

DRAGON  
THE  
CUMBERS

## 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 imminent 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 13<sup>th</sup>, 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 Orobouoi, Nathan and I. We met in 1912."

"That word, 'Oroboroi'... it's derivative of Oroboros, 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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This book uses the supernatural for settings, characters, and themes. All mystical and supernatural elements are fiction and intended for entertainment purposes only. This book contains mature content. Reader discretion is advised.

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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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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. It takes time to adjust. Of anything it is an unforgettable, if not solitary, experience.

## Schools and Philosophies

After the metamorphosis a dragon has to make a decision: whether or not to remove her Heart. The prospect of immortality wins most over. As she pursues this removal (or have someone else assist in the matter, if courage is insufficient), a new Oroborei is faced with a grim consideration. She has just ended the life of another to become something... unnatural. Will she accept this burden and try to live up to the responsibility? Or will she shut her eyes and close her ears and run until her feet bleed? This decision will dictate which school she pursues when the deed is done. The prior is the mentality of the Dominion school of Embers, and the latter the mentality of the Saintly Devil school of the Five Evils.

But there are those who undergo the metamorphosis but remain unaware of these decisions. Or perhaps they actively set out to defy them. These are the True Hearts, those that do not remove their Heart and thus eschew the allure of immortality. Sometimes more experienced Oroborei can set them straight. But mostly these

True Hearts expire swiftly and are replaced by newer members.

After choosing how she will handle her new condition (her school of thought), the new dragon then chooses a Philosophy, the lens through which she examines all things. While the school determines how they will handle their new identity, a Philosophy dictates how an Oroborei will handle the world around her. It is her world outlook and her primary motivation.

## 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 Oroborei 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.

Unlike the ones they dethroned, the Oroborei are NOT indisputable gods, and their authority can be challenged. Because of their nature as usurpers, their status as kings is not secure. Their well-being is directly related to the respect they receive in their positions, and to have that authority questioned literally turns their flesh to stone. Fossilization from insubordination is a serious threat for any Oroborei, which is why they must fight for authority in every avenue they can find.

### 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 Oroborei. 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei, go to **Chapter Two**. It details all the physical traits a dragon can incorporate into her True Form, as well as the mysterious powers Edicts grant her.

**Chapter Three** covers mechanics exclusive to dragons, from assuming Oroborei traits to the dietary requirements of the Furnace to the conditions of fossilization, death, and resurrection. This chapter also covers the function of the draconic Code of Ethics (their alternative to Morality), as well as special combat 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. Discover the supernatural history behind the City by the Bay, explore the conflict of an Oroborei-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 Ablution 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 Oroborig. 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

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**Ablution:** A physical trait of dragonhood. To manifest an Ablution is to relinquish human features and be washed over by the heat of the divine. To disband an Ablution is to disguise the true nature and blend in the muck.

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

**Antecedent:** An Oroborei Heart's previous owner.

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

**Breath:** The heat of a dragon's Furnace, it fuels the Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei. The birth of the schools.

**Common Ablution:** A draconic trait common to Oroborei of all Methods.

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

**Daylight:** The Material world.

**Deep Ones:** Otherworldly Faustian bargainers.

**Den:** An alliance of Oroborei.

**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.

**Edict:** Thought made reality. An enforcement of will upon the material, instigated by a proclamation. Dragon magic.

**Embers School:** The group of Philosophies practiced by the Embers Oroborei, based off lessons learned in the Collapse.

**Ethics:** Dragon Morality.

**Finder:** An Oroborei 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 blood pumping muscle. A dragon's weak point and most treasured possession, theirs possesses nine-chambers.

**Hedge, the:** The Fae world, comprised of promise and fate. The Bramble holds it separate from Daylight.

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

**Inheritor:** An Oroborei 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 Ablutions, immediately after consuming an Oroborei Heart.

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

**Method Ablution:** Ablutions seen most frequently in dragons of a particular Method.

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

**Non-Method Ablution:** Ablutions not usually seen in dragons of a particular Method.

**Oroborei (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 Oroborei outlook and worldview.

**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 Oroborei after the Collapse to bring 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 Saintly 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 Greenhorns:** A True Heart Philosophy, or rather a total lack of Philosophy. The term is used derisively against young Oroborei that don't know what they're up against.

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

**Philosophy of Pride:** A Saintly 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 Saintly 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 Traditionalists:** A True Heart Philosophy that believes the only way to reclaim the glory of the original Dragons is to shun the deep god's offer of immortality and cling to the Heart proper. Their power is maddening, though their lives are short.

**Philosophy of Wrath:** A Saintly 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 Oroborei brain. Highly coveted.

**Reforging:** The process of manifesting Ablutions.

**Saintly Devil School:** The group of Philosophies practiced by the Scholars of the Five Evils, determined to expunge the wicked but doomed to backslide.

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

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

**Shayatin:** Corpse eaters that live in the Dreamtide.

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

**Slayer:** An Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 Ablutions manifest.

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

**Twilight:** A state of existence where an object exists in the Material world but is not material. The object may be composed of Ephemeral, Astral, Empyrean, Plasm, or Fate particles, or any combination of such. Dragons that have removed their Hearts are forced into this state of existence while their bodies are being repaired from fatal injury.

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

## *Slang*

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**Burnouts:** Heart Eaters.

**Coatls:** Central/South American Dragons.

**Pigs:** Shayatin.

**Drakes:** European Dragons.

**Englund:** Nightmares.

**Fishes:** Deep Ones.

**Fog/The Fog:** The Miasma.

**Ghidorahs:** Hydras.

**Grimms:** Changelings.

**Karloffs:** Prometheans.

**Lons:** Werecreatures.

**Lugosi:** Vampires.

**McKellens:** UK Dragons, also Mages and Thaumaturges.

**Rains:** Ghosts.

**Romeros:** Sin-Eaters.

**Sea/The Sea:** The Dreamtide.

**Spanish Inquisition:** Knights of the Bloody Chalice.

**Snakes:** Celtic and Korean Dragons.

**Trippers:** Lucid Dreamers.

**Wights:** Old term of the Undead.

**Winchesters:** Wanna-be Hunters.

**Wyrms:** Asian main land Dragons; old term for Celtic Dragons.

**Zillas:** Pacific Rim Asian Dragons.

# Chapter One: Fire of the Orobos

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 Oroborei, 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 untoouchable 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei. But what is that like? First off, it's the worst heartburn she 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei, 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 what she is 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 treasure hunting 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 a con, 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 Ablutions 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 Ablutions 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 Ablutions. 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 meter upon which she measures herself. Within each school are a series of world views called Philosophies, which act as the lens through a member of the Oroborei uses to understand the world. The Dominion School Philosophies are based on conclusions regarding the Collapse, and the Schools of the Five Evils Philosophies 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.

## Dominion Philosophies

### Ash

The Dominion Philosophy 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 Philosophy 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 Philosophy 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 Philosophy 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 Philosophy 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.

## Five Evils Philosophies

### Wrath

The Five Evils Philosophy 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 Philosophy 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 Philosophy 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 Philosophy 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 Philosophy 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 Philosophies

### Greenhorn

More the absence of a Philosophy than a command decision, Greenhorn dragons don't understand the Oroborei condition and wander about in a confused daze until someone sets them straight. They make easy recruits for either school of thought.

### Traditionalist

Those that know the risks and still refuse to remove the symbol of their joy take on the True Heart Philosophy of the Traditionalist, following in the footsteps of the original dragon kings. Making such a decision involves integrating the metamorphosis

into one's personality instead of rejecting or justifying it. Traditionalist 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 Oroborei.

## Life of the Flickering Flames

The Oroborei may live virtually forever, but such a life is not without hardships. Besides the immediately apparent horror of outliving all their loved ones, an Oroborei 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 Oroborei for her Heart, red pearl, or blood (would-be dragons, greed-hoarders, or Knights of the Bloody Chalice respectively).

Another thing the Oroborei 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 Oroborei take on a province to occupy their time. This is also an instinctual defense mechanism, for if their authority is threatened they risk becoming a relic of history... literally. Threats to their power translate to fossilization of their flesh. Being a king among men is thus a necessity.

## Oroborei 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 Oroborei will interact.

It is this 'island' mentality that keeps the Oroborei in check, as they are too paranoid and greedy to actually collaborate on a regular basis. So in truth, the Oroborei 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) Oroborei follow.

### *1: The Subjects must not Know*

The presence of the Oroborei 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 Oroborei are forbidden from interacting with the Hungry both as a message of self-preservation and for the good of their species. If an Oroborei meets one of the heart-eaters, she should kill him, or find somebody who can.

### *3: The Righteous must honor Surrender*

Members of the Oroborei 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 Oroborei. Those that extend these courtesies to mortals are exceptional, but rare. The golden rule of survival enforces this. If an Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei who called dragon alliances a 'Den of Evil'. Unfortunately, the name stuck.

The Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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. What an Oroborei 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.

It's a reason to live. Pretty much the only reason. The province also gives an Oroborei a direct line to a position of authority, which her Heart demands as protection from the threat of fossilization. After all, a king in rags is no different than a beggar.

## 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei that eat dragon Hearts to stoke their Furnace, are a constant and dangerous force in the darkness. Official dragon committees might arrange for a Heart to be 'misplaced' in the hands of a prospective candidate, effectively replacing the previous owner. Then, there are those who wish to snuff out dragon-kind completely, and these predators hunt for Hearts so they can destroy them.

The Knights of the Bloody Chalice are a lingering problem for all the night folk, but especially for the Oroborei. 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei.

### 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.

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 Oroborei). 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.

### Those that Hunt for Heart

The most dangerous of the dragon's enemies, those that hunt for an Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 seeking to join have been a problem to the Oroborei since the Collapse, though only on a personal level. Since consuming a Heart kills a dragon and makes a new one, the Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei. 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei prosperity.

### Conspirators

Like mortals, Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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.

### Exterminators

Another class of Mortals that know of the Oroborei condition, but hunt for different purpose, exterminators seek to accelerate the extinction of the species by destroying as many Hearts as possible. Perhaps they blame all Dragonkind for some facet of their lives, or perhaps they simply see the Oroborei as monsters of the past that are long overdue a visit from the reaper. Regardless of motivation, exterminators are extremely dangerous on both a personal and species-wide level, and so they are dealt with quickly and discreetly.

Thankfully, exterminators are undone by their dedication to the hunt. Their visage quite easily portrays their hate, and their tempers usually drive them to tip their hand too early. Those that know how to be patient, though, are more dangerous than any supernatural threat could ever be.

### 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 Oroborei. 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 Oroborei. 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 Oroborei, but where dragons sustain themselves on scores of edibles, Vampires must feed on blood.

For the most part, the Kindred and the Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei. 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 Oroborei. 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. Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei. 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 a state of Twilight for her body to repair itself. This phase between worlds gives her a glimpse into the places that surround the Daylight. Though she can only gain access to the Dreamtide, she can still glean information as she sees others slip in and out of these realms.

### *Werewolves, Vampires and Mages, oh my!*

Though discussed as possible threats to an Oroborei, 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 Oroborei.

### *Credit where Credit is Due*

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.

## **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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei can get through the Gauntlet, the Shadow looks like the world through a mirror darkly (thus the name). Since Oroborei 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 Oroborei know of the Hedge at all.

The Hedge is protected by a towering line of bloodied thorns, which the Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei. Everything within is... alive.

## **The Underworld**

Not everything that dies leaves a ghost. Most things are severed into five essential forces: nature, nurture, potential, faith, and fate. Nature is the part that forms a ghost, and it usually goes 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 Daylight, which the Bound neglected to name, is often called the Wall by the Oroborei. 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 Oroborei get a quick peek when they do so.

Antecedents who cannot sustain themselves in the state of Twilight fall through the Wall, never to return. Oroborei 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 Solstice

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 Solstice is filled to capacity with this purified potential—at least at its surface—and the Oroborei believe it's held at bay to keep from drowning out the world in white.

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

As for the Solstice 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 Solstice 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 twelve philosophies available to an Oroborei. Also included are the various Ablutions a dragon can manifest, as well as all twenty-four Edicts 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: Character Concept

In accordance with the Dark Pack agreement, no fan document may contain the rules for character creation. As such, the sections in red were written and then excised from this document.

You will need the World of Darkness Rulebook to complete every step except step 5, which is specifically about the template.

### Step Two: Select Attributes

Excised

#### 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 44-48)

Choose a Philosophy (see page 49-73)

For beginning Ablutions, place five dots in common Ablutions, three dots in Method Ablutions, and two "free pick" dots in Ablutions from *any* category (see pages 73-96). For beginning Edicts, place one dot in the Edict specified by your Philosophy, and place another dot in an Edict of your choice. (see pages 96-125)

Dragons have access to Merits specially designed for them (see page 41-43)

Morality is now called Ethics (see page 137)

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 Ablutions (Unless they are associated with another player).

Excised

### Step Three: Select Skills

Excised

Excised

## Step Four: Select Skill Specialties

Excised

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

### Philosophies

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

Check the Dominion philosophies (pp.49-59)—or possibly the philosophies of the Five Evils (pages 60-70)—and pick one that fits your character's mindset. If you have trouble, ask your Storyteller or the other players for their opinion. And if you do pick one of the Five Evils, you'd better be prepared for character creation to get *very* complex.

Philosophies help a dragon direct their command of thought made reality, which in turn makes them more competent with a particular type of Edict.

### 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 Ablutions more quickly, have more Breath to spend on Edicts, 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 39.

### Breath

A measure of the dragon's energy, Breath not only fuels certain Ablutions, it is refined to bring material force to Edicts. A dragon with high breath is capable of belching waves of flame, using complex combinations of Edicts, 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, uses certain Ablutions, or eats. It is described in full on page 40.

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.

### Ablutions

When a dragon undergoes her metamorphosis, she acquires a number of "divinities" (as the Oroborei call them) that define her True Form. Traits, or features, or rather Ablutions as they are most commonly called, all grant a biological boost to the would-be leader. A starting dragon begins play with ten Ablutions. Five must be drawn from the Common Ablution 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).

Ablutions are explored in further detail on pages 73-96.

### Edicts

Edicts are a mindset made real by force of will, burned onto the real world with a blast of Breath. They are the only potency dragons do not draw from their own genetic structure; they are the power of idea. Oroborei start with only two Edicts, the first

level associated with their Philosophy, and one level from any Edict of their choice.

It is possible to start with two levels of a single Edict, provided it's the edict associated with the character's Philosophy. For more on Edicts, see page 96.

## Step Six: Select Merits

Excised

see pages 41-43 for Merits specifically Oroborei 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 (it's the source of that nasty migrane). Becoming a member of the Oroborei 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 137 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

### 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

### Philosophy

Choose the frame of thought that your character follows. Twelve philosophies are available.

#### Embers

*Ash (Ruin)*: anarchists, demolitionists, saboteurs  
*Blood (Oath)*: prosecutors, judges, executioners

*Bone (Hippocratic)*: pacifists, humanitarians, menders

*Sweat (Agony)*: workaholics, contractors, tanks

*Tears (Hysteria)*: zealots, mediators, puppeteers

#### Saintly Devils

*Wrath (Rampage)*: prey/predator  
*Pride (Assembly)*:

sheep/shepherd

*Greed (Property)*: ascetic/abyss

*Lust (Comfort)*: abstainer/addict

*Sloth (Trance)*: brigadier/bum

#### True Heart

*Greenhorn (Phantom)*: naïve, fresh, mortal

*Traditionalist (Astral)*: stubborn, powerful, mortal

she look like? What are her features like when she sports True Form? The Ablutions 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.

### Furnace

The default Furnace rating of an Oroborei 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 Oroborei character begins play with a number of points of Breath equal to her Ethics rating.

#### Merits

Dragon Merits include Graft (● to ●●●●●), Hoard (● to ●●●●●), Language: Draconic (● 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	
Ablution	New dots x 5

Method	
Ablution	New dots x 5
Non-Method	
Ablution	New dots x 6

Primary	
Edict	New dots x 6
Ancillary	
Edict	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 Oroborei. 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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.

### Step One: Concept

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.

### Step Two: Attributes

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

To successfully ensnare prey, he needs to be quick on his feet, but being charming certainly doesn't hurt. And the increased social prowess fits with the career the Bartender has chosen. Since Jesse sees serial murder as a matter of control, he doesn't feel his character needs to be immediately powerful. As long as he gets the jump on his victim, strength and stamina will not play a part.

As Social is his character's primary category, Jesse has

#### Excised

Composure, which Jesse feels is necessary for both his Bartender's profession and hobby.

#### Excised

Manipulation, mainly because as an American bartender Jesse's character could only be more invisible if he were a chameleon.

#### Excised

The Bartender's secondary category, Mental, has **Excised**. Jesse feels his Bartender should be at least average when it comes to intellectual pursuits, so **Excised**

Believing his character will need to be quick to improvise, he **Excised**

Finally, the tertiary category, Physical, has **Excised**. Any good alcohol vendor needs at least a bit of endurance, and some finesse to put on a performance. Jesse decides his homicidal bartender is a performing bartender, and so **Excised** Dexterity. **Excised** Stamina, so the Bartender has the capacity to work his whole shift.

**Excised**

### Step Three: Skills

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**

He justifies this with the fact that the Bartender's profession, while primarily social, consists of very limited interaction, and thus his bloody hobby would have a greater array of talent.

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

Jesse decides that as a listening board and

penny-jar psychiatrist, any liquor vendor needs a wide variety of training in the field of social interaction.

**Excised**

Jesse thinks hard on what a Bartender would need. No inspiration there, so he turns to the other side of his character. Jesse feels being a successful serial killer would require at least Larceny and Stealth, but he throws Weaponry in as well (what kind of killer doesn't know how to use his weapon?).

**Excised**

### Step Four: Skill Specialties

**Excised**  
Medicine, "Toxins", Science, "Anatomy",  
Weaponry "Knives".

### 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 44 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 Philosophy of Dominion fits his character's persona almost perfectly, so Jesse takes a look. After briefly comparing it to the other philosophies, he agrees that it's the best fit for the Bartender. The Hysteria Edict 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 Ablutions. Jesse has five dots for the Hearts Suit, three dots for the Clubs Suit, and two dots to place where he pleases. Inferno 1, Impervious Hide 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 Oroborei template is the selection of Edicts. Only two dots are available, and one is already designated for the Hysteria Edict due to Jesse's Philosophy selection. He decides to place the other dot in Hysteria as well, since it presents more immediate utility than the first level of a different Edict.

#### Step Six: Merits

Jesse has **Excised**, 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 Oroborei. 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. Contacts (the Downtrodden) 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 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

#### Excised

Jesse has already decided the Bartender's Vice is Gluttony. 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 declares the Bartender's Virtue is Hope. 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 Ablutions 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". Zuke. 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 Oroborig 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 Oroborig. To combat the cold world of politics and secrecy, dragons store their fuel-source at the core of their body. Both a

#### Effects of Furnace

Furnace	Attribute/Skill Maximum	Max Breath/Max Breath per Turn	Furnace Bandwidth	Heartbeat	Breath Meal Requirement
1	5	10/1	5	0	3
2	5	11/1	8	+1	3
3	5	12/1	11	+1	3
4	5	13/2	14	+2	3
5	5	14/2	17	+2	3
6	6	15/3	20	+3	4
7	7	20/5	23	+3	6
8	8	30/7	26	+4	8
9	9	50/10	29	+4	12
10	10	100/15	32	+5	18

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 Edicts, it incinerates the supernatural before it reaches her person (see the "Supernatural Conflict" sidebar on page 96), 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 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.

Furnace also determines the amount of Bandwidth a dragon has to dedicate to Ablutions. A low-Furnace body can only handle a few points of Ablutions simultaneously, whereas a high-Furnace body can handle a wider array of synchronized draconic features. Breath can mitigate this issue, but it is an expensive and temporary fix. This system is explained in more detail in Chapter 3, starting on page 128.

