Trauma 9. If that same man was then struck with a different attack of Venoms 2, his trauma would not change (Venoms 2 is less than Venoms 3, and as both are Aspect-origin they do not stack). Below are more examples of how trauma works.

- A subject suffering Trauma 4 does not move, but refuses to sacrifice his Defense. His next rolled action suffers -4.

- A subject suffering Trauma 2 sacrifices his Defense but moves his full speed. His next rolled action suffers -2.

- A subject suffering Trauma 1 continually applies his Defense, but takes no other actions. His trauma does not expire, but neither does it pile up. Only the next rolled action suffers -1.

- A subject suffering Trauma 5 recovers from all his lethal damage. He will no longer trigger trauma penalties, and if one was pending it is discarded.

- A subject suffering Trauma 1 from an Aspect is struck with Trauma 3 from another Aspect. The subject now suffers Trauma 3.

- A subject suffering Trauma 1 from an Aspect is struck with Trauma 5 from a Philosophy. The subject now suffers Trauma 6, as the philosophy is considered a different source than the Aspect.

- A subject suffering Trauma 3 moves no further than half his speed and sacrifices his Defense. He suffers no penalty to act.

- A subject suffering Trauma 2 moves no further than half his speed, but utilizes both his Defense and a Defensive Flourish attack. He suffers -2 to his next rolled action.

- A subject suffering Trauma 6 moves no further than half his speed, sacrifices his Defense, but uses a Defensive Flourish attack. He suffers no

penalty, but still benefits from the Defense granted by his attack.

Resistant Injuries

Some wounds inflicted or suffered can only be mended by the material world. Resistant wounds cannot be healed by supernatural means (though high levels of the Lust Philosophy may remove the resistant status). Also, they take twice as long to heal as a regular wound of the same type would. For bashing wounds, that's thirty minutes. Resistant lethal wounds take four days to heal, and resistant aggravated wounds take an astounding two weeks.

A resistant wound becomes attached to that wound slot at the time of infliction. Marked with a registered trademark symbol beneath the corresponding slot, the resistant status remains until a wound in that slot has healed naturally. This can be especially frustrating if the resistant status occurs near the left side of the health bar, where the wound is likely to upgrade in severity before it has time to heal.



In this example, the third wound slot has become resistant. To heal that bashing wound takes thirty minutes. If the subject were to suffer additional lethal wounds:



the resistant mark does not move with the bashing wound. In fact, a lethal wound now occupies the resistant slot. It will take four days to heal, and no mysticism save the force of will of a Lust dragon will accelerate this process.

It is important to note that though resistant wounds cannot be healed by supernatural means, their mending can be accelerated by natural ones. This includes the Quick Healer Merit, which can be found in the **World of Darkness** Rulebook on page 113.

Allergy to Jadeite

Believed to be a house for the virtues of mankind, true Chinese hard jade (Jadeite) inflicts grievous, unnatural wounds to the Oroboroi. Some believe this is a built-in secret weapon of the original dragons, designed to punish the Oroboroi when they seized power during the Collapse. Others say the faith poured into the precious stone over the centuries has given it properties of the Dreamtide, and that shared trait is what makes it so effective against draconic flesh. Whatever the case, it is a long-held secret, and the jade statues are the hint.

Any weapon that has touched hard jade (Jadeite) within 9 seconds (3 turns) of striking an Oroboroi inflicts aggravated damage. Weapons that are actually made of Jadeite, though incredibly rare, are even more effective as the wounds they inflict are resistant (such weapons would have to be made from scratch, as dragons are holy creatures in China and a weapon designed to murder them would never be forged). Most would-be dragon-slayers keep a jade trinket to pass over their blades or bullets during the fight. Soft jade (Nephrite) and cheap forgeries that may look like hard jade do not possess the same quality that Jadeite does, and thus have no effect on the damage a weapon inflicts.

Health Penalty Shifts

Prompted by the use of the Sweat or Lust Philosophies, a Health Penalty shift takes all the penalties on the health meter and slides them to the left or to the right, as specified by the Philosophy used. This makes the penalties more severe, or grants bonuses for high states of health. There are restrictions, though.

- Left shifts and Right shifts cancel each other out. Having the penalty shift three steps left and four steps right means it moves only one step right. As four is the larger number, three is subtracted from

it and it determines the direction of the shift.

- The maximum number of steps the penalty can shift is ten. Even if twelve skilled Sweat dragons all applied their Philosophies, the shift would never go further than ten steps to the left. Likewise, if twelve Lust dragons tried to pump euphoria to the maximum, the shift would go no further than ten steps to the right.

- The active bonus is determined by the leftmost open slot. The active penalty is determined by the rightmost filled slot. Never the two shall meet.

- A bonus is only applied when an unmodified slot is pushed off the meter. Though all possible permutations of the Health Penalty Shift will be provided, this information is provided should you wish to modify the system.

- If the -1 penalty reaches the left end of the meter, it will be pushed off in the next step. Likewise, -2, -3, and -4 will vanish as leftward steps progress. The loss of these lower penalties is dependent on how many health slots the meter possesses. If the subject manages to acquire more health slots, these lower penalties are likely to reappear.

- If the +1 bonus reaches the right end of the meter, it will be pushed off in the next step. Likewise, +2, +3, and +4 will vanish as rightward steps progress. The loss of these lower bonuses is also dependent on how many health slots the meter possesses. Though it may seem like it, this really isn't a good thing. Should more health slots appear, these bonuses are likely to reappear.

- The merit Iron Stamina from the **World of Darkness** Rulebook (page 113) may be treated as a rightward Health Penalty Shift, the number of steps being the same as the dots owned in the merit. Obviously this is in place of its wound

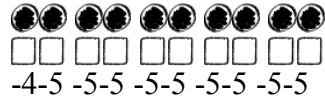
penalty reduction, and mechanically it is identical.

No wound penalty or health bonus will exceed 5. This limit does not apply to situational penalties, which are applied afterward. Again, this information is provided should you wish to modify the system.

Negative Health Penalty Shifts

Left Ten:

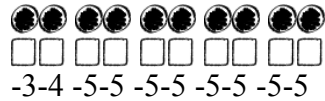
Penalties begin to count up at the thirteenth-to-last health slot. Should the meter prove too short, the difference between the health dots and fourteen forms the starting penalty.



(10 health dots – 14 = -4 in first slot)

Left Nine:

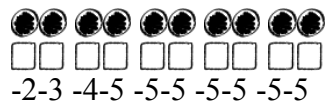
Penalties begin to count up at the twelfth-to-last health slot. Should the meter prove too short, the difference between the health dots and thirteen forms the starting penalty.



(10 health dots – 13 = -3 in first slot)

Left Eight:

Penalties begin to count up at the eleventh-to-last health slot. Should the meter prove too short, the difference between the health dots and twelve forms the starting penalty.



(10 health dots – 12 = -2 in first slot)

Left Seven:

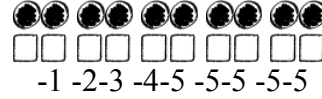
Penalties begin to count up at the tenth-to-last health slot. Should the meter prove too short, the difference between the health dots and eleven forms the starting penalty.



Left Six:

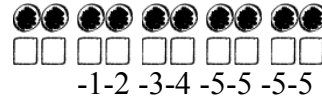
Penalties begin to count up at the ninth-to-last health slot. Should the meter prove too

short, the difference between the health dots and ten forms the starting penalty.



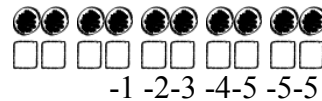
Left Five:

Penalties begin to count up at the eighth-to-last health slot. Should the meter prove too short, the difference between the health dots and nine forms the starting penalty.



Left Four:

Penalties begin to count up at the seventh-to-last health slot. Should the meter prove too short, the difference between the health dots and eight forms the starting penalty.



Left Three:

Penalties begin to count up at the sixth-to-last health slot.



Left Two:

Penalties begin to count up at the fifth-to-last health slot.



Left One:

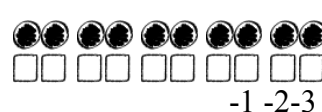
Penalties begin to count up at the fourth-to-last health slot.



Neutral Health Penalty Shift

No Penalty Shift:

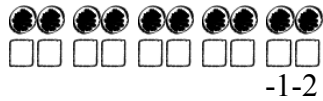
Penalties begin to count up at the third-to-last health slot. This is the standard on which all shifts are based.



Positive Health Penalty Shifts

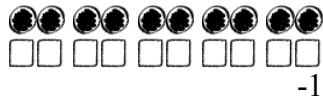
Right One:

Penalties begin to count up at the second-to-last health slot.



Right Two:

A minus one penalty is applied on the final health slot.



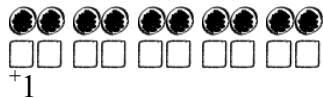
Right Three:

No penalties are applied for severity of wounds.



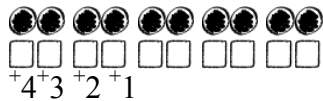
Right Four:

A plus one bonus is granted to the first health slot.



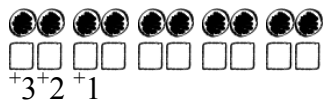
Right Five:

Starting at plus two, bonuses count down to the right until they reach zero.



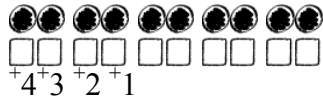
Right Six:

Starting at plus three, bonuses count down to the right until they reach zero.



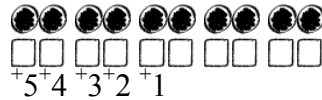
Right Seven:

Starting at plus four, bonuses count down to the right until they reach zero.



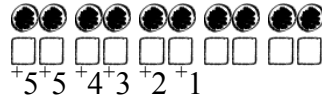
Right Eight:

Starting at plus five, bonuses count down to the right until they reach zero.



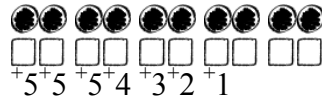
Right Nine:

The first two health slots receive a plus five bonus. Starting at the third slot, these bonuses decrease until they reach zero.



Right Ten:

The first three health slots receive a plus five bonus. Starting at the fourth slot, these bonuses decrease until they reach zero.



Situational Penalties for Wounds

Though explained in a summarized sense in the **World of Darkness** Rulebook, page 124, there is a need to reiterate the situational modifier. In order for generalized and localized pains to work properly, an increased level of care must be taken to keep track of where wounds occur, and how such wounds would influence someone's actions. For the sake of this, the general malaise of a beating is covered by the Health meter penalties, and the localized reduced capacity of an injured or broken extremity is covered by situational modifiers. If a player takes a sharp blow to his arm, levy a penalty against actions involving the arm. Even one fewer die renders the injury a little more real, and likewise makes the Sweat and Lust Philosophies more plausible.

As a good rule of thumb, a limb that has suffered bashing damage (of any amount) should inflict a -1 situational penalty to activities involving that limb. If the wound (or wounds) suffered were lethal, -2 would stand as a better penalty. And if the limb has suffered any kind of aggravated damage, a -3 situational penalty to actions involving its use is not unreasonable.

Anatomy of the Heart

The Oroboroi Heart consists of nine chambers, four of which are atria with the remaining five serving as ventricles. The Oroboroi Heart is essentially two independent Hearts drawing from two separate oxygen sources, connected by a center ventricle which pumps oxygenated blood throughout the body.

The Left Heart, or rather the left four chambers of the Oroboroi Heart, gathers low-oxygen blood (in the dorsal left atrium) from the body and sends it to the lungs (from the dorsal left ventricle), where it becomes high-oxygen blood if the lungs are in use. High-oxygen blood is then received in the Left Heart again (in the ventral left atrium), where it is sent to the center ventricle (from the ventral left ventricle). If the dragon is currently not utilizing her lungs, the low oxygen blood is blocked out of the center ventricle by means of a specialized nervous reaction, instead being redirected to the first atrium of the Right Heart (The ventral right atrium).

The Right Heart, or rather the right four chambers of the Oroboroi Heart, gathers low-oxygen blood just as the Left Heart does (in the ventral right atrium), but sends it off to the gills instead (from the ventral right ventricle), where it becomes high-oxygen blood if the dragon is submerged in water. Returning from the gills, high-oxygen blood (in the dorsal right atrium) is then pumped into the center ventricle (from the dorsal right ventricle). If the dragon is currently not utilizing her gills, the low oxygen blood cannot enter the central ventricle due to the same nervous reaction that occurs in the Left Heart.

Finally, the central ventricle stores oxygenated blood and pumps it throughout the body. It only ever contains oxygenated blood, and will only pump if it has blood in it. Because of this, a dragon that has had both her sources of oxygen cut off will not

have a pulse, as the low-oxygen blood simply flows back and forth between the Left and Right Hearts. Instead, her chest will whirr quietly (and practically undetectably) until she starts breathing again or she dies.

Of course, that's how it would work if a dragon kept her Heart in chest. All of these functions are performed sympathetically with the Heart's beat, so it needn't actually hold the dragon's blood at all. An astral bond connects the body with its blood muscle, and some say a silver string can be seen connecting the two if you look hard enough. Though, it could be jade, too.

An interesting thing to note is the fact that dragons possess both gills and lungs. Due to the design of their Heart, the Oroboroi are capable of life on land or sea without consequence, even if they are not manifesting a single Aspect. There are rumors of dragon cities beneath the waves, but each is colored by legends of horrid creatures that sleep where ocean swallows the light.

The Heart as a Possession

The Heart is a physical entity, usually kept hidden in safety. Those that would steal it for a meal are not the only threat, though they are the largest. For those with the intent to do so, the Heart can be damaged and destroyed.

An Oroboroi Heart is Size 1, with Durability 4. Yes, it's as hard as reinforced steel. It is also immune to heat and fire-based damage. The intent to eat softens this Durability, but those that would destroy it through conventional means best prepare for an ordeal.

The Heart would have Structure 5, that is if it wasn't alive. Instead, it has five health dots. A minimum of an exceptional success is required to inflict harm on the Heart, and its five health slots must be filled with aggravated wounds before it is destroyed. The Heart's health meter is on the character

sheet, and it is healed simultaneously with the dragon's body.

Destroying an Oroboroi Heart is a sin against Ethics 1. No dragon would take the act lightly.

Preternatural Detection

Are Oroboroi aware of each other when they are devoid of Aspects? Usually not. Even to dragon-kind an Oroboroi in mortal form is indistinguishable from any other human. That is, without immediate proximity.

When an Oroboroi gathers near to another being, she can feel the heat in his chest. Mortals give off just a flicker, whereas dragons radiate their Furnace outward. No mundane being can detect this difference, but a dragon can. This can lead to an uncomfortable revelation, especially if one Oroboroi had intended to manipulate the other. When an Oroboroi draws near to a deep one, she feels only a crushing cold where that heat should be.

Staking out Possessions

Sometimes a dragon does not feel her presence is enough to imply ownership, so she sets out to mark her possessions. This must be done in a subtle way, so as to circumvent the laws of humanity.

When a dragon wishes to lay claim to an area or an object, she may brand it with a unique heat signature. By funneling breath into a symbolic object called a "signet", the Oroboroi scours a mark into the surface of an object. From that day forward the marked area becomes a hot-spot, giving off a very subtle wave of heat. It is completely invisible unless infrared vision is utilized, in which case it displays a very intricate initial and insignia. This process is called "Branding".

Dragons are aware of this branding even if they cannot see in infrared light. When one comes across an unfamiliar hot-spot, he knows he's trespassing. If a dragon so chooses, she may brand her own flesh. Such

an act is called "sigil branding", and used as a further means of identifying herself as an Oroboroi. It is usually not recommended, though, as such sigil brands are visible through infrared imaging technology.

Grafts

The Graft Merit (page 47 in Chapter 2) gifts a dragon one of these boney devices, but what are they, exactly? And what do they do?

Creating a Graft involves the death of a mortal, mainly when said mortal touches a heavily cursed item. The Graft itself is comprised of the slain mortal's body, compressed tenfold and shaped in gruesome fashion. It is mystically charged by the former life that created it, and by grasping another object it converts that mysticism into something useful.

The Graft bonds with a host, and withdraws into the body to wait. This is the Graft's hiding state. With nothing to mount, it serves no purpose. It must be attached to an object with a mundane function (though the object itself needn't be mundane). The Graft reaches out of the body to clasp a tool, sometimes at the dragon's call and sometimes of its own volition. This is the Graft's binding state.

During a binding state, a Graft improves its mount's bonus by its rating. A knife that normally does 1 (L) mounted with a 3 dot Graft instead does 4 (L). While a Graft is attached to an object, that object's Durability is doubled. And for every fifteen minutes that pass while the Graft is attached, the object has one lost point of Structure restored.

There are drawbacks, of course. The Graft is a terrifying, boney, encircling mass. And it does not let go on its own. One point of Breath, or one lethal wound, is required to force the Graft back into hiding. If it is separated from the object by some other means (such as disarming or the object's destruction), this price must still be paid.

When a Graft is created, it absorbs a strong emotion from the life that created it (the dying individual, and no, the emotion does not have to be despair). If the dragon feels the Graft's emotion to an immense degree, the mystical bone clasp lunges out and grabs the first mount it can reach.

If a dragon is horrified by her augmenting clasp, or she finds it endangers her secret too much, she may rid herself of her Graft. To do so, she must sacrifice a *dot* of Furnace to incinerate it, and it cannot be gripping anything when she does.

Profession and Provincial Boons

While a school determines a dragon's philosophy, her province flavors it. Despite all her divine traits, the mind is the greatest tool an Oroboroi can utilize. If her Furnace reaches **four dots**, she can project the metaphoric power of her chosen people through sheer force of will, just like when she weaves a Philosophy.

There are many different types of people, but Provincial Boons are based specifically on profession. A dragon who holds province in a courthouse would likely receive the Boons of judgment, as the most prominent regulars of a courthouse are attorneys and judges. Likewise, a dragon who holds province in a prison would likely receive Boons related to crime, as the inmates outnumber the guards. Since there's no way to cover every single profession, a few examples will be provided, followed by guidelines for crafting your own Provincial Boons.

Smoke—Provincial Boon of Criminals

With a province of criminals comes the guile to obscure, and to see through the darkness. The Provincial Boon of Smoke allows a dragon to utilize "Pierce the Fog" and "Smoke Bomb".

Pierce the Fog

For a single point of Willpower, the dragon may roll Wits + Composure + Furnace to

'Pierce the Fog'. She believes herself immune to the occluding effects of darkness, and her force of will makes it so.

Roll Results:

Dramatic Failure: Blinded by her ambition, the dragon cannot utilize her sense of sight for the rest of the scene.

Failure: The dragon's sight is not improved.

Success: Any situational penalties that would be levied against Sight do not trigger against the dragon, until the scene ends. She can see just as well in pitch darkness and dense fog as she sees in daylight.

Exceptional Success: Same as success, but the Willpower is not spent.

Smoke Bomb

For two points of Breath, the dragon may roll Stamina + Resolve + Furnace to drop a 'Smoke Bomb'. Steam erupts from the surface of her body, quickly filling a room and making it *very* difficult to see. For a number of turns dependent on her success, the room is considered blindingly smoky. Unless the dragon has used "Pierce the Fog" this scene, she too is stricken sightless. A dragon can only use "Smoke Bomb" once per scene.

Roll Results:

Dramatic Failure: The smoke forms, but dissipates almost instantly. If she wasn't considered suspicious before, she is now.

Failure: No smoke erupts from the dragon's body.

Success: A thick, scentless fog fills the room by falling off the dragon's body, and lingers for a number of turns equal to the successes rolled. Any within this gray haze are rendered completely blind unless otherwise prepared, and must rely on their other senses to navigate. If the Smoke Bomb is used outdoors, it will disperse one turn sooner.

Exceptional Success: Besides the longer duration of the smoke, there is no additional benefit.

Holy Light—Provincial Boon of the Flock

With a province of highly religious constituents (of any theology) comes a faith in the hereafter. Though dragons know where they go upon death (and have an inkling of where they go after the Last Hand), the Holy Light lets them see and interact with the Twilight on an almost-equal level. The Provincial Boon of Holy Light allows a dragon to utilize “Find the Darkness” and “Forge the Light”.