### **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 Oroborei 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 meals equal to or exceeding the listed value for her Furnace rating. This also affects how many meals 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 explained in further detail in Chapter 3, starting on page 134).

### **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 electricity, 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 consumption. Breath may be expended to:

- Stave off Starvation. One point of Breath must be spent every day 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.
- Increase Furnace bandwidth by three for the scene, for the sake of manifesting more Ablutions.
- Gather forging points to assume Ablutions as a reflexive action instead of a reforging action. Ablution mechanics are explained in detail in Chapter 3 (page 128).

- Power Edicts. The available Edicts can be found on pages 96-125.
- 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 aggravated wound. This price must be paid in a lump sum).
- Fly with the appropriate Ablution.
- Breathe Fire with the appropriate Ablution.
- Pump up an Attribute with the appropriate Ablution.
- Protect gear and clothes from the wear and tear caused by Ablutions (for one scene).
- Brand a piece of property.

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

- Eat the required number of meals or meal substitutes for your Furnace rating (see page 134 in Chapter 3).
- 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 Oroborei. 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 Ablutions 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 154. 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 the sum of its ratings 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 3 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. That means Hoard 3 grants three Breath per day and Hoard 5 grants five Breath per 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 25 at 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 Oroborei 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 his dots in this Merit. If successful, he begins his life as one of the Oroborei with an extra dot of Furnace.

A dragon that spawns 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 Ablutions that the Heart-segment's owner possesses. While he is using those Ablutions, she cannot activate them herself (for more information, see "Borrowing Ablutions" on page 134 in Chapter 3). The participant may also use up to three dots of the dragon's highest Edict (and any of the laws she knows). 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, but the reverse is not true. 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 a True Heart parent 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 Ablution points possessed by the parent (Mother or Father, determined at character creation) and the child can use Ablution 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 Oroborei. They also do not benefit from Degrees of Divinity.

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. While the character

possesses this merit, he is as vulnerable to jadeite as a regular Oroborei.

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

## Language: Draconic (• to •••)

*Prerequisite:* Occult ••

*Effect:* The Oroborei has studied the ancient written language of dragons. This merit proffers different levels of literacy at different ratings.

1 dot -- Pictographic (Current - Mesopotamian)

The Oroborei can communicate messages of middling complexity through the use of draconic symbols. The symbols available are complex enough to project full messages, but not with any kind of efficiency. This language evolved from the one crafted by the Oroborei after the collapse.

2 dots -- Engraved (Pre-Mesopotamian to the Collapse)

Older than the pictographic language, these carved symbols were used to portray the most basic

of emotional stimulus. "Safe", "Danger", "Knight", "Leech", and so forth in that manner. They are like hobo symbols. The Engraved draconic was the language developed by the Oroborei immediately after they overthrew the original dragons. While it is rumored some of them could understand (but not write) the original draconic, those that possessed this talent were felled by the wave of usurpers in the Collapse, so the original language was lost.

3 dots -- Written (Dominion)

Before they were destroyed, the original dragons had a sophisticated array of alphanumeric characters that could portray the subtlest of emotional messages. It was said that simply touching these messages would clear the Miasma and feed an idea directly into the dragon's mind. The Oroborei, distant as they were from the Dreamtide, could not crack these codes, though. It was only recently that some learned to read them at all, and they were not able to draw in the moving awe the words were originally fabled to possess. Still, they can read it, and sometimes they can write it. It makes a great secret code, though, for only one with a Dragon's Heart can ever decipher it.

## ***Slayer: The Rabid Monster, Those who Claim through Violence***

The least tactful of the Oroborei, 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 Oroborei 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.

Ablutions 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 laxess 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 Oroborei 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.

Ablutions 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 Oroborig, 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.

Ablutions 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.

Ablutions 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 Oroborei. 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 Ablutions 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.

## School of Dominion

The Philosophies 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 Philosophy has its own interpretation of this event, and how dragonkind should learn from it. It is expected that Players will choose one of these five philosophies.

## Philosophy 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 Oroborei 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 Ablutions 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.

**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 Oroborei 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 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.

### 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.

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**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. My bad attitude is not likely to have a change of heart.

**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.

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.

Ash dragons begin play with a dot in the Ruin Edict (see page 121).

**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*

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## Philosophy 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 rretched 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.

**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 philosophy 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.

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**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.

Blood dragons begin play with a dot in the Oath Edict (see page 115).

**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.*

## Philosophy 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 Oroborei 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 philosophies 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.

**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.

### 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.

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**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.

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.

Bone dragons begin play with a dot in the Hippocratic Edict (see page 108).

**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 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.*

## Philosophy 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 philosophy 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.

**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 Oroborei. 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 philosophy.

### 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 you. Sometimes, a hammer is just a hammer.

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**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.

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.

Sweat dragons begin play with a dot in the Agony Edict (see page 97).

**Province:** The province of a Sweat dragon is probably the largest of all the philosophies, 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 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.*

## Philosophy 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 Oroborei.

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.

**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 Oroborei 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.

### 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.

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**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.

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 revolves around the core

deception, which makes for an uneasy alliance should anyone Den with them.

Tears dragons begin play with a dot in the Hysteria Edict (see page 110).

**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.*

## School of the Five Evils

The School of Five Evils, unlike the School of Dominion, is far more isolated, and its Philosophies are all based on the same principle: that one sin is far worse to indulge than all the others. Ironically, the Edicts these Philosophies prep an Oroborei for 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 Philosophies 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 Philosophy. 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 Oroborei, and none see them as the gravest atrocity. They are a necessary evil.

Saintly Devil dragons face a largely different system of character creation, explained in great detail in Chapter 3 (page 140). In short, when the sin they're fleeing catches up to them, their entire personality is turned on its head.

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

## Philosophy 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 snapped."*

Saintly Devil dragons who fall prey to the philosophy 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 philosophy 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.

### 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.

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**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. 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.

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**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.

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.

**Edict:** Wrath dragons begin play with a dot in the Rampage Edict (see page 120). Because of their normally timid nature, they refrain from using Edicts while they are in their “Good” mode. When in “Bad” mode, they are particularly fond of both Rampage and Earth, to cause the most collateral damage in the shortest span.

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

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

**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.*

## Philosophy of Pride: Shepherds to the Masses

A crowd had gathered in the plaza. Or rather, amalgamated in the plaza. A woman had just started bandstanding, 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 Oroborig 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.

### 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.

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**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.

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 a 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 Pride dragon's sickening charm, or the Edicts that addle their senses 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.

### 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?

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**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.

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 her 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.

**Edict:** Pride dragons begin play with a dot in the Assembly Edict (see page 99). They will not use this Edict while in “Good” mode, but they may pursue other less-obvious proclamations, such as the Network and Due Process Edicts. When in “Bad” mode, they use the Assembly and Metal Edicts almost exclusively.

**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 shoemarks 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.*

## Philosophy 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.

### 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?

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**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.

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.

### 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.

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**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.

Greed dragons are the progenitors of Grafts. They invented the ritual through which they are crafted. Though most other Oroborei 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.

**Edict:** Greed dragons begin play with a dot in the Property Edict (see page 119). In “Good” mode they tend to favor the Network, Water, and Polygraphy Edicts. When in “Bad” mode, they will use as much of the Property Edict as they know, and then turn to Phantom and Artillery as they go looting.

**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!*

## Philosophy 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.

### 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 overcompensating?

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**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.

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 dedication grants them a guarantee they will not be distracted, even as their entrails are falling out.

### Stereotypes—Bad Mode

**Wrath Dragons:** Huh? What's that noise?

**Pride Dragons:** [Slams window shut]

**Greed Dragons:** No comment.

**Sloth Dragons:** You were gone?

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**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.

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.

**Edict:** Lust dragons begin play with a dot in the Comfort Edict (see page 103). They use these proclamations just about evenly in both modes. In “Good” mode they tend to favor the Camaraderie

and Wood Edicts. In “Bad” mode, Husbandry and Mutilation become the favorites.

**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.*

## Philosophy 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 Saintly Devils, Sloth dragons do the most good in "Good" mode.

### 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.

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.

### 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.

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.

**Edict:** Sloth dragons begin play with a dot in the Trance Edict (see page 122). They won't touch it in "Good" mode, though. Fire, Polygraphy, Camaraderie, Oath, and Hippocratic Edicts are the "Good" Sloth dragon's focus (or over-focus). In

"Bad" mode, Sloth dragons use the Trance and Phantom Edicts almost exclusively.

**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, 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 two other Oroborig 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.

True Heart Oroborig are the most difficult to play. The advantages, such as pilot-light offspring, are limited and extroverted. These Philosophies are intended for players who are looking for an extra challenge, as the only real advantage is access to the Astral Edict and wordless proclamation of Edicts.

## *Philosophy of Greenhorns: Children at the Edge of Inferno*

*Did somebody just shove an ice-pick in my head? And my heart... it feels like my chest is going to burst.*

Membership in the Greenhorns isn't really a decision. In fact, it isn't really a membership, it's just a label assigned by those who already decided to join a group. Greenhorns are united only in their ignorance of their options.

Greenhorns tend to distance themselves from the lives they once lived, absorbed by the difference their new state presents. They alienate friends and family. These abrupt changes make the Greenhorn an easy mark. Unless another Oroborei takes them under her wing, they're likely not to last long.

**Mannerism and Background:** Since a Greenhorn is an Oroborei that has not chosen a philosophy yet, they come in all varieties. Still, they tend to be infatuated with their new power, and the swagger they strut with is distinctively narcissistic.

**Character Creation:** Greenhorns have no preference for attributes or skills. They do begin play with a dot in the Network Edict (see page 114).

**Province:** Greenhorns are too self-involved to take a Province.

**Quote:** *Hey, do you ever just stand in front of a mirror and... nah, you must. Definitely.*

### Stereotypes

**Scholars of Dominion:** What's with the humanitarian thing? Blegh.

**Scholars of the Five Evils:** You mean you don't like being like this?

**Vampires:** Those things are real?

**Werewolves:** Born that way? That's nothing like the movies.

**Mages:** Tell me more.

**Mortals:** Sometimes I can't believe how blind I used to be. Poor guys, stumbling around with their eyes poked out.

## Philosophy of Traditionalists: 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.*

Traditionalists 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei” becomes another feature in their impressive whole, but it is not the defining feature.

Traditionalist 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:** Traditionalist dragons are as varied as the people of the world. Being an Oroborei doesn’t faze them. As such, it is impossible to sum them up, as there is no summary to be made.

**Character Creation:** Traditionalists 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 Oroborei and to bear the confidence necessary to stay mortal after enlisting. Traditionalist dragons begin play with a dot in the Astral Edict (see page 100).

**Province:** The province of a Traditionalist 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. Pitiable, 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.

## Ablutions

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’. Ablutions are these traits.

Members of the Oroborei define for themselves what it means to be a dragon, both spiritually and physically. The combined complement of Ablutions 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.

Ablutions 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 Oroborei can freely learn Ablutions from the common suit and the suit of their Method, but Ablutions 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 Ablutions. Partly their preconceptions about dragons from fiction, partly a conversion of their personality into physical characteristics, these first Ablutions give the new dragon some defense mechanisms for her new Furnace. Five Ablutions are chosen from the Heart suit, those common to all dragon-kind. Three Ablutions come from the dragon’s Method suit, which is determined by the means through which their Heart was acquired. Finally, two Ablutions can be chosen from any suit, including those not associated with the dragon’s Method.

The only way to get new Ablutions 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 Ablutions in this manner. (Ablutions must be acquired *sequentially*.)

Having a complex array of Ablutions available means more power at your disposal, but also a larger effort to use them. More Ablutions means a longer trek to True Form, as well as more issues with Furnace bandwidth. But more points mean more room to increase your dragon’s Degree of Divinity. Ablutions must be manifest, so simply owning them does not grant any benefit. The rules for

manifesting Ablutions are explained in Chapter 3 (page 128).

The Ablutions 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 Ablution creation guide is provided in the sidebar at the end of this section (page 125).

All Ablutions 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 Oroborei 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 Ablutions 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 short 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 Oroborei can make that deals aggravated damage. The amount is equal to the points manifest in this Ablution.

**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.

## **Impervious Hide (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 Ablution 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 ablution is manifest at any rating, the dragon possesses the bulletproof quality everywhere except her vulnerable scale (see page 133 in Chapter 3).

The armor ratings from this Ablution 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 sections, which are slightly puffy and hard to the touch.

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

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

## **Firearms versus Athletics**

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

## **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 Ablution allows them to do so.

Having any amount of points active in this Ablution 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 Ablution. 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 Ablution. That means attacks made with the claws ignore an amount of the target’s close armor rating equal to the points manifest in this Ablution. Claws make no distinction between biological and non-biological armor. Attacks with the Claws are made with Strength + Brawl, and the damage rating is two lethal. More information on Piercing Strike can be found in Chapter 3 on page 147.

**Type:** Sequential

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** Strength + Brawl

**Action:** Instant

**Tells**

**Minor:** The dragon’s fingernails thicken, point to the center, and elongate slightly. The trait of a derelict man, 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 rip through fabrics that seek to contain them.

### **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, rendering the damage rating equal to the yards she’s traveled before striking (maximum bonus equal to her Stamina).

This weapon has the “Knock-Back” feature with a rating equal to the points manifest in this Ablution.

That means any strike with the horns flings a victim a number of yards equal to the points manifest in this Ablution, at a speed equal to ten times the points manifest in this Ablution. 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. More information on Knock-Back can be found in Chapter 3 on page 147.

**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 horns elongate. 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, eight inches long and twisted to impale and toss and impossible to conceal at any distance. They cannot be concealed.

### **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 a dragon’s very touch a dangerous weapon.

Those in direct contact with the dragon suffer a point of bashing damage for each point manifest in this Ablution. 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 for a number of turns equal to that rating, after which all clothes involved catch fire if flammable (except the dragon’s clothes, provided she’s spent Breath to protect them). See “The Cost of Clothes” sidebar below). Many Oroborei who utilize this Ablution will first remove some of their protective gear so that their skin inflicts the most harm.

Fires started in this manner are of size torch and intensity candle, meaning they inflict one lethal wound per turn. They are caused by friction heat and thus quenched by any means attempted. Burning clothes deal damage in addition to the bashing damage from Fire Skin, provided contact is

maintained. The Oroborei is NOT protected from these secondary fires, unless she spends Willpower to absorb the flames.

For more information on fire consult the **World of Darkness** Rulebook, page 180.

**Type:** Sequential

**Cost:** 1 Willpower to ignore flames ignited by the Ablution

**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 Ablution, however.

### *Serpentine (Eight of Hearts)*

The dragon is possessed of snakelike flexibility, and the added 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, she may treat herself as a smaller size for the purpose of traversing tight spaces. Her effective size is reduced by the even points manifest in this Ablution, to a minimum of size 1.

**Type:** Odd over Even

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** None

**Tells**

**Minor:** The dragon becomes twice as limber as she was before. Her muscles slim slightly and she can contort into unusual positions without much effort. She might be mistaken for a yoga master.

**Moderate:** In addition to minor, the dragon's hinge joints all become double-jointed, allowing her to bend elbows, knees, toes, and fingers in the opposite direction. This can be quite disturbing to watch.

**Major:** The dragon loses her joints in favor of spine-like supports for her limbs. They become completely fluidly flexible and can twist into

impossible positions. The best description for this would be rubberized arms.

### *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 Ablution. 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 leeched into dragon anatomy, making Oroborei 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

Ablution. 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.

**Major:** The dragon's tongue splits halfway, with each tip expressing a severe point. It flits out when the dragon speaks.

### Why Buy Skills?

Many Ablutions provide a bonus to skills, improving the natural talents an Oroborei 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 Ablutions 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 Ablutions, on the other hand, are not throttled by the maximums imposed on a character. With clever use of Ablution and Skill training, a dragon can get up to eight dots in a single Skill at Furnace 5 or less, and even higher when her human limits have been lifted.

### 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 Oroborei 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 Ablution.

Each point manifest in this Ablution 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 Ablution 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 gains an exorbitant amount of mass. Her size rivals that of a small family automobile. Posture slouches and arms elongate to gorilla-grade standards.

### 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 Ablution for the scene. This is particularly important for Ablutions like Fire Skin and Colossal Beast, which can potentially destroy all the dragon's clothes.

### 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 Ablution 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 a Socialize or Empathy roll that was not a chance die is resolved, roll a number of additional chance dice equal to the odd points manifest in this Ablution. 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:** 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 x 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 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 Ablution increase sight Perception rolls on a one-to-one basis. This Ablution 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, until the Ablution is disbanded, 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 Ablution 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 Dexterity x Wall Climber, plus 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 Ablution. 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 Ablutions are the cheapest available to a Slayer. All other Methods must pay the highest price to purchase Ablutions of this Method, as they do not suit their Heart as readily.

#### Tempest Roar (Ace of Blades)

Some dragons have shouts that pierce 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—deafened—with only the hardiest 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.

Those within short range suffer Knock-back with a rating equal to the successes rolled, and suffer a penalty to hear equal to the points manifest in this Ablution. Within medium range, victims suffer half-successes in Knock-back and half-manifest in hearing loss. For more information on Knock-back, see page 147 in Chapter 3.

**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 suffer Knock-back, with a rating equal to the successes rolled. They also suffer a penalty to hearing-based Perception rolls equal to the points manifest in Tempest Roar. Those in medium range of the roar suffer half the Knock-back of those in short range (rounded down), and suffer half the hearing penalty (rounded down). Each subject may spend a point of Willpower to reduce the Knock-back rating by his Stamina.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, 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 complete loss of subtlety.

### Draconic Strength (King of Blades)

Dragons are strong. They can carry castles on their backs. But some humans who become Oroborigoi 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 Ablution.

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, the points manifest in this Ablution act as a multiplier to the throwing distance of all items.

**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. In addition, the skin gets loose around the shoulders and wrists.

### Attribute Bumps

Certain Ablutions, 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 Ablutions. If a dragon has a Strength rating of 5 and Strength limit of 5, she may still use this Ablution to increase her Strength (up to 10 if she owns all five dots).

### 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 barbs that both protect her and maim her foes.

These 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 (Using her Defense and the previous action's successes as her dice pool) to inflict bashing damage (equal to the points manifest in this Ablution). 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 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 points manifest in this Ablution.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, 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 Ablution. Deadly Wound only comes into play when an attack rolls three or more successes. It adds its rating to the successes total, greatly increasing the inflicted wounds. The Wrist Blade may also be used with appropriate Weaponry Merits and fighting styles.

Attacks with the Wrist Blade are made with Strength + Weaponry. Its base damage rating is three lethal. See page 147 in Chapter 3 for more information about the Deadly Wound feature.

**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 is even wider and 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.

This Ablution renders any attack against a living thing of at least Size 2 a Restorative action, attaching that feature with a rating equal to the points manifest at the time of attack. Restorative actions reduce the severity of wounds suffered, and are explained in detail on page 148 in Chapter 3.

**Type:** Sequential

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** None

**Action:** Reflexive

**Tells**

**Minor:** The dragon's elbows and knees form a distinctive point. It looks like a dislocation.

**Moderate:** Small spikes of bone erupt from the dragon's elbows and knees. It looks like a compound fracture, a broken bone that has pierced through the skin.

**Major:** As moderate, but the bone spikes stretch out significantly farther. Each is roughly half the length of the dragon's forearm. Medical explanations are no longer applicable.

### 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 + 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, plus the points manifest in Pounce!. 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 Ablutions are the cheapest available to a Finder. All other Methods must pay the highest price to purchase Ablutions 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 Ablution.

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 Ablution (so manifesting two points halves research time and manifesting five points reduces it to one fifth. Round down). Dragons very practiced in this Ablution 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 a half inch in both directions.

**Major:** As moderate, but the whiskers extend roughly one foot. They curl, 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.

### Hoard 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 Oroborei lifestyle. So dragons stay sharp, and those that really need to stay on the ball use this Ablution.

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, within any conversation the dragon participates, she may pull relevant information (up to her manifest points in factoids) 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 facts the roll derived, and must rely on others to retain them.

**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 factoids are 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 factoids are useless or irrelevant.

**Success:** The factoids deftly sum 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: Raptor 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, flexible blade replaces the big toes. This weapon had the "Sweeping Hit" feature equal to the points manifest in this Ablution. 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 base damage rating is two lethal. For more information on the Sweeping Hit feature, see page 148 in Chapter 3.

This Ablution also grants the Oroborei the impeccable balance necessary to perform these roundhouse kicks. Anyone trying to trip her suffers a -2 penalty to the attempt. If the Oroborei has sufficient Degree of Divinity to possess a tail, a secondary scythe forms at the tip, allowing her to sweep attack without compromising her footing.

**Type:** Sequential

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Brawl

**Action:** Instant

#### **Tells**

**Minor:** The dragon forms short blades (three inches) of sharpened bone in place of her big toes.

These blades poke through her shoes (if she's wearing them), but she may curl her toe uncomfortably to conceal them.

**Moderate:** As minor, but the blade is curved and of medium-length (six inches). The toes themselves begin to curl upward, resembling a raptor's talons. At this manifestation, she may tuck the curved blade into the arch of her foot, but it is terribly uncomfortable and interferes with her gait.

**Major:** The dragon's big toes curl upward and form thick, vicious scimitar blades of incredible length (twelve inches). The toe's radical posture rips open the tips of her shoes (if she's wearing them). At this stage, the blade is too big to tuck beneath the foot.

#### 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 Ablution take time to analyze and exploit those spots.

Manifesting this Ablution 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 its dice pool, up to a maximum equal to the points manifest in this Ablution. 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 Ablution 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.

**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 Ablution.

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 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 Ablution.

**Type:** Sequential

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Academics

**Action:** Extended (1 success; a single roll is made over the course of 30 seconds)

#### 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, though tapping into those properties will require further investigation.

#### 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 Ablutions are the cheapest available to a Challenger. All other Methods must pay the highest price to purchase Ablutions 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 Ablution 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 Ablution is purchased, it is assigned to a particular Skill. When manifesting a point in this Ablution, 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. In addition, you may choose to spend one point of Willpower to recycle a number of the roll's failed dice (after the result is determined), equal to the points manifest in Skill of the Gods. The skill therefore possesses the Reliable feature equal to the Ablution's manifest points. See page 148 for more information.

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).

**Type:** Compound

**Cost:** 1 Breath to use lowered Exploding Numbers for the scene

1 Willpower to recycle failed dice (max “Skill of the Gods” times per roll)

**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 exposed.

**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.

While this Ablution is manifest, the Dragon may walk across water (and other liquid surfaces) at a rate in yards equal to the points manifest in Natural Inspiration.

**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 (with a rating of four to be specific), but it has the “Reliable” feature equal to the points manifest in this Ablution. 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. More information on the Reliable feature can be found in the Bombastic Combat Features section of Chapter 3, on page 148.

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.

For each point manifest in this Ablution the dragon receives a +1 bonus on tasks directly related to her promises. However, any actions that would work against her promises suffer an equal -1 penalty for each point manifest.

When a dragon with this Ablution fulfills a promise, she is rewarded with the stoking of her Furnace. She gains a point of Breath. If a promise is inherently dangerous, the amount of Breath garnered is doubled. If a promise risks betrayal of a trusted friend, *but* does not actually betray them, the amount of Breath garnered is also doubled. Obvious a promise that does both is worth four Breath.

**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 Ablution 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 Ablution, the dragon can puff up her chest and flaunt her crest to scare away aggressors. By rolling Presence + Intimidation (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 Ablution 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 - Composure

**Action:** Instant

*Roll Results*

**Dramatic Failure:** The target... laughs. The dragon cannot try to frighten him off again during this scene, and she 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 Ablutions 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 Ablutions are the cheapest available to a Trickster. All other Methods must pay the highest price to purchase Ablutions of this Method, as they do not suit their Heart as readily.

### Noxious Breath (Ace of Clubs)

Dragons that use this Ablution 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, a knockout gas that deals one point of bashing damage per point manifest in this Ablution. 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 Ablution.

If the gas causes a target's final open wound slot to fill, that target instantly faints. The gas cannot inflict harm to unconscious targets. It also ignores True Form damage reduction.

**Type:** Sequential

**Cost:** 1 Breath to belch out fumes

**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Resolve

**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 points manifest in this Ablution. They will linger for a number of turns equal to the points manifest in this Ablution, 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 rretched. 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 Ablution. This excludes her own biological armor, though not the armor she's wearing or the biological armor of others. 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 Ablution, the fluid in question is saliva.

The corrosive contamination 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 to her roll equal to the even points manifest in this Ablution. 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. When it strikes flesh, it burns like a fire with intensity torch until diluted with water (so that's one Lethal wound per turn). For more information about fire, see page 180 of the **World of Darkness** Rulebook.

This Ablution 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

**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.

If the spitball struck exposed flesh, the acid burns like fire until doused with water. Its intensity is equal to that of a Torch, but its size is irrelevant.

**Exceptional Success:** Identical to success, but the damage suffered by the wearer is lethal. On inanimate objects, the Durability is reduced instead of ignored. Supernatural objects recover from this Durability damage at the end of the scene, but mundane objects suffer the damage permanently.

#### *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 can be seen sizzling in the air as it falls from her mouth.

### 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 Ablution. 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, and for rules on Sticky Grasp specifically see page 148 in Chapter 3 of this book.

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 its base damage rating 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 Ablution 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. Or perhaps she has made a sound that alerts others to her direction. Onlookers are likely to investigate, though they suffer a penalty to spot her equal to the points manifest in this Ablution.

**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 her roll next turn automatically succeeds.

### **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 Ablution... 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, 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 Ablution 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 is not 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.

### 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 149.

## 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 Ablutions are the cheapest available to an Inheritor. All other Methods must pay the highest price to purchase Ablutions 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 Ablution 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 Ablution 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 Oroborei 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.

The dragon's very attendance serves to dispel the fear of others. Each turn a mortal can see the dragon his Willpower meter recovers from a number of bashing wounds equal to the points manifest in this Ablution. This recovery cannot remove lethal wounds from the meter and does not occur if the mortal is hostile towards the dragon.

In addition, while this Ablution 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 Ablution 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 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 Ablution 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.

### 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, the dragon gains access to the assumed powers of such a position despite the fact that it is fictitious. When the Ablution’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 Ablution may only reshape clothes that are there, however, so if the dragon is underdressed or her other Ablutions trash her clothing, uniforms cannot be spawned.

### *Weaponry: Razor Fins (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 fin, a set of serrated blades that deflect blows and injure attackers.

Sharp fins spawn on the dragon's forearms, in line with the wrist. Attacks with razor fins are clumsy, but enjoy the "Defensive Flourish" feature (with a rating equal to the points manifest in this Ablution). 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, and any melee combatant that attacks in that turn suffers a lethal wound. Attacks with the Razor Fins are made with Dexterity + Brawl, and the base damage rating is negative one lethal. More information on the Defensive Flourish feature may be found in Chapter 3 on page 148.

**Type:** Sequential

**Cost:** None

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Brawl

**Action:** Instant

**Tells**

**Minor:** A row of fins forms along the dragon's forearms, lining up with the wrist along the ulna and stretching halfway to the elbow. They're made of bone and they're serrated, but they can be folded in for concealment.

**Moderate:** As minor, but the fins are wider, longer, and more bulky. They stick out even when folded into the forearm.

**Major:** As minor, but the fins are much wider and nearly three times as long. They can no longer be folded into the forearm.

### *Crown of the Ages (Squire of Goblets)*

Another tribute to regality, this Ablution 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 (minus the target's 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 (albeit penalized by the points manifest in this Ablution). 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 Ablution.

This Ablution 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 + Persuasion - 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

volution. 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, penalized by the points manifest in Crown of the Ages.

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 glow 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 jinx him with her gaze. All actions the mark would take against the dragon suffer a penalty to act equal to the points manifest in this Ablution, until he succeeds at a roll of his Composure (this roll is subjected to the penalty as well). The penalty the mark suffers only applies to actions directed at the Dragon, but he must give up an instant action for each effort he intends to take against someone else. Once he has succeeded at his Composure roll, both the dice-pool penalty and the delay of action are lifted.

After the first use of the scene, further gaze jinxes with this Ablution cost one point of Willpower.

**Type:** Sequential

**Cost:** 1 Willpower for subsequent gazes in the scene

**Dice Pool:** Composure + Expression - 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 suffer the associated penalties and delays.

**Success:** The mark becomes trapped in the gaze of the dragon, suffering a penalty to act equal to the points manifest in Mesmerizing Eyes. If he wishes to act against anyone other than the dragon, he must give up an instant action first (usually delaying him one turn).

**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.

### Ablution Factory

Now that you've seen the array of pre-made Ablutions, you possess enough information to create some of your own. Crafting an Ablution takes four steps:

#### Step 1: Create an Ability

Your Ablution should alter some way the dragon interacts with her world. For Sequential Ablutions, this advantage takes the form of an increasing bonus. For Odd over Even Ablutions, two advantages alternate between granting bonuses. For Compound Ablutions (of which there is currently only one, Skills of the Gods on page 86), an advantage is applied to an increasingly wide selection of tasks (At least five).

#### Step 2: Assign Physical Tells

Every Ablution has a sign that it is in use. This forces your dragon to turn it off, lest she give herself away. The Tells that you use should be unique and at least somewhat difficult to

conceal. As a good guideline, the more potent the advantage you Ablution provides, the more difficult the Tells should be to conceal.

#### *Step 3: Attach a Cost*

Determine whether your Ablution 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 Ablution 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 Ablutions in your target Method to make sure your new advantage fits thematically.

To use an Edict and its laws, an Oroborei must make a proclamation. This vocal declaration forms the link between the Dreamtide (and without it, a -5 penalty is imposed). Only True Heart dragons can use Edicts without a vocal trigger. Each proclamation may only trigger one law of the Edict, and each proclamation requires a point of Breath to declare. All proclamations are instant actions.

#### *Supernatural Conflict*

All Edicts incorporate Furnace in their dice pool. As such, a target facing the Edict 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 an Edict 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.

Edicts determine how potent they are by an Effective Rating, measured in points just as Ablutions are. The Effective Rating begins each scene equal to the dots known in the Edict, plus the Oroborei's current Degree of Divinity (and thus fluctuates as that trait does). Every time a proclamation is resolved, the Edict's Effective Rating is reduced by one. Thus, each time an Oroborei becomes repetitive with the same Edict, it becomes less powerful than before. Effective Rating is referenced law by law to varied effect, controlling everything from duration to area of influence to number of targets.

## Edicts

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 Edicts are the roads dragons use to unlock that force.

The cynicisms and stereotypes of a particular train of thought become reality when they are focused into an Edict. The sheer force of will a dragon possesses is woven into their very fabric of existence at the fall of their words, leeching out of their mind and twisting the world around them to their preferences. It's good to be king.

When making a **Dragon** character, that character receives a fleeting two dots to place in Edicts, and one such dot must always be placed in the Edict that matches the dragon's Philosophy. These first two dots reflect the dragon's introduction to her new worldviews, and the influences that come with such worldviews.

The Edicts detailed here are all surface-oriented, based on the preconceptions that made them reality. It is somewhat of an old-wives tale that certain dragons spend their eras underwater, and there is little known about the mindsets of these deep Oroborei. Philosophies and Edicts of the deep could be completely different. Still, that is beyond the scope of this book.

Each Edict is accompanied by three laws, with each Law bearing its own unique purpose. Individually, they can each turn the tide of a situation. On the other hand, if multiple laws of the same Edict are used in conjunction, their true purpose becomes clear. They are each in their own way designed to build a more complex manipulative strategy. Every time an Oroborei acquires an odd dot in the Edict, she learns one of these laws. All Edicts are associated with a single skill, with the laws dictating the Attribute to roll.

So to summarize:

- Laws enable the Oroborei to perform one particular action in the vein of the Edict.
- Odd dots in the Edict unlock one Law each. Once a Law is unlocked, the decision cannot be overturned. Laws can be unlocked in any order, and are each comparable in power.
- Each time an Edict is used by proclamation, it requires a point of Breath. An exceptional success on the activation roll refunds this cost.
- All Edict proclamations are instant actions.
- An Edict's Effective Rating, frequently referenced by laws, begins each scene at the dots owned in the Edict. It is then increased by the Oroborei's current Degree of Divinity. Each time an Edict is used by proclamation, its Effective Rating decreases by one, to a minimum of zero where it ceases to function.

## Agony

The Edict of Agony takes suffering and makes it longer, stronger, and more miserable. Its laws mar the healing of injuries, worsen the state of wounds, and make the whole of them more painful.

**Skill:** Brawl

**Blatancy-Utility:** Moderate-Aggressive

### Complication

**Attribute:** Presence

"Are you sure that's just a scratch? It's bleeding pretty profusely."

From left to right, the Oroborei upgrades the severity of wounds suffered by the targets by one step. The number made more severe is equal to the Oroborei's effective dot rating in the Agony Decree.

If the target has insufficient existing wounds, new wounds do not form. Instead, the proclamation passes over the wounds again, increasing the severity again and again until the effective rating is used up or there are no more wounds that can be changed. Aggravated wounds do not change, and are thus passed over. This is a lasting effect.

**Targets:** Up to the square of Agony's Effect Rating beings

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Brawl + Agony – Highest Stamina among Targets

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** Instead of upgrading the severity of wounds from the left, she

DOWNGRADES the severity of wounds from the right.

**Failure:** No injuries are intensified.

**Success:** Starting at the left side of the target's Health meters, increase each wound one step in severity, until you've increased as many wounds as the Effective Rating in Agony when you rolled. Lethal becomes Aggravated and Bashing becomes Lethal. If the meter has Aggravated wounds, skip over them without counting it as an increase. An empty box or the end of the meter force you back to the beginning, until you've run out of wounds that can become more severe or you've used up the Effective Rating of the proclamation.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

### Malaise

**Attribute:** Composure

"Do you see that, in the cut there? That's flesh eating bacteria. Tricky, tricky business."

From left to right, the Oroborei renders wounds suffered by the targets resistant (Resistant wounds take twice as long to heal. For more information, see page 150 in Chapter 3). The number made resistant is equal to the Oroborei's effective dot rating in the Agony Decree.

If there are insufficient wounds to be made resistant, half the difference (rounded down) is inflicted as standard bashing damage. This law cannot cause a wound roll-over from bashing to lethal. Both this and the resistant wounds are lasting effects.

**Targets:** Up to the square of Agony's Effect Rating beings

**Dice Pool:** Composure + Brawl + Agony – Highest Stamina among Targets

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** If the opponent is currently marked with resistant wounds, that mark is removed. This overrides the rule that resistant wounds cannot be undone by supernatural means, but it cannot be used in a benevolent manner.

**Failure:** No injuries are made resistant.

**Success:** Starting at the left side of the target's Health meters, mark each wound resistant with a ® beneath it, until you've marked as many wounds as the Effective Rating in Agony when you rolled. An

empty box results in a standard bashing wound, and reduces the rating double before moving to the next box. If the end of the meter is reached and the effective rating is still greater than two, any excess is wasted.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

## Woe

**Attribute:** Intelligence

*Scratching an itch:* “Whew, is it warm in here? Makes the joints ache, doesn’t it.”

The proclaiming Oroborei sends goose-bumps down the limbs of her opponents. Wound penalties are increased in the targets, by the Oroborei’s effective dot rating in the Agony Decree (This is a health penalty up-shift, which is explained in detail on page 151 in Chapter 3). This effect lasts for the scene.

**Targets:** Up to the square of Agony’s Effect Rating beings

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Brawl + Agony – Highest Stamina among Targets

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** Instead of an up-shift, the targets experience a down-shift, reducing the wound penalties they suffer.

**Failure:** No penalty shift occurs.

**Success:** Beneath each wound penalty, increase the negative by the effective dot rating in this Edict at the time of proclamation (Write it down!), and apply penalties to an additional number of wound boxes equal to the effective dot rating at time of proclamation. Essentially, the point where wound penalties begin to count up is shifted up, causing penalties at less injured levels. For a clearer explanation of this mechanic, read about up-shifts and down-shifts on page 151.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

## Artillery

The Edict of Artillery controls projectiles, both those in the clip and those in the air (though the latter is harder to manage).

**Skill:** Firearms

**Blatancy-Utility:** Subtle-Crowd Direction

## Puncture

**Attribute:** Strength

“These are armor piercing marshmallows. You didn’t think they made them, did you? Well here they are. Say goodbye to your spleen”

The Oroborei gives the projectile a piercing quality, making it ignore a number of points of armor the target is wearing equal to the effective dot rating at time of proclamation (Write it down!). This applies even to biological and supernatural armors. Puncture also renders the projectile a piercing projectile, meaning it ignores the Bulletproof quality (if applicable).

This law applies its effect to individual projectiles, be they bullets or arrows or even molded sugar. The projectiles need not all be of the same type. The law’s effect lasts until the end of the scene.

**Targets:** A number of projectiles up to the square of Artillery’s Effect Rating

**Dice Pool:** Strength + Firearms + Artillery – Highest Durability among Targets

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The projectile is softened, doubling the effectiveness of armor against it.

**Failure:** The projectile is unchanged.

**Success:** Each projectile gains the piercing quality, allowing it to bypass bullet-proof protection. If used in an attack, the projectile ignores an amount of armor (both worn and biological) equal to the effective rating in Artillery when they were enhanced.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

## Riot Control

**Attribute:** Stamina

“Rubber bullets. They may not be lethal, but they’ll sting like a boxer’s fist. ..Yes, I know that was cheesy. I’m going to shoot you now”

The Oroborei reduces the deadly nature of a projectile, rendering it a knockout attack. The damage type the projectile would inflict is downgraded to bashing, but increased by the effective dot rating in Artillery at time of proclamation (Write it down!). If the projectile would have been aggravated, the increase is applied twice. Rollover damage is disabled for attacks made with the projectile, however.

This law applies its effect to individual projectiles, be they bullets or arrows or even molded sugar. The projectiles need not all be of the same type. The law's effect lasts until the end of the scene.

**Targets:** A number of projectiles up to the square of Artillery's Effect Rating

**Dice Pool:** Strength + Firearms + Artillery – Highest Durability among Targets

#### ***Roll Results***

**Dramatic Failure:** The projectile is made more deadly. It will inflict a single point of aggravated damage when fired.

**Failure:** The projectile is unchanged.

**Success:** Each projectile's damage type is changed to bashing, and its damage increased by the effective dot rating in Artillery at time of proclamation. If the projectile used to deal aggravated damage, then the effective dot rating is added to the damage TWICE.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

### **Shrapnel**

#### **Attribute:** Manipulation

"This bullet? It's actually buckshot. The visage of a slug is merely an illusion"

The Oroborei inflicts the projectile with invisible fractures, causing it to shatter as soon as it is thrown or fired. The number of targets the projectile can strike is increased by the effective dot rating in Artillery at time of proclamation, but the damage bonus is reduced by that same amount. Ironically, the Oroborei may use this Decree on her own biological projectiles and even on her Inferno.

This law applies its effect to individual projectiles, be they bullets or arrows or even molded sugar. The projectiles need not all be of the same type. The law's effect lasts until the end of the scene.

**Targets:** A number of projectiles up to the square of Artillery's Effect Rating

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Firearms + Artillery – Highest Durability among Targets

#### ***Roll Results***

**Dramatic Failure:** The projectile is cracked haphazardly, and will fly out of control when fired.

The attack roll suffers is automatically rendered a chance die.

**Failure:** The projectile is unchanged.

**Success:** The projectile can strike a number of targets equal to the effective dot rating in Artillery at time of proclamation. An attack made with the projectile is made against the highest defense and highest armor rating of all the targets, but ignores cover.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

### **Assembly**

The Edict of Assembly manipulates crowds. Its laws isolate individuals and overpower them with mob mentality.