Find the Darkness

For a single point of Willpower, the dragon may roll Intelligence + Manipulation + Furnace to ‘Find the Darkness’. By her faith she gains the capacity to see objects in both Daylight and Twilight simultaneously, at least until the end of the scene. Despite being aware of Twilight, she cannot interact with it.

Roll Results:

Dramatic Failure: The dragon’s efforts backfire, and all at once she can see *only* Twilight. She bumbles through a perceived world she cannot touch, and a tangible world she cannot see, until the end of the scene.

Failure: The dragon’s sight is not altered.

Success: The dragon sees both the material and the immaterial in her vicinity. She is unable to interact with the immaterial, but she is aware of its presence and can detect Numina.

Exceptional Success: Same as success, but the Willpower is not spent.

Forge the Light

For two points of Breath, the dragon may roll Strength + Stamina + Furnace to bless an item. The item becomes bathed in the warm glow of the dragon’s faith, and until the end of the scene it is capable of interacting with both Daylight and Twilight in equal fashion. If used as a weapon, the damage it inflicts is bashing and it is only capable of rendering others unconscious (In other words, if the final health slot has a

bashing wound, the weapon can no longer deal harm). The item remains blessed until the end of the scene.

Roll Results:

Dramatic Failure: The item is rendered completely ethereal. Unable to interact with the material world, the dragon cannot maintain her grip and the item falls to the ground. It’s lost to the Twilight, so hopefully it wasn’t important.

Failure: The light does not embrace the item, and it remains material only.

Success: The item gains the peculiar trait of being both material and immaterial simultaneously. It’s capable of interacting with the realms invisible (specifically the Twilight) until the end of the scene. If used as a weapon, it deals only bashing damage and cannot kill.

Exceptional Success: In addition to success, one point of Breath is refunded.

Crafting a Provincial Boon

To make your own provincial boons, you need to come up with two powers (one that uses Willpower, and one that uses two Breath) that, while useful separately, are only really practical when used in tandem. The power that uses Willpower should be something internalized, while the power that uses Breath should be something projected. And both powers should have some sort of metaphoric relation to the constituents that bore it. A Provincial Boon of law enforcers should involve shattering lies, or bringing order. A Provincial Boon of fisherman should have something to do with salt, the sea, boats, or fish. Use your imagination, but be sure to keep it reasonable.

Chapter Four: Storytelling and Antagonists

She stood in her apartment, but it was peculiarly barren and devoid of color. It was as if the light had been robbed of it, the diversity stolen away in the night while it was sleeping. Cameron remained the only thing with color... a sore thumb protruding, that's what she was.

"So this is hell, then?"

"Hardly." It was Ivan. He reclined against the far wall of the kitchen, chomping on a chunk of kitchen counter he'd liberated with his claws. "No, this is more like hell's waiting room." Cameron took a step back.

"You're dead."

"Yeah, well so are you. At least for the moment."

"What do you mean?"

"I have to say you're doing better than I did. Two months before your first fatality, that's got to be a new record. At least for our kind."

"Why are you here? What *is* here? Why am *I* here?"

Ivan smiled. "Well, let's just say we've got plenty of time to discuss it."

“Love is friendship that has caught fire”

–Ann Landers

“Hate is distrust subjected to arson. Especially the part where the arsonist sticks around to watch it burn”

-Anonymous

*In order to use this chapter, you'll have to have read the Storytelling chapter in the **World of Darkness** Rulebook. While there's probably sufficient space here to go over all of the topics covered there, that wouldn't be very sporting and frankly the redundancy would be pointless.*

Much of the **Dragon** game is about maintaining and improving a building and its surrounding community. Each player is going to have a province, and it's your job to make that province as real as possible. Your stories will be frail and your group disinterested if you fail to properly develop your setting. Players will not care about hazards to their province if it is flat and uninteresting. So the setting must be built. This chapter provides some starting points for developing your **Dragon** World of Darkness.

The Horror that comes with

Eternity

There are precious few stories in which the dragon is the protagonist. Usually it stands as a monster to be slain, or a mystery to be studied. Sometimes, especially in modern fiction, the dragon stands as a guide to push heroes in the right direction (sometimes violently). The Chinese tradition depicts dragons as unknowable forces of nature. But still, in all of these instances the dragon stands as an ancillary character.

We could delve into the dragon as a political image but considering the groups that use it as their symbol it is best not to dig too deeply there. So what's life like from the dragon's perspective? There's no way to tell without anthropomorphizing the fire-

breathing lizards. Luckily, that's what we've done.

Dragons are durable, powerful, long-lived and feared. The Oroboroi are formerly human and possess a singular frailty like that of precious stones. Though this frailty is not expressly emotional, it is symbolically so. What does it mean to live forever, only to watch everything you love wither, die, and crumble to dust? Now consider this is a consequence of indulging in power. Couple the loneliness and guilt of a life like this with the self-loathing knowledge that *choice* made life that way, and you've got a **Dragon: The Embers** game.

As a storyteller, it's your job to make your players regret their decision in joining the Oroboroi. This is a more delicate process than it sounds. If you snatch away every happiness as it reaches its climax, your players and likewise their characters will become jaded and introverted. Likewise if you allow the players to perfect their environment you marginalize the mood. Ideally you want them to be aware of conclusions but not paranoid of them. Practically, you want to make the players more than uncomfortable but less than miserable.

The lingering threat of Extinction

In the World of Darkness, dragon-kind is on its way out. There's no (or little) hope of propagation and the self-destructive nature of the Oroboroi condition spirals the species towards oblivion. After all, Oroborus cannot survive forever on the meat of its own body.

It's important to keep this truth in mind while you're forging a chronicle. Really, it's a tool with which to beat back the

chaotic impulses of your players. If the threat of personal exposure is not enough to deter someone from waving ‘*Dragon!*’ in the media’s face, then the knowledge that Oroboroi exposure en masse will accelerate their end should act as a nice buffer. If this still doesn’t help, it can be used by others as a justification for removing the dangerous blabbermouth.

The trials of Terror versus Tact

Just as extinction keeps them in line on a grand scale, discretion keeps the Oroboroi from trotting around as giant reptilian monsters. Even if they were completely untouchable, the human that dragon used to be would still have to face some pretty tough facts before unleashing her scaly self.

Be it creation or destruction, a dragon’s features are catalyst to the world. Change is scary both when it is physical and when it is environmental, and the human inside must understand that each time she goes into her True Form she’s going to come out in a different world. New Oroboroi fear losing themselves in the monster, while older Oroboroi fear disbanding back to the charade.

Even if she can resolve herself to the duality of her existence, she cannot force such understanding on the things she cares about. Even domestic animals have difficulty coping when their owners grow half a foot taller and sprout wings, so imagine how more rational beings react. Unpredictably, of course.

So what does this have to do with you, the Storyteller? You need to present your players with these situations; instances where they would both benefit and suffer from using their divinities. This is one of the core struggles in the **Dragon** setting, and you have to make it legitimately difficult to portray the gravity of the decision.

Ego against the Den

Though not a support structure of the game, the Den will serve as the primary means through which your players interact. In this instance (almost ironically) dragons work better in a cross-over than they do in their own setting. There are no creatures greedier and vicariously more untrustworthy than another dragon. If you think of each dragon as its own nation, it becomes clear that friendship is highly unlikely and secrets are the greatest currency.

Interacting dragons live on the uneasy balance of a symbiotic relationship. So long as both continue to benefit on a relatively fair basis, they can collaborate. Should one resort to blackmail or extortion, though, the alliance is likely to end in a bloody mess (along with the destruction of one or both provinces). This is the hard way out.

Slights that lead to vicious massacres may seem like a lot of fun, but they’re really more chaotic than engrossing. While you want to make your players nervous around each other, you should bait them away from this ‘bad end’. The best way to do so is by rendering the Den’s union co-dependent. The characters will be less adamant about slights and backstabs if the alliance provides them with something their province cannot run without. Maybe one player lays claim to the local legislature and another to a hospital. The latter must stay in alliance with the former to cover up insurance ‘shufflings’ for their poorer patients, and the former must stay in alliance with the latter to get the good hospital PR for her politicians. Both would suffer extreme setbacks if they broke their Den, and so both would have to be rational when faced with the gluttony and ego of the other.

Dens also help to maintain a larger zone of authority. If a dragon makes alliances her influence will be able to cover a greater area... giving her a greater sense of accomplishment and magnanimity. Dens

also allow a dragon struggling with a particularly stubborn or dangerous problem to ask for help; something that would be construed as a sign of weakness in other situations. The Den creates the closest approximation to trust an Oroboroi can hope to achieve in her fear-wrought eternity. It's worth the effort.

Methods as a means of maintaining a Den

Co-dependency need not be as specific as that. There are certain areas where one Oroboroi excels over another, and planning each chapter to the talents of a particular player can help keep them from ripping each other apart.

Each method's suit of Aspects is designed for a specific set of tasks, but that's not the only thing a method has going for it. One focal attribute gets both a dot and maximum value boost, and that can have quite an influence on the areas where an Oroboroi excels.

When it comes to Slayers, their main function is to inflict death on others. The Suit of Blades is specifically designed to be a blender of complementing weaponry. It's likely the Den's Slayer is the strongest dragon in the group, but muscles aren't just for maiming. While a Slayer's main function will be combat, she should also take the lead in tasks that require tireless effort or massive strength. Perhaps a collapsed metro station is full of innocent mortals with only one hour of air left. The Den's Slayer is the one to turn to.

Finders are bookworms. The Spades Suit is particularly effective in studying, understanding, and then tracking down pretty much anything. Beyond the hound-dog position, though, a Finder has the capacity to be ferociously intelligent. While research and retrieval will be the two primary focuses of a Finder-intensive chapter, they also stand out as great thinkers and planners. If something needs to be done,

the Finder can probably come up with the best way to do it.

Challengers are difficult. Their major strength is humbling others with their superior talent, and for this reason their main purpose is spite. Challengers do have other functions in a Den, however, the biggest of which serving as bait. Whereas a Finder locates the Den's enemies with research, a Challenger lures them out with her arrogance and prowess. Their knack for Wits also complements this function.

The Suit of Clubs is largely acidic, set up to expose weakness. Most of its applications are defensive, so a Trickster is at her best when helping the Den retreat from an angered enemy. This is not the Trickster's only talent, though, and you should be wary of falling into a rut with it. A Trickster has the capacity to be the Den's best manipulator, and likewise she should be very good at convincing others to do things they shouldn't. Setting up situations where a Trickster can twist someone else into working for her can lead to some very interesting vendetta stories.

Inheritors are socialites, hands down. The Suit of Goblets is all about confidence, and grants the traits necessary to safely inject the dragon into any social situation with at least some modicum of authority. They stand as great investigators because of this, having easy access to privileged information and possible suspects. Their talents are not exclusive to external endeavors, though. When the Den needs someone to stand up and take charge, an Inheritor is the one to turn to. Versatile enough to be competent as a fighter, researcher, intimidator or saboteur, an Inheritor can relate with the other Oroboroi of her Den and possesses (or rather should possess) the Presence necessary to get them to listen. You can get a lot of story for your effort by creating internal conflicts that the Inheritor has to resolve, if only temporarily.

These suggestions assume you have five players of five separate methods. Don't worry if your game is not the case. Throwing in opportunities for an 'absent' method to shine is a great way to get your players to panic and cooperate.

The Power of the Province

For the most part world travel is a matter of soul-searching, when an Oroboroi needs to find some perspective in her eternity. It's a very personal matter, though... one that doesn't play out well when you have more than one player. For this reason your geographic setting will usually be static, with the provinces of your players being the focal points. For most Oroboroi the province gives their longevity meaning. It stands as their most beloved possession and they loathe traveling far from it for long.

The foundation of your chronicle should be an area where people congregate. A city, farming community, or suburb are all good building points, but a twelve-member municipality in the middle of nowhere is not a likely place for even a single dragon to settle, let alone three to five.

Control Freak versus Pacifist

You may have an image of your desired city in your head. *History* may have an image of that city. But your players are going to be the ones living in it. While the urge to control every single detail is crushingly powerful, players will struggle creating characters to fit in a setting, rather than a setting to fit their characters. For this reason, it is best to let each player design their own province, including some of the locals that live/work/pass through there.

This doesn't mean you're helpless in terms of defining the setting. Far from it, the unclaimed spaces between each province fall into your jurisdiction. Also, as storyteller you have final say what is acceptable and what is a stretch when players pitch province ideas. Any

constituent concepts a player gives you will be yours to flesh out and exploit. It is not a passive process.

The point to be made is this. Don't just sit back and approve everything. Players may be joking or trying to get a leg up, and such haphazard decision making could harm your theme or plot. Still, that doesn't give you permission to be a dictator. Letting the players contribute to the setting builds attachment which makes them more engrossed in their characters. That means fewer distractions at the game table and higher-quality stories.

Locations and Locals

Destinations and the people that occupy them will color your story. Details are important, but need not be immediately evident. No, it is best to introduce things softly and then season them with description as your story probes them. With a location you need only start with the public areas. Atmosphere and vague layout will suffice until players express an interest, and then you can embellish as necessary. Contacts are even easier, you need only come up with a name and basic mannerism to start, and the character can then develop as he interacts with the world around him. In both cases this means performing the first step of character creation, that of producing a concept.

At this initial step assigning attributes and skills is not necessary, but keeping good notes is. You should record the names of anyone the players encounter (just in case the character becomes important later) and you should record the basic facts about a location (its general size, the time it takes to travel there from a specific location, the kind of people that gather there, etc.). Keeping good notes can prevent you from being put on the spot by smart-ass players, and will give you directions to take later on in the chronicle.

Any incidental character can become an important character. Assign attributes as they are necessary for rolling, and what started as a five-second improvisation can become a recurring figure.

Antagonists

Antagonists are the inversion of contacts, for while a contact can be rolled up into a complex character over time, an antagonist is unraveled. They need to start complex in order to have somewhere to go. After all, there's little difference between a flat character and a dead character. Players should feel a sense of accomplishment when they defeat an antagonist, and they won't if he is underdeveloped.

Making antagonists hurts, because a large amount of effort goes into a character that is doomed to perish. If you do it correctly, though, your group will talk about the villain long after his time in the sun has passed. *That* is what it's about, and the payoff is way better than the sting of losing a developed character.

Though it would seem that you could roll up an incidental character and then unravel them, you risk transforming your players into meta-gamers. If they catch on that each character who grinds up a back-story becomes a villain, they will interfere before you get the chance. You do *not* want this to happen, so for the most part it is better for an antagonist to start off complex. At least more-so than the run-of-the-mill background character.

Allegro, Maestro!

Dragon is a game about eternity, which means occasionally eternity has to come quickly. Some conflicts take years to culture, and sometimes time is the only tool available to bring misery. For this reason we discuss the time slip as a plot device and storytelling tool.

A time slip is just that, an application of dramatic timing in which the frame of play

advances significantly. Weeks, months, or years may be made to fly past at your whim, but there are precautions to be taken.

1- Only Time Slip when it is Necessary: Often a time slip is prompted when one player has died and must wait weeks for her resurrection. While you may sometimes present her with a temporary character to play (someone from another player's province... possibly a Dragon-Born or Bonded.), the significant amount of time away from her own character can be disheartening. On the other hand, if time moves too quickly players will become disoriented and thus disconnected from the setting. For this reason, more than one time slip in a single chronicle is highly discouraged.

2- Prepare for a Time Slip and define it accordingly: Time slips should not be made on the fly. Things happen in the years you fast-forward through; settings and characters and provinces change by events you choose to skip. This is a fact you cannot gloss over, or the time slip will be surreal (and likewise pointless). The player's characters will be likewise influenced by these differences, so you should explain to each player how their world has changed and take record of their responses accordingly. For this reason, it is best to perform a time slip between game sessions, to generate opportunity to collect this feedback.

3- Don't exit a Time Slip in times of Bounty: When a time slip ends, a significant issue should prompt the end. There's no reason to stop sprinting through the years if nothing interesting is going to happen. Impending catastrophe is necessary to slow time down again. Occasionally a time slip is necessary to steal happiness from a particular character, and likewise the time slip should not end until *after* it's too late to interfere. A little rude, yes, but effective nonetheless.

No Running Starts

Like the Oroboroi themselves, your chronicles should start slowly and work up a pace until they are ready to be earth-shattering. Much of this book assumes at least moderate competence as a storyteller, but in this case it's back to basics. After all, **Dragon** is not only a new take on the **World of Darkness** system, it's a new setting too. The idea is to think small, build skill with the book, and then move on to bigger endeavors when experience is sufficient to fuel them.

When starting, it is best to plan a series of mutually exclusive events, triggered by players who travel to particular locations or speak to particular people. This creates the illusion that you are prepared for any contingency, and will keep your players more reasonable in their pursuits. It will also discourage them from splitting up on more than a local scale, which is desirable to prevent lag in more complex sessions.

Once your feet are wet, you can start interconnecting planned events, making them happen in sequence instead of haphazardly. Not only does this unlock the possibility of investigation, it increases the potential complexity a story may have.

Finally, after improvisation has become second nature, you may start planning events that the players can miss. Events that have repercussions; events that you can use to torture inattentive players. This is the ideal.

Sample Stories

Provided here are some sample plots that you can use to get started. Each is capable of standing alone but can be combined to craft an even more engrossing tale. Most are vague enough to fit in any setting.

- **A Gift of Karma?:** A peculiar bit of antiquity comes up at auction and evidence suggests it is an Attra. No matter how hard any of the players try, the thing

goes home with some hapless mogul. What does this guy know about this object? Is he a threat? And damn, *I* want it. The characters, plagued by their own superstitions, feel an inescapable drive to liberate this artifact from the buyer. But even if they get it, how will they decide who gets to keep it?

- **Here Comes the Leper:** A new Oroboroi has arrived in the city, but she's a Scholar of the Five Evils. This dragon has set up shop in one of the most forsaken corners of town and is really starting to turn the place around. Her charity is infectious, but... what if she turns? Or rather, when she turns, what's going to happen, and who'll feel the repercussions? The characters must decide whether to judge the Five Evils Scholar prematurely as an act of damage control, or sit back and hope to put out the fires when she explodes.

- **Pilot Light for Sale:** Several missing persons have turned up dead within the past couple months. They each suffered similar knife-like stabs and slashes, and each had their heart removed post-mortem. Though the organ theft implies a hapless mortal trying to get his hands on an Oroboroi Heart, cursory study shows that these people were not actually Oroboroi. Also, the injuries imply that a *dragon* was the murderer. What connects these victims? Why would a dragon (even a depraved one) mutilate their bodies after murdering them? It soon becomes clear that the victims were all children of Oroboroi, and their hearts each had an extra chamber. Is the killer trying to build a new Heart? What follows is a story of hope exacted through bloody murder. When the Den learns the truth, which side will they take?

- **Faustian Whisper:** One of the Den's Oroboroi is approached by a deep one, demanding payment for a favor her

Antecedent had requested. It gives her twenty-four hours to say goodbye to her liver, after which it will come to collect. What do the characters do when they find out about this demand? Will they submit to the desires of this mysterious beast, or try to fight it off? Do any of the other Den members have secret requests to posit to the deep one?

- **Castle under Fire:** There's a new dragon in town, and he wants the province of one of the Den's Oroboroi. His attacks are subtle at first, manipulating the constituents into harming the province or its caretaker. If he does not get his way quickly, though, he will resort to all-out violence. How will the characters react to open warfare? Will the other Oroboroi leave the dragon under attack hanging in the wind, or will they come to her aid? What will they do if the newcomer wins?

- **Where each head falls, the Ground will Rot:** A Hydra has come to the city and is wreaking havoc on everything. Even if it's a foe the Den can best, it won't stay dead until they deal with its Heart. What do the characters do when pressured to eliminate another Oroboroi? Will they resort to cannibalism if it means ridding their kingdom of a monster? This is not the only problem. The Hydra has no concern for the well-being of dragon-kind as a whole, and thus it leaves a massive trail of evidence. How will the characters clean up this mess without being exposed?

- **Shh! She's Sleeping Now:** A recent media hit has wrought the minds of hundreds of people in the city, and as a result their fears have given birth to a powerful Nightmare. While it does not attack the dragons directly, the Nightmare reaps havoc upon their subjects and likewise harms the province. People are driven to mental breakdowns by loss of sleep and fear of mental illness. So the question becomes not whether to fight this

beast but how to fight this beast. Do the characters wage political warfare against the film that birthed the monster? Do they try to inspire their constituents to fight their fear and conquer their dreams? Or do they risk death by confronting the monster directly in the Dreamtide?

- **A Thirst for the Waters of Life:** A cell of Bloody Chalice Knights have come to the city, drawn by rumors that 'giant crocodiles' are living in the sewers. These half-immortal dragon-slayers rip through the characters' provinces, using kidnapping and torture to find the whereabouts of their most-prized blood source. How do the characters face off against a foe like this? Can they come to terms with killing these murderers, or are they crippled by the fact that they are, effectively, no different?

Antagonists

It's not safe at the top of the world, no matter how invigorating the experience may be. There are forces whose sole purpose is to knock a man from the top, and there are others from below who vulgarly claw at power, eager to forge their own peak.

Many would kill the Oroboroi, but they can be divided into three categories: Those that hunt for Heart, Those that hunt for Blood, and Those that hunt for Flesh. Likewise, the beings that would deal harm to the Divine Rulers may be divided up in terms of their ignorance to the dragon condition. Some attack out of fear of the unknown, while others know just enough to recognize a dragon's death is profitable. Those that understand the Oroboroi completely strike to kill forever, to claim the spoils of the Last Hand and take their position at the top.

Mortals

Without a doubt, mortals are the greatest threat to the well-being of an Oroboroi. They possess within them the powers of

blackmail and congregation, being perfectly capable of rallying thousands under the banner of fear and simply trample... well, anything. Many dragons mistakenly think of humans as tools, inanimate until needed and perfectly willing to submit to labor's punishments. While it is true mortals can be useful, it is foolish and elitist to think they are mindless drones. Sometimes violence is the best means of teaching this lesson.

Would-Be Slayer

Quote: "Uzi? Check. Limbic mines? Check. Jade locket? Can't forget that."

Background: Mortals aware of the Oroboroi condition are often pulled into the clammy grasp of Greed by the heartstrings. Or maybe it's a matter of fear evolving to self-righteous hatred? Or maybe it's about bagging the strongest, most cunning big game on the planet. Whatever the reason, they are driven to kill the Oroboroi.

Description: When in public, would-be slayers are perfectly average. Maybe they're a touch muscular, and perhaps they have some burn wounds or joint braces. These injuries come from training and not actual combat with a dragon, though, as such battle would likely result in fatal injuries. Once a slayer is ready for battle, though, he'll strap on as much weaponry as he can carry and don whatever gear he can get his hands on (an effort to protect against the fire and the claws is almost standard, and common weapons include knives, guns, and spears...well, pitchforks anyway, as they're easier to acquire in suburbia). The smart ones pack jadeite as well, so that its touch rips through the dragon's nigh-impregnable skin.

Storytelling Hints: A simple would-be slayer is arrogant enough to believe he can kill a dragon, and so he attacks directly and works alone. The smart ones (who are by far the most dangerous, and whose statistics are provided here) know that direct combat is simply suicide, and so they bring friends

to act as decoys. Intelligent would-be slayers lure the Oroboroi onto their own turf, where traps await to disorient the beast. Jade-blessed assaults follow.

Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 2, Resolve 2, Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3, Presence 1, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Skills: Investigation 2, Occult 2, Athletics 1, Brawl 2, Drive 1, Firearms 2, Larceny 1, Stealth 1, Survival 1, Weaponry 2, Intimidation 1, Persuasion 2, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Danger Sense, Kung Fu 3, Iron Stamina 2

Willpower: 5

Morality: 5

Virtue: Prudence

Vice: Envy

Health: 8

Initiative: 5

Defense: 2

Speed: 10

Weapons:

Type	Damage	Range	Clip	Pool
Heavy Pistol	3 (L)	30/60/120	7+1	4
Knife	1(L)	Close	-	5
Brass Knuckles	1(B)	Close	-	5

Armor:

Type	Rating	Defense Penalty
Thick Clothes	1/0	0

Knight of the Bloody Chalice

Quote: [Hungry eyes hovering over a sinister smile]

Background: Membership in the Knights is something of a contagious condition. There are two ways to join. One is to interrupt an abduction in progress, and the other is to be abducted. Knights collect and imprison sacrifices for months, waiting for the optimum time of exsanguination. When it comes time for the ritual, these captives are lined up and forced to watch.

Blood-Bathing Ritual

Knights of the Bloody Chalice enjoy a taste of immortality at the expense of others. By killing a victim through bloodletting and then coating their skin, they are restored to a state of youth and imbued with both massive physical strength and a fantastic visage (at least compared to before).

This comes with a cost, as all things do (and that cost is more than the sin of murder). The knight's life-force is consumed by the blood, and he wears it as a coat around himself. It is impervious until the blood wears off (a year for most beings, five for dragon's blood), at which point it rips and frays. The knight will begin to disfigure, age quickly, and physically weaken when the blood wears off. He has one month to bathe again before he rots to dust.

Those that declare loyalty (out of fear, usually) are allowed to live, themselves dipped into the vat of blood.

Description: Knights of the Bloody Chalice are nauseatingly modern. They recognize that settling on a style will lock them in a particular time period, hindering them greatly when it comes time to hunt again. Despite their fashion sense, though, they are socially small and they do not leave a big impression. Such anonymity is harrowing, but useful for their cause. Whenever a knight draws near to his quarry, he begins to sweat blood.

Storytelling Hints: A knight should be introduced from the shadows of the province. Maybe whispers of a peculiar stranger make their way to the Oroboroi. Even if she becomes aware of the blood-bather, he will not reveal himself until he's ready to capture. Make your players paranoid, and when they go looking spring the knight's trap.

Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 4, Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4, Presence 2, Manipulation 4, Composure 3

Skills: Investigation 4, Occult 4, Athletics 2, Larceny 3, Stealth 2, Survival 2, Weaponry 4, Firearms 1, Intimidation 2, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Eidetic Memory, Holistic Awareness, Unseen Sense (Bleed near Supernaturalism), Strong Lungs, Iron Stamina 3, Striking Looks 2, Quick Healer, Barfly, Resources 1, Status 3 (Knights of the Bloody Chalice),

Willpower: 7

Morality: 2

Virtue: Fortitude

Vice: Gluttony

Health: 9

Initiative: 6

Defense: 3

Speed: 12

Weapons:

Type	Damage	Range	Clip	Pool
Shotgun	4(L) [9-Again]	20/40/ 80	5+1	4
Jadeite Kris	1(A)	Close	-	8
Jadeite Sword	3(A)	Close	-	8

Armor:

Type	Rating	Defense Penalty
Flak Jacket	2/3 [Bulletproof]	-1

Dragons

There are plenty of reasons for two Oroboroi to wage war. In a way, they are too far above everything else to throw punches. Nothing is as climactic as a clash of two dragons. A big thing to face in any dragon conflict is the narcissism. Each Oroboroi thinks she is the greatest thing since sliced bread, and that confidence is her downfall when faced with another... greatest thing.

Lust Trickster

Quote: "Come little broken bird. Your wounds need easing, and my body needs pleasing."

Background: Broken by the actions she took to become a member of the Oroboroi, this dragon rejects her state of being and thusly aligns herself with the Scholars of the Five Evils. Haunted by the passion that drove her to kill, she runs scared from it until it catches her and then she dives in

buck naked, engulfed by the rush she'd forgotten.

Description: Like all Oroboroi the appearance of a Lust Trickster is dependent on the Aspects she chooses to manifest. Usually she is indistinguishable from an ordinary mortal, though she might carry herself with a higher level of entitlement than most. Something's off about her, though. Maybe her veins show a little too clearly. Maybe her burger seems to waste away after she takes a bite. Something's definitely... off. When in True Form, a Lust Trickster looks sickly and shifty. Somebody with brain damage might mistake her for some Caribbean reptile, but most recognize her for what she is, a gigantic prehistoric monster.

Storytelling Hints: It's best to introduce any Scholar of the Five Evils in "Good" mode and allow them to build trust. In groups that have no Saintry Devil players this Oroboroi will seem refreshingly benevolent in a world full of back-stabbers. This is not the case, though; as soon as they get comfortable their demeanor turns. Using a Saintry Devil dragon faces your players with the force of their own power. If that isn't enough, they have to decide how to retaliate against someone they'd considered a friend.

The following character details are suggested for the Trickster's "Bad" mode. Use your own best judgment for "Good" mode, as she will not likely be an antagonist.

Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 2, Resolve 2, Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3, Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

Skills: Investigation 2, Occult 2, Athletics 1, Brawl 2, Drive 1, Firearms 2, Larceny 1, Stealth 1, Survival 1, Weaponry 2, Intimidation 1, Persuasion 2, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 2

Merits: Hoard 2, Lair 2 (small, minimally secure apartment), Resources 3

Furnace: 1

Breath: 8

Willpower: 4

Ethics: 6

Virtue: Charity

Vice: Gluttony

Health: 8

Initiative: 4

Defense: 2

Speed: 9 (Fly 5 x Wings)

Philosophies: Lust 2

Aspects: Inferno 2, Wings 1, Wall Climber 1, Whipping Tail 1, Weaponry: Palm Pike 2, Acidic Saliva 1, Envoy's Passage 2

Provincial Boons: -

Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Pool
Fireball	Inferno(A)	10 + 2 x Inferno/ 20 + 4 x Inferno/ 40 + 8 x Inferno	5
Spit	Acidic Saliva (Structure)	4/8/12	4
Spike Cannon	2(L)	25/50/100	6

Weapons:

Type	Damage	Range	Clip	Pool
Baseball Bat	2(B)	Close	-	4

Armor:

Type	Rating	Defense Penalty
Clothes	0/0	0

Heart-Eater

Quote: "Okay. I'm stopping now. This is *definitely* the last time. Promise"

Background: A Heart-Eater, or one of the Devourers as they are called by their people, is an Oroboroi who fuels his Furnace with the Hearts of other dragons. He starts innocently enough, consuming out of need to quickly dispatch a dangerous foe (usually a Hydra), but the resulting surge of power is highly addicting, and soon he craves more.

Description: A Heart-Eater is nonchalant, because attention will draw other dragons and when they learn of his sins he's toast. He's finicky and easily excited, though, stirred on by his guilty conscience. Rarely a Heart-Eater will play friendly to gain access to another dragon's Heart, but he cannot maintain the charade for long.

Storytelling Hints: A Heart-Eater is most effective as a short-term threat. Too flighty to maintain a province, a Heart-Eater drifts from place to place seeking his next fix. Use a Heart-Eater if you need to get rid of an Oroboroi in the city (usually an NPC). As an added bonus, it should scare the characters into being more paranoid with their own Hearts, as well as tempt them with what could come from sin.

Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 1, Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4, Presence 1, Manipulation 4, Composure 1

Skills: Academics 2, Computers 3, Investigation 3, Medicine 4, Occult 5, Politics 2, Larceny 4, Stealth 3, Survival 3, Expression 1, Persuasion 3, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 4

Merits: Graft 3, Hoard 4, Direction Sense, Fresh Start, Quick Draw, Quick Healer, Resources 4

Furnace: 4

Breath: 13

Willpower: 2

Ethics: 3

Virtue: Charity

Vice: Gluttony

Health: 9

Initiative: 5

Defense: 4

Speed: 12, Climb 9 + Wall Climber, Burrow 7 + Burrowing Body

Philosophies: Ash 2, Blood 5

Aspects: Scales 2, Weaponry: Horns 3, (Horns, Tail Scythe, Razor Fan), Fire Skin 2, Whipping Tail 2, Colossal Beast 2, Burrowing Body 2, Wall Climber 2, Trail of

Scales 1, Weaponry: Tail Scythe 1, Weaponry: Razor Fan 2

Provincial Boons: - [The Heart-Eater does not have a province]

Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Pool
Horns	Yards Charged [Max +4] (L)	Close	2
Tail Scythe	2 (L)	Close	4
Razor Fan	-1 (L)	Close	4

Armor:

Type	Rating	Defense Penalty
Thin Kevlar	1/2	0
Scales	2/2 bio	0

Hydra

Quote: [Incomprehensible Hiss]

Background: An Oroboroi with no respect for the state of dragonhood slips down the slopes of the Code and, deranged and fractured, becomes a raving monster. Torture, mass murder, and treachery lead to this end, and none would say a Hydra has not earned his suffering.

Description: This Hydra is always in True Form (as most of them are), with a slew of conflicting heads barking and biting at each other. Most of the time it sleeps somewhere in the wilderness, sustained on the spoils of its rampages. It is incapable of coherent thought, though some of the heads will ramble on depending on the derangements it has accrued on its journey to the bottom. Maddeningly senseless and immovable, the Hydra is little more than a bloody typhoon of death.

Storytelling Hints: Fighting a Hydra head-on is suicide. Still, there's little other choice when it rips through the city causing havoc and raising questions. A Hydra broadcasts the Oroboroi condition, and even

Extra Heads

This Hydra has five heads, which means it has four dots in the as of yet undefined “Extra Heads” Aspect. This Aspect grants the same benefits (and hindrances) that an Antecedent Passenger’s extra head does, though in greater degree.

Each extra head gives a +1 bonus to Inferno and Bite attacks. Bite attacks gain the Short Burst property [another +1 and some spread out wounds, but little more] and Inferno attacks gain the Long Burst property [+3 with the ability to simultaneously attack a wide range of enemies].

Likewise, the extra heads get to act on their own, each granting an additional instant action at the Hydra’s Initiative Mod in the turn order. They don’t usually cooperate, though, so these extra actions are often spent going back and forth or nipping at each other.

if the beast can be slain a great deal of clean-up is necessary to stop a witch-hunt. Awareness is the first coffin-nail for dragon-kind, and once it’s in it’s a bitch to pull out. The best way to fight a Hydra is to find its Heart and, well... you figure it out.

Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 3, Resolve 2, Strength 6, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4, Presence 5, Manipulation 2, Composure 1

[*True Form:* Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 3, Strength 7, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5, Presence 6, Manipulation 3, Composure 2]

Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 4, Firearms 2, Survival 2, Weaponry 5, Intimidation 3

Merits: Hoard 5, Danger Sense, Fast Reflexes 2, Fleet of Foot 3, Iron Stamina 3, Quick Healer, Resources 5

Furnace: 6

Breath: 10

Willpower: 5 [Includes +2 from True Form]

Code: 0

Virtue: -

Vice: Greed, Gluttony

Health: 16 [Includes +2 from True Form, +1 from Degree of Divinity, and +4 from Colossal Beast]

Initiative: 11 [Includes +2 from True Form, +2 from Fast Reflexes, and +2 from Flight of the King]

Defense: 5 [Includes +1 for True Form and +1 for Flight of the King]

Speed: 20 [Includes +2 from True Form, and +3 from Fleet of Foot], Fly 24 [Includes True Form and Wings bonuses]

Philosophies: -

Aspects: Inferno 2, Scales 4, Wings 2, Weaponry: Claws 6, Weaponry: Horns 5, Colossal Beast 4, Draconic Strength 3, Weaponry: Wrist Blade 4, Impassioned

Effort 3, Skill of the Gods 1 (Brawl), Vile Blood 1, Flight of the King 3, Extra Heads 4

Degree of Divinity: 5 [+1 Size, +7 (L) bite, +2 to Weaponry Aspects, +1 (A) to Inferno]

Provincial Boons: - [The Hydra is incapable of owning a province]

Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Pool
Fireball	3 (A) [Long Burst]	14/28/ 56	11
Wrist Blade	5 (L) [Deadly 4]	Close	14
Bite	7 (L) [Short Burst]	Close	13
Horns	Yards Charged [Max +5] (L) [Knock-back 5]	Close	11
Claw	4 (L) [Pierce 6]	Close	13

Armor:

Type	Rating	Defense Penalty
Scales	2/2 bio [Bulletproof]	0

Deep Ones

To the Oroboroi deep ones pose the greatest mystery. What are they? Where do they come from? Why do they make bargains in exchange for organs? Some believe the deep ones came from the furthest depths of the Dreamtime, originating as Nightmares but piercing the Miasma and becoming flesh and blood. That would explain their similarities to the denizens of the astral stretches. But still, they have a lot in common with dragons as well. Could that

state be some sort of infectious corruption? What happens when a dragon makes too many bargains?

Corrupting Bargainer

Quote: [In a low, vibrating mumble] “Do you accept the terms?”

Background: There’s little to be had here. The Bargainer is so utterly foreign no background exists to be found. It’s as if it was erased... or it never existed at all.

Description: The Corrupting Bargainer, like all deep ones, is completely aquatic. It’s as if various oceanic traits were blended and then wrapped around the shape of a man. Some have wings, some have claws, and some have fins. In fact, pretty much the only thing they have in common is their deadpan demeanor. Often overlooked is the stench, though—a deep one smells of wet rot and muck. A bucket of leaves left in the rain for a month simulates the odor pretty effectively.

Storytelling Hints: When a character becomes unappreciative of what she has, it’s time for a visit from the Corrupting Bargainer. The deep one will make an enticing offer (from curing a dying loved one to killing an unstoppable foe, or even a gift of personal power). This offer does not come without a price, though, which must be paid in both emotion and body parts. To make players learn to appreciate what they have, or to make them suffer for their greed, use a Corrupting Bargainer.

Attributes: Power 2, Finesse 6, Resistance 3

Skills: Academics 1, Brawl 2, Persuasion 4

Merits: Fresh Start

Cold: 2

Dread: 10

Willpower: 5

Code: 3

Virtue: Justice

Vice: Wrath

Health: 8

Initiative: 9

Defense: 6

Speed: 18

Aspects: Vile Blood 5, Regal Stature 3, Beguiling Mandibles 4

Attacks:

Type	Damage	Range	Pool
Brawl	0 (B)	Close	8

Armor:

Type	Rating	Defense Penalty
Tough	1/1 bio	0
Hide	[Bulletproof]	

Experience

Experience works practically identically to the system found in the **World of Darkness** Rulebook, pages 216 and 217. The Oroboroi, just like the mortals they used to be, learn from mistakes and experiences and are bettered for it.

Experience is used to increase Attributes, Skills, Merits, and supernatural abilities. As Storyteller you will award experience to your players, who spend it to improve their characters in all sorts of ways. Though this a character becomes more talented in her endeavors and is thus transformed from rookie to veteran.

Aspects and the Dreamtide Denizens

Both Deep Ones and Dreamtide Nightmares use the three-attribute system instead of the nine-attribute system (The Power/Finesse/Resistance system is detailed in the **World of Darkness** Rulebook, page 208). Deep Ones on occasion have access to Aspects. When either of these entities needs to utilize an ability that requires Essence or Breath, they spend Dread instead. Aspects that increase one particular attribute instead increase the category (a deep one using Horde of Knowledge increases Power by the dots owned, instead of Intelligence by the points manifest).

One other thing ... though deep ones can own Aspects, they are incapable of turning them on and off. More detail on this subject will be provided in the first Appendix.

Awarding Experience

Experience is given out by the Storyteller at the end of each session. Giving low experience will frustrate your players, but giving copious amounts will marginalize achievements and cause a meteoric rise to power. As a general rule, you should give no fewer than two experience per character per session, but no more than seven. If you choose to give bonus experience to a “most valuable player” each night, make sure it evens out in the end. After all, it’s never a good thing to play favorites with friends.

Spending Experience Points

Each player should keep record the amount of experience they’ve spent, the amount they haven’t spent, and the total amount tendered. Experience can be spent at the end of each story (not each chapter) or immediately after a time-slip, but such expenditures should make logical sense in the context of the character’s actions. A police officer that was grilling suspects all story should not

spend experience on Dexterity, though Presence or Manipulation would be okay.

Philosophies follow this rule, but Aspects do not. As an Oroboroi defines what she believes to be the dragon condition, her imagination shapes her divinities to fit. In order to purchase a new Aspect, a dragon need only imagine it and practice. Existing Aspects are similarly improved. Getting the idea in the dragon’s head, though... *that’s* where the justification comes in. Each method provides it own unique way of discovering new traits, and researching a new Aspect is good filler for a time-slip.