#### **Skill:** Politics

**Blatancy-Utility:** Moderate-Soapboxing

### **Rapture**

#### **Attribute:** Presence

"Hear me, citizens! There is a great injustice that must be brought to your attention!"

The Oroborei snatches the attention span of a crowd, forcing them to give her their complete focus. Perceiving anything that is not in the immediate vicinity or directly involved with the proclaiming Oroborei suffers a penalty equal to the effective dot rating of the Assembly Decree at time of proclamation (Write it down!).

Targets must act within their own frame of perception. To attempt to function outside this focus of attention is essentially acting blind. See the rules laid out on page 166 of the World of Darkness Core Rulebook for more information. Spending a point of Willpower allows them to pull away from the Oroborei's focus for thirty seconds. This effect lasts for the scene.

**Targets:** A number of persons up to the square of Assembly's Effect Rating

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Politics + Assembly – Highest Wits among Targets

#### ***Roll Results***

**Dramatic Failure:** Instead of catching the focus of the crowd, the Oroborei distracts them further. Outside stimuli distract the crowd away from the Oroborei's message, rendering her socially invisible until the end of the scene.

**Failure:** The crowd's focus is unaltered.

**Success:** Each person in the crowd has their focus forcibly set in the vicinity of the proclaiming Oroborei. They suffer a penalty to perceive outside sounds and objects equal to the effective rating in Assembly when the proclamation of Enrapture was made. This penalty lingers until the end of the scene.

Attempting to act outside of this frame of focus effectively renders the subject blind. Additionally, they may break away from both the penalty and the blind

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

## Pariah

### **Attribute:** Manipulation

"Why listen to the people around you? Their vapid, meaningless blathering holds no real insight. They might know more than they say, but are too afraid or too greedy to share it with you. Such people are a waste of your time! The world is full of lies, and I am the only one willing to tear the truth out of the shadows!"

The proclaiming Oroborei renders the targets socially invisible. They inexplicably write each other off as a nuisance, drowning out anything said. This does not render the targets incapable of being noticed, it simply stops others from caring about their presence.

All social rolls made by afflicted targets are penalized by the proclaiming Oroborei's effective dot rating in the Assembly Decree, at the time of Pariah's proclamation (Write it down!). This effect lasts for the scene.

**Targets:** A number of persons up to the square of Assembly's Effect Rating

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Politics + Assembly – Highest Wits among Targets

### **Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** At the end of her proclamation, the Oroborei unfortunately passes gas. People misinterpret her hand-standing as a gag, laugh, and walk away.

**Failure:** The targets do not write each other off as annoyances.

**Success:** Targets attempting to interact socially suffer a penalty to act equal to the effect rating of Assembly at the time Pariah was proclaimed.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

## Persuade

### **Attribute:** Resolve

"I have been to the depths of confidential, top secret archives, and I have seen through the cover story that they stirred up to hide the scandal. Senator Vaughn is not a man! He is actually an extraterrestrial being sent as the first wave in an all-out invasion!"

The Oroborei forces the target audience to experience a change in opinion. They may resist this mental invasion with a successful Resolve roll (+Furnace), penalized by the effective rating of Assembly at time of proclamation (Write it down!).

Some extremely radical changes grant the target a bonus to their roll. This change in opinion is permanent, and could very well force the target to reconsider their position on a variety of issues.

**Targets:** A number of persons up to the square of Assembly's Effect Rating

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Politics + Assembly – Highest Wits among Targets

### **Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The crowd believes the Oroborei is telling a joke. They laugh, shake their heads, and walk away.

**Failure:** The crowd remains skeptical.

**Success:** The crowd's opinion is changed to match the ideas the Oroborei desires. These changes are permanent.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

## Astral

The Astral Edict. A True Heart Oroborei's faint hold on the legacy of the original dragons. The Astral Edict rips a hole in the Miasma, granting its proclaimer the power of a lucid dreamer in the waking world.

Only Oroborei that have not yet removed their Heart may learn this Edict and its laws. If the Heart is ever removed, this Edict is removed and replaced with an equivalent amount of experience.

### **Skill:** Occult

**Blatancy-Utility:** Obvious-World Shattering

## Dream

### **Attribute:** Resolve

"This is only a nightmare. It holds no power over me as long as I declare that fact."

The True Heart Oroborei reaches down and tears open the barrier between dreams and reality. Around her, within a number of radial yards equal to the square of the effective dot rating in the Astral Decree at time of proclamation, 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 Hysteric Dreamers until they are knocked unconscious, whereupon they collapse instead of awakening. They awaken at scene's end, likely believing the events that transpired were a very vivid daydream, or perhaps the result of an arterial blockage.

This area is the dreamscape of the proclaiming Oroborei, though, and she gains the benefits of being Lucid while within this zone. The number of bonus dice she receives to all rolls is based on her effective dot rating in the Astral Edict at time of proclamation, as opposed to the flat three that normal Lucid Dreamers receive. The zone of Dreamtide moves with the proclaiming Oroborei, and is her own personal bubble of unreality. As the scene ends, the dreamscape fades away with the dragon inside, whisking her safely back to her Lair or place of residence.

While within this zone of Dreamtide, the victims of this proclamation are immune to death, as wounds are inflicted on their Willpower meter. This makes the zone enact the "Willpower as Health" rules for all within it, as found in the First Appendix on page 174. I feel that needs to be stated here, to punctuate the rule.

The Oroborei may create objects in her dreamscape, but not nightmare beasts. Her actions also cannot leave the boundaries of her dreamscape zone, meaning any projectiles she launches will fizz at the edge of the zone and any teleportation can only reach to the end of the zone. Since the zone is always centered on her, that means her maximum teleportation distance is equal to the radius of the zone, that being the square of the effect rating at time of proclamation.

**Targets:** Spherical Zone surrounding the proclaiming Oroborei, with a radius in yards equal to the square of Astral's Effect Rating

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Occult + Astral

### **Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** From the material world, it appears as if the Oroborei simply vanishes. However, she has accidentally created a bubble of Daylight reality in the Dreamtide, and is now stranded and powerless in the dangerous stretches of Pandemonium.

**Failure:** The proclamation fails and the zone of dreams fails to form.

**Success:** A spherical zone of dreams forms around the proclaiming Oroborei, representing her personal patch of the Dreamtide. Anyone entering this zone becomes a hysteric dreamer (as detailed on page 174 in Appendix 1). The Oroborei herself becomes a Lucid Dreamer, receiving a bonus to all actions equal to the effect rating in Astral at time of proclamation. No one within the zone of dreams can die this scene, as any injuries they suffer are inflicted upon Willpower.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

## Flames of the Father

### **Attribute:** Strength

"They say our predecessors could change shape at will, washing away their mortal disguise in an instant. I say the only difference between us is the belief that we cannot do the same."

The proclaiming Oroborei sends out beams of light, which spiral into the sky and then come down on each of her Den mates. This light infuses them with accelerated access to their Ablutions. Manifesting and Disbanding become reflexive actions, and the number of points that may be altered is increased by the effective rating in the Astral Edict at time of proclamation (Write it down!).

Ordinarily, an Oroborei would normally have to give up her movement or defense to manifest Ablutions, and would only be able to assume a number of points equal to her Furnace. Under the effects of this proclamation, she may manifest points in her Ablutions each turn without sacrifice, and with greater speed as she adds the effect rating to the amount she can change. This effect lasts for the scene in which it is triggered. For more information

about manifesting Ablutions, see page 128 in Chapter 3.

The proclaiming Oroborei may bestow this benefit to her Den mates across any distance.

**Targets:** Any Oroborei in the proclaiming Oroborei's Den, including herself

**Dice Pool:** Strength + Occult + Astral

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The proclaiming Oroborei's callous vision of true dragonhood backfires, and she harms her Den in the process. For the next day, no one in the Den may manifest Ablutions.

**Failure:** The proclamation has no effect.

**Success:** Each member in the Den may manifest or disband Ablutions reflexively without spending Breath to do so. The number of points they may manifest or disband is also increased by the effect rating at time of proclamation.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

## In Their Shadow

**Attribute:** Composure

"This Heart is a second-hand treasure. It's had previous owners. Lots and lots of previous owners. I'd like to believe that each owner leaves a little bit behind for me."

The Oroborei draws out the essences of each of her antecedents, forming shadows of each. These shadows assist the proclaiming Oroborei in her endeavors. She can call forth a number of antecedent shadows equal to the effective rating of Astral at the time of proclamation, and each gives her an additional action in the turn.

Antecedents cannot attack, but they may grapple targets, give up their action to increase the Oroborei's defense by 3, or make proclamations on the Oroborei's behalf.

**Targets:** None

**Dice Pool:** Composure + Occult + Astral

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The shadows turn on the Oroborei, each inflicting one aggravated wound on her before vanishing.

**Failure:** The shadows do not form.

**Success:** A number of antecedent shadows form, based on the effect rating of Astral when the proclamation is made. These shadows may take additional actions on behalf of the proclaiming

Oroborei. While they cannot attack, they may grapple opponents, increase the Oroborei's defense, or make proclamations for her.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

## Camaraderie

The Edict of Camaraderie is a font of communication and a means to resolve aggressive conflicts peaceably. Its laws open the lines of dialogue in several ways.

**Skill:** Socialize

**Blatancy-Utility:** Subtle-Diatribe

## Group Mentality

**Attribute:** Dexterity

"Okay, are we clear on the gestures?"

The Oroborei forms a fraternal bond with the target, and is able to communicate complex messages through the smallest nods and gestures. The two may communicate silently for the duration of the scene, and any attempt to intercept these messages is penalized by the effective rating in Camaraderie at time of proclamation (Write it down!).

When proclaiming, the Oroborei may form this bond with a number of subjects equal to the square of the effective rating. This bond lingers for the scene.

**Targets:** A number of persons up to the square of Camaraderie's Effect Rating

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Socialize + Camaraderie

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** Gestures get scrambled, sending the wrong messages. Worse, they become blatantly obvious after just a few exchanges.

**Failure:** Gestures remain vague and unclear.

**Success:** Each target gains the ability to interpret the intended meaning of even the subtlest gestures the proclaiming Oroborei make, and the Oroborei can understand their gestures in turn. Outsiders attempting to understand the gestures suffer a penalty to do so equal to the effect rating at time of proclamation.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

## Interpreter

### Attribute: Intelligence

"Huh? Taiwanese? I thought I was speaking English."

The proclaiming Oroborei is granted the gift of Babel Tower. She may understand any spoken language for a number of minutes equal to the square of the effective rating at time of proclamation (so a rank 5 proclamation grants lingual fluency for 25 minutes). This power does not grant her the ability to *read* these languages, nor does it attune her to the social customs of the peoples that speak them. She may, however, converse as if she were a native speaker for the duration of the proclamation.

#### Targets: Self

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Socialize + Camaraderie

#### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The Oroborei instead acquires the curse of Babel Tower, speaking nothing but gibberish for the Edict's intended duration.

**Failure:** The Oroborei does not gain world's tongue.

**Success:** The Oroborei can speak and understand any language for a number of minutes equal to the square of the effect rating when the proclamation was made.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

## Truce

### Attribute: Strength

"I don't care who called who whatever! Shut the hell up!"

The Oroborei puts her foot down and the fighting stops. She may calm a number of targets equal to the square of the effective rating at time of proclamation (so a rank 4 proclamation could calm 16 targets), for an equal number of minutes (again, rank 4 means 16 minutes). During this proclamation, none of the affected targets may take aggressive action (this includes the proclaiming Oroborei). At duration's end, no matter how the Oroborei made use of the Truce, all restrictions are removed.

**Targets:** A number of persons up to the square of Camaraderie's Effect Rating

**Dice Pool:** Strength + Socialize + Camaraderie

#### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The crowd breaks into a full brawl.

**Failure:** The crowd remains belligerent.

**Success:** The crowd settles down, unable to attack each other until the proclamation ends.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

## Comfort

The Edict of Comfort manipulates neural sensation to drive its victims into a cold, narcotic bliss.

**Skill:** Empathy

**Blatancy-Utility:** Blatant-Disorientation

## Bliss

### Attribute: Dexterity

"Focus on the sound of my voice. It's timbre. Its melodic embrace. Let it swallow you up."

The Oroborei forces the target's senses to his core. Wound penalties and situational penalties are decreased by the effective rating in a down shift (See page 151 in Chapter 3), as the target is enveloped in a cold, dead numbness. This effect lasts until the end of the scene.

**Targets:** A number of persons up to the square of Comfort's Effect Rating

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Empathy + Comfort

#### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** Instead of a down-shift, the targets experience an up-shift, increasing the wound penalties they suffer.

**Failure:** The target's sensation does not change in a significant way.

**Success:** Beneath each wound penalty, decrease the negative by the effective rating in this Edict at the time of proclamation (Write it down!). If the effect rating was higher than three, take the overage and count down bonuses from the left (For example, effective rating 5 adds a +2 beneath the first box and a +1 beneath the second box). These bonuses apply so long as the boxes are empty.

For a clearer explanation of this mechanic, read about up-shifts and down-shifts on page 151.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

## Euphoria

### Attribute: Composure

"Do you feel that? That fuzzy feeling? Doesn't it just make you want to curl up and go to sleep?"

The proclaiming Oroborei subjects the target to the disorienting euphoria of a controlled substance, for a number of minutes equal to the square of the effective rating at time of proclamation. The strength of the narcotic the Oroborei can imitate is dependent on the effective dot rating of the Comfort Decree at time of proclamation (see the sidebar below).

**Targets:** A number of persons up to the square of Comfort's Effect Rating

**Dice Pool:** Composure + Empathy + Comfort

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The Oroborei accidentally doses herself instead of her targets.

**Failure:** The Oroborei does not dose the targets.

**Success:** The Oroborei subjects the targets to the effects of the chosen narcotic, for a number of minutes equal to the square of the effect rating.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

### Light 'em Up

The potency of narcotic a proclamation of Euphoria may draw from is based on the effective rating of that proclamation. Here is a quick guideline to the kinds of drugs the Oroborei can simulate:

**1 effective dot:** Stimulants like Caffeine. Can induce an energetic state.

**2 effective dots:** Depressants like Alcohol. Can induce an inebriated or relaxed state.

**3 effective dots:** Hallucinogenic like a small dose of LSD. Can induce color intensity and shape distortion.

**4 effective dots:** Strong Stimulants like an Amphetamine. Can induce hyper-alertness and tachycardia.

**5 effective dots:** Strong Depressants like Opiates. Can induce pain relief, sleep, and paralysis.

**6 effective dots:** Strong Hallucinogenics like Ketamine. Can induce out-of-body experiences.

**7 effective dots:** Wide Angle Narcotics like high-dose Cannabis. Can induce

hallucinations, hunger frenzy, high energy, listlessness, and so forth.

### 8-9 effective dots: Supernatural Narcotics.

The Oroborei is free to design a custom narcotic that has a variety of effects. A 9 dot narcotic is roughly twice as potent as an 8 dot narcotic.

### 10 effective dots: Deadly Dose. The Oroborei can kill with the proclamation.

## Nurse

### Attribute: Stamina

"It's not as bad as it looks. See, it's just a scratch."

A number of the target's wounds, equal to the Oroborei's effective rating in Comfort, downgrade by one degree. Resistant wounds subjected to this power cease to be resistant. This is the only supernatural means of removing that mark. This effect applies to the health bar from right to left, and only on wounds that already exist. This is a lasting effect.

**Targets:** A number of persons up to the square of Camaraderie's Effect Rating

**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Empathy + Comfort

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** All the target's wounds become resistant wounds.

**Failure:** No wounds are made less severe.

**Success:** A number of wounds the target suffers, equal to the effect rating, are downgraded from right to left. A resistant wound that is downgraded by this proclamation ceases to be resistant.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

## Due Process

The Edict of Due Process is about bringing justice to the world. So long as that justice is brought down on scapegoats that the Oroborei has framed for her crimes.

This Edict and its laws have no influence on an Oroborei Heart. It is effectively immune to their effects.

**Skill:** Investigation

**Blatancy-Utility:** Secret-Incrimination

### Falsify

**Attribute:** Intelligence

"Jim, come have a look at this. \*Shining a Black Light\* Blood."

The Oroborei spawns an array of false evidence to craft a scenario at the crime-scene for whomever would investigate it next. She may create a number of false 'clues' equal to the square of the effective rating in Due Process at time of proclamation (so a rank 5 proclamation could create 25 clues). These clues are indistinguishable from the real ones, and simply materialize at time of proclamation (hence it is best to set a scene when there are not witnesses). The Oroborei can spawn blood, fingerprints, mud, fibers, and fluids of any being she has interacted with more than twice. This is a lasting effect.

**Targets:** Empty space within a crime scene.

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Investigation + Due Process

#### **Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Oroborei accidentally uses herself as the imprint for the clues, creating incriminating evidence against her.

**Failure:** The clues do not form.

**Success:** The Oroborei forces clues to materialize in the crime scene, creating evidence for a crime that may or may not have occurred. While the evidence may be open to interpretation, it certainly paints a picture that is ideal for the Oroborei's goals.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

#### **Obstruct**

**Attribute:** Stamina

"Who needs bleach?"

The proclaiming Oroborei erases the target clues from existence. She may only do so to clues that she is aware of, and may only erase a number of clues equal to the square of the effect rating of her proclamation (so at rank 3, she could erase 9 clues). The clues are completely obliterated, leaving no trace evidence whatsoever.

For the sake of this proclamation, one set of fingerprints on a surface counts as one clue. Also, a dead body counts as ten clues. Obviously, this law only affects objects that are dead or were never alive in the first place. This is a lasting effect.

**Targets:** A number of clues in the crime scene up to the square of Due Process's Effect Rating

**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Investigation + Due Process

#### **Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Oroborei erases the clues, but leaves behind the traces of a cleanup and one obvious mark that something has happened in the crime scene. It will likely backfire later.

**Failure:** The Oroborei does not remove the clues.

**Success:** The Oroborei erases the target clues from the crime scene, completely eradicating any evidence that they were there. If she does so with the entire crime scene, it is as if the crime never occurred.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

#### **Sweep**

**Attribute:** Wits

"It may look like I'm being excessively compulsive or just plain weird, but... there!"

The Oroborei causes clues to emit a soft glow, drawing her eye towards them. She receives a bonus to perceive these clues equal to the effective rating in Due Process at time of proclamation. This shine must be perceived visually, and thus does not grant bonuses for smell or hearing. Also, the shine can be seen by ANY supernatural being, which means they too receive the bonus to perception.

This law affects a number of clues equal to the square of the effect rating at time of proclamation (so a rank 4 proclamation would highlight 16 clues). The clues must be in reference to a particular act, though the act need not be illegal.

This effect lasts for the scene. If the proclaiming Oroborei wishes to hide the glow, she may discard the perception bonus to do so. However, this effectively ends the power and it must be activated again.

**Targets:** A number of clues in the crime scene up to the square of Due Process's Effect Rating

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Investigation + Due Process

#### **Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Oroborei accidentally occludes the clues, making them more difficult for her to spot. Other investigators are unaffected.

**Failure:** The Oroborei does illuminate the clues.

**Success:** The Oroborei illuminates the clues. Anyone of a supernatural nature gains a bonus to perception to spot the clues equal to the effect rating when the proclamation was made.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

## Earth

The Edict of Earth gives the Oroborei control over the ground. She may manipulate it on a local or grand scale, or use it as an extension of her senses.

**Skill:** Athletics

**Blatancy-Utility:** Obviously Supernatural-Mass Destruction

## Earthmeld

**Attribute:** Strength

"You know, they used to do this to pirates when they caught them. Good times."