The experience cost of almost everything is a number of points times the new total, but you knew that already. What you may not have known is that *all* dots have to be purchased in sequence, even those they may not provide a benefit. If you wanted to acquire the “Danger Sense” mental Merit, you’d have to pay for the first dot (2 experience) before you could purchase the second dot (4 experience, for a total of 6). No benefit is accrued for owning Danger Sense 1, though.

As for Merits, they’re mostly unchanged for this template. Obviously a Merit cannot be purchased if the prerequisites are not met, and some Merits are limited to character creation. One in particular, the “Graft” Merit, warrants further explanation. Though the Merit itself states that Grafts must be acquired through play, that doesn’t mean they’re free. Each Graft is different and it takes time to attune. To use a Graft acquired in play, a character must purchase the Merit dots in sequence until they match the rating of said Graft. Worse yet, they must do so for each Graft individually. For example, if an Oroboroi acquired both a rank 2 Graft and a rank 3 Graft, he would have to buy dots 1 and 2 of the Graft Merit to use the prior and dots 1, 2, and 3 to use the latter.

Experience Costs

Trait	Cost
Attribute	New dots x 5
Skill	New dots x 3
Skill Specialty	3
Common Aspect	New dots x 5
Method Aspect	New dots x 5
Non-Method Aspect	New dots x 6
Primary Philosophy	New dots x 6
Ancillary Philosophy	New dots x 7
Merit	New dots x 2
Furnace	New dots x 8
Ethics	New dots x 3
Willpower	8

Appendix One: The Dreamtide

Cameron held her hand softly, so as not to pierce her with the claws. This girl's dream would be the battleground on which Black Ben would fall.

Ten feet tall, his fingers were double-barrel shotguns and his smile stretched over his eyes; the teeth polished bits of shrapnel. His feet were mangled bloody messes, peppered with shards of broken glass. As he laughed, a storm thundered behind him.

Some derelict psychopath had birthed this fear in the children, and their active imaginations immortalized him as a monster. But Cameron would end the nightmares, and little Julia was the key.

"A Dreamer is one who can only find his way by moonlight, and his punishment is that he sees the dawn before the rest of the world."

—Oscar Wilde

The Dreamtide

The sensory input of a day is processed during rapid-eye movement sleep, organized into patterns based on relatable stimulus. The seemingly random result is both confusing and whimsical; a world tied together by emotions and connections instead of logic and matter. What if this world was real... an entire landscape crafted by the subconscious of living beings? It is.

In the World of Darkness there is more fear than faith, more hatred than love, and more damnation than retribution. The terrified and deranged minds of both man and beast craft a dark and dangerous sleeping world. Those that know the darker truths around them contribute still more to this group nightmare. The result is a rumor sea; fact and myth twisted gnarled in darkness.

Supposedly the first, original dragons descended from the depths of the Dreamtide and pierced the static of the subconscious, becoming real. Whether or not they started there or were born of superstition is really no more than a matter of semantics. The Oroboroi, being imperfect facsimiles of the first dragons, may also travel to and from the Dreamtide, though the journey is not as significant as that of their predecessors. For the modern dragon this astral expanse is a place where one can explore their divinities without fear of exposure. Still, the place is not safe. The sickest and most dangerous beings an imagination can muster live in the Dreamtide, and dragons do not enjoy the protection a Dreamer does.

A comfort of the Dreamtide's shallows (or perhaps a hazard) that is not extended to its Pandemonium depths is that of the Dreamers. Each region of the astral reaches plays out the events of one being's sleep. Depending on the Dreamer in question, and whether or not they are aware that they are dreaming, this landscape can change violently at the drop of a pin. Lucid Dreamers are the most powerful entity in the Dreamtide, though, and if a dragon can ally herself with one her visit will be far more pleasant.

The Miasma

The Dreamtide stands on a different frequency of existence that most can only tune into while they sleep. Around it is a mental static that keeps others from intruding. Perhaps each being's frequency is incompatible with another's, or maybe it's a form of defense against the things beyond, but the Miasma keeps the Dreamtide at bay.

Rapid Eye Movement sleep organizes thoughts in a pattern, which makes them compatible with the waking world. This array cuts through the static, generating a blurry glimpse into the sleeping world for those with sense to see it. And the Oroboroi are the ones with that capacity. They can tune the static to clear, and once it's so they are free to step through.

From the material side entering the Dreamtide is phenomenally easy. An Oroboroi need only creep up on a sleeper and attune herself with the thinned Miasma's frequency, and she may leap body and all into the dream. Said sleeper needn't even be human, as animals too create doorways into the astral expanses.

Getting out, however, is a far different story. Some anchored object stands out where the dragon arrives, and serves as the silver tether that holds the Miasma open. She must familiarize herself with this object if she hopes to leave the Dreamtide, as finding another weakness in the Miasma is both time-consuming and dangerous. Worse, if the Dreamer awakens while she's still inside said anchor is destroyed, leaving no choice but to seek out another (possibly by entering another Dreamer's landscape, therein lies the danger).

Reclining Whispers

The Dreamtide is a difficult place to describe, mostly because it changes not only night by night but minute by minute. Geography has a parallel in this place, but the puzzle pieces fall together in different ways. In the real world spatial connections hold locations together. An upstairs hallway has three doors, one of which leads to a daughter's bedroom. Using this door will lead into the room, and using it again will return to the hallway (as is logical). In the Dreamtide, this is not the case. Perhaps when the door opens it leads to a burn ward. If you turn around, the door no longer returns to the hallway but instead opens out into a cemetery. In this way fears and memories are preserved, given new significance as a form of maintenance.

The coloration of these places tells more than their material world counterparts. Everything is dulled... almost numb in its drab cloak. Only things of great significance enjoy the benefit of vivid color, and this stands a sort of syntax highlighting of what the Dreamer considers important.

Equally peculiar are what passes for human beings. The most simplistic of these mankind imitators is the Doll (as the Oroboroï call it). A Doll serves

minimal purpose in the course of the dream, and is limited to a small set of stimulus-prompted responses. This gives them a disturbing feel of artificiality, and depending on the mood of the dream it can render them quite dangerous. More complex than the Doll but still limited in its interactive capabilities is the Carrion. A Carrion contains within it all the capabilities of the person it is portraying, but it is perpetually locked in a single emotion. Carrion stand as mixers and antagonists in a standard nightmare, supporting the Dreamer's opinions with sweeping preconceptions. Finally, there are Dreamtide copies of a person that are indistinguishable from the real thing, though they may be idealized. Called Anima, these entities are always pivotal to the dream, and likely the Dreamer as well.

Not all dreams are created equal. Some are shockingly vivid while others are almost cartoons. Also important to note is that some dreams are not human. An animal's dream, while outwardly simplistic, can be intensely complicated (particularly considering the barrier of language). The dreams of supernatural beings, especially those of Vampires, are viciously turbulent and should be described as grimly as possible. Remember to let your imagination run wild when you portray journeys through the Dreamtide, as logic does not apply here.

Wading the Thicker Waters

As a dragon moves further from the locus of an individual dream, the tide begins to blur with that of similar dreamscapes. This is where dreams overlap. The thicker waters, as it were. Dreamers can almost never come to this place, as it exists at the boundary of their unconsciousness and they remain in the

center. Likewise, Nightmares rarely traverse the thicker waters because there is no prey to be had. It is simply the transition between dreams. In many ways, the thicker waters are the safest place to stay in the Dreamtide, if an extended stay is necessary.

If a Nightmare were to exist here, it would be more powerful than in an individual dreamscape. The redundancy of existing in two minds simultaneously sees to that. On the reverse, however, should a Dreamer play so small a roll in his own dream that he can traverse here he is diminished in his capacity, as the dream is no longer his. This is also what causes those rare instances of shared dreaming (unless a shared dream is initiated, read further in this appendix).

Some clever dragons use the thicker waters as a means of safely evading pursuers, entering the Dreamtide through one sleeper, traveling through the overlapping region into another dream, and then exiting the Dreamtide by means of another sleeper. It's certainly a gamble, though, as two adjacent dreams may have no material correlation at all.

Pandemonium

Though individual shallows of the sleeping world are vastly different, the thicker waters begin to blend common themes, and Pandemonium is where all the elements are amalgamated. A twisted maze of buildings, trees, storms, and faces, there truly is no place more frightening than this in the life of an Oroboroi. Only Nightmares live here, and only the ones strong enough to make the journey. In order to cross the barrier between individual dreams and the world subconscious, an idea must have multiple points of origin. By merging copies of itself a Nightmare becomes memorable enough to become myth, and is thus empowered like a god. Dragons

practically never have a good reason to travel to Pandemonium, but may go there anyways out of curiosity or disorientation. Those that do are most likely killed by the denizens of this place... or worse.

If an Oroboroi wishes to traverse to a completely different type of dream, she must first step out into Pandemonium. It's like the great outdoors between two houses in a neighborhood. Because of the difficulty differentiating overlapping dreams in the thicker waters, some dragons pass through Pandemonium instead when attempting the aforementioned flight. Those that do have real courage, facing the chaos like that.

The End of a Dream

When a Dreamer awakens, the dream ends for him. But what does that mean for someone walking around inside his head? What happens to a dragon that is still inside when a dream ends?

Any dream-walkers receive one subtle warning that the Dreamer has begun to stir; the walls of the Dreamtide vibrate briefly as if snoring. What follows is a cold wind that sweeps through the dreamscape paralyzing (almost) everything it touches. Doors can be heard locking, Dolls and Carrion freeze in place, Anima fall asleep, and the world fades to black and white.

The most terrible part? When this vibration reaches the anchor, the opening in the Miasma closes, trapping the dragon within the Dreamtide until she can find another weakness to exploit. She may wait in the silenced dreamscape until the next night when she gets another opportunity to escape, but such action is not recommended. Nightmares that were not resolved before the awakening still linger, and are not rendered inactive like the actors of a

Dreamer's imagination. No... if these monsters are still alive they're likely wandering the dark hallways searching for ways to become *real*. So she can fight for her life, or she can flee.

Making the Best of It

The thought has probably occurred to you by now... "Why bother with such a dangerous place?" That's easy to answer. Because it's profitable. Not only does the Dreamtide provide an Oroboroi with a place to evade nighttime pursuers for a few hours, it also allows her to harvest resources for the material world. Though a gap in the Miasma is only big enough for one person (or dragon, rather), she can still carry most anything back with her. Also, the Dreamtide is the only battleground on which dragons may clash with the horrors of their constituents. Part of owning a province is maintaining the well-being of its inhabitants, and part of that is putting an end to their fears. Plus, anything edible from the Dreamtide is worth triple calories.

A Dreamer twists his environment with his imagination, and can even make something out of nothing. That sort of power is breath-taking, but pointless in a world where everyone else can do the same. As a dragon is only a visitor in any given dream, she cannot herself take advantage of these bizarre physics. Still, she can exploit the talents of others. Anything not nailed down to the dreamscape can be absconded back through the miasma to the real world. Though any fantastic powers an item may possess fade away as it passes through the Miasma, the item still maintains all of its mundane properties (and machines still function as intended, provided the design is somewhat sound). In this way the Dreamtide is both a source of cheap raw material and a font

for invention... provided the dragon can convince or trick a Dreamer into helping her.

Likewise, when peace of mind is shattered by Nightmares a dragon has two options. She can either struggle in the waking world to rally the spirits of her constituents and dispel their fears... or she can invite herself into their dreams and squash them herself. The second option is more preferable, mainly because it's much faster. And easier, in a way. Instead of a test of endurance and resolve, the dragon simply battles the symbolic manifestation and **poof**, no more problem. Constituents are likely to be suspicious of such a change in their concerns, though, as it is with all things in the World of Darkness.

Dreamers

Mortals may not be able to physically travel to the Dreamtide, but that doesn't keep them out. They are the world-builders, god in chains. Even if the Dreamer is not lucid, his powers of influence warp the dreamscape around him each and every second. If the Dreamer's lucid... well, there's nothing he can't do.

Hysterical Dreamers

Hysterical Dreamers do not know they are asleep. They make up the majority of the sleeping population. Hysterical Dreamers are a Nightmare's primary source of Dread, and they're usually the ones a dragon dream-dives to rescue.

Hysterical Dreamers have no conscious powers, though their mood colors the scenery. Hysterical Dreamers suffer a -2 to resist all Nightmare-instigated Numina, and they wake up if their Willpower is depleted (full of lethal). Other than that, they're pretty much ordinary.

There is one thing a Hysteric Dreamer can do. When he lays his faith upon something... anything in his dreamscape, it is improved by the lower of his Resolve or Composure until such time as he can no longer see it or it leaves his dreamscape.

Lucid Dreamers

Lucid Dreamers (rare as they may be) are those that are aware that they are asleep, though they may not know the dangers the Dreamtide actually poses. Lucid Dreamers are a threat to both the Nightmares and the dream-walking dragons, so it's usually best to put them back in the dark. Lucid Dreamers make great swords if one is trying to do away with the other, though.

As soon as a Dreamer becomes Lucid, their attributes are converted to Power, Finesse, and Resistance (by taking the highest of each from Mental, Physical, and Social), and those three attributes jump by 3. A Lucid Dreamer has infinite speed within the boundaries of his dreamscape, and thus may teleport anywhere at any second. He can also fly, shoot lightning from his fingertips, materialize anything from nothing, or pretty much do whatever he wants. A Lucid Dreamer that is injured (if he can be injured, which is a big if) does not awaken when his Willpower is depleted (filled with lethal). No, he risks madness if he suffers too much harm. Still, he can always end the dream if he gets in trouble.

Lucid Dreamers work pretty much like ghosts do in the **World of Darkness** Rulebook, as explained in that work starting on page 208. They're more flexible, though, in that they can do pretty much anything they want. Attacks a Lucid Dreamer throws can have any range, hit any number of targets, and use any combination of

attribute and skill. Their only real weakness is perception; a Lucid Dreamer may be powerful but he is not omniscient. The point is simple: don't try to fight a Lucid Dreamer. Storytelling in the dreamscape of a Lucid Dreamer should be about cat and mouse, not doing battle with god.

It is important to note that Lucid Dreamers that kill dragons in their dreamscape do not get the pleasure of dealing the Final Hand. Part of dying fragments the dragon, and a piece becomes embedded in the Dreamer until such time as it can be expunged (by any means, but usually violent vomiting). Returned to Daylight, resurrection can begin.

Obviously, all powers bestowed upon Lucid Dreamers vanish when said Dreamer awakens. It is important to note that the Dreamer's "Health" advantage is not altered by her change in attributes (though for a Ghost its Corpus rating would be). Power bestowed by self-awareness in a dream-state does not translate back to the Daylight world, and such alterations would not be necessary anyway (as Willpower is used for Health for a Dreamer).

Though a Lucid Dreamer is quite powerful, his creation is still limited by the threat of waking. Power limits the strength of his creations, Finesse limits the frequency in a scene and Resistance limits how much they can be improved.

Objects

Any object created by a lucid Dreamer has a sum of utility and structure equal to his power rating. A lucid Dreamer of Power 6 attempting to spawn a disintegrator pistol with a +4 rating would have two points left to spend on structure, to be placed in Size or Durability as he wishes. Objects created

Real-World Corrosion

Objects created by a lucid Dreamer have the potential to be startlingly powerful. For this reason dragons are often compelled to snatch them and carry them back through the Miasma. Such objects suffer greatly in their transfer to matter, though. Any dream item carried through the Miasma immediately suffers a permanent -3 to its utility and loses three points of structure (to be deducted from Size and Durability at Storyteller discretion). If this reduction would render the utility or structure of an object negative, it falls apart upon reaching the Daylight world.

The Corrosion of reality does not simply apply to the object's form. Certain limitations that were irrelevant in the Dreamtide fall into place once standard physics apply. The range of a dream-crafted firearm becomes that of a contemporary weapon. Objects that are blatantly fantastic tend to seize up and cease to function, and upon disassembly prove unfounded and non-functional. Only the residual touch of the astral allows these creative leaps to continue functioning, and as the sand clears from a Dreamer's eyes they become what they really should have been: an impossible myth.

in this fashion must always have at least one point of structure.

A Lucid Dreamer may willingly sacrifice one point of Willpower (suffer a lethal wound, see below) to add his Resistance rating to either category as a lump sum (either increasing utility or increasing structure). In the above example, if the Lucid Dreamer had a Resistance rating of 5 he could spend a point of Willpower to add 5 to structure, placing four more points in Durability and another in Size.

Spontaneous object creations and modifications are limited to the lucid Dreamer's Finesse rating. If in the above example the lucid Dreamer possessed a Finesse of 4, he would be able to craft two more items, or enhance the disintegrator two more times. This Finesse limitation is refreshed at the start of each Dreamtide scene.

Beasts

Forging a creature from nothing is a little more taxing, and requires a payment of Willpower up front. When a lucid Dreamer crafts a beast, it begins as a Nightmare with dots spread across its attributes equal to the Dreamer's Power rating, and Dread equal to the Dreamer's Finesse. Spending more Willpower gives the Dreamer dots to spend on his Nightmare's three attributes, equal to his own Resistance rating. Doing so also increases its Size by 5.

Unlike objects, the only limit on the creation and enhancement of a Nightmare is the amount of Willpower available. Still, there is no guarantee this monstrosity will not turn on the Dreamer.

Fear-Based Damage, the Willpower Meter

A Dreamer does not physically travel to the Dreamtide, so his body is not at risk. Instead, his mind suffers the damage he receives in this place. The Dreamer's Willpower meter effectively becomes his Health meter (working in the same fashion as explained in the **World of Darkness** Rulebook, starting on page 171) with a few exceptions.

- **With Regard to Bashing Wounds:** There is no effect for having a Willpower meter filled with bashing wounds, unlike the Health meter which places one at risk of unconsciousness. Bashing wounds heal at a faster rate as well, one per minute instead of one every fifteen minutes. This healing rate is static, and thus not controlled by Merits that accelerate healing or by supernatural powers which do the same. Dreamers may also suffer a few bashing wounds when they're frightened (usually one point of bashing for every point of Dread a Nightmare reaps).

All bashing wounds on the Willpower meter are removed each time Vice is

fulfilled or a Virtue is upheld. This does not interfere with the removal of lethal or aggravated wounds either, so indulging a Vice removes from the Willpower meter all bashing wounds and one lethal wound, while indulging in a Virtue clears the meter of all bashing and lethal wounds (plus one aggravated one).

- **With Regard to Lethal Wounds:** When the Willpower meter has filled with lethal wounds, a hysteric Dreamer abruptly awakens in a panicked sweat. Lucid Dreamers may remain in their dreamscape, but they must roll Resistance each turn to fight awakening (this roll is reflexive and suffers no penalty, just as the roll to stay conscious works in the **World of Darkness** Rulebook, as detailed on page 173). There's no risk of bleeding out, though.

Lethal wounds to the Willpower meter do not heal by themselves. No, they are removed one at a time if Vice is indulged, or all at once if Virtue is upheld. Any other recovery of Willpower also removes lethal wounds on a one-for-one basis. Dreamers suffer a lethal wound to their Willpower meter whenever they spend Willpower, just like in the Daylight world.

- **With Regard to Aggravated Wounds:** When the Willpower meter has filled with aggravated wounds, the Dreamer is immediately forced to awaken and suffers a derangement until such time as his meter is completely emptied. Aggravated wounds on the Willpower meter can only be removed one at a time, by upholding the Dreamer's Virtue. Unfortunately Vices have no effect on so severe a mental injury.

These rules may be translated to the daylight world, used to reflect mental injury. In fact, both 'degrees of divinity' and 'True Form' utilize this system.

Shared Dreaming

A rarely practiced but still possible mortal excursion into the Dreamtide is that of shared dreaming. A group of determined individuals gather in a circle (much like a séance) and simultaneously drift into unconsciousness—under the direction of a lead Dreamer that is. The Lead Dreamer generates the dreamscape, though other Dreamers may contribute to its scenery or trappings as they please.

Just like a private dreamscape, inflicting enough harm to a group Dreamer will force him to consciousness. The dream will not end, however, until the Lead Dreamer awakens. Also, group Dreamers are much more likely to be

Insomnia?