The Oroborei buries the target up to his neck in the ground. Effective rating determines the number of targets, as well as the density of ground the Oroborei can manipulate (read: the durability of the material). For quick reference of ground composition, wet soil is durability 1, wet sand is durability 3, and solid rock is durability 5. The target remains trapped until he can break free or he is released by another means. Another proclamation by the Oroborei may lift the target out from this burial, provided she has the effective rank left to do so.

**Targets:** A number of beings equal to the effect rating

**Dice Pool:** Strength + Athletics + Earth

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Oroborei accidentally targets herself, sinking up to her waist into the ground instead of her victim. She may make another proclamation to free herself, but at the cost of more breath and a reduced effect rating.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The Oroborei creates a lightning-fast quicksand pit beneath the target, separating the ground just enough to bury him but not enough for him to climb out without some serious struggle. Escape may be attempted with a Strength + Athletics roll, penalized by double the durability of the ground he is buried in.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

## Ping

**Attribute:** Composure  
"Shh... did you feel that?"

The proclaiming Oroborei sends out a series of pings through the ground. Anything in contact with the ground, or in contact with something that is in contact with the ground, returns this ping, revealing the location and density of material even through walls. The Oroborei can detect this ping within a number of radial yards equal to the square of the effect rating of Earth at time of proclamation.

The pings last for roughly one minute before this law must be proclaimed again.

**Targets:** The ground within the square of effect rating's yards

**Dice Pool:** Composure + Athletics + Earth

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Oroborei misreads the information of the ping, learning false facts about her environment.

**Failure:** The Oroborei does feel the return signal.

**Success:** The Oroborei gains functional knowledge of the area within the ping's radius, learning the position of objects and people at the time the ping went out. This knowledge alerts her to the presence of things and people she perhaps cannot see directly, as well as mitigates penalties for acting against opponents she cannot see.

While fighting blind (page 166 in the **World of Darkness** Core Rulebook), the effects of ping act as a success on listening in the dark, meaning the opponent only benefits from substantial instead of full concealment. In addition, the penalty is reduced by the effect rating in Earth when Ping was used (Write it down!)

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

## Quake

**Attribute:** Resolve

"There's a fault in the plate, about two miles down. Want to see the ground dance?"

The Oroborei causes an earthquake, with Richter intensity equal to the successes rolled. This quake

has a radius of influence in miles equal to the effective rating in Earth at time of proclamation. Everything in the quake's radius (including the proclaiming Oroborei and any object in contact with the ground) suffers bashing wounds equal to the Richter intensity, and there is likely widespread damage to property and pipelines. On an exceptional success, the quake can rupture gas-lines and cut power citywide, or trigger a volcanic eruption.

The activation roll for this Edict is penalized if the proclaiming Oroborei is distant from a fault-line.

**Targets:** Radial Miles equal to the effect rating

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Athletics + Earth

#### **Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Oroborei triggers a much more violent and much more localized quake than intended. She suffers lethal damage equal to the effect rating of Earth at the time of the proclamation, and the ground immediately around her is destroyed. Violently.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The Oroborei causes an earthquake, with intensity equal to the successes rolled. Within a number of miles equal to the effect rating of the proclamation, everything suffers bashing wounds equal to the intensity of the quake.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered. Gas lines rupture and any buildings in range lose power. If a volcano is in the radius of the quake, it erupts (Yellowstone excluded without an effect rating of 16).

## **Fire**

The Edict of Fire manipulates chemical reactions, the most recognizable of which being the act of combustion.

**Skill:** Science

**Blatancy-Utility:** Obviously Supernatural-Creative Solutions

## **Catalyst**

**Attribute:** Intelligence

“Look at that! Aw, you missed it.”

The Oroborei accelerates the rate of reaction in a chemical substance, be it fire chewing through wood or baking soda fizzing to citric acid. The reaction occurs at a speed equal to double the effective rating

when the proclamation is made (So a rank 6 proclamation makes the reaction occur 12 times faster).

Catalyst may be used on ANY reaction, be it a flame to produce excessive smoke, a helium balloon to accelerate deflation, or the radioactive decay of waste uranium. It'll take a creative chemist to make the most of this law.

**Targets:** One chemical reaction

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Science + Fire

#### **Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The reaction slows to a crawl, and becomes immune to Catalyst proclamations.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The reaction accelerates by a rate equal to double the effect rating. In other words, the time it takes for the reaction to complete is divided by double the effect rating. Utility of this effect is up to the proclaiming Oroborei to determine. Make it sound good, players!

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

## **Immolate**

**Attribute:** Resolve

“This tiny fire isn’t so bad. It just needs a little love.”

The proclaiming Oroborei intensifies a fire, feeding it oxygen and increasing its size or heat by her effective rating in Fire at time of proclamation. Once fed, the flames remain at that size until they die down naturally.

If the fire is already the size of an Inferno, only heat may be intensified. For more information on fire consult the **World of Darkness** Rulebook, page 180.

**Targets:** A number of flames the Oroborei can see equal to the effect rating

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Science + Fire

#### **Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Oroborei accidentally puts the fires out.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The Oroborei increases the size of the fire(s) a number of stages equal to the effect rating at time of proclamation. Once the fire is an inferno, excess effect is applied to the heat of the flames.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

### Jolt

#### **Attribute:** Manipulation

“You know... that outlet isn’t properly grounded.”

The Oroborei alters an electrical source, increasing or decreasing its voltage. She may also redirect the charge off-circuit, a number of yards based on the effective rating in Fire for a number of minutes equal to that same rating. Clever Oroborei use this decree to turn outlets into Tesla cannons, but after the first redirection subsequent alterations require a second proclamation.

In practice, this proclamation may be used to increase or decrease the damage dealt by an electrical source by the effective rating. It can be used to make outlets and electrical fences less dangerous, or perhaps weaponize them.

For more information about electrocution, consult the **World of Darkness** Core Rulebook, pages 177 and 178.

**Targets:** One Electrical Source

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Science + Fire

#### **Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Oroborei alters the voltage in the wrong direction. If she’s redirecting the electricity off-circuit, she accidentally jolts herself.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The Oroborei increases or decreases the voltage of the circuit, either causing a brown-out or an overload to any devices connected to the circuit. Damage done by that electrical source is increased or decreased by the effect rating at time of proclamation (player’s choice). The Oroborei may also choose to redirect the electricity off-circuit, in which case it acts as a non-insulated wire suspended in a position of the Oroborei’s choosing. Anyone in contact with this redirected electricity risk being trapped by muscle contractions from the contact, as described on page 178 of the **World of Darkness** Core Rulebook.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

### Hippocratic

The Hippocratic Edict controls the state of the body, repairing damaged tissue, treating ailments, and making the flesh harder against injury.

#### **Skill:** Medicine

**Blatancy-Utility:** Plausible-Health

### Brace

#### **Attribute:** Resolve

“Our strength of character can withstand any volley of bullets! But still, try to avoid being hit by the bullets.”

The Oroborei grants a number of targets equal to the square of the effect rating temporary Health dots, equal to the effect rating of the Hippocratic proclamation (so a rank 3 proclamation can give 9 subjects 3 temporary Health dots). These dots last until the end of the scene, and follow all rules of temporary Health established in the **World of Darkness** Core book, page 173.

**Targets:** A number of living things equal to the square of the effect rating

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Medicine + Hippocratic

#### **Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The proclaiming Oroborei accidentally inflicts lethal wounds on the targets.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** Each target gains a number of temporary Health dots equal to the effect rating, until the end of the scene.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

### Mend

#### **Attribute:** Stamina

“This may sting a bit, but it will help you feel better.”

The proclaiming Oroborei accelerates the rate at which the target’s tissues mend. Until the end of the scene, subjects recover one bashing wound each turn and one lethal wound every other turn. This stacks on top of their natural regenerative capabilities.

**Targets:** A number of living things equal to the square of the effect rating

**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Medicine + Hippocratic

#### **Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Oroborei slows down the target’s metabolism accidentally. Any wounds they suffer become resistant, and they cannot recover Health during the scene.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** Targets acquire the accelerated healing mechanics for the scene, as described in the above law.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

### Remit

**Attribute:** Presence

“Come, take my hand and whatever ails you shall be washed away.”

The Oroborei causes the targets to no longer suffer the effects of their illnesses. In effect, these conditions go into remission for a number of days equal to the square of the effect rating. The degree of illness that can be suppressed is based on the proclaiming Oroborei's effective rating of the Hippocratic Edict (see the sidebar below).

The Oroborei may optionally apply this effect to only one target, AND pay a DOT of Willpower, to permanently treat the condition.

**Targets:** A number of living things equal to the square of the effect rating

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Medicine + Hippocratic

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Oroborei worsens the condition, advancing it a stage in its development.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The Oroborei temporarily treats the condition the target suffers, rendering them inert both as a contagion and as an irritant in the body.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered. In addition, the conditions are treated permanently.

### Remit Illness

The illnesses you can treat with Remit are based on the effect rating, 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.

**1 effective dot:** Trivial conditions like cold, flu, minor addiction, fatigue, acne, parasites, toxicity 1 poisons, etc.

**2-3 effective dots:** Pesky conditions like most STDs, major addiction, bone fractures, toxicity 2-4 poisons, etc.

**4-6 effective dots:** Serious conditions like neurological disorders, blood disorders, asthma, rabies, toxicity 4-6 poisons, etc.

**7-9 effective dots:** Potentially fatal conditions like cancer, aids, Huntington's, meningitis, toxicity 7+ poisons, etc.

**10 effective dots:** Supernatural conditions like possession, claiming, death derangements, etc. (*not vampirism*)

### Husbandry

The Husbandry Edict manipulates animals to the Oroborei's benefit. All Husbandry laws may affect many targets for a short duration, or one target for a long duration, but not both.

Special to this Edict, any effect may be made permanent with the expenditure of a Willpower DOT. This may only occur when the Oroborei is targeting a single animal and may only be maintained with that single animal. If she attempts to apply permanent Husbandry affects to a new creature, the first reverts to normal.

**Skill:** Animal Ken

**Blatancy-Utility:** Blatant-Curiosity

### Domesticate

**Attribute:** Presence

“Sit! Sit! Good puma.”

The Oroborei drains all hostility from the animal. Until the end of the duration the animal will not show aggression, for any reason.

**Targets:** Square of effect rating animals (1 hour) or one animal (square of effect hours)

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Animal Ken + Husbandry

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The animal immediately attacks the proclaiming Oroborei, and will continue to do so for the intended duration.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The animal calms and will not attack, even if threatened or harmed.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

## Familiar

### Attribute: Intelligence

"Hey, you. Yeah, squirrel there. Go up to the window and see what you can find out about the office up there."

The Oroborei gifts the animal a state of humanoid intelligence, increasing its Intelligence attribute by the number of successes rolled. This proclamation also gives the animal the capacity to talk, in the Oroborei's native tongue (IE: an American Oroborei can make animals speak English). When the duration ends, the animal reverts to its normal state.

**Targets:** Square of effect rating animals (1 hour) or one animal (square of effect hours)

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Animal Ken + Husbandry

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The animal appears to become more intelligent, but is actually unchanged. The Oroborei will not discover this until she tries to communicate with the animal and embarrasses herself.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The animal gains a number of dots of Intelligence equal to the successes rolled in the activation of this Edict, for a number of hours based on how many targets the Oroborei chose to enhance. These animals can communicate in the Oroborei's native tongue and will take orders.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

## Hybrid

### Attribute: Manipulation

"Way back when, dragons were just lizards with bird wings. Let's see them now."

The Oroborei crosses the animal with another species of her choosing. The resulting mythical hybrid shares all the key biological features of both species, and has attributes that represent the average of the two source species. When the duration of this proclamation ends, the animal instantly sheds all the features from the secondary species, and reverts to its former state.

**Targets:** Square of effect rating animals (1 hour) or one animal (square of effect hours)

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Animal Ken + Husbandry

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The animal suffers debilitating organ incompatibility and dies in a writhing mass.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The animal gains the key biological features of the second species, for a duration in hours based on the number of animals influenced by the proclamation.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

## Hysteria

The Edict of Hysteria allows a proclaiming Oroborei to toy with the emotions of her targets, sapping their Willpower, distracting them, or forcing them into a particular hysterical state.

**Skill:** Expression

**Blatancy-Utility:** Subtle-Manipulation

## Crowd Control

### Attribute: Manipulation

"And they made me watch as she bled out all over the cellar floor. Can you imagine what that's like? CAN YOU!?"

The Oroborei snatches control of the mental state of the targets, forcing a particular emotion to the forefront. This effect lasts for the scene. Supernatural beings may contest this unnatural state once a minute, with a roll of Composure + their Supernatural Trait (so a mage resisting would roll Composure + Gnosis).

**Targets:** Square of effect rating people

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Expression + Hysteria – Highest Composure among Targets

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The emotion triggered in the crowd is not the intended emotion, but rather its philosophical opposite. The Oroborei suffers a -3 penalty to all social rolls for the remainder of the scene.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The crowd is forced into an emotional state that the Oroborei was trying to encourage. For the remainder of the scene, any social interaction the

Oroborei engages in with the targets that is compatible with the emotion benefits from a +3 bonus to the roll.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

### Demoralize

#### **Attribute:** Resolve

“Struggle all you want, but the cold truth is that you are all mortal. And sooner or later that asymptotic plane of nothing will cross your path. And then what’s left of you? Dust.”

The Oroborei imposes a wave of fear on the crowd, inflicting lethal wounds to the Willpower Meter equal to the successes rolled on activation. For more information on Willpower as Health, see page 174 in the first Appendix.

#### **Targets:** Square of effect rating people

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Expression + Hysteria – Highest Composure among Targets

#### *Roll Results*

**Dramatic Failure:** The crowd is bolstered instead of frightened. They gain three temporary Willpower Dots, which may be used freely until the end of the scene.

#### **Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** Targets have points of their Willpower ‘spent’ for no benefit, equal to the successes rolled in the activation of this proclamation. They also experience a sensation of crippling fear, reducing the likelihood they will attempt something bold or harmful against the proclaiming Oroborei. There are no mechanics for this; it is simply a story element.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

### Reminisce

#### **Attribute:** Stamina

“We’re all here to celebrate Sarah turning my best friend into an honest man. I remember the first time we went downtown...”

The Oroborei thrusts the targets into a daydream, effectively distracting them for a number of minutes equal to the successes rolled. Duration is reduced by one minute for each wound a target suffers while in the flashback. Supernatural beings may contest

this unnatural state once per minute, with a roll of Composure + their Supernatural Trait (so a vampire resisting would roll Composure + Blood Potency).

**Targets:** Square of effect rating people

**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Expression + Hysteria – Highest Composure among Targets

#### *Roll Results*

**Dramatic Failure:** The Oroborei traps herself in a daydream instead of her intended target. The daydream lasts until she succeeds at a Composure + Furnace roll, which she may make once every minute.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The crowd becomes entranced by daydreams, unable to perceive the world around them for a number of minutes equal to the successes rolled. During this time the Oroborei may do whatever she pleases to them, provided she does not harm them while she acts. Anything she says or does will not be perceived by the crowd as long as they are in the daydream.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

### Metal

The Edict of Metal controls... what else? Metal! A proclaiming Oroborei can alter which metals a machine is constructed from, its magnetic field, or even its apparent worth.

**Skill:** Drive

**Blatancy-Utility:** Miraculous-Sabotage

### Alchemy

#### **Attribute:** Intelligence

“You know what the difference between lead and gold is? Three steps to the left.”

The Oroborei alters the composition of metal in the target object, for a number of hours equal to the effective rating at time of proclamation. Metals can be converted into any other elemental metal or alloy, and adopt the properties of said materials for the duration of the proclamation. In addition, Structure can be repaired based on the successes rolled (and altered based on the new metal’s durability).

When used in conjunction with metal that is currently being corroded by rust or acid, the corrosion is halted.

**Targets:** One Object or Machine

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Drive + Metal – Object Durability – Artifact Rating

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The object flickers briefly and then settles into a tie-die amalgamation of metals that are unpredictable. If a machine, it likely breaks.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The metals that make up the object are changed to the Oroborei's whim. This can affect durability, electrical conductivity, susceptibility to acid or rust, or any other manner of functions. It is the burden of the proclaiming Oroborei to explain how the difference in metals changes the object's function (Make it convincing!). Additionally, the Oroborei may choose to restore some of the object's Structure, equal to the successes rolled. The change in composition is temporary, but the repair is permanent.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

**Magnetize**

**Attribute:** Strength

"You know... if you eat a magnet you'll die. They connect in your intestines and shred your insides."

The Oroborei may magnetize an object, with effective magnetic strength equal to X hundredweights (100 lbs), with X being the square of the effective rating at time of proclamation (Write it down!). For example, at effective rating 4, the dragon may create a magnet capable of moving 16 hundredweights (1600 lbs) of metal. Until the end of the scene, the Oroborei remains in complete control of the magnetic charge of this object, able to polarize it as she pleases. The magnet will attract or repel any other metallic substance in its proximity (provided it is magnetically reactive), and pull or fling it if it weighs less than the magnet's strength. The object remains magnetized until the end of the scene.

At high effect rating, this proclamation is a great way to make campaign buttons into car cannons.

**Targets:** One object

**Dice Pool:** Strength + Drive + Metal – Object Durability – Artifact Rating

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The object is magnetized, but the Oroborei has no control over its polarity. It

changes from north to south randomly and with dangerous consequences.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The object gains magnetic push and pull, in hundredweights equal to the square of the effect rating. The proclaiming Oroborei may change the polarity of the object at will, using it to maneuver metallic objects as she pleases.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

**Monetize**

**Attribute:** Wits

"See this? This is an authentic signature from the artist. You can tell from this alone that it is definitely not a reproduction."

The Oroborei imbues a sense of tremendous value in the target object. Until the end of the scene, it is perceived to be worth an amount of Resources equal to the effective rating of the proclamation. At the end of the scene, the object again appears to be worthless. This will likely breed trouble if the Oroborei used it as snake oil, but that is a complication beyond the scope of the law.

**Targets:** Effect Rating objects

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Drive + Metal – Object Durability – Artifact Rating

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Oroborei instead makes the object appear worthless. Onlookers likely suspect she's trying to pull one over on them, and may report her to the police.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The objects increase in Resources value by an amount equal to the effect rating at time of proclamation. At even middling effect ratings, this can lead to objects that appear absolutely priceless (resource appraisal of 6+). In such cases, the excess perceived value beyond Resources 6 is applied as a bonus for the Oroborei towards any social rolls involving the prospective buyer.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

**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 supernatural power. Whenever a dice pool involves Artifact Rating, it is referring to the Merit Cost of a mystic item that is being targeted by the supernatural power.

## Mutilation

The Edict of Mutilation modifies objects for the sole purpose of inflicting more grievous harm.

**Skill:** Drive

**Blatancy-Utility:** Blatant-Carnage

### Main

**Attribute:** Dexterity

“Do you feel the bludgeon twisting your organs out of place? Is it getting difficult to breathe?”

The Oroborei imbues the weapon with the capacity for crippling damage. The weapon gains a Trauma rating equal to the effective rating of the proclamation (Write it down!).

This effect lasts for the scene. Edict Trauma is separate from trauma imposed by Ablutions, which means the two stack. For more information about Trauma, see page 149 in Chapter 3.

**Targets:** One Melee Weapon

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Weaponry + Mutilation – Object Durability – Artifact Rating

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The weapon is unaltered, but the proclaiming Oroborei suffers the intended Trauma for the remainder of the scene.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The weapon gains the capacity to inflict Trauma, equal to the effect rating at time of proclamation, until the end of the scene.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

### Regenerate

**Attribute:** Stamina

“If you get the finger on ice quickly we can reattach it.”

The Oroborei infuses the target with the energy of life, re-growing a dismembered body part. She may only do so to external body parts.

This law's duration is in days, based on the effective dot rating at time of proclamation. At duration's end, the restored appendage withers and disintegrates to dust.

If the body part was severed within a number of weeks less than or equal to the effect rating, if what's left of it can be recovered (even ashes are fine), and if the Oroborei adds a Willpower DOT to the cost of proclamation, the effect is permanent.