As written it may appear that those depleted of Willpower are incapable of sleeping. That is not the case. They are *actually* rendered unable to dream... a state whose implications are not immediately apparent. Willpower-drained individuals may still fall asleep, but such sleep is not comfortable or refreshing. They awaken drowsy and sore, and if such a state of mental exhaustion continues they may struggle with short-term memory loss or even depression. There are no mechanics for this downbeat, but it gives additional directions for character development to follow.

Comatose Dreamers

Comatose Dreamers, both Hysteric and Lucid, are incapable of awakening on their own. Well... not incapable, but it's quite unlikely. Usually that makes them a safe bet when a dragon goes dream-walking, as there is virtually no risk of getting trapped. Coma victims can be brought around, though, just as any other Dreamer is awakened. If a dragon (or more likely, a Nightmare) so desired, a comatose patient could simply be beaten back into consciousness. That doesn't mean their bodies are still capable of handling conscious mental activity, but they awaken nevertheless.

lucid and travel in a pack. Usually dragons will stay away from such dreams unless they are assured the group of dreamers is acting in their interest. Sometimes dragons encourage such shared dreaming to overcome a subconscious trauma, secretly intending to use them as weapons against a Dreamtide Nightmare. Dragons may also act as Lead Dreamers, but only if they enter the Dreamtide through sleep (rather than through the Miasma).

Shared Dreams initiated in this way exist in the shallows, not the thicker waters. Even if a dreamer were to reach the thicker waters, they would never be able to breach that final barrier into Pandemonium. It is simply impossible for a human mind to exist there.

Nightmares

Anima, Carrion, or even Dolls that taste the fear of others slowly grow in power, mutating into a twisted reflection of their original purpose and growing hungry for more. These are Material Nightmares, those originating from the mortal mind (bestial or otherwise). Material Nightmares are excellent at terrorizing the Dreamers that spawned them, but that's where they stop. It is terror, not death, that fuels them. Without the Dreamer to remember them and provide them a food source, they cease to exist.

Such is not the case for Nightmares born of the world's slumber. Pandemonium Nightmares—those that flicker into existence in the deepest stretches of the Dreamtide—are ruthless maws that live to eat and eat to live. Pandemonium Nightmares don't care how much damage they cause, as they can always retreat to the depths if they begin to fade. Sturdy enough to survive the death of one believer, they actually use slaughter to fuel their legend.

Either way, Nightmares are strictly solitary, and may even fight each other for a meal (that meal being the fear of a Dreamer). Though these two types of beings are quite different in motivation, their composition is practically identical. Nightmares are significantly foreign when compared to the Daylight world, and thus they use a tweaked version of the Ghost Rules as found in the **World of Darkness** Rulebook, page 208.

Power

Instead of Intelligence, Strength, or Presence, a Nightmare has only Power. An imposing person in the Daylight produces an Anima that is likewise domineering. As said Anima evolves into a full-blown Nightmare its imposing nature bleeds into other extremities. Suddenly the imposing man is more mentally acute, and his meager muscles unfurl as mountain movers. As this Anima becomes a Nightmare, its Presence (the highest Power attribute) simply becomes Power.

Finesse

Wits, Dexterity, and Manipulation compress into simply Finesse where a Nightmare is concerned. Something that was initially clever likewise becomes hard to pin down, and quite skilled at the art of twisting others. Nightmares do not have to distinguish between Mental, Physical, and Social, because subconsciously their prowess in one translates to all three.

Resistance

Resolve, Stamina, and Composure for a Nightmare is all summed up in Resistance. Again this is because the preconception of talent bleeds over into the other categories, rendering them more potent. Resistance controls how difficult a Nightmare is to harm.

Skills and Merits

A break from the rules of traditional Ghosts, Nightmares do need skills to act without penalty. This is a weakness of the Nightmare, who mustn't work around an anchor or some restriction to act. When a Nightmare performs a task that requires a Skill, it uses the most appropriate of its three Attributes with that Skill. Attempting to act unskilled causes the expected penalties.

Nightmares have no use for Merits.

Dread

Unlike deep ones (which will be covered later in this appendix) Nightmares do not have an independent well-being stat. Instead they both maintain their corporeal form and fuel their wicked Numina with the same energy: Dread.

Dread is spent to activate Numina. Dread is lost when a Nightmare suffers damage. Whenever the emotion of fear is directed towards a Nightmare, an appropriate amount of Dread is replenished. A Nightmare gains one Dread each night it is included in the plot of a dream. When one Nightmare devours another, it gains an amount of Dread equal to the devoured Nightmare's Resistance. A Nightmare can garner Dread no other way.

There is a limit to how much Dread a Nightmare can keep, and that limit is the sum total of its three attributes. Since Nightmares have no limits on how high each of those attributes can climb, this creates the potential of a massive pool of Dread. Acceptable, since it fluctuates so much.

Everything in the Dreamtide is comprised of Astra. That means objects interact in the same way they do in the Material world (as they are made of the same creation components). Any damage a Nightmare suffers subtracts from its Dread, so in this case the type of

damage does not matter. The amount a Nightmare can inflict, however, is dependent on how much Dread it spends on an action. Normally its attacks are bashing, but if one Dread is used (even if it's just the activation cost of a Numina) the attack becomes lethal. Five Dread makes a Nightmare's attack inflict aggravated damage (and the activation cost of Numina counts towards this).

Besides this, combat functions as normal. In situations where Strength + a Skill would be rolled, the Nightmare instead rolls Power + that same Skill. Likewise, instead of Dexterity + a Skill the Nightmare would roll Finesse + that same Skill. If a Nightmare is ever completely depleted of its Dread, it is forgotten and ceases to exist.

Other Traits

Nightmares do not have Willpower. Though they maintain the illusion of sentience, they lack the actual mental impact to push themselves to extremes. Instances where Willpower would be removed instead drain Dread, and a Nightmare obviously cannot expend Willpower for bonuses to Resistance or a roll.

Initiative is Finesse + Resistance. Defense is the higher of Power or Finesse. Speed is Power + Finesse, + Power again. Size is totally variable, but usually falls between 3 and 20. Since Size plays no part in calculating any of the Nightmare's traits, it really doesn't matter all that much (though it may play into the whole stature of fear thing).

Numina

Just like ghosts, Nightmares have access to otherworldly mysticisms called Numina. They could technically use the same ones presented in the **World of Darkness** book, though Nightmares have little if any interest in the waking world (so it's unlikely).

- **London Bridge is Falling:**

The Nightmare can meld with the dreamscape, sinking its limbs into the walls or floor and then resurfacing them elsewhere. When the limbs re-emerge, they do so as skeletal fingers, bloody swords, tendrils of darkness, or some other horrific extension. For one Dread, the Nightmare can attack anything within ten times its Power in yards (such attacks are made with Power + Brawl or Power + Weaponry, depending on the type of weapon formed). For an extra two Dread, the Nightmare also grapples its target (provided the attack hits).

- **False Awakening:** The Nightmare reaches down to the floor and rips out a chunk. Abruptly the dream takes a sharp turn, one which causes the Dreamer to believe he's woken. The dreamscape suddenly converts to that of the Dreamer's favored place of slumber, with both the Nightmare and any other entities flung to nearby hiding places. This Numen costs five Dread, and renders any Lucid Dreamer Hysterical. It likewise

confuses any dragon that was in the dreamscape at the time of the False Awakening. A dragon subjected to the False Awakening Numen must pass a reflexive Wits + Composure roll to recognize she is still in the Dreamtime (note that False Awakening removes any twists the Mutation Numen inflicts).

- **Dream Maiming:** Made famous by a particular series of popular movies, Dream Maiming allows a Nightmare to inflict actual injuries on a Dreamer's body. For two Dread the Nightmare can attack a Dreamer's Health instead of his Willpower. These injuries, being material and not mental, cannot be healed while the Dreamer is sleeping and thus carry over into the real world. Material Nightmares use this Numen to frighten, not kill. Pandemonium Nightmares are not so conservative, though, and likely cause plenty of waking world problems.

- **Powerless:** The Nightmare has such an imposing presence it disarms any attacks directed toward it. Guns break before they can fire, bullets melt, swords break, knives shatter, bones fracture, or *something* stops the attack from inflicting harm. Heaven help someone who tries to attack the Nightmare unarmed. For one Dread the Nightmare completely neutralizes an incoming attack that it saw coming.

Gone for Good?

The wording is a little dodgy regarding the destruction of a Nightmare. While the Nightmare itself is destroyed, the Dreamer who created it forgets why he was afraid. This works for the most part when it comes to Material Nightmares, but for those that descended from Pandemonium.... Pandemonium Nightmares are known to a large population, and even if they are destroyed in the Dreamtime the sources that made them renowned are likely to craft them anew.

For example, a popular scary movie features a slasher villain that births a Pandemonium Nightmare. A Den of dragons enters the Dreamtime to deal with this monster, but constituents in their provinces just see the movie again and create a new one. Even if the movie loses its pizzazz from viewer burnout, *somebody* will get the idea to film a remake.

This makes it virtually impossible to eliminate a Pandemonium Nightmare, which is why it's better to discourage re-exposure from the material side after dealing with it in the Dreamtime.

If Willpower was used for the attack, the weapon used ceases to function but the determined Dreamer (or dragon) still manages to land a blow (it breaks after a single use, instead of right before a single use). Nightmares cannot use this Numen on attacks they don't expect.

- **Mutation:** With one touch the Nightmare twists the flesh of another within the Dreamtide. The Nightmare spends three Dread and rolls Finesse + Craft. Successes both inflict damage and a penalty to act with the manipulated body-part on a one-to-one basis. There may be some benefit to said alteration, but it is gravely outweighed by the penalties. Besides that, there's always the horrifying implications of watching a hand expel all its bones (or twist into a hammer, or whatever else you can imagine). Hysterical Dreamers cannot escape this horror while they are dreaming, though they are saved when they awaken. Lucid Dreamers can simply undo the mutation, though any injury they suffered may linger. Dragons, having traveled to the Dreamtide with their physical body, take such horrid disfigurements home with them when they pass back through the Miasma. To remove the mutation, a dragon must spend five Breath over the course of two days. Such Breath need not be spent all at once, but all five points have to be paid by the end of the second day, and the Breath cannot be spent for dual purpose.

- **Ford the Miasma:** Only possessed by the most powerful of Pandemonium Nightmares, this Numen allows the beast to phase through the Miasma and enter the real world. Such action costs three Dread each turn for three turns, and if the

Nightmare is interrupted during this process it must start over. If said Nightmare manages to finish fording the Miasma, it becomes ensnared in Twilight (though it need not worry about anchors) until something drags it back to the Dreamtide. To become material and interact directly with the waking world, it must purchase minutes with Dread (so a Nightmare spending three Dread could become material for three minutes). Such purchases can be made at a whim, and most Nightmares prefer to pop in briefly and then retreat to the Twilight to gorge on the resulting terror. Needless to say, a Nightmare loose in the Daylight is a huge problem.

This list is by no means all-encompassing. Think of it more as a guideline from which to design your own Nightmare Numina. Each Nightmare should be uniquely terrifying, and part of building that terror is pouring love into the Nightmare creation process. Be sure to consider the Nightmare's appearance as you choose and create Numina for it. Many of these horrors incorporate their weaponry into their form, breaking it away to strike at their terror victims.

Deep Ones

Difficult to categorize, "Deep One" is a catch-all term for the emotion-dead bargainers of the world. Supernaturally speaking, all deep ones are at least partially aquatic, reek of the rotten and silent sea, and emit a crushing cold from their core. Like Nightmares a deep one does not play well with others. They lack the rage to actually fight over a bargainer, so the weaker simply bows out to the stronger. Deep Ones do not attack first, ever.

It is uncertain what creates a deep one, or if they're even from the

Dreamtide. Something about them seems suspiciously... simple, as if their true purpose was concealed beneath independently insignificant undertakings. Deep Ones also use a tweaked version of the Ghost Rules as found in the **World of Darkness** Rulebook, page 208.

Attributes

Intelligence, Strength, and Presence are rolled up into Power. Wits, Dexterity, and Manipulation all become Finesse. Resolve, Stamina, and Composure become Resistance. It is unclear why the deep ones are this way, though it gives evidence they're of some ethereal origin.

Skills and Merits

Deep Ones, just like mortals and Oroboroi, have need of both Skills and Merits. When a deep one performs a task that requires a Skill, it uses the most appropriate of its three attributes with that skill. Attempting to act unskilled causes the expected penalties.

Deep Ones tend to Physical Merits, though they are not restricted to them. Deep Ones cannot take the Status Merit. Any Merits a deep one holds function as written.

Dread and Cold

Deep Ones use Dread solely as a source of fuel... to restore themselves and power their Aspects. A deep one's Dread works exactly as a dragon's Breath (See Chapter 3) save how it is acquired. Deep Ones garner Dread from only one source: the organs of a bargainer. The specifics of this are discussed later in this chapter.

Deep Ones can only hold so much Dread, and they can only use so much in a given turn. In this way they are quite different from Nightmares and actually closer to the Oroboroi. Deep Ones have a supernatural trait called "Cold" that

works practically identically to Furnace (save the Calorie requirements). Compare the deep one's "Cold" rating to the corresponding "Furnace" rating in the chart on page 45 to find out how much Dread it can hold, and how much it can use at once. Cold would also be used for Aspect manifestation... that is if deep ones could disband their Aspects.

Health

Deep Ones have a physical body, and thus possess flesh to be torn and bones to be broken. A deep one's Health rating is Resistance + Size, with Size usually being 5. Deep Ones may suffer resistant wounds, trauma, health penalty shifts, and all three types of damage. If they have been bruised, they risk falling unconscious. If they are stabbed repeatedly they bleed. If they are maimed enough, they die. They are no different than mortals or dragons in this way.

Other Traits

Though deep ones may not be able to feel emotion, they are not stifled in their capacity to commit to a goal. Willpower is the greatest difference between a deep one and a Nightmare. To find a deep one's Willpower, take Power + Resistance. Deep Ones may spend and recover Willpower in the same manner any Oroboroi would.

Initiative is Finesse + Resistance. Defense is the higher of Power or Finesse. Speed is Power + Finesse + 5. Size is 5. Deep Ones can learn and incorporate any Aspects an Oroboroi can use, as well as a few exclusive to them and their bargains.

Aspects

The primary feature that makes a deep one supernatural is also the main commonality they share with the Oroboroi: they have and utilize Aspects.

In places where Furnace is demanded a deep one instead uses Cold. Where Breath is required, Dread is used instead. In situations where an attribute would be increased, the deep one's equivalent attribute is instead increased (for example, an increase in Strength would be applied to the deep one's Power). Deep Ones cannot disband Aspects; they are always manifested. Despite using Aspects, deep ones are not entitled to True Form or degrees of divinity.

Deep Ones may own and use any of the Aspects presented in Chapter 2. In addition, there are certain features that are exclusive to these beings; features an Oroboroi may only acquire through bargaining.

Luminescent Lure

The silent dark of the deep ocean is a hunter's paradise, trapping the weak in a velvet net of black. Terrified and helpless they swim to the light, only to be swallowed by the monster that uses it as bait. Deep Ones use this Aspect to repeat this process on land, and likewise the Oroboroi who make bargains take advantage.

The deep one (or a bargaining Oroboroi) possesses a phosphorescent angler's lure and the maneuverability to use it effectively. The flexibility and speed of baiting predators fills her body, granting a +1 bonus to Dexterity and its associated traits for each point manifest. Making use of this phenomenal advantage means paying one Dread (or Breath) per scene. While the Luminescent Lure is manifest, aggressors who decide to make targeted attack may only target the lure (-4 to attack). The Luminescent Lure dispels a bit of darkness... just enough to change pitch darkness (chance die) to substantial darkness (-3 to act).

Type: Sequential

Cost: 1 Breath to use the Dexterity for the scene

Dice Pool: None

Action: Reflexive

Tells

Minor: The dragon's forms a glowing lure, originating from the forehead's temple and hanging down to the nose. She may tuck it under a hat or into her hair at this stage.

Moderate: As minor, but the lure stretches down to the chin.

Major: As moderate. The lure pulses with phosphorescent light, and whips itself back into position even if tucked away. It cannot be concealed by any means.

Beguiling Mandibles

Tentacles provide a flexibility of weaponry that uniquely allows their owners to snag and crush prey with ease. If the pressure doesn't kill prey, at least the suckers will shred the victim's dermis. Grab, crush, and scar. Even if the end result is the death of the tentacle beast, it still teaches its attacker to think before trying for seconds. This Aspect transfers that "crush and scar" ruthlessness to the words of its deep one owner.

The deep one (or a bargaining Oroboroi)'s voice takes on the rhythm of the tide, waning loud and soft and gently mesmerizing those it touches. For each point manifest a +1 bonus to Manipulation is bestowed, but making use of this within a scene requires Dread (or Breath). While Beguiling Mandibles are manifest the deep one may release a guttural rumble from his throat, inflicting bashing wounds (equal to the points manifest in this Aspect) to the Willpower of all who can hear it. The first such rumble is free, but subsequent uses in the scene require Willpower as payment.

Type: Sequential

Cost: 1 Breath to use the Manipulation for the scene

1 Willpower to use successive throat rumbles in the scene

Dice Pool: None

Action: Reflexive (Attributes) or Instant (Rumble)

Tells

Minor: The dragon's voice flows harsh and soft, with the motion of the tide.

Moderate: As minor. In addition, the dragon forms a set of octopus arms in the vicinity of her upper lip. Males also form two slightly longer tentacles which are mildly prehensile, though not enough to be useful.

Major: As moderate. The arms reach down to the dragon's neck, and the longer tentacles to the chest.

Tympanic Membrane

Fish get by on water's vibrations, but more perceptive entities need a better sense of the space that surrounds them. Hearing is an orbital sensation, unlike sight which is quite directional. In a place where danger can originate from any angle, the limited field of vision is not enough. That's where the Tympanic Membrane comes in.

Wide, flexible covers of the opening of the ear, a pair of tympanic membranes amplify sound underwater instead of drowning it out as mammalian ears do. The deep one (or a bargaining Oroboroi) owns a pair of these amphibian membranes, and the hearing that comes with it. While most biologists would argue that there are both benefits and downsides to a tympanic membrane, the deep one experiences only the positives. A +1 bonus to Wits is granted for each point manifest in this Aspect, but to make use of this bonus during a scene Dread (or Breath) must be spent. While this Aspect is manifest the deep one

need not roll while blind to pick the direction of his attacker. Though he still needs to take an instant action to listen, no roll is necessary. It is as if he scores an exceptional success automatically. For more information on fighting blind, see the **World of Darkness** Rulebook, pages 166 and 167.

Type: Sequential

Cost: 1 Breath to use the Wits for the scene

Dice Pool: None

Action: Reflexive

Tells

Minor: The opening of the dragon's ears are capped with a thin, circular film.

Moderate: As minor. The opening of the ears widen to greater expand the reach of the membrane. This structure does not alter the normal shaping of the outer ear.

Major: As moderate. Each circular membrane is now roughly the area of a coffee mug.

Nightmare Gullet

Nightmares do have one feature that is desirable. In fact, it's practically godly. They sustain themselves on the thoughts of others. Though any type of reaction will suffice, *fear* is the most potent for the effort invested. With this Aspect a deep one (or a bargaining Oroboroi) too gains the ability to feed on the emotions of others... specifically fear.

For deep ones, each dot in this Aspect allows them to harvest Dread at half value. For Nightmare Gullet 1, whenever a Nightmare would garner two Dread the Deep One would receive one. For Nightmare Gullet 4, whenever a Nightmare would garner one Dread the Deep One would receive two. For the bargainers of the dark this ability is indispensable.

Oroboroi are further from the Dreamtide, and so benefit less from this

Aspect. For each point manifest in this Aspect, a dragon receives 500 Calories (2 Caloric Points) where Dread would usually be granted.

Type: Sequential

Cost: None

Dice Pool: None

Action: None

Tells

Minor: Anything the dragon places in her mouth turns to ash, provided it was dead or inanimate. This does not hinder her ability to garner Calories, though.

Moderate: As minor. In addition, the dragon's tongue turns black.