**Targets:** One living being

**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Weaponry + Mutilation

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** Not only does the limb fail to reform, but the stump begins to bleed profusely. The target suffers one lethal wound every other turn until pressure is applied and the wound is closed.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** Bone, then muscle, and finally skin flare into existence where the severed body part would be positioned. The replacement limb functions as normal for the duration of the proclamation.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

### Sever

**Attribute:** Strength

“It needn't be razor sharp. It's all about the amount of force you apply. Then again, being sharp doesn't hurt.”

The Oroborei gifts the weapon the power to kill. Its damage type becomes lethal, and is increased by half the effective rating at time of proclamation (Round down. And write it down). If the weapon did not have a sharp edge, it warps to develop one.

When using the weapon to make an attack, three successes sever a limb. The extent of the dismemberment and its ramifications are determined by the description of the triggering attack and Storyteller discretion.

This law's duration is one day or the effect rating in severing attacks, whichever comes first. NOTE: The damage type is not *upgraded* to lethal, it BECOMES lethal. Using Sever on aggravated weapons grants the damage bonus and dismemberment capabilities, but reduces the severity of the damage inflicted.

**Targets:** One Melee Weapon

**Dice Pool:** Strength + Weaponry + Mutilate – Object Durability – Artifact Rating

### **Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Oroborei renders the weapon harmless by mistake. She is unaware of this until she attempts to use the weapon.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The weapon gains the horrifying power of severing dismemberment, and has its damage rating increased by half the effect rating (rounded down).

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

## **Network**

The Network Edict follows the intangible lines of thought that connect all living things to each other. Its primary function is the exchange of information, though there is some utility in muddying the mind of another.

**Skill:** Computer

**Blatancy-Utility:** Secret-Espionage

## **HACK**

**Attribute:** Wits

“Fly to Nairobi. Banana. Banana! Cold Steel Wednesday Motorcycle.”

The Oroborei transmits a mental virus, bombarding the target's mind with nonsense. This is quite disorienting, and inflicts a penalty to actions equal to the effective rating at time of proclamation. This effect lasts for a number of minutes equal to the square of the effect rating (so a rank 3 proclamation of HACK lasts 9 minutes).

Effective Rating controls the number of connections the Oroborei may cross. That is, a rank 1 proclamation can only travel to a target in the Oroborei's immediate sensory range, while a rank 2 proclamation may travel *through* that immediate target to anyone he shares more than a fleeting connection with. For example, the dragon may be with Frank, but Frank knows Sally, Thomas, and Richard. A rank 2 proclamation could be applied to *any* of those four people.

The Network Edict cares not for physical distances, as it travels along the invisible threads of social connections. At rank 6, the Oroborei can network with practically anyone on the planet. When the Oroborei passes through a person's mind as a connection, they experience a shiver.

**Targets:** One person through applicable connections

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Computer + Network – Resolve

### **Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, Eureka! The nonsense leads the target to a brilliant revelation, and as such he receives a BONUS to his actions instead of the intended penalty.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The dragon follows the social connections through the mind of someone in her vicinity to her target, and then bombards that mind with nonsensical information. The target is disoriented by these confusing thoughts and thus becomes disoriented and ‘spacey’ for a number of minutes equal to the square of the effect rating. In addition, he suffers a penalty to act equal to the effect rating.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

## **MAIL**

**Attribute:** Presence

“Listen closely, it’s Marie. I’m speaking to you telepathically through the power of Science. I need you to meet me at Seventh Street before sunset. Bring weapons.”

The Oroborei sends a message, which the target hears in his mind as a telepathic statement (in the Oroborei's voice). The message may be as long as the Oroborei wishes, but must be spoken in a single uninterrupted filibuster. This law does not give the dragon access to a reply.

If she so chooses, the Oroborei may leave carbon copies of these messages at each connection she crosses on the way to her target. She may also choose to use herself as the first connection. Both of these options apply for this Network Law only.

Effective Rating controls the number of connections the Oroborei may cross. That is, a rank 1 proclamation can only travel to a target in the Oroborei's immediate sensory range, while a rank 2 proclamation may travel *through* that immediate target to anyone he shares more than a fleeting connection with. For example, the dragon may be with Frank, but Frank knows Sally, Thomas, and Richard. A rank 2 proclamation could be applied to *any* of those four people.

The Network Edict cares not for physical distances, as it travels along the invisible threads of social connections. At rank 6, the Oroborei can network with practically anyone on the planet. When the Oroborei passes through a person's mind as a connection, they experience a shiver.

**Targets:** One person through applicable connections

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Computer + Network

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The message is not received, and the Oroborei has no means of knowing that. She assumes that her mail arrived as intended.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The target receives the message, and may interpret it as he wishes.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

## PHISH

**Attribute:** Resolve

"Let's take a look at your browsing history... ah, there it is. How to dissolve a body, huh? Somebody's been a naughty boy."

The Oroborei may read the surface thoughts of the target. If she shuts out one of her senses, she may instead experience the corresponding sense of her target. This feed of information remains until the end of the scene.

Effective Rating controls the number of connections the Oroborei may cross. That is, a rank 1 proclamation can only travel to a target in the Oroborei's immediate sensory range, while a rank 2 proclamation may travel *through* that immediate target to anyone he shares more than a fleeting connection with. For example, the dragon may be with Frank, but Frank knows Sally, Thomas, and Richard. A rank 2 proclamation could be applied to *any* of those four people.

The Network Edict cares not for physical distances, as it travels along the invisible threads of social connections. At rank 6, the Oroborei can network with practically anyone on the planet. When the Oroborei passes through a person's mind as a connection, they experience a shiver.

**Targets:** One person through applicable connections

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Computers + Network – Resolve

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The feed is reversed. Until the end of the scene, the target may read the Oroborei's surface thoughts and perceive through her senses.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The Oroborei taps into the feed of the target's mind, observing his surface thoughts and—if she so desires—his senses. This feed lasts for the scene.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

## Oath

The Oath Edict expects only the truest intentions of everyone, and demands that the honor of one's word is irrefutable. By force.

**Skill:** Intimidation

**Blatancy-Utility:** Mild-Pledge

**Reprimand**

**Attribute:** Strength

"You made a promise. That means something. Break it, and I will break you."

The Oroborei forces the target to be accountable for his promises. When acting against them, he suffers the agony of boiling blood. This sensation crushes his heart and physically resembles a heart attack, but the target knows better. He suffers lethal wounds equal to the proclaiming Oroborei's effective rating at the time of the proclamation (Write it down!), and suffers Trauma rated at the same value. These wounds can be reduced by the target's supernatural trait, but the Trauma cannot.

This effect lasts until the promise is broken or reaches its inevitable conclusion. If it is an ongoing promise, the duration is a number of months equal to the effect rating of the proclamation. If the Oroborei directly forces the target to break the promise, the penalty suffered is only half.

**Targets:** One person

**Dice Pool:** Strength + Intimidation + Oath – Resolve

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The proclaiming Oroborei unintentionally ties her own body to the binds of the

promise. If the target does not uphold his word, then the dragon will suffer the consequences.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The dragon ties the target's physical well-being to the weight of his promise. If he does not keep his word his blood will boil, inflicting lethal wounds and trauma.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

## Shame

**Attribute:** Manipulation

"You gave them your word. Your word as a man of honor. How can you be so frivolous with something so important?"

The Oroborei forces the target to keep his promises. When acting against them, he suffers theft of Willpower equal to the effective rating of the proclamation at time of application (Write it down!). Willpower lost in this manner is granted to the proclaiming Oroborei.

This effect lasts until the promise is broken or reaches its inevitable conclusion. If it is an ongoing promise, the duration is a number of months equal to the effect rating of the proclamation. If the Oroborei directly forces the target to break the promise, the penalty suffered is only half.

**Targets:** One person

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Intimidation + Oath - Resolve

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The proclaiming Oroborei unintentionally ties her own body to the binds of the promise. If the target does not uphold his word, then the dragon will suffer the consequences.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The dragon ties the target's mental well-being to the weight of his promise. If he does not keep his word he will feel his force of will drain away, sending points of Willpower to the proclaiming Oroborei.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

## Vow

**Attribute:** Stamina

"I have to know that I can trust you. Do you promise?"

The Oroborei forces the target to keep his promises. When acting against them, he suffers a penalty to do so equal to the effective rating of the proclamation (Write it down!).

This effect lasts until the promise is successfully broken or reaches its inevitable conclusion. If it is an ongoing promise, the duration is a number of months equal to the effect rating of the proclamation. If the Oroborei directly forces the target to break the promise, the penalty suffered is only half.

**Targets:** One person

**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Intimidation + Oath - Resolve

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The proclaiming Oroborei unintentionally ties her own body to the binds of the promise. If the target does not uphold his word, the dragon suffers a -2 penalty to act for the remainder of the scene.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The dragon imposes a mental barrier in the target, hindering his attempts to break the promise. If he tries to break his word, he will feel an unseen force pushing against him, and suffer a penalty to the attempt equal to the effect rating.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

## Phantom

The Phantom Edict taps into the Heart's connection to death and undeath, using trickery to remain concealed. It's funny how people stop questioning you when it looks like you're dead.

**Skill:** Stealth

**Blatancy-Utility:** Moderate-Escape

## Devour

**Attribute:** Stamina

"The darkness that sustains you... that darkness shall be fuel for my light."

The Oroborei reaches into the phantom edges of the target and steals his very essence to sustain her. This is experienced as an expense of supernatural fuel in the target (Blood for vampires, Breath for dragons, Essence for Ghosts and Spirits) to replenish the Oroborei's own Breath. The target spends an amount of fuel equal to the effect rating of the proclamation, and the Oroborei acquires half that expenditure (rounded down) as Breath. Once a

supernatural being is subjected to Devour, they are immune for the rest of the scene.

If the targeted supernatural did not have enough fuel to spend, there is no additional penalty for the shortage (beyond their own depletion). The amount of Breath the Oroborei gains is always based on the amount her victim actually spends.

If used on a being that does not possess supernatural fuel, this Law instead inflicts bashing wounds to the Willpower meter. All other effects are the same. For information on damage to the Willpower meter, see page 174 in the First Appendix.

**Targets:** One supernatural being

**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Stealth + Phantom – Stamina

#### **Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The proclamation does the opposite of its intended effect. The Oroborei is forced to pay Breath, which converts to the intended victim's fuel of choice.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The dragon grabs hold of the target victim's aura and consumes it, refueling herself at his expense.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

#### **Project**

**Attribute:** Intelligence

"It is a matter of discipline. The only thing tying our mind to our physical form is the belief that this is a law of nature."

The Oroborei ejects her soul from her body, entering a state of Twilight for a number of minutes equal to the effect rating of the proclamation (or until she decides to return). She may travel a number of miles from her body equal to that same effective rating, but must travel by her own physical means. While in this state, she is completely imperceivable by normal beings and may pass through matter. Supernatural beings that can detect the Twilight state may see the Oroborei if she wills it, otherwise they receive a penalty to perceive her equal to the effective rating of the proclamation (Write it down!).

While her soul is separated from her body, it is listless and only responds with nods and shakes

when asked questions. Without a soul, the body is obligated to answer any question truthfully with either a confirming nod or denying shake. The exception is questions about its supernatural nature; the power of the Heart and its former inhabitants protect this information, forcing the body to lie. If the Oroborei speaks while she is separated from her body (including the act of proclaiming an Edict), her body speaks the words as well.

**Targets:** Self

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Stealth + Phantom

#### **Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Oroborei locks herself out of her body, but within her body. She enters the listless state, unable to move under her own power, but without the benefit of scouting undetected.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The Oroborei breaks away from her body, able to travel undetected by the power of her mind within a number of radial miles equal to the effect rating of the proclamation. She may make proclamations while in this state, applying them within her range of perception instead of that of her body.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

#### **Rigor**

**Attribute:** Presence

"AUUGH!"

The Oroborei appears to drop dead, and upon investigation seems as if she has suffered a heart attack. She remains in this state, indistinguishable from a real corpse, for a number of minutes equal to the effect rating of the proclamation (or until she decides to end it). She is effectively blind while in this state, but completely aware of her immediate surroundings through her other senses. Also, while posing as a corpse she cannot take any actions, save making another proclamation (which comes out as a death wail or an escape of air).

Supernatural abilities that detect life suffer a penalty to do so against her equal to the effective rating of the proclamation.

**Targets:** Self

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Stealth + Phantom

### ***Roll Results***

**Dramatic Failure:** The Oroborei drops dead, but still bears all the signs of life. It is quite clear she is faking, though she does not know her cover is blown.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The Oroborei takes on the semblance of a corpse, suffering an apparent heart attack or stroke and collapsing. Mundane means of medical examination corroborate this. She remains ‘dead’ but aware until the effect ends. People tend to treating corpses differently than living things, but it will take some creativity to make the most use of this ability.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

### **Polygraphy**

The Edict of Polygraphy twists the fabric of truth, making lies into facts and forcing facts to be lies. Polygraphy’s Laws reveal lies to the Oroborei, make her lies completely believable, or force others to exercise the use of their serpent tongues.

**Skill:** Subterfuge

**Blatancy-Utility:** Blatant-Confusion

### **Honesty**

**Attribute:** Presence

“Scout’s honor”

The Oroborei acquires an indelible aura of credibility, making every statement she speaks seem like the god’s honest truth. Mortals cannot discern her deception from fact, no matter how ridiculous her lies may be. Against supernatural beings, her acts of deception receive a bonus, equal to the effective rating of the proclamation (Write it down!).

This effect lasts for a number of minutes equal to the effect rating of the proclamation.

**Targets:** Self

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Subterfuge + Polygraphy

### ***Roll Results***

**Dramatic Failure:** The proclaiming Oroborei accidentally imposes the reverse effect. No one will believe a word she says until the end of the scene.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The dragon coats her words with the air of reliability. Even if her lies are laughable, mortals will believe her until the proclamation’s duration ends. Supernatural beings may still detect

her lies, but she receives a bonus to her social roll equal to the effect rating of the proclamation.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

### **Kindred Sinner**

**Attribute:** Composure

“It really does take one to know one.”

The Oroborei gets a good grip on the target’s deceptive mind, instantly gaining the ability to detect his lies. She is notified by the Storyteller every time the target diverges from the truth, or by the controlling player if the target is another player’s character. While she is aware of lies, she is not made privy to omission of facts, nor is she aware how elaborate the lie may be.

Supernatural beings may still deceive the Oroborei, but suffer a penalty equal to the effective rating of the proclamation (Write it down!).

This effect lasts for a number of minutes equal to the effect rating.

**Targets:** One person

**Dice Pool:** Composure + Subterfuge + Polygraphy - Resolve

### ***Roll Results***

**Dramatic Failure:** The proclaiming Oroborei unintentionally ties her own body to the binds of the promise. If the target does not uphold his word, then the dragon will suffer the consequences.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The dragon ties the target’s mental well-being to the weight of his promise. If he does not keep his word he will feel his force of will drain away, sending points of Willpower to the proclaiming Oroborei.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

### **Serpent’s Tongue**

**Attribute:** Manipulation

“You may ask one question... but I always lie.”

The Oroborei psychically forbids the act of telling the truth. For a number of minutes equal to the effect rating of the proclamation, the target may speak only lies. Any attempt to speak the truth emerges as raspy, incomprehensible muttering.

A supernatural target may roll Resolve + Furnace (or whatever equivalent) to resist this effect.

Success means he is able to tell the truth, but only for the one statement. Exceptional success means he has broken free of the proclamation.

**Targets:** One person

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Subterfuge + Polygraphy – Composure

#### **Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The proclaiming Oroborei unintentionally subjects herself to the proclamation. She suffers its effects until the end of the scene, just as any other supernatural being would.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The dragon blocks the target's ability to tell the truth, intercepting each non-fallacy with sudden-onset loss-of-voice. This effect lasts for a number of minutes equal to the effect rating of the proclamation.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

## **Property**

The Edict of Property laces possessions with dangerous consequences. Burglars beware.

**Skill:** Larceny

**Blatancy-Utility:** Mild-Trap Setting

## Biohazard

**Attribute:** Stamina

“Whosoever touches this object shall be stricken with boils.”

The Oroborei wraps an aura of sickness around the object. If a thief touches the object, he begins to suffer the effects of an illness. In effect, he contracts the specified illness until the end of the proclamation's duration. The intensity of illness that can be inflicted is based on the effect rating of the proclamation, and is identical to the illnesses that can be treated by the Hippocratic Edict's Remit Law (see the sidebar on page 109).

The illness has a duration in days equal to the effect rating of the proclamation.

**Targets:** One object

**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Larceny + Property

#### **Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The proclaiming Oroborei accidentally exposes herself to the contagion, forgetting to exclude herself from viable victims.

She suffers its effects until the proclamation's duration ends.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The dragon laces the object with an illness. The degree of illness that can be inflicted is equal to the effect rating, and is equivalent to the illnesses treated by the sidebar on page 109.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered. The thief subjected to the illness suffers it until its natural conclusion, instead of until the end of the proclamation's duration.

## Mark

**Attribute:** Dexterity

“It's a radioactive dye-pack. It's like a regular dye-pack, but invisible to the naked eye. That means I can see where you've been, and you can't.”

The Oroborei coats the object in an imperceptible ink. Anyone who touches the object gets the ink all over them, leaving a trail the proclaiming Oroborei can follow to the culprit. This ink also reveals to the Oroborei that the object has been tampered with.

The ink remains viable for a number of days equal to the effect rating of the proclamation, and can still be perceived by the Oroborei for a number of ADDITIONAL days equal to that same number.

**Targets:** One object

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Larceny + Property

#### **Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Oroborei fails to prime the ink, and it ceases to be viable almost instantly. She is unaware of this as she cannot test the ink herself.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The Oroborei coats the object in an invisible dye that only she can see. Anyone who touches this dye within the proclamation's duration gets covered in it, leaving a trail to their current location. The trail can be followed for a number of days equal to the effect rating of the proclamation, straight to the person that touched the coated object.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

## Trap

**Attribute:** Strength

"Bit by bit, it eats away at you. Greed is one nasty bitch."

The Oroborei wraps an aura of negative energy around the object. Any time and every time a thief touches the object, he suffers a number of bashing wounds to Health AND Willpower equal to the effective rating of the proclamation (Write it down!). The injury is experienced as a sharp, embracing numbness all over the body.

Damage from this effect does NOT cause roll-over on the Health meter. Instead, it immediately renders the thief unconscious.

This effect remains for a number of days equal to the effect rating of the proclamation.

**Targets:** Self

**Dice Pool:** Strength + Larceny + Property

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The trapped object is actually not trapped at all. It triggers the tingling sensation but no detrimental effects.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The Oroborei imbues the object with the ability to cause fatiguing mental and physical pain. It does so each time it is touched by someone who is not its owner and is attempting to take possession of the object (so if applied to a weapon, the pain is inflicted on a disarm attempt but not on a strike). Each intentional touch inflicts bashing wounds to both Health and Willpower equal to the effect rating of the proclamation.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

## Rampage

The Rampage Edict is used to weaponize rage, channeling terror into the masses and rendering them reckless, helpless, and infuriated.

**Skill:** Streetwise

**Blatancy-Utility:** Obvious-Havoc

## Bedlam

**Attribute:** Intelligence

"Dance! Scream! Smash the windows! Everything must go!"

The Oroborei forces the targets to be overcome with rage. Each must lash out against someone or something in range each turn, until he has inflicted and/or suffered a number of strikes equal to the effect rating of the proclamation. In other words, for

someone suffering the effects of a rank 5 proclamation, striking three objects and being struck twice would free him from Bedlam.

**Targets:** Square of Effect Rating people

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Streetwise + Rampage

- Highest Resolve among Targets

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The proclaiming Oroborei gets caught up in the commotion, and subjects herself to the effects of Bedlam.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** Each target is driven into a frenzy, attacking anything in range until they have struck a number of objects or persons (or been struck a number of times, or any combination of the two) equal to the effect rating of the proclamation.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

## Terrorize

**Attribute:** Presence

"You're not going to hurt me. You know what I'll do if you try."