Major: As moderate. When the dragon's mouth is opened, it drains light from the surrounding air.

Electric Skin

The electric eel (in name only, as it was originally misidentified as an eel) attacks prey by discharging voltage from its electric organs (voltage generated by the water's current). Deep Ones that take this Aspect develop similar organs, though they generate voltage from the subtle motion of the atmosphere.

The deep one (or bargaining Oroboroi) can discharge this voltage buildup once per scene as he pleases, though successive uses require a point of Willpower. The resulting jolt inflicts two bashing wounds per point manifest to everything within close combat range (one to three yards) excluding the deep one herself. Any living being touching the deep one becomes trapped by the shock's resulting muscle contractions, and must succeed at a Strength roll or continue taking damage (as explained in the "Electrocution" section of the **World**

of Darkness Rulebook, on pages 177 and 178). Because of this the voltage continues its output until that being finally breaks free (or falls dead), though that does not prevent the deep one from discharging the voltage again.

Type: Sequential

Cost: 1 Willpower for subsequent jolts in the Scene

Dice Pool: None

Action: Instant

Tells

Minor: The dragon takes deeper breaths than usual. She also seems to suffer constantly from static cling.

Moderate: As minor, but the static cling becomes more severe. Sparks can be seen jumping between the dragon's limbs as she moves.

Major: As moderate. In addition, the dragon's body occasionally flickers with electric energy. The breaths become even more dramatic, and the dragon often tries to stay moist to ease the burden of collecting ambient electricity.

Obsidian Fog

A defense mechanism of cephalopods in the brighter surface waters, the ink sac produces a spray of mucus-locked melanin. Effective but costly to produce, this clod of dark liquid distracts and sometimes even stuns predators. Deep Ones have developed similar versions for use on land.

The deep one (or a bargaining Oroboroi) may spend one Dread (or Breath) to expel a pitch-black gas from a modified pore on its face. This gas quickly envelops everything within twenty-five yards of its source, creating a pocket of complete darkness through

Fear

Nightmares gain their Dread primarily by inflicting fear on others. We've already discussed how fear affects a Dreamer (inflicting bashing wounds to the Willpower meter), but we need to discuss where levels of fear fall in a numerical representation. This is actually easier than it sounds. Put yourself in the shoes of the cast member who is frightened, and try to rate the fear from 1 to 5. Whatever you settle on is the amount of Dread that is generated. You can then use that Dread to determine the benefit of Nightmare Gullet. 200

which the deep one may escape undetected.

All beings within the Obsidian Fog are rendered completely blind for a number of turns equal to twice the points manifest in this Aspect. This of course means that changing the degree of manifestation in the Aspect also alters the duration of the fog (adding or subtracting two turns per point altered).

Those that can detect heat through vision (Infrared Sight) are not completely blinded, but instead treat all combatants as if they were substantially concealed (-3 to act against them). The cloying cold of the fog prevents clearer perception. Ultraviolet vision provides no benefit against the darkness this Aspect produces. For more information about fighting blind, see the **World of Darkness** Rulebook, pages 166 and 167.

Type: Sequential

Cost: 1 Breath to emit Obsidian Fog

Dice Pool: None

Action: Instant

Tells

Minor: The dragon forms a pock mark on her left cheek. This pock disperses the gas when the Aspect is used.

Moderate: As minor, but instead of a pock a funnel-shaped protrusion of skin forms, like those seen on the common octopus.

Major: As moderate. The funnel is larger, and it twitches constantly. If an onlooker were to stare inside, they would see the sac of melanin cells that are atomized to blind attackers.

Bargains with a Deep One

Beasts from the silent night come to the light for one reason: to trade dark serendipity for emotion. A symbolic sacrifice of organ severs the mind's hold on the feeling associated, thus gifting its potency to the being that can feel nothing.

Deep Ones grant wishes to the extent that coincidence allows, and in exchange they expect payment. They cannot unwind death, but they can deflect its approach. They cannot turn rain to gold, though gold can be made to rain upon a bargainer through other means. Hearts can be warmed or cooled, families forged or torn asunder, businesses overthrown or enhanced. Whatever the request, the means through which it is fulfilled are contrived and lined with blood. It is impossible to connect these events to the deep one himself... one wonders if he plays any part at all?

Not all bargains are created equal. Below is a chart of the organs within the human body a Deep One will accept, the emotion with which it is associated, the organ's worth in Dread, and how long it will take to complete the request. Any organ removed in a bargain is replaced with a glass copy, though it still functions as intended from a biological perspective. The character is rendered incapable of expressing the emotion sacrificed, and must spend Willpower if she wishes to fake it (or if she does not role-play the loss appropriately). If a bargainer who gave up her Appendix wants to appear disgusted when some partier throws up in her lap, she'll need to spend Willpower. This is not necessarily because she lacks talents in acting or the human condition, but from the bargain on the emotion is so foreign it must be forced.

When the deep one claims an organ, he is instantly awarded the corresponding amount of Dread. In addition, each night he maintains ownership of that organ he receives this Dread again. Dread acquired in this way is not fear-based, and thus does not contribute to "Nightmare Gullet".

Organ	Emotion	Value (in Dread)	Response
Appendix	Disgust	1	Decades
Eyes	Foresight	2	Years
Stomach	Ambition	2	Years
Intestines	Rage	3	Months
Liver	Inhibition	3	Months
Kidneys	Trust	4	Weeks
Pancreas	Amazement	4	Weeks
Lungs	Sadness	5	Days
Spleen	Fear	5	Days
Heart*	Joy	6	Instants
Brain	Remorse**	6	Instants
*Dragons cannot offer their Hearts as collateral in a bargain			
**Those incapable of Remorse fail all degeneration rolls automatically			

The Dread Value serves another purpose. When a dragon makes a bargain, she receives a number of dots of “Deep One” Aspects equal to the Dread Value of the organ sacrificed. These may be spent where the player pleases, so long as it’s amongst the “Deep One” Aspects presented earlier. Just as with character creation, the fifth dot of a “Deep One” Aspect costs two of these “free” dots. Bargains are the only means of acquiring “Deep One” Aspects; since they are not associated with a method they cannot be purchased or improved with experience.

“Why?” you ask? In many ways the True Form of an Oroboroi is a reflection

of her state of mind. She does not leave the bargaining table unchanged, in mind or body. The process of slaying emotions is one that brings her closer to the deep ones, in more ways than one.

Keep in mind that the surgical removal of an organ does not prevent its exchange in a deep one bargain. Many a pompous Oroboroi may say “Well I’d give you my appendix, but it came out thirty years ago!” only to find a glass replica replace it in their body, with the emotion stolen. The only exception is the Heart. Under no circumstances may the Heart be traded in this manner of bargain.

Appendix Two: San Francisco

“Settle down for bed and I’ll tell you a story, okay? Hmm... which’s one should I tell? Ah, how about this. Why do you think the earth shakes, son?”

“Tectonic plates shift back and forth causing vibrations!”

“Well, aren’t you a little smarty! I’m glad you’re learning something at school. But why does the earth *really* shake?”

“I dunno. Why?”

“Long ago, when the world was young and man was not yet ruler of the lands, there was a mighty serpent that from end to end stretched the world over. His name was Jörmungandr.”

“Jörmungandr?”

“It’s a Norse word. It means great world serpent. Jörmungandr traveled the world as he pleased, eating what he liked and stealing what he wanted. He had a particular fancy for gold, you see, and he stashed a great haul of it right here under San Francisco.”

“Really?”

“Yes. Its said that even today his hoard of treasure is buried, waiting to be found.”

“Cool!”

“Not exactly. You see Jörmungandr was quite sinful, and a hammer of justice slew him for his wickedness. But not quite. Instead of death Jörmungandr was knocked into eternal slumber and buried beneath the earth, so that other creatures might flourish on the land. But it is a restless sleep the world serpent sleeps. As he tosses and turns the earth atop him is shaken and shattered, the tremors causing quakes like the one we had today.”

“But if he’s asleep, wouldn’t he starve?”

“No, son. There’s a reason he was drawn to gather gold. The wealth sustains him like food sustains us, and so long as it is with him he will continue his sleep. But should someone steal the treasure from beneath his scaly form, Jörmungandr would rise once more and eradicate the world that entrapped him.”

“Don’t worry about the tremors. It’s just mother Earth having a seizure.”

-Anonymous

The hooks and mechanics may be present in the earlier sections of the book, but you might still be having trouble setting up your **Dragon the Embers** chronicle. The best way to teach is to lead by example, though, and so the San Francisco setting is provided here.

The City by the Bay is practically a living sitcom, populated with eccentrics, outsiders, and trendsetters. The fog enshrouds the city in a cloak of insane whimsy, which is partly why dragons find the location so enticing. It brings excitement to their otherwise miserable eternities.

That being said, the Oroboroi population has taken a dip as of late, and at the moment less than one hundred live within the city proper. The threat of Bloody Chalice Knights is high in the area, partly due to their anticipation of modern draconic needs. Likewise, the superstition of Jörmungandr keeps many Oroboroi at bay. Life in the so-called Paris of the West is exciting, but not free.

Theme

The theme of San Francisco is that of relief. The laid-back nature of the city makes blending easier for dragons, especially the more world-weary and rigid who need a place to hide their old ways. The combination of Victorian and modern architecture appeals to a wide range of personalities. Likewise, since the area is quite apparently a dragon magnet Oroboroi can go seeking companionship with their own... a matter quite difficult to pursue in other regions.

Contradicting and yet complimenting the first theme is that of doom. Those in the region who know what to look for can spot dragons easily, and that includes any enemies they carry as a species. The Knights of the Bloody Chalice have long

had a priory in San Francisco, where their prey is not only easy to hunt but amply available. Also looming is the threat of exposure... even though the city is likely to ignore any crazy happenstance, should too many build up in similar fashion suspicion will follow. The Oroboroi are almost *too* comfortable here, and one wonders if somebody isn’t encouraging it to gather proof of their existence.

Mood

The mood of San Francisco is one of Ambivalence. Dragons migrating to the area find they are torn in their decisions, startled by the new freedom the city offers but still locked in their paranoia. Likewise, freedom and dominance are contradictory states of existence. Dragons attempting to set up province find the “free spirits” that make up their constituency to be laboring and indignant. Such subjects are unfitting of kings, but necessary to enjoy the other benefits of the region. Again, ambivalence ensues.

A complimenting mood is one of Drama. Not only do the local dragons need to deal with their rebellious mortals, but also with the knowledge that other Oroboroi are nearby. If there is any place where draconic politics could be so tense, it would be in San Francisco. Individual monsters faction off into Dens and wage war with others over what they believe is best for the city, though there’s no evidence that any of them are right. Oroboroi who come to San Francisco seeking interaction with their own may find more than they bargained for, unable to deal with the egos of other self-proclaimed gods.

History

The draw to the San Franciscan bay has always been one of glittering jewels. The area has had much to offer all along, from its first settlement by the Ohlone people

through Spanish settlement and mission years up to the gold rush. Part of this process involves displacing (or incorporating) the previous occupants, and for modern Oroboroi that requirement has not changed. After all, nothing shines quite like gold, and people will take as much as they can.

Early History

The tale of the San Francisco bay begins with the Ohlone tribes of central California, a village-based people who migrated to the area for its convenient access to hunting and gathering. In the process, they displaced or absorbed the smaller Hokan-speaking tribes of the area. Whichever actually occurred has been lost in the fogs of time, though it really doesn't matter.

It is a well-believed myth that the Ohlone tribes were assisted by a pack of moon-shifters, though no one remembers why. Ending a five-thousand year occupation, the Ohlone people would remain themselves for only twelve-hundred years.

Approaching from the south, Spanish explorers came to the region with hopes it would be suitable to colonize. Led by one Don Gaspar de Portolà, a soldier of noble blood originating from Catalina, the Alta region was surveyed in the name of Spain. Following the soldiers were the missionaries, armed with crosses and the conviction of God. And some with the word of the Supernal. And disbelief would not stop them.

Under the supervision of Father Junípero Serra missions were constructed to assist in converting unbelievers to the way of god. One of these missions was the Mission San Francisco de Asís, an adobe structure that is today the oldest surviving building in the San Francisco city proper. The Ohlone tribes were assimilated into the missions, their own lives drowned out in a flood of piety and poverty. San Francisco had become the property of Spain.

But it would not stay that way. Eleven years of bloody guerrilla fighting liberated Mexico and its provinces from the grasp of Spain. Once more the bay changed hands, and the new government of Mexico worked to end the mission system and replace it with privatization. An Englishman by the name of William Richardson established a homestead near the bay and, with the help of the region's mayor "Francisco de Haro", laid out designs for Yerba Buena.

In February of 1848, at the end of Mexico's two-year pugilism with the United States over the latter's annexation of Texas, Mexico relinquished California for fifteen million dollars. This of course was a formality, as Commodore John D Sloat had claimed California for the United States in 1846 (at the beginning of the Mexican-American war). Yerba Buena was included in this conquest, and by 1847 it had been renamed "San Francisco".

This was a big blow to Mexico, for one James W Marshall struck gold only nine days earlier. The resulting flash of gold fever sent hundreds of thousands sprinting to the west coast to make a claim, and San Francisco swelled into a boom town for it. In many ways the forty-niners made the city as memorable as it is. The gold rush also introduced Oroboroi to the region, magnetized to the flocking masses. Or perhaps it was the glitter of gold that drew them as well.

Oroboroi from the Americas and Oroboroi from China met for the first time in San Francisco. Culture shock forged them into enemies: the Chinese dragons startled and angered by the disrespect shown them and American dragons furious that these newcomers arrived expecting positions of power. In fact, the two years between California's acquisition and its induction as a state brought a great deal of different cultures to the pot, with violence in toe. The accompanying lawlessness made this

mixture dangerously explosive. Dragons and mortals alike fought over claims, businesses, and matters of dignity in a bloody tornado of soot, gold, and bullets.

Recent History

The earth shook San Francisco on the eighth of April 1906, the city shuddering into rubble. It is said to have suffered over four hundred million dollars in damages (an enormous fortune at the time), and the collapse and subsequent fires killed thousands of residents. The quake's epicenter was off the coast of San Francisco, near a greenstone assemblage called Mussel Rock. This location was directly adjacent to the San Andreas Fault, which led local Oroboroi to believe it was sabotage.

The controversy lead to a full-out brawl between the San Francisco Dens, often referenced as the "War of the Conspirators". Accusations fell like rain, and old enemies from the gold rush took the opportunity to settle scores. Hearts changed hands again and again, justified with claims that "he was the saboteur". Only a dozen or so gold-rush dragons living in the region are believed to have survived this period, the rest replaced with new Oroboroi.

The city was quickly rebuilt, mostly out of earnest to be prepared for the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, a 1915 World's Fair to celebrate the completion of

the Panama Canal. This feat was achieved at the cost of safety codes, which were discarded after the first year of reconstruction to meet this deadline. Even today the city suffers for that haste, and a quake of equal or lesser magnitude to the one in 1906 would topple several sectors of the city, ending hundreds of lives.

Life went on in the bay, the city becoming a financial symbol as the gold-founded banks secured themselves as national powerhouses. Not a single San Franciscan bank closed at the stock market crash of 1929. Oroboroi from the period like to flaunt this as a grand achievement to the "whipper-snappers", a sign that their leadership weathers all disasters and keeps the land alive. Some actually did contribute to the "Great Depression Buffer", and have records to prove it. Others are full of shit.

Despite the survival of the city's value as a whole, many independently wealthy Oroboroi were ruined by the crash. Province-snatching became commonplace, and the dragon underground seemed ready to burst into Daylight. Then, a curse in blessing's skin. The outraged dragons simply vanished. In fact, any dragon whose actions drew too much attention vanished. The Knights of the Bloody Chalice had arrived in San Francisco.

Proximity to the Pacific Theater brought



A picture of the ruins of San Francisco, taken by George R. Lawrence on May 28th of 1906

scores of young men to San Francisco during World War Two. Industry followed to meet the demands of the soldiering, and lingered after the war ended. Just as new blood came for work and war, Oroboroi once more flocked to the City in the Bay. This second immigration was less violent than that of the forty-niners, held civil by patriotism. It also helped that most of the resident dragons were post-quake Oroboroi, possessing a more modern outlook for the city and its interests. Province quarrels still existed, but on the down-low in respect for the issues at hand.

As San Francisco approached the 1980s the denizens became increasingly principled and difficult to control, empowered by activism and “Love” (as the hippies called it). The city became a symbol for change, breaking off into factions as each group gained support in a neighborhood. This outspokenness, along with the ever-increasing presence of Bloody Chalice Knights, drove many Oroboroi out of the area, and the dragon population is still thin to this day.

History Yet to be Made

Even though the gold may be gone (at least perceivably), San Francisco is still and always will be a focal point for the new. In the modern world, this is the breeding ground for new ideas and new philosophies. Maybe the Oroboroi will learn a great truth about their existence in San Francisco. Maybe it will give meaning to their extinction. Or maybe it will wake Jörmungandr.

Culture and the Province

The selection of a province is a very personal matter, limited to one gathering of people and usually one place of business. That being said, the process is virtually identical regardless of city. Still, the constituents of a province are quite variable based on location, and the layout of a

populous region contributes to that. In this section we will discuss some of the norms of a San Franciscan neighborhood, and how to use those norms to make one up.

Much of the city is mixed-demographic, meaning buildings are zoned for both commercial and residential use. This gives the City by the Bay a cozy, pulsing feel; keeping work and play close together renders the entire city “downtown”. An unfortunate after-effect of this is the cost of said “mixed-use” properties. Industry has left the city, replaced with entitlement, and the middle and lower classes have been pushed into orbit around the city, rather than living in the city proper. A pity, as they could benefit greatly from close proximity (it’d certainly save on gas... and traffic jam stress). The city’s convenient layout is quite appealing to tourists; this combined with its pleasant climate keeps the camera-snappers in constant supply. Well... that and the eclectic mixture of modern and historic architecture.

The best way to make a province in the San Francisco setting is to suspend disbelief and make up your own street. What are the buildings like? Is the street mostly Victorian, or does it have a modern feel? What types of business take up the storefronts on your street? Is it mostly restaurants? Grocers? Boutiques? Who works at these businesses? Who lives above them? San Francisco dragons tend to share denizens (not voluntarily, the city is just tight-knit that way), so the best thing you can do as a storyteller is generate a well-developed cast of extras for your street. Lay out their personality. Lay out their routine. Determine when and how they interact with each dragon’s province and the other regulars of the street. The effort you put in will pay out in turn, flavoring your chronicle and giving the dragons something to lose.

Complications of Life in San Francisco

As stated before, there is a looming sense of doom in the City by the Bay. Something that seems perfect needs to be inspected from a different angle; flaws or something sinister could be waiting beneath the veil of standard perception. The fog certainly doesn't help this feeling, either.

Accompanying this is the issue of the residents, too self-involved to play along for the greater good and too opinionated to stay out of the way. If a dragon pushes her denizens too hard they will mutiny against her. A catch-twenty-two, as letting them run amok doesn't work either. Oroboroi machinations are thusly forced underground, exacted through manipulative charisma and the persuasion of "problem" individuals. Much of the conflict in a San Francisco campaign will be political; the endless tug of war that is convincing others your way is right.

Knights of the Bloody Chalice

The blood-bathing serial killers are a parasite of the city, hooked to its intestines and feeding off its glut. Just as dragons move with relaxed gait in San Francisco, so do the Knights travel unnoticed. In a place with so many people, who notices one person go missing? In any scene with a crowd, a Knight could be bleeding in the background. Maybe he's a customer in the dragon's province, and his sweat alerts him to her presence. As anywhere, the Knights are indistinguishable until they attack. The only difference is concentration. As many as five Bloody Chalice Knights can occupy a single public gathering, and with so many witnesses the dragon cannot fight them with her full range of talent.

Jörmungandr

There's a nasty rumor that some ancient world serpent is sleeping under the bay, on top of a delicious hoard of treasure. The

kind of riches that make mythical gold vaults look like chump change. But, there's a catch, as there always is. Jörmungandr is sleeping on top of it, and if he were to wake up the resulting cataclysmic earthquake would destroy the entire continent. Even now as he stirs in slumber the earth shakes above him. Plus, upon awakening he would proceed to destroy the rest of the world.

Or maybe not. Does Jörmungandr even exist? If the local Oroboroi believe in him enough, will he become *real*? Should Jörmungandr rise, could he be stopped? Who would claim his riches? Who would be so *reckless* as to claim his riches? All of these are considerations an Oroboroi migrating to San Francisco will mull. There's a reason the city is so pleasant, and that reason could be the draw of Jörmungandr's breath. He *wants* to wake up.

Factions and Figureheads

In many ways the Oroboroi that live in San Francisco are as unique as the mortals that share the same space. Being virtually timeless beings promotes quirky outdated behavior, especially in the older dragons that have grown weary of the world's ebb and tide. San Francisco is a haven for these Oroboroi, a place both driven and locked in time. Below are some of the more interesting factions in the San Francisco area. How they serve in your chronicle is entirely up to you.

The Blue Angel Den

The Blue Angel Den is named after the Blue Angel club, a speak-easy from the 1920s converted to a jazz bar that the Den frequents. Tables with lamps; a stage for the performers; and a smooth, clean dance-floor. The Den pays for and maintains the club part time.

This Den consists of four Oroboroi: Michael Haze, a True Heart Trickster; Francis Harrison, an Ash Challenger; Delmira Livingston, a Blood Inheritor; and

Richard Martanus, a Sweat Slayer. It is particularly famous for having some of the most mentally unstable Oroboroi in San Francisco.

Michael Haze

Quote: [harried muttering]

Michael Haze is a paranoid schizophrenic who is also suffering from dissociative identity disorder. Both of these conditions befell him when he was first inducted into the Oroboroi. A homeless bum, Haze learned of an Oroboroi humanitarian through the soup kitchen, and tricked her into sponsoring him so he could steal her Heart. Unable to cope with his self-loathing upon the metamorphosis, Haze fractured into two personas: the helpless mortal and the domineering monster. Haze sees his dragon half in every mirror. He suffers the same nightmare every time he sleeps: being trapped in a room, hung from the ceiling by hooks that puncture his flesh, while that *monster* gets away. Every time Michael falls asleep, he transitions to his alternate persona.

Michael fights to stay awake, so that he does not have to face his personal tormentor. His dragon half wishes to eradicate him, to gain total control of the body. Haze would be right at home as a Scholar of the Five Evils, but his mortal side refuses to part with the Heart. In his head, he is not the monster and so such action would be suicide.

Haze is homeless and unemployed, though he protects a spousal abuse shelter as his province. While a victim is within those walls he defends them with almost savage ferocity, but once said victim departs that's that. Haze has made lots of enemies in the seedy underbelly of San Francisco. And yes, San Francisco *does* have a seedy underbelly.

The Den is not aware of the duplicity that Michael faces. They only ever meet his dragon half. This 'monster' cleans up well, and is very good at hiding his mortal half's misfortune despite his lack of real assets.

Since he is so oppressed by his other half, Haze's dragon does not take orders well.

Michael's Heart is still resting behind his rib cage. His Furnace does not burn hot enough to cause audible beating, though he is still incredibly vulnerable because he cannot resurrect.

Francis Harrison

Quote: *Nice ride. Let's take it for a test drive, shall we?*

Francis Harrison is a prick. He gambles on street races, most of which he either rigs or competes in (or both). He didn't start off this way, of course. He used to race legitimately, and he was good at it. So much so he beat a dragon and got her Heart. But changed as he was after the metamorphosis, he began to fret. Suddenly his life had meaning to lose, and some races got too close for comfort. He started bribing cops to ambush the other competitors during his events. He even began abusing the auto shops in the area, slipping in at night to sabotage the cars of other racers. Harrison hates himself for this, but he can't lose. The cost is too high.

Francis calls his back alley route his home. His circuit. His province. He is familiar with all the other racers on a first-name basis. And he's famous for his tuning skills. But he'd never let anybody else look under the hood of his ride. No, behind the purr of Harrison's baby is a beat most primal and dangerous. A steel box is welded to the bottom of the car's engine block, and hidden inside is Francis' Heart.

Harrison is high on his own shit. His arrogance is unnerving even to the best of drivers, and all the other competitors hate to race with him. But the other racers are growing suspicious. There's got to be a reason why he never loses races, and there's got to be a reason why so many die or get maimed on the tar when he's in the game. Some have even become aware of his status as an Oroboroi.

Francis' circuit starts and ends in front of the Blue Angel club, and the bookie that takes bets is the Saturday night bartender. The other members of the Den know that Harrison is a dirty cheat, but keep him around for the revenue he attracts and generates. It is a tenuous partnership.

Delmira Livingston

Quote: *Same shit. Different decade.*

Delmira was the protégé of the Pentex (heh heh) east coast branch Head Executive, Thomas Fletch. A reserved, powerful, but quiet man, Mister Fletch had actually held one position or another at the branch for over sixty years, though the records had been falsified to conceal his identity as an Oroboroi. When Delmira caught on to this charade, corporate gave Thomas a choice: surrender the position and his Oroboroi membership, or kill Delmira. Being a sweet, tired dragon, he chose to let Delmira live instead of him. She's felt guilty ever since.

Delmira was supposed to be promoted to Fletch's position upon her induction to the Oroboroi, but corporate had other plans. She's been banished to what she calls "the ass-end of the business"—expense accounting for board affairs—with no means of escape, as the company is blackmailing her and has her Heart hostage. It's in a safe at their east coast branch in Pennsylvania. Her motivation to lead as a dragon is being stifled by this oppression, and it is slowly driving her insane.

Delmira goes to the Blue Angel club to blow off some steam, get hammered, and conspire against Pentex. She even sings to forget her troubles, and has obtained some local fame as the "Lady in Blue". The other members of the Den have agreed to assist her in her revenge against Pentex in exchange for inside info about the company. Richard Martanus has on several occasions used this information to make a fortune on the stock market. Livingston doesn't mind

though, to her any damage to Pentex is a step closer to her freedom.

Despite her hatred of the company, Delmira claims her own department as her province. She hopes that her efforts to improve her workspace will distract her from her troubles, and set her manipulators at ease until she is ready to strike. Of all the Oroboroi who claim membership in the Blue Angel Den, Livingston is the most sane.

Richard Martanus

Quote: [Wide, bejeweled grin] *How can Martanus loans help you today?*

Richard Martanus is not a dragon you want to piss off. The owner and proprietor of a check-to-cash small loans business, Martanus was a cut-throat businessman even before his metamorphosis. When a crime-lord tried to make him pay protection money, Martanus took action. Richard killed the crime-lord with a lawn chair, after brutally battering the two bodyguards with a coat-rack, of course. The bloodied small loans official then found in the crime-lord's suitcase a magnificent, beating prize. He looked up the nine-chambered Heart on the internet, learned its purpose, and then indulged in the greatest power high he would ever experience.

Since his divine empowerment Martanus has been building an empire, cornering people with interest and threatening to sell their organs on the black market if they don't comply to his demands. He makes his constituents tithe, act as spies against his enemies, and pay for the water and electric (which is not specified in the lease!). Overall, he is not a good person.

Richard keeps his Heart hidden in the right wall of the second bedroom of his home, packed in a cushion of insulation between two studs between the two windows. He is so afraid of its discovery that he keeps the door locked at all times. He doesn't even live in the building anymore, so it has fallen into disrepair.

Richard owns the Blue Angel club. They play jazz because he has a particular softness for it. Perhaps it is the last softness he possesses in his cold, unfeeling chest. Even here he is a tyrant, though. He signed contracts with the other Oroboroi of the Den to forge their alliance, but his contributions are mostly financial. Oddly enough, he gets along quite well with Harrison.

The Hermes Cross Den

The Hermes Cross Den is so named as a play on words; a combination of “Red Cross” and “Hermes Staff”, the two most prominent symbolic representations of the medical community. The members of this San Francisco Den all work for Jacobson Memorial Hospital in some capacity. Built atop the ruins of a warehouse that collapsed in the 1906 quake, the understructure is riddled with both secret compartments and structural faults.

This Den consists of three Oroboroi: Walter Humber, a Bone Finder; Frank Christophe, a Tears Slayer; and Charlotte Ramsfield, an Ash Trickster.

Walter Humber

Quote: *Whew, some big damage here. What is that? Blast wounds? Oh sweetheart, what were you up to?*

Walter Humber, to the many dragons that know him, is a godsend, an angel, and invaluable part of the dragon community. Walter is a medical examiner that works for the city hospital. Anytime a dragon dies, she ends up on his operating table. He can delay the autopsy and likewise the investigation, giving the fallen dragon enough time to rouse and slip away. Humber also removes Hearts for those without the stones to do it on their own, for a fee of course.

Walter learned of Oroboroi Hearts when a corpse he was examining woke up, screamed, and ran like hell. Humber locked the doors before this dead man could escape, and then cornered him until he got the truth.

Of course, part of the truth involved said corpse spitting fire at the frightened Walter.

Not willing to kill a living dragon, Walter decided to find a dead one instead. Unfortunately his research was a little... inaccurate. Misinterpreting the story of a mother burying her Heart with her child, he desecrated the grave and pried the still pristine nine-chambered Heart. Whisking it away to the safety of his home, Humber cleaned, sterilized, and ate it, becoming a dragon of the Finder method. He is still unaware he killed another dragon to do it.

Walter is good natured, but has been keeping tallies of who owes him favors for his occlusion services. He has yet to call in any of these favors. Humber's province is one half of Jacobson Memorial and the morgue staff that work there. He holds a tentative truce with Charlotte Ramsfield, another Oroboroi who acts as administrator for the hospital.

Frank Christophe

Quote: *This time it will work. Just focus, okay? Form the image in your head, and reality will follow.*

Frank Christophe is a mad scientist. Originally a plastic surgeon with a minor in implantology, upon learning about the long shadows of the world he began to believe supernatural talent could be transplanted to compatible suspects. Still mortal, he began to seek out these beasts of the night as his patients, so that he could steal body parts while they were under anesthetic.

This did not turn out so well for Christophe, who set up his supernatural operating room in the underground ruins of the collapsed warehouse. His one vampire patient frenzied, the nitrous didn't work on that werewolf, and the changeling beat the snot out of him when he tried to operate through her visage. Then, a lucky break. A forgetful Oroboroi woman came to the clinic seeking cosmetic surgery, unaware her

Aspects would tear away any reconstructive work

She continued to visit Christophe's 'clinic' for months, each time unaware she had gone before and each time revealing more of the Oroboroi to him. He excised her organs dozens of times, storing them in antiseptic gel for future study. Eventually he tired of the charade, and killed her on his operating table. But not before she told him where to find her Heart.

Frank still runs his horror clinic under the hospital, while seeing regular patients in his real office three floors up. He keeps his Heart safely tucked in the pedestal of his horror chair. To retrieve it would involve disassembling the entire apparatus. Administrator Ramsfield allows him to stay despite her awareness of his actions. Secretly she hopes his research will be successful... for her own reasons.

Charlotte Ramsfield

Quote: *Anima simulate the real thing. But are they the same? And how do you fetch them thither?*

Charlotte Ramsfield is haunted. Frustrated with the dead-turn her career had taken, she resorted to inane and frankly mad extents to get what she wanted: a bigger office and a better paycheck. She half-read a web article that detailed "world-class leadership skills", and in her folly sent away for the package. What arrived was a beating mass and a note that read "eat the steak". So she did. And her life as a Trickster began.

Ramsfield didn't know what would happen when she ate the Heart. And she didn't know that it was stolen. A friend of the 'donor' sought revenge, through a letter tainted. Hand delivered to avoid the watchful eye of the post office, this letter belched sickness on Charlotte and her two children. They all died, but only Charlotte came back, and by the time she had her grief-wrought husband had ended himself with the handgun from their safe.

Charlotte got the position she wanted, at the cost of everything she needed. So she settled in and tried to repair the shambles of her life. But her children left an un-healing wound. She began to have nightmares about their deaths, and declared she would have them back one day. But stronger, and immortal like she was now. This is why she supports Christophe's 'experiments', hoping he will produce a new means of creating Oroboroi. If he fails, she plans to steal the Hearts of both her Den-mates for her purposes.

Dimain's Craven Rock Den

Dimain's Craven Rock Den is named by its most prominent member, Ryan Dimain, after the other members of the den: a coward by the name of Isaiah Thamesbaum and a guitarist who goes by the name Deucalion Clarke. Compared to the other Dens of the region, this alliance is relatively new.

This Den consists of three Oroboroi: Ryan Dimain, an Ash Trickster; Deucalion Clarke, a Tears Challenger; and Isaiah Thamesbaum, a Blood Finder.

Ryan Dimain

Quote: *Aw shit, not these guys!*

Ryan Dimain is an athlete, though the type is hard to quantify. He does a little bit of everything. Archery, fencing, jogging, bare-knuckle boxing, tracking, camping, tennis, basketball, and pretty much anything else he can find to occupy his time. This is the primary means through which he makes connections.

Dimain learned of the Oroboroi as a fluke, first encountering a dragon when he was beaten in a game of tennis at the park. He was not comfortable being bested, so he tracked down his opponent. Ryan's research led him to three different aliases, two of which were far too outdated to make sense. At first he believed them to be a family of con men, passing the reins from father to son. But further inquiry proved none of the

personas he'd detected had ever had children. Something was suspicious.

Ryan began to delve into the occult, originally believing the man to be some sort of demon. That train of research led him to an ancient reference to some "self-consuming serpent". One particular book spoke of monsters eating Hearts. To the side lay an etching of a man, with a Heart staked on the end of his sword and a horrendous beast falling dead before him. Ryan saw a means of resolving his comeuppance, and so returned to stalking the man.

His common sense said killing a man over such a trifling would be too much, so he resolved to test his hypotheses first. After all, if this ageless man was some sort of beast than dealing death would do the world a favor. Gaining access to the man's house with his streetwise and athletic skills, Ryan crept through the halls until he found a safe, wherein the disembodied Heart could be heard beating. Horrified but intrigued, he cracked the safe and took the cardiopump, simply to examine it. But he couldn't help taking a bite. And then another. And soon, he was the monster. Dimain became an Oroboroi Trickster.

Since his induction Ryan became obsessed with others that shared his 'affliction', and sought them out as best he could. A task more difficult than it sounds. He eventually learned that *heat* was the secret to tracking these creatures, and through that revelation he discovered Deucalion and Isaiah. Being the one that sought them out, he declared himself their leader.

Isaiah Thamesbaum

Quote: [nervous stirring] *Did you hear that?*

Isaiah Thamesbaum is a bookworm and a coward. Initially dedicated to a life of study, he majored in Paleontology and intended to logically dissect a lost world of ancient, dead things. It was the safest study

he could legitimize as a profession, and with time he came to love the digs and the bones. But he was not prepared for one of the artifacts he would find.

While examining a 'hoax' sauropodous fossil, Isaiah unearthed in the dirt a soft, supple Heart. Horrified, he buried it again and fled the dig. But its beating could not be silenced, and he returned that night to collect it. For weeks he studied the bizarre nine-chambered pump, trying to understand its anatomy just as much as how it could still be fresh and pliable without a body to keep it alive. When traditional science failed, he turned to more archaic and superstitious endeavors. And there he found his answer.

Thamesbaum learned what the Heart was capable of, and at first he was exhilarated by the prospect of it. In a moment of weakness he indulged, and was thus transformed into a Finder Oroboroi. But soon he began to regret his haste. Isaiah started to picture all the ways his life could come to an end, imagining all the dangers his new position had inflicted upon him, and it was terrifying. He resolved to bury the Heart, planting it in a wooden box beneath an orange orchard just outside the city limits. He goes to visit it once in a while, but infrequently out of fear of its discovery.

Deucalion Clarke

Quote: [irritated exhale] *Assholes.*

Deucalion Clarke grew up in San Francisco. Listening to classic rock and heavy metal, he found himself quite talented with a guitar. He was an exceptional student during his public education, especially with the band, but his mind would constantly drift to other endeavors. He didn't want to be an academic. And he didn't want to be a marching performer. Still, Clarke went to college, on a music grant no less. There he received his first electric guitar, a Fender-caster.

During his third semester at the San Francisco Institute of Art, Clarke withdrew

from his classes to pursue his stage career. At a Battle of the Bands, Deucalion accidentally wandered on to the bus of the guest judges, the heavy metal group called Wyren Alchemy. He befriended the group, and despite taking only seventh place at the competition he made some kick-ass contacts.

With his foot in the door, Clarke succumbed to his vices. He became an excessive drinker, a lay-about, and a sponge. The lead guitarist of Wyren Alchemy saw his friend spiraling in the drain, and so made a proposition: Deucalion could beat him in a play-off and take his place in the band, or the Fender-caster would be forfeit. Deucalion didn't understand the guitarist's motivation for such a contest, but he accepted anyway.

Clarke won the contest, and Wyren Alchemy's guitarist gave him a tool-box. "Wait three days and then eat what's inside. That is your pact with Satan. That is what will make you great." Clarke took the box home, waited three days, and then did as instructed. And he became a Challenger.

Deucalion could not bring himself to take the place of that guitarist, and so Wyren Alchemy drove out of his life. Still, he has accumulated a great degree of local fame and even taken a few stabs at nationwide notoriety. He plays for charity each year on the anniversary of his Oroboroi induction, as tribute to the man that set him back on track.

Appendix Three: Mirrors

“Miss Grinstead! Miss Grinstead! A word please!” The paparazzi mobbed Cameron like a swarm of locusts. “Is it true you murdered Ivan McGregor?”

She sighed. “As I told the police, my exchange with Ivan was an act of mercy. Assisted suicide. And since he no longer held a social security number and had been declared dead, *twice*, they gave me a stiff fine and thirty days in county jail.”

“What about the extracted Heart we’ve heard so much about? Where is the Heart now?”

Cameron took a deep breath, pushed through the crowd, and entered the courthouse. “If you want answers, talk to my attorney.”

“At the right frequency, glass shatters into perfectly congruent pieces. I wonder what frequency it takes to shatter a mind.”

-Anonymous

Dragon the Embers is a game tightly twisted around the Storytelling system. It is a strangler-fig in this respect, incapable of surviving without its host. This makes the game difficult to mesh with the system-smashing book, **World of Darkness Mirrors**. This appendix is designed specifically to make preparing a chronicle with both **Dragon** and **Mirrors** easier, so it is intended for use in conjunction with the latter.

This Appendix is broken up by the chapters in **World of Darkness Mirrors**. Each section is named after a chapter in that book, and each subsection after a topic contained within.

Chapter One : Breaking the Mirror

After the release of **World of Darkness Mirrors**, great care was taken to soften the incompatibility that book shares with this one. Still, certain options presented require additional effort to function properly. Only matters that need to be adjusted are listed here, with appropriate fixes.

Attributes: Three Alone

Dragon does not necessarily have an issue with a truncated attribute system, but a clarification must be made: Aspects that boost an attribute instead boost the category that attribute would fall into. This can result in a much larger boost to stats, if Deep One Aspects are used. The added simplicity of this system precludes itself to being overpowered, though.

Skills: Three Plus

As for the consolidation of Skills, the following adjustment may be applied: Aspect boosts to Skills act instead as specialties in Three Plus. Obviously they need to stack in order to function properly,

but this is acceptable because they are of supernatural origin.

Variables : Age

Character variables are not a big issue, but a clarification must be made. Any specific bonuses from the Age variable refer to the character *before* induction into the Oroboroi. This is because Heart consumption ceases the aging process.

The Virtue/Vice Element : Removing Virtue and Vice

Virtue and Vice are relatively easy to remove as sources of Willpower, but there are complications with certain Aspects and thematic devices that declare “on par with a Vice’s indulgence” or “on par with a Virtue’s fulfillment”. In such cases, simply treat these triggers in the same manner. After all, they are not an issue of the character’s own motivation, but rather a reaction to the action in general.

As for recovering Willpower, the only issue arises with wounds to the Willpower meter. So here is the proposed fix:

- Any time the character would instantly recover one Willpower point, she instead removes all bashing wounds from her Willpower meter, and one lethal one.
- Aggravated wounds to the Willpower meter would not be removable by normal means. To remove such grievous mental injuries, the character must meditate as dictated in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, page 51. Three successes remove one aggravated wound from the meter. This makes such disastrous damage to the mind a much more serious matter.