The Oroborei causes the target to be overcome with fear and hesitation, forcing him to rally his composure to take aggression. When trying to take an aggressive action, he must first succeed at a Composure roll (+Furnace) or pause before acting and lose his action. This refers to attacks, threats, arguments, plotting, and anything else that the Storyteller decides is aggressive towards the Oroborei.

This condition persists until the total number of suffered hesitations matches the effective rating of the proclamation. If the proclamation was rank 4, the target need no longer roll Composure to act aggressively after hesitating the fourth time. This Law has no effect on non-aggressive actions.

**Targets:** Square of Effect Rating people

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Streetwise + Rampage - Highest Resolve among Targets

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Oroborei anticipates she's created a cloak of fear, but finds that it does not work as she intended. ...The hard way.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The Oroborei shrouds herself in a cloak of fear, causing attackers to hesitate whenever they would act aggressively against her. They must

succeed at a Composure roll before attacking a number of times equal to the effect rating of the Terrorize proclamation.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

### Unbalance

**Attribute:** Strength

“Watch your step. The ground isn’t as level as it looks.”

The Oroborei causes the balance of her target to be gravely offset, causing him to flop around like a rag-doll. Whenever struck or thrown, the target suffers additional knock-back equal to the effective rating of the proclamation. This effect lasts for the scene.

For more information on knock-back, see page 147 in Chapter 3.

**Targets:** Square of Effect Rating people

**Dice Pool:** Strength + Streetwise + Rampage

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Oroborei subjects her own body to the effects of this Law.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The Oroborei causes her targets to ragdoll when struck, prompting knock-back whenever they are injured.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

### Ruin

The Edict of Ruin takes functional objects and machinery and turns them into piles of rusty dust. Oroborei that study the Edict of Ruin do so to break things, and Ruin’s laws do a very good job.

**Skill:** Crafts

**Blatancy-Utility:** Obvious-Disarming

### Cut Corners

**Attribute:** Dexterity

“Do you see that label on the bottom? That thing that says manufactured from outsourced parts? Yeah, that’s not really steel. It’s pig-metal somebody melted together in a kitchen pot.”

The Oroborei depletes the object’s hardness. Its durability is reduced by the effect rating of the proclamation. Unless the object is supernatural, this

reduction is permanent. Supernatural objects that survive until the end of the scene recover from this reduction.

**Targets:** Square of Effect Rating objects

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Crafts + Ruin – Object Durability – Artifact Rating

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The objects actually harden, improving their durability by 2.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** Each object experiences a decrease in Durability equal to the effect rating of the proclamation. This reduction does NOT result in a decrease in structure; that’s the purview of a different Law. Unless the object is supernatural, this depletion is permanent.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

### Defect

**Attribute:** Wits

“Due to a manufacturing error from that item’s lot, it has a fatal defect. See that little crack on the casing there? If I poke it like this... presto! Dust.”

The Oroborei inflicts unseen manufacturing defects on the object. Each target suffers damage to Structure equal to successes rolled on activation. Supernatural objects recover at the end of the scene.

**Targets:** Square of Effect Rating people

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Crafts + Ruin – Durability – Artifact Rating

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Oroborei accidentally repairs the object.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** Each success inflicts one point of damage to the object’s structure. Since durability is deducted from the dice pool as a penalty, the successes do not need to exceed it to harm the object.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

### Embargo

**Attribute:** Presence

“You shouldn’t use those. They are against the rules.”

The Oroborei causes an object to inexplicably seize up. It ceases to function for a number of minutes (if a machine) or turns (if a weapon) equal to the effect rating of the proclamation, less the object's durability and artifact rating (if applicable). It is effectively jammed until the duration concludes.

**Targets:** Square of Effect Rating people

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Crafts + Ruin – Object Durability – Artifact Rating

#### **Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Oroborei believes she's disabled the objects, but she has actually done nothing. This likely results in a bullet wound.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The Oroborei disables the objects she is targeting, rendering them paperweights (not literally, figuratively) for a number of minutes (or turns for weapons) equal to the effect rating (minimum one minute or turn).

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

## **Trance**

The Trance Edict tugs on the chains of the mind that connect memory to motion. Forgetfulness makes such a wonderful distraction.

**Skill:** Persuasion

**Blatancy-Utility:** Moderate-Distraction

## **Flashback**

**Attribute:** Intelligence

"Do you remember the first time you realized that things weren't as they seemed? When you found out that adults don't always tell the truth? You're thinking about Santa right now, aren't you? I can tell."

The Oroborei causes the target to be swallowed up by his memories in a bizarre dream-state. People and objects around him take the shape of things from his history, and though their physical actions remain the same their words speak relevance from the target's past. The target is greatly disoriented by this, and cannot break free unless he succeeds at an Intelligence + Composure roll, which he may make once per minute. All of his actions, including the roll to break from the flashback, are penalized based on the effective rating of the proclamation (Write it down!). Each time he is wounded in this state, he

may immediately make another Intelligence + Composure roll (reflexively) to break free.

Should the target be unable to slip the flashback, it will fade at the end of the scene.

**Targets:** Square of Effect Rating people

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Persuasion + Trance – Highest Composure among Targets

#### **Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The proclaiming Oroborei snares herself in the proclamation, falling into the Trance along with the rest of her targets.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The target is plunged into a flashback, greatly disorienting him. All actions suffer a penalty equal to the effect rating of the proclamation. He may roll Intelligence + Composure once per minute (or once each time he is injured) to attempt to break from the flashback. This roll suffers the same penalty as his other actions.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

## **Pluck**

**Attribute:** Dexterity

"I was never here. You sat in the security office all night eating potato chips. That's why they're all gone. Not because I took them from you."

The Oroborei plucks the strings of the target's mind, altering various details in the target's short-term memory. The number of details the Oroborei can alter is equal to the square of the effective rating of the proclamation (so a rank 5 proclamation can alter 25 details). Any minor detail the target experienced since he last slept may be tweaked as the Oroborei pleases. Major details may need to be changed in steps by breaking them up into smaller memories. This is a lasting effect.

**Targets:** Square of Effect Rating people

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Persuasion + Trance – Highest Composure among Targets

#### **Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Oroborei believes she has adjusted the details in the target's memory, but actually has achieved nothing. She is unaware of her failure until it comes back to haunt her.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The Oroborei paints a picture over the target's short-term memory, tweaking minor details or completely replacing them. Anything the target

experienced since his last sleep may be adjusted in any manner, though bigger details (read: more important) need to be broken up into smaller details to be manipulated by this proclamation. The number of details that can be tweaked is equal to the square of the effect rating.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

## Stitch

**Attribute:** Resolve

“You’re not really a man. You’re three ducks and a salmon in the hollowed out hide of a hobo.”

The Oroborei may overwrite the long-term memories of the target. The memory that the dragon has created to replace the old one is accepted by the target until significant evidence is presented to prove otherwise. Even then, it’s only enough to give the target one roll to recover his old memory: Intelligence + Composure, penalized by the effect rating of the proclamation (Write it down!)

The number of long-term memories that can be altered is equal to the effect rating of the proclamation. Overwriting a memory does NOT give the proclaiming Oroborei knowledge to the original memory. Since external evidence can give the victim a chance to recover, it is best to keep these adjustments plausible.

**Targets:** Effect Rating People

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Persuasion + Trance

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Oroborei overwrites the target’s memory, but not as intended. She has no idea what the target now believes, and as such he is likely to be VERY unpredictable.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The Oroborei changes a number of the target’s long-term memories. The target will behave as if that history were truth until evidence proves otherwise AND he succeeds at an Intelligence + Composure roll, penalized by the effect rating.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

## Water

The Edict of Water controls the phase and acidity of liquids, and even the weather.

**Skill:** Academics

**Blatancy-Utility:** Obviously Supernatural-Creative Solutions

## Snap Freeze

**Attribute:** Manipulation

“I never thought you could be so cold. I mean look at that, the puddle’s freezing at your fingertips. Is that all you are? A cold fish?”

The proclaiming Oroborei freezes a volume of liquid in cubic yards equal to the cube of the proclamation’s effective rating (so at Water 3 the amount of liquid frozen is 27 cubic yards). The liquid frozen need not be one continuous body. It could even be individual drops of rain over a limited range. The liquid remains frozen until it melts naturally.

The resulting ice bears a uniform temperature of -4 degrees Celsius (regardless of the freezing point of the original liquid), and has a durability of 2. When its surface reaches the freezing point, its durability shrinks to 1. Structure is based on the size of the ice block.

**Targets:** Liquid within sensory range

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Academics + Water

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The water warms to a comfortable 21 degrees Celsius, and is protected against the Water Edict for the rest of the scene.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** A volume of water freezes, equal to the cube of the effect rating. Persons frozen into the water suffer a single point of bashing damage from the expanding crystalline structure crushing their limbs, and they may be immobilized. The water remains frozen until it melts naturally.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

## Solute

**Attribute:** Intelligence

“You know, you should never judge a viscous material by its color. That’s why I carry litmus paper everywhere I go.”

The proclaiming Oroborei can affect the pH of liquid she can see, rendering it an acid or an alkali (or changing it to water if it is already caustic). Liquids adjusted in this way gain (or lose) a caustic

nature. When caustic, they may dissolve any material with less structure than the effect rating of the Solute proclamation (less the object's Durability) over the course of a few minutes. This change lasts a number of hours equal to that same effect rating.

There are limits to how much liquid the proclaiming Oroborei can affect. She must be able to see the entirety of the liquid when she makes the proclamation, and the liquid's volume cannot exceed the cube of the effect rating. It need not be in one continuous body, however (so a clever Oroborei could make the very rain caustic).

Since the **World of Darkness** Rulebook does not have any specifics about acid, the result of caustic exposure is resolved just like a fire (see the core book, page 180) with the following exceptions: the size of the acid involved is not important (that only goes to determine who is exposed), the heat is equal to half the effect rating of the proclamation (round up), and continuous exposure does not cause objects to catch fire. To stop the burning the caustic liquid needs to be diluted with water or treated with anti-blistering agents.

**Targets:** Liquid within sensory range

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Academics + Water

#### **Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Oroborei changes the acidity/alkalinity of the liquid, but has absolutely no idea if she has succeeded. If she thinks that it is caustic, it's actually harmless. If she believes it to be harmless, it is actually deadly.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The Oroborei renders a cubic volume of liquid caustic (or non-caustic). If caustic, the liquid may dissolve objects with structure less than the proclamation's effect rating (minus the durability of the object submerged). Organisms exposed to this adjusted liquid suffer as if on fire, with a heat index equal to half the effect rating (rounded up). The liquid remains caustic for a number of hours equal to the effect rating.

If non-caustic, the acid or alkali remains harmless for a number of hours equal to the effect rating.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

#### **Storm Call**

**Attribute:** Presence

"And the rain washed the blood from the ground."

The proclaiming Oroborei spawns a thunderstorm in the sky, with a number of storm cells equal to the effect rating of the proclamation. This triggers a downpour, which lasts for a number of hours equal to half the proclamation's effective rating (round up). Heavy rain has many uses, including the occlusion of a hunting trail or the flooding of sewers. It also generates a large volume of liquid that the Oroborei can manipulate with the other laws of the Water Edict.

**Targets:** A radius in square miles equal to the effect rating

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Academics + Water

#### **Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Oroborei accidentally triggers a tornado or hurricane cell, causing a tremendous natural disaster.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The Oroborei causes a thunderstorm, with duration equal to half the effect rating of the proclamation (round up). While the amount of precipitation in a thunderstorm varies by region, the instant downpour from this law can cause flooding, power outages, lightning and thunder, or even small tornadoes as the Oroborei pleases.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

#### **Wood**

The Edict of Wood taps into the forces of nature to bring life and health to botanical organisms, and to use them as weapons.

**Skill:** Survival

**Blatancy-Utility:** Obviously Supernatural-Creative Solutions

#### **Allergen**

**Attribute:** Stamina

*Inhales Deeply:* "Ahh! Fresh Air! Keeps you young, you know?"

The proclaiming Oroborei triggers a spray of pollen from all nearby plant sources. Anyone within range suffers an immediate sneezing fit, even if they are not particularly allergic to outdoor irritants. This fit lasts for a number of turns equal to the effective dot rating in the Wood decree at time of proclamation. While sneezing, those in range are physically incapable of performing any other action.

This law suffers penalties to activation if there are few plants nearby. It is never restricted from use, however, because even cleanrooms have tiny particles of mold afloat in the air.

**Targets:** Square of Effect Rating radial yards

**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Survival + Wood

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Oroborei triggers the pollen spray, but subjects herself to the allergic fit.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** Within a number of feet equal to the square of the effect rating, hyper-allergenic pollen clouds the air. Anyone within this cloud suffers a sneezing fit for a number of turns equal to the effect rating, and can take no other action during that time.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

## Bloom

**Attribute:** Composure

"I hate winter. Not for the cold. Not for the snow. No, I hate winter because it strips the trees bare. Nothing beats a magnolia in bloom."

The proclaiming Oroborei forces the target botanical organism into a seasonal stage of her choosing. She can make trees shed their leaves in summer, or flowers bloom in the middle of winter. This effect lasts for the scene, at which point the plant works to return to its natural state. It could take days to repair itself, though.

**Targets:** Square of Effect Rating plants

**Dice Pool:** Composure + Survival + Wood

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Oroborei changes the plants, but to a random seasonal stage that is not the season of her choice. The law is otherwise unchanged.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The Oroborei spontaneously alters the plants, changing them to the seasonal state of her choosing. The utility of this may not be immediately apparent, but the proclamation's purpose isn't necessarily about the plant. In harsh environments this law can spawn fruit for nutrition or hydration, and in cult situations the power of a visible miracle is not to be underestimated.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

## Cultivate

**Attribute:** Resolve

"It's all in the fertilizer."

The proclaiming Oroborei speeds the target plant along its natural lifespan, advancing it a number of years up to the square of the effective rating. She may do so with a seed to cause it to grow to viable age instantly, or even with a dead plant to decompose it into mulch. With a high enough effect rating and repeated applications she might even be able to fossilize the plant.

Alternatively, she may target many plants at once, though if she does so each only advances one year in its cycle. The number of plants she may target in this manner is equal to the square of the effect rating.

Regardless of the application of the Cultivate law, the result is permanent.

**Targets:** One plant (Many Years) or Square of Effect Rating Plants (One Year)

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Survival + Wood

**Roll Results**

**Dramatic Failure:** The Oroborei accidentally kills the plant.

**Failure:** Nothing happens.

**Success:** The Oroborei miraculously grows the targets. This is done with a time compression, so to all outside science it appears to have reached the new age by natural means. There are many practical uses for accelerating a plant's development, the most apparent being immediate availability of a climbing surface.

**Exceptional Success:** In addition to success, the point of Breath to make the proclamation is recovered.

## 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:

**Ablution dots 6-10:** These are relatively easy, as all of the Ablutions 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 Ablution. No Ablution can have a dot rating higher than the Dragon's Furnace (After dot five, that is), and manifesting any Ablution 5 or higher requires two forging points, not one.

*Edicts 6-10:* More difficult than the Ablutions are the Edicts. While the effective rating scales

well, a higher level Edict would require more laws to be available (and perhaps even laws that have a minimum dot requirement to unlock). Though additional laws for each could be detailed here, the degree of creativity that comes with designing high-level powers is not one we wish to rob.

## 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 an array of bloody bone flechettes 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 Ablutions 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 Ablution manifestation (known as reforging) 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, the Caloric requirements of a Dragon Furnace have been simplified into 'meals', which also includes normally inedible fuel sources. 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 Oroborei. 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 Oroborei, their modified rules for Virtue and Vice can be found here. From the trigger of swapped motivations to the duality of derangements, 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? Does she come back to life... wrong? 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 Agony and Comfort Edicts make use of an as of yet nonexistent Health Penalty Shift system. The Willpower meter gets a significant overhaul here, making necessary compensations to handle fear-based damage and Dreamtide vitality. Fossilization is presented in more detail, receiving a conversion from thematic element to mechanical effect. 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.

## Manifesting Ablutions (Reforging)

Unveiling and re-concealing a divine trait 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 Ablution 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 Ablution 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 Ablution, you must take a reforging action. A reforging 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 Ablutions.

If the dragon so chooses, she may spend a point of Breath to gain the benefit of a reforging 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 reforging action supplies the dragon with a number of forging points equal to her Furnace, which can be spent to assume or disband an Ablution.

<i>Wings</i>	<i>Impervious Hide</i>	<i>Claws</i>
●●●○○	●●●●●	●●●●○
◻◻◻◻◻	◻◻◻◻◻	◻◻◻◻◻

When no Ablutions 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:

<i>Wings</i>	<i>Impervious Hide</i>	<i>Claws</i>
●●●○○	●●●●●	●●●●○
◻◻◻◻◻	◻◻◻◻◻	◻◻◻◻◻

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 would be lost at the end of the turn. The number of points assumed in an Ablution may never exceed the number of dots owned in that same Ablution. Dots in an Ablution are purchased with experience, whereas points show how manifest an Ablution is. The prior is more permanent than the latter.

<i>Wings</i>	<i>Impervious Hide</i>	<i>Claws</i>
●●●○○	●●●●●	●●●●○
◻◻◻◻◻	◻◻◻◻◻	◻◻◻◻◻

To assume the fifth point of an Ablution (and any point higher, if you're playing a Furnace 6+ game), *two* forging points must be expended. For our Furnace 4 dragon, moving from Impervious Hide 4 to Impervious Hide 5 would take two of her four forging points from the reforging action, leaving her two to spare.

Disbanding an Ablution (for the means of concealing the Oroboroi nature) works exactly the same, but in reverse. A reforging action is taken by the dragon, but the forging points are spent to remove Ablutions. Our Furnace 4 dragon, after ending her foe, takes another reforging action:

<i>Wings</i>	<i>Impervious Hide</i>	<i>Claws</i>
--------------	------------------------	--------------

●●●○○	●●●●●	●●●●○
◻◻◻◻◻	◻◻◻◻◻	◻◻◻◻◻

softening a single point of her Impervious Hide and reduce the size of her claws. In this manner, disbanding Ablutions takes as long as manifesting them. It is important to note that disbanding the fifth point or higher in an Ablution requires two forging points, just as assuming it does.

Also important to note is Furnace Bandwidth. This limits the degree of supernatural prowess a dragon may exhibit on any given turn. The total number of points assumed across the character sheet cannot exceed the dragon's Furnace Bandwidth. Furnace Bandwidth may be calculated by tripling the dragon's Furnace rating, and then adding 2. Breath may be spent with the intent of increasing Furnace Bandwidth, in which case it improves the limit by three per point until the end of the scene.

### Low-Light Furnace

You no doubt noticed that it is impossible for a Furnace 1 dragon to assume the final point of an Ablution. At least, not with reforging action. For Furnace 1 dragons *only*, an entire turn may be dedicated to assuming the fifth point of an Ablution. That means no movement, no Defense, *and* no action. The act essentially becomes a full action.

### Tells

You may have noticed that all the Ablutions have three degrees of tells. This was explained briefly in the previous chapter, but the gravity of these perceivable changes has not been explored.

Tells do not inflict any mechanical penalty, and neither do they provide any mechanical benefit. This is a pleasant component of the Storytelling system: a game feature that is not trapped inside a coffin of tables and numbers. Tells instead encourage both players and the Storyteller to be aware of the Ablutions in use, and how concealing them might be a problem.

Minor tells come into play when the first point of an Ablution is manifest. They are easy to hide without planning in advance and thusly could be called 'subtle'.

Moderate tells do not form until the Ablution is manifesting at least three points. They are blatantly monstrous, but they can be disguised by planning in advance. Peculiar fashion like long coats and scarves are usually enough to hide a Moderate tell, and so they are called ‘concealable’.

Major tells, on the other hand, refuse to be contained. They burst free from cloth prisons, slice through shadows and guises, and stick out like a sore thumb. Major tells only come into play when an Ablution is manifest at five points or greater. These tells could easily be called ‘blatant’.

## Bandwidth

As a usurper, an Oroborei’s body can only handle a limited quantity of divine traits. The very nature of an Ablution—a cleansing restructure by fire—is limited by the amount of heat the furnace can generate. There is a limit to how many Ablutions an Oroborei of any Furnace rating may manifest, and that limit is called the Bandwidth.

Bandwidth can be calculated by tripling the character’s Furnace rating and then adding two. If the character would try to manifest more points of Ablutions with a reforging than her Bandwidth allows, she suffers one lethal wound for each excess point, as her body tears trying to reshape itself beyond its means. The reverse is also true, if she attempts to disband Ablutions when she is beyond her Bandwidth, the body is maimed in the process (suffering one lethal wound per point disbanded until the Oroborei is back to her Bandwidth).

Bandwidth may be increased by stoking the Furnace with a point of Breath, giving it the extra heat necessary to properly reshape the body. Doing so increases the Oroborei’s available Bandwidth by three for the rest of the scene.

You may notice that the starting Bandwidth for a Furnace 1 Oroborei is only five, while the starting number of Ablutions is ten. This is very easily explained. While new dragons have the creativity to manifest a variety of traits, they lack the discipline and Furnace to use them all simultaneously. For this reason they must stoke the Furnace with extra Breath in order to exceed the second degree of divinity, or even True Form.

## Degree of Divinity

As a dragon manifests more and more Ablutions, her statutory human features are washed away,

replaced with a fitting draconic form. This is partly due to each Ablution’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 Ablutions), her 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 Ablutions. Beyond the tells from any assumed Ablutions, she is indistinguishably human.

**This Degree adds:** Nothing.

**Which brings the total to:** Nothing.

### Degree 2

The dragon has at least five points manifest in her Ablutions, but no more than nine. Her teeth become noticeably longer and sharper, especially the canines. Her skin-tone begins to wander as well, drifting towards the color her scales will eventually take on. A bump forms at the base of her back as an extension of her tailbone, poking out roughly an inch. Also, her ears begin to recede.

**This Degree adds:** +1 (L) damage to bite attacks

**Which brings the total to:** +1 (L) damage to bite attacks

### Degree 3

The dragon has at least ten points manifest in her Ablutions, but no more than fourteen. Her teeth are further sharpened, and the beginning of a muzzle forms on her face. The nose widens and joins with the mouth as the jaw protrudes. This expanded sinus grants a +1 bonus to scent-based perception. The dragon’s hair grows rigid and begins to lose its pigment, draining into the body to color the skin further. This causes the hair to brighten and often go gray. As for the skin itself, it attains the target shade, with the underbelly and muzzle brightening to an off-white. The texture also becomes rigid, with beginning patches of a scale coat forming. The dragon’s ears completely recede, leaving only auditory canals. Finally, the tailbone extension extends and widens, becoming a three-inch nub roughly the width of a fist.

The dragon may drop down on all fours to increase her speed, adding a +2 species factor.

**This Degree adds:** +1 (L) damage to bite attacks, biting without a grapple, +1 to scent-based perception, +2 species speed factor (all fours)

**Which brings the total to:** +2 (L) grapple-less bite attacks, +1 to scent-based perception, +2 species speed factor (all fours)

If the dragon wishes to disband Ablutions this scene, she must pay a point of Willpower first. The power is just too tempting to resist without determination.

Due to the increased metabolic strain on the human portion of her body, the dragon must pay to resist deprivation every 18 hours (that's three Breath every two days). Even if she disbands some Ablutions to reduce her Degree of Divinity, she must pay once within the next 18 hours.

#### Degree 4

The dragon has at least fifteen points manifest in her Ablutions, but no more than nineteen. The beginnings of the muzzle have erupted into a full bestial maw of sharp teeth, and the dragon's skin is now completely covered in scales of her envisioned shade (which varies from dragon to dragon, and should not be confused with Impervious Hide). She sprouts a small pair of decorative horns, even if she already possesses weaponized ones, and a pair of fanned membranes form to cover the auditory canals. That nub of a tail grows in length, approximating an arm. It is prehensile; the dragon may wield equipment 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. When on all fours, her species speed factor is now +4.

**This Degree adds:** +2 (L) damage to bite attacks, +1 to scent-based perception, +1 damage to all "Weaponry" Ablutions, +2 species speed factor (all fours), prehensile tail

**Which brings the total to:** +4 (L) grapple-less bite attacks, +2 to scent-based perception, +1 damage to all "Weaponry" Ablutions, +4 species speed factor (all fours), prehensile tail

If the dragon wishes to disband Ablutions this scene, she must pay a point of Willpower first. The power is just too tempting to resist without determination.

Due to the increased metabolic strain on the human portion of her body, the dragon must pay to

resist deprivation every 12 hours (that's two Breath per day). Even if she disbands some Ablutions to reduce her Degree of Divinity, she must pay once within the next 12 hours.

#### Degree 5

The dragon has at least twenty points manifest in her Ablutions, and she has reached the pinnacle of her divinity. Her maw now extends roughly seven inches, her body is covered in wide scales of her envisioned color, and her hair has turned into white spines, which are actually modified scales. The decorative horns increase in length and number, and many of them contort. She also grows in stature, rising roughly a foot.

The Oroborei's arm-length tail extends to double the length of her legs, granting her additional balance while maintaining its prehensile functions. It also functions as a leg while in contact with the ground, inflicting a -3 penalty to trip attempts made against her. In addition, lifting an object and using her tail in the effort increases the dragon's Strength by three for the sake of calculating her lifting capacity. For more information on lifting, see the **World of Darkness** Rulebook, page 47.

When on all fours, her species speed factor is now +6.

**This Degree adds:** +3 (L) damage to bite attacks, +2 to scent-based perception, +1 Size, +1 damage to all "Weaponry" Ablutions, +2 species speed factor (all fours), +1 (A) damage to Inferno, +3 lifting Strength (with tail), Trip Protection 3 (floored tail)

**Which brings the total to:** +7 (L) grapple-less bite attacks, +4 to scent-based perception, +1 Size, +2 damage to all "Weaponry" Ablutions, +1 (A) damage to Inferno, +6 species speed factor (all fours), prehensile tail, +3 lifting Strength (with tail), Trip Protection 3 (floored tail)

This power is so awing that the dragon must spend a point of Willpower each time she intends to use forging points to disband an Ablution.

As a usurper pretending to be a Dragon of old, the strain of this state on the Oroborei's human half is intense. She must pay to resist deprivation every 8 hours (that's three Breath per day). Even if she disbands some Ablutions to reduce her Degree of Divinity, she must pay once within the next 8 hours.

## **High Degree of Divinity**

When a Dragon attains a Furnace of 6 or higher, she gains access to even higher degrees of divine manifestation.

### **Degree of Divinity 6**

The Oroborei has at least thirty points manifest among her ablutions. At this point she begins to slip the bonds of her human half. She acquires the moderate tells of every Ablution in her Method, as well as every Ablution in the Hearts Suit. This occurs even if she does not know the Ablutions (and thus cannot utilize them). Her size also increases dramatically, making her rival a small family automobile.

*This Degree Adds:* +3 (L) damage to bite attacks, +3 Size, +2 damage to all "Weaponry" Ablutions, +1 (A) damage Inferno, +3 lifting Strength (with tail)

*Which Brings the Total To:* +10 (L) grapple-less bite attacks, +4 to scent-based perception, +4 Size, +4 damage to all "Weaponry" Ablutions, +2 (A) damage to Inferno, +6 species speed factor (all fours), prehensile tail, +6 lifting Strength (with tail), Trip Protection 3 (floored tail)

Attempting to Disband an Ablution causes the Oroborei to lose two points of Willpower and a point of Breath. Also, due to her tremendous size, she must pay Breath to stave off deprivation every 6 hours (that's four Breath per day).

### **Degree of Divinity 7**

The Oroborei has fifty points of Ablutions manifest, and is beating down on the boundary between Oroborei and Dragon proper. She acquires the major tells of every Ablution she owns, regardless of how much of them she can actually utilize. Also, she's practically the size of a house by this degree.

*This Stage Adds:* +5 (L) to bite attacks, +5 Size, +3 to "Weaponry" ablutions, +3 (A) to Inferno, +5 lifting Strength (with tail)

*Which Brings the Total To:* +15 (L) grapple-less bite attacks, +4 to scent-based perception, +9 Size, +7 damage to all "Weaponry" Ablutions, +5 (A) damage to Inferno, +6 species speed factor (all fours), prehensile tail, +11 lifting

Strength (with tail), Trip Protection 3 (floored tail)

Attempting to Disband an Ablution causes the Oroborei to suffer an aggravated wound to her Willpower meter, and lose two points of Breath. Also, due to her tremendous size, she must pay Breath to stave off deprivation every 4 hours (that's six Breath per day).

### **Degree of Divinity 8**

The Oroborei has one hundred points of Ablutions manifest. Having mastered her Heart, she leaps the boundary that held her apart from the dragons of old, and sheds her status as a usurper. She may no longer disband Ablutions, and is thus permanently in True Form. Her size is tremendous

There are advantages, however. She may now draw nourishment from the worship or fear of others. Rate the fear or worship a mortal experiences from 1 to 3, with 3 being complete reverence or terror. The Oroborei gains that much Breath this scene. The Furnace cap on Ablutions is also lifted, and any may be increased with experience (to a rating up to 24 dots). Finally, she may roll all the Laws of a single Edict together in the single proclamation.

*This Degree Adds:* +5 (L) damage to bite attacks, +6 Size, +5 damage to all "Weaponry" Ablutions, +5 (A) damage Inferno, +7 lifting Strength (with tail)

*Which Brings the Total To:* +20 (L) grapple-less bite attacks, +4 to scent-based perception, +15 Size, +12 damage to all "Weaponry" Ablutions, +10 (A) damage to Inferno, +6 species speed factor (all fours), prehensile tail, +18 lifting Strength (with tail), Trip Protection 3 (floored tail)

She must still pay Breath every 3 hours to stave off deprivation (that's eight Breath per day), but she cannot starve to death. Instead, if her health would be depleted completely by starvation she slips into a deep slumber. While asleep, she may hunt and feast in the Dreamtide to recover.

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 174 in the First Appendix. 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 in the know 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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 Ablution she owns to its fullest...

<i>Wings</i>	<i>Impervious Hide</i>	<i>Claws</i>
●●●○○	●●●●●	●●●○○
☒☒☒□□	☒☒☒☒☒	☒☒☒☒□

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 and damage that specifically states otherwise) 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 out there, a targeted attack against the dragon's weak scale (located with a successful 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 (and provided her Degree of Divinity doesn't starve her to death).

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. It is also important to note that True Form is not guaranteed. If the dragon lacks the sufficient amount of Furnace Bandwidth to manifest all of her Ablutions, she cannot attain True Form without expanding her Bandwidth (by Breath expenditure or an increase of Furnace, or some very painful reforging).

## Mortal Responses

Dragons are free to sport their Ablutions 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 Oroborei 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 Ablutions 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.

### 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 Ablutions, 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 Oroborei.

*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 barbequed 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.

### Borrowing Ablutions

The Bond of Brood Merit allows a mortal who has undergone the described ritual to share a dragon's Ablutions. That mortal gains access to the reforging action, using his own Furnace to generate points. But he and his patron share the same Ablutions, and thus the same sheet. If the Bonded manifests an Ablution:

*Wings*      *Impervious Hide*      *Claws*



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 Ablutions, the dragon cannot attain True Form. The two also share the same Furnace Bandwidth. Brood-Bonded are not entitled to Degrees of Divinity.

## Meals

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, a meal in general tends to have the same number of Calories as any other (if you apply the Central Limit Theorem of statistics, anyway), and time for storytelling can be saved by just by lumping food into 'meals'. On the Furnace chart is a list of meal requirements, and when an Oroborei consumes that many meals a single point of Breath is rewarded. For this reason, a player needs only declare that she is taking time to have a meal.

When refueling, the Oroborei rolls Stamina + Composure. Success means the meal fuels her Furnace, and Exceptional Success means she's so satisfied that the meal counts double. Failure means she vomits, and receives no benefit from the food consumed. This roll receives bonuses when the food is something she enjoys (up to +3, with +3 being her favorite food), and it is penalized by successive attempts (eating the same thing again and again) and by foods that the Oroborei finds disgusting (like broccoli. Blecgh!).

A meal is not necessarily composed of edible substances. An Oroborei may consume combustible substances in the same manner as she would consume food. Flammables are much more efficient sources of Breath than edibles, though getting them to the stomach is much less pleasant. A list of common fuels, their meal equivalency, and their penalty to consumption can be found in the list on the next page:

Fuel	Value	Penalty to Refuel
Firewood (1 log)	1 Meal	-1, Suffer 1 (L)
The Shirt off your Back	1 Meal	0
Coal (One Brick)	1 Meal	-1
Gasoline (One Glass)	3 Meals	-2, Lose 1 Willpower
Crude Oil (One Glass)	4 Meals	-3
Amonium Nitrate Composite Propellant (Model Rocket)	14 Meals	-5, Suffer 1 (A)
Alcohol – Beers (2 Bottles)	1 Meal	0
Alcohol – Wines (1 Glass)	1 Meal	0
Alcohol – Hard Liquors (1 Shot)	2 Meals	-1
Alcohol – Pure (1 Shot)	3 Meals	-2

These may benefit or be penalized by the Oroborei's preferences, just like regular food. The Alcohols in particular are particularly susceptible to preference.

There are also fuels that penalize anyone that would consume them. Fuels that put a strain on Willpower are more difficult to eat due to taste or smell. Gasoline is presented as a liquid so disgusting that Willpower is lost just for consuming it. Fuels with a strain on Health are harder to digest and in those of less sturdy build would likely cause internal damage. The sharp, splintered form of a log of firewood is a perfect example of this kind of physically damaging fuel.

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 penalties or more combustible value. 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 meals, 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 to meet her Furnace requirements, she will gain a point of Breath. But... should she sleep before she's finished forming a point of Breath, the remaining Calories from her extra meals 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 meals but must face Fatigue (see the **World of Darkness** Rulebook, page 179).

For dragons with a Furnace rating below six, 3 meals (a regular day's consumption) are required to produce a single point of Breath. This is pretty easy to achieve with low Furnace ratings, but as the internal inferno rises the meals necessary for Breath rise with it. Falling even a single meal short could prove a massive exercise in waste. Suppose a Dragon at Furnace 9 ate 11 meals and then slept. She would lose all her progress towards the point of Breath. All 11 meals 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 (their rating in meals is tripled). Likewise, dreams might possess fuels that are not only potent, but also palatable to the tongue. 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. Oroborei benefit from feeding on the sentient, provided they can live with the consequences of such an act. When an Oroborei consumes human flesh, each serving grants her a full point of Breath. The number of servings available is equal to the victim's Willpower dots. So if an Oroborei ate a middle-aged man who had 4

Willpower dots, she'd get 4 Breath out of it. Consuming any flesh in this manner triggers a degeneration roll, once per victim per scene.

Supernatural flesh is even more effective. In addition to the Willpower dots, the supernatural being's supernatural trait is added to the number of servings. So if an Oroborei ate another dragon with Furnace 3 and 4 Willpower dots, she'd get 7 Breath

out of it. Again, after consuming sentient flesh the dragon must roll for degeneration.

In either case, the victim need not *die* to feed the Oroborei, but chomping large hunks of flesh from a living entity is tantamount to torture (and thus triggers another degeneration). If an Oroborei would feed on a living being, she must inflict at least five lethal wounds with a bite attack, and then swallow the bloody mouthful.

## 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.

Ethics	Threshold Sin	Dice Rolled
10	Looking down on a mortal.	(Roll five dice.)
9	Allowing an insult to go unchallenged.	(Roll five dice.)
8	Going a month without demanding some kind of tribute.	(Roll four dice.)
7	Gifting another dragon's Heart to a mortal. Telling a mortal about the Oroboroi.	(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. 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.)

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.

**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 (and turn her flesh to stone). 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 Oroborei. 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 Oroborei 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 (or rather, perceived eternity) that is Oroborei 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 reforging 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. She does her 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 reforging 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 reforging action.

#### E thics | 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.

#### E thics | 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.

#### E thics | 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.

#### E thics | 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.

#### E thics | 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.

#### E thics | 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.

#### E thics | 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 Ablutions 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.

#### E thics | 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 Ablutions, 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 165.

## 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 lists of derangements (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.

## Scholars of the Five Evils

The Saintly Devils are unique, because their rejection of Oroborei 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 Saintly 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 Saintly Devil may be trained in completely different fields. This is especially interesting because the "Bad" mode did not exist before induction into the Oroborei. 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, Mostly** – If attributes can be different, so can derived traits. The exception is the Health trait, which is always based on the dragon's original persona (the 'good' mode).
- **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 Saintly 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. "Bad" mode begins two dots lower than "Good" mode at character creation, but is completely independent after that point.

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, Ablutions, Edicts, and Health** – The things that make a dragon what she is do not waver when she transitions from "Good" to "Bad" (or vice-versa). Furnace, all Ablutions, and all Edicts remain static between the two sheets (and so need not be marked twice). Also, despite the possibility for alternate traits, the 'bad' mode can never truly overpower a dragon's real constitution, so Health is unchanged (it is always the value of the "Good" mode's rating).
- **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 later in this chapter) is likewise inverted.

Saintly 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 Saintly Devil Oroborei can lead to some very interesting character development, there is a complication that comes from having two sheets so varied. This is the primary conflict of playability that these schools present, which is why they are not recommended for new players.

Whenever a wound is suffered, it is marked simultaneously on both sheets (or rather, marked on whichever sheet you’re tracking Health on). The two modes’ Willpower meters, however, 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 Saintly 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 Oroborei—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 becomes 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 Oroborei 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 fossilize into frightening but harmless statues. One valuable remains in the wake of this phenomenon, the Heart – safely interred within the stone until it is reclaimed. Most people write them off as ‘fringe’ art left in ironic places, but for those in the know... smashy smashy.

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 Oroborei suffers that last aggravated wound, she dies. Her consciousness is instantly shifted into a Twilight state, and teleported to the vicinity of her Heart until such time as her body can be repaired. Also, all Ablutions are disbanded upon death, as the body returns to a human state, and the wounds she has suffered all become resistant to supernatural treatment (but more on that later).

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. These values work for the dragon’s resistant wounds, but only in her last three Health boxes. 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 Ablutions 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.

### ***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. Her mind and soul can't get back to her body without her body, so it continues to repair and then expire in a never-ending cycle. 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.

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 her Twilight state and returned to life once more. If she had assumed any Ablutions while waiting, 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.

### **Came Back Wrong**

When an Oroborei dies, so do the neurons in her brain. While they may be repaired when the dragon resurrects, the Furnace might not do the best job in the world. When a dragon resurrects, a roll is made against acquiring a derangement (using Ethics, just as if the dragon had suffered degeneration, but skipping the degeneration roll). If this roll fails, the Oroborei acquires a PERMANENT derangement

(log it to the side of the Ethics table). This symbolizes an unsuccessful repair of the brain.

In addition to the derangements in the standard World of Darkness manual, Oroborei may acquire the following special derangements upon resurrection:

### **Antecedent on the Shoulder (Mild)**

The character has acquired a little hitchhiker; one of the previous owners of her Heart. He's anchored to her body and constantly derides, criticizes, or generally comments on everything she does. And the most frustrating part? Nobody else can see him.

This derangement can be taken multiple times, each time representing a different Antecedent.

### **Two Souls, One Body (Severe)**

The Antecedent has sunk himself into the character's very being, and he's not going to let go. In stressful situations he might even take control of some of her limbs or force-manifest