The Virtue/Vice Element: Motivations

This alternative possesses the same issues as the previous one does, with practically the same solutions. Again, actions that are on par with a Virtue or Vice do not change, as it is the symbolism of the action itself that causes those triggers (especially with the Scholars of the Five Evils). The real issue again comes from Willpower recovery, specifically dealing with bashing and aggravated marks on the Willpower meter.

- Any time the character acts out a motivation, she removes all bashing wounds from her Willpower meter, and one lethal one. This is the equivalent of fulfilling a vice.
- If the character acts out all three of her motivations within the same scene, all bashing and lethal wounds are removed from her Willpower meter, and so is one aggravated one.
- Again, aggravated wounds to the Willpower meter can be removed by meditation, on a three-success to one-aggravated-wound basis.

This change, as all in this section, dilutes some of the forced drama a Sainly Devil dragon would face (with the inversion of her Virtue and Vice). Perhaps that is your goal, but nevertheless you've been warned.

The Virtue/Vice Element: Nature and Demeanor

This system does not generate any problems, except with Scholars of the Five Evils. To compensate for the disparity between modes, each sheet may have different archetypes (even though they possess the same Virtue and Vice). For the "Bad" mode, the Nature is a mash-up of *Virtue* and Archetype, while the demeanor is a combination of *Vice* and Archetype. This represents the core of good that "Bad" scholars conceal beneath their wickedness. On either sheet, fulfilling Demeanor is like upholding a Vice, and indulging Nature is like upholding a Virtue.

This particular system hack turns Scholars of the Five Evils on their head. It renders "Bad" mode as "sweet-moment" monsters with a conscience, trying to hide their good heart beneath wickedness. And as for "Good" mode, well... at the core there is always that flicker of wickedness.

To make this fix *absolutely* clear, here is an example:

- A Sainly Devil dragon is made, with a Vice of Gluttony and a Virtue of Fortitude.
- On the "Good" mode sheet, the player writes **Demeanor:** "Martyr/Fortitude" and **Nature:** "Survivor/Gluttony". This portrays a "Good" mode that is outwardly ascetic, but secretly self-serving.
- On the "Bad" mode sheet, the player writes **Demeanor:** "Jester/Gluttony" and **Nature:** "Guardian/Fortitude". This portrays a "Bad" mode that acts as a buffoon, but really seeks to shelter those she cares about.

If the demeanor slips, any dragon may recover from aggravated wounds to Willpower by meditating, as detailed earlier.

Mind over Matter: Forbidden Lore

Limit it to mortals. This is very important. If a mortal wants to uncover an Oroboroi piece of Forbidden Lore, it comes in the form of a Philosophy. Aspects are a feature of the Furnace, a biological feature and not a mystical one. For this reason, they cannot use Forbidden Lore to learn Aspects.

Learning and Using Forbidden Lore

Dragon: The Embers

A character can learn Philosophies mostly through group dreaming, empowering her mind to force her will on the waking world. But it's far more likely the character shattered a dragon in her dreamscape while she was lucid, and the resulting fragment slightly altered her consistency with the waking world. Part of her is always dreaming, and that injured

fragment gives her the power of a Philosophy.

Reimagining Merits : Player-Described

Merits

This system hack throws a real wrench in the works, not only for the Merits presented in this book but also for the Aspect, “Envoy’s Passage”. While the former can simply be pitched as you desire, the latter requires a rewrite.

Envoy’s Passage (Queen of Goblets)

Oftentimes a dragon does not start at the top. Frequently, she may have no association with a group from which she needs favors. But rather than earning them, she can project an air of status that will get her in the door; at least briefly.

The dragon declares a group, and for the rest of the scene she gains an appropriate Player-Described Merit. She also receives a bonus to interact with any member of that group, equal to the points manifest in Envoy’s Passage. The Aspect grants her no actual credentials, just the semblance of “being in charge”.

If she doesn’t play along with somebody of higher authority, it’s likely her ruse will be unveiled. Also, some particularly attentive members of the group may question her sudden appearance once she’s gone. In addition, she may be associated with the group when faced with that group’s enemies (Like say, facing the police when posing as a gang member). Needless to say she’ll need to be clever to make the passage stick.

When the scene ends, her association with the group dissolves without contest. They notice she’s gone, but don’t particularly understand or care why. They may rationalize it as a transfer or a termination, or possibly a long leave-of-absence for medical or mental reasons. After the scene ends the dragon may select a new group with which to associate (But not the same group for another twenty-four hours), but

until she does this Aspect grants no other benefits.

Though being able to switch between factions fast has its benefits, the dragon does not prosper from extended relationships with these factions. Her interactions with them are fleeting, and she likely generates many enemies in the process. Plus, there’s a certain degree of resentment at her sudden injection into the fold, and should she draw too much attention to herself her charade can be dispelled.

For more information on Player-Described Merits, see **World of Darkness Mirrors**, page 35.

Type: Sequential

Cost: None

Dice Pool: None

Action: None

Tells

Minor: The dragon gains a physical trait usually associated with a low-level member of the selected group, and her clothes are adjusted accordingly. This trait may turn out to be a stereotype, which could prove troublesome for a dragon trying to blend in. Also, the clothes probably lack important details that an attentive member of the selected group might notice.

Moderate: As minor, but the feature is instead associated with a mid-level member of the group. A stereotype is more likely and more pronounced, and more features are likely to be missed.

Major: As minor, but the feature is instead associated with the top-dog of the group. Stereotyping is very likely and quite pronounced, and the clothing may be missing several important details.

Alternate Systems for Morality : Scrap

It

Removing Ethics from **Dragon** is actually easier than it seems. We won’t discuss *why* you want to discard Morality, but we will go into how to compensate for its absence. These fixes assume you are still willing to

deal with derangements. If you are not, you're on your own.

Instead of forging bonuses for holding high Ethics, the dragon adds a number of forging points to her manifest action equal to the *lowest* of her Stamina, Composure, or Resolve. As for Philosophies that work on Morality:

See the Scars (Blood ●)

Instead of revealing Morality and the last derangement, *See the Scars* reveals the target's Willpower meter and the last derangement.

Bind the Scars (Blood ●●●)

Instead of a degeneration roll, the target rolls the lower of his Composure or Resolve. Failure causes the target to develop a derangement, until he can buy it off with 3 experience or have it treated psychologically.

Lay the Chain (Tears ●●●●)

Instead of rolling Morality from the haphazard chain placement, the target rolls the lower of his Composure or Resolve. Failure causes the target to develop a derangement, until he can buy it off with 3 experience or have it treated psychologically.

Rip the Chain (Tears ●●●●●)

Instead of instantly lowering Morality by two, the target instantly suffers two derangements. On an exceptional success, the target instantly suffers three derangements.

Chapter Two : Picking up the Pieces

These are the necessary adjustments to make **Dragon** compatible with the various combat hacks presented in **World of Darkness Mirrors**.

Alternate Systems for Combat : Bad Karma

Add 3 to Frequency for the 7-Again trait. For any of the Aspects that add "additional chance dice", add 1 to the frequency for each chance die that would be added. For

example, *Reptilian Fear 3* adds two additional dice to an intimidation roll, provided the initial roll was not a chance die. That means *Reptilian Fear 3* adds 2 to the dice pool's frequency.

Alternate Systems for Combat :

Miniatures Play

A manifest action is actually a type of movement action. In a way, the rules for *Miniatures Play* make it easier to deal with Aspect manifestation. The Aspects themselves are not cause for further issues. *Chameleon Hide* doesn't require cover to sneak up on a victim, *Inferno* and *Palm Pike* both use the same threat ratings as a firearm, and *Quick* attacks are unchanged.

Action Sequences : Alternate Initiative

The only issue here comes from the *Inheritor Aspect: Flight of the King*, and the *Lust Philosophy: Feel the Hurt*. Altering the *Initiative Mod* is not the only function of either of these abilities, however, so you may simply ignore that bonus.

Action Sequences : One Second Turns

Manifesting Aspects becomes a concentrated action. *Defensive Flourish's* defense bonus in a fast action is utilized like *Brawling Dodge*, rolled to neutralize successes on an individual incoming attack instead of boosting overall defense. *Flight of the King's* defense bonus in a fast action is also utilized like *Brawling Dodge*, but the dice pool is the sum of *Defense* and points manifest.

Action Sequences : Fog of War

Dragon is sufficiently complicated that utilizing simultaneous actions is not recommended. If you do decide to use it, though, follow the instructions on the sidebar and write down all intended actions.

Streamlining Combat : Collective Combat

Brawling Dodge may not function in this setup, but *Flight of the King* still does. If

taking a totally defensive action, take the character's base defense and add a number of dice equal to the points manifest in Flight of the King. Likewise, Defensive Flourish attacks also add dice to your character's defense contributions.

Streamlining Combat : Scene-Based

Combat

Each time a dragon rolls for her extended action, she may assume or disband a number of Aspect points equal to her dots in Furnace. There are no new objectives for this combat hack.

Health and Injuries : Critical Hits

In addition to the context-sensitive penalties, Sweat and Lust Philosophies may move the severity of a critical hit, just as if it were a penalty. "Generalized" critical hits refer to the torso. These Philosophies do not actually repair the injured area, they simply redirect the pain so that the body part remains functional. Redirecting the severity of a critical hit does not alter the severity (like the Philosophies do to a penalty). The degree of severity that can be moved is limited by the dragon's proficiency, though (so a dragon with Sweat 3 could move a Severity 3 critical hit, but not a Severity 4 hit).

Chapter Three : Shards

Ah, now the real meat of it! The setting hacks.

The World of Darkness Revealed :

Shards of Shards

The threat of exposure is already a huge theme of **Dragon the Embers**, but what would absolute disclosure do to the Oroboroi? And to mortals? The following is the thematic adjustments necessary to use dragons in your World of Darkness Revealed chronicle.

The Embers Revealed

Extinction is thrown into sharper leaf when humankind becomes aware of the dragon

condition. In fact, the entire draconic lifestyle is turned on its head. The opportunity to form a province is shattered; people do not like being controlled even if it is in their best interest. And the notion of being a chess piece is more than a little disconcerting.

Then there's the matter of induction; gaining membership in the club is more than just controversial. Cannibalism, murder, and treachery not only cast dragons in a bad light, they put them in the sights of law enforcement. And what about fraud? Older dragons that have been swapping personas to stay under the radar would suddenly be in the spotlight, facing serious consequences for playing fast and loose with the law.

The Heart is also thrown into the fire, completely exposed and in the sights of any freak who wants to turn big and scaly for all the wrong reasons. Some mortals may become outraged at the membership restrictions, lashing out at a dragon's home or loved ones. Others, frightened by the prospect or perhaps outraged by the blasphemy, might seek to destroy Hearts and end the Oroboroi completely. Others that learn of Red Pearls, on the other hand, could sponsor dragons with the underlying goal of harvesting them when the time is right.

Then there's the matter of the Dreamtide. With mortals aware of the wickedness in the world, dreamscapes grow into terrible tempests of fear and chaos. The number of Pandemonium Nightmares skyrocket, especially when certain humans haphazardly dream up dragon copies. The likelihood of this is very high, especially considering the raving fanatics that think dragons are super badass.

There is one benefit to the exposure, despite the countless conflicts it generates. The Knights of the Bloody Chalice cease to be successful predators. Humanity as a whole becomes aware of the blood-bathers and their hunting methods, and the light

casts an even more unappealing visage on them than it does the Oroboroi.

Whether or not degrees of divinity maintain their power of fright is up to you as Storyteller. If the draconic visage still inflicts fear on the masses, then the Oroboroi remain a sign of immense power even in the face of their exposure. If, however, the unveiling steels nerves against this resolve-draining shock, then dragons become little more than a joke. Yes, they're powerful, but a well-determined mortal can simply sweep them aside as a kitschy gimmick.

The World of Darkness Destroyed: The Shadowed World

Dragons are already well-prepared for their own extinction. For this reason it would seem like they are well prepped for the end of the world. Nothing could be further from the truth. Below are the appropriate adjustments to setting to make **Dragon the Embers** compatible with your end-of-the-world chronicle.

Dragons

When it comes down to living in an apocalyptic world, dragons are simply screwed. Dragons do not heal at a supernatural rate. They are no better protected from radiation or disease than a normal human. And their supernatural prowess is fueled by plain old edibles... the scarcest resource in a wasteland.

Dragons run on their stomachs. In fact, it practically dictates their entire life. In this respect they are even worse off than human survivors, because deprivation strikes after only a single day. Where a hearty survivor could go without food for a few days while searching for resources, a dragon would collapse to starvation. Resurrection does not provide a respite from this trial, either. Many become trapped in a cycle of starvation, death, revival, starvation, death, painfully withering over and over again with no exit in sight.

Likewise, many Oroboroi suffer a loss of purpose. How can you be a leader when there's nobody left to follow? Coupled with the guilt of wasting resources, many dragons simply decide to commit suicide, passing off their Heart or destroying it in an act of grand defiance.

A dragon's supernatural prowess is moot in the wasteland. Both Aspects and Philosophies are too costly to use on more than an occasional basis, requiring massive amounts of energy (specifically foodstuffs) to make them function. Though some dragons may substitute fuels for edibles, such a substitution does not diminish the severity of the situation. In many ways fuel is even more precious than a meal.

Even the Dreamtide does not provide a respite from the horror. Many survivors are haunted by the tragedy that ended the world. Stepping into the wrong dream could mean death in an atomic blast, consumption by a hoard of walking dead, or an army of killer aliens. Fear and shared experience augment these Nightmares to a terrifying degree, making them even more vicious than their real-world analogs.

Still, there are some that thrive in the shattered pieces of the world. Dragons can draw nourishment from valuables, even those that no longer serve a purpose in the destroyed world. Jewels, gold, and big bags of cash sit in the collapsed ruins of cities... left behind because of their heavy weight and lack of practicality. But to a dragon, the treasure troves of the old world provide the means for self-sufficiency. The world becomes a twisted treasure-hunt, with Oroboroi waging war over the planet's last shreds of wealth.

Woundgate: Supernatural Beings

Surprisingly **Dragon the Embers** is very compatible with Woundgate, though the Oroboroi themselves don't care for the Shatter.

Dragons

Oroboroi have two means of entering the Shatter. The first is through a woundgate, just like any other immigrant. The second is through dreams. Since the Corpse and the Shatter share dreamscapes, an Oroboroi may enter one dream, pass through Pandemonium, and then exit another dream in the Shatter.

Dragons do not like the Shatter, though, and rarely travel there. They are often mistaken for other, native beasts of the Shatter that share similar morphology but not the same level of cognition. And the Oroboroi do not appreciate being hunted like

animals and driven to the shadows. They can get that at home.

The populaces of the Shatter do not submit to draconic influences like the constituents of their Corpse provinces do. And unless they bring their Heart along for the trip, they run the same risks of Last Hand that they would in the Dreamtide or any of the realms invisible. Overall, the Shatter gives them little payoff for their risk. Still, some Oroboroi make daytrips to the Shatter. For groceries. Being fused with Twilight and Worldblood, the Shatter's edibles are worth triple Calories.

Epilogue: Silence

She left the box open for a little while, just to hear it tick. She really did miss it. The metronome of the beat. A secret friend beneath the surface that so often goes unnoticed. But it makes a difference when he's gone.

Cameron recalled something a friend of hers once said. "Every heart has a certain number of beats, and after that? Kaput. Like a light-bulb. They just flicker out." She wondered how many beats this Heart had left. This second-hand Heart.

She closed the box. The heavy woodwork of the rehashed music box blocked the beats from escaping, and there was silence. Cameron retired to her bed. When would her last moment come? In ten minutes? Ten centuries? She had inflicted this upon herself, the wonders and horrors of a life both short and eternal. Now it seemed more horror than wonder, though. She stirred on the mattress, though its springs refused to creak. Silence.

She would not sleep tonight.

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Concept:
Virtue:
Vice:

Method:
School:
Province:



ATTRIBUTES

POWER Intelligence: ●○○○○○ (○) Strength: ●○○○○○ (○) Presence: ●○○○○○ (○)
 FINESSE Wits: ●○○○○○ (○) Dexterity: ●○○○○○ Manipulation: ●○○○○○ (○)
 RESISTANCE Resolve: ●○○○○○ Stamina: ●○○○○○ Composure: ●○○○○○

SKILLS

MENTAL

(-3 UNSKILLED)

Academics _____ ○○○○○○
 Computer _____ ○○○○○○
 Crafts _____ ○○○○○○
 Investigation _____ ○○○○○○
 Medicine _____ ○○○○○○
 Occult _____ ○○○○○○
 Politics _____ ○○○○○○
 Science _____ ○○○○○○

PHYSICAL

(-1 UNSKILLED)

Athletics _____ ○○○○○○
 Brawl _____ ○○○○○○
 Drive _____ ○○○○○○
 Firearms _____ ○○○○○○
 Larceny _____ ○○○○○○
 Stealth _____ ○○○○○○
 Survival _____ ○○○○○○
 Weaponry _____ ○○○○○○

SOCIAL

(-1 UNSKILLED)

Animal Ken _____ ○○○○○○
 Empathy _____ ○○○○○○
 Expression _____ ○○○○○○
 Intimidation _____ ○○○○○○
 Persuasion _____ ○○○○○○
 Socialize _____ ○○○○○○
 Streetwise _____ ○○○○○○
 Subterfuge _____ ○○○○○○

MERITS

_____ ○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○
 _____ ○○○○○○
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FLAWS

ASPECTS

_____ ○○○○○○
 _____ □□□□□
 _____ ○○○○○○
 _____ □□□□□
 _____ ○○○○○○
 _____ □□□□□
 _____ ○○○○○○
 _____ □□□□□

MORTAL TRAITS

Size: _____
 Defense: _____
 Initiative mod: _____
 Speed: _____
 Armor: _____

OTHER TRAITS

HEALTH

○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○
 □□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□

WILLPOWER

○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○
 □□□□□□□□□□□□□□

FURNACE

●○○○○○○○○○○○○

BREATH

□□□□□□□□□□
 □□□□□□□□□□

Caloric Points

_____ / _____

ETHICS

10 _____ ○
 9 _____ ○
 8 _____ ○
 7 _____ ○
 6 _____ ○
 5 _____ ○
 4 _____ ○
 3 _____ ○
 2 _____ ○
 1 _____ ○

HEART

□□□□□

Attributes 5/4/3 • Skills 11/7/4 (+3 Specialties) • Method • School • Province • Aspects 5/3/2 (Common/Method/Choice) • Philosophies 1/1 (School, Choice) • (Buying the fifth dot in Attributes, Skills, Merits, or Aspects costs 2 points) • Favored Attribute (+1 Strength Slayer, +1 Intelligence Finder, +1 Wits Challenger, +1 Manipulation Trickster, +1 Presence Inheritor) • Health = Stamina + Size • Willpower = Resolve + Composure • Size = Five for adult humans • Defense = Lowest of Dexterity or Wits • Initiative Mod = Dexterity + Composure • Speed = Strength + Dexterity + 5 • Starting Ethics = 7 • Furnace starts at 1 dot • Breath = Ethics

It's haunting, isn't it? That disembodied beat.
It keeps perfect time, you know.
Lub Dub-a-dub lub.

I will not lie.
I was weak. I feared death, and craved power.
...both appetites have been thoroughly satiated now.

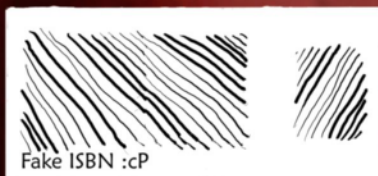
Joining this club is like going to a party with lemmings.
Don't get me wrong, it's the experience of a lifetime.
But when the night is over, everybody jumps.

We used to be a blazing inferno. We used to be so
powerful. At least, that's what everybody says.

There's no stoking the embers. There's no fuel left.
This is our final hour.

Let's go out with a bang.

For use with the
World of Darkness Rulebook



This is a fan product



www.worldofdarkness.com



Dragon
the Embers

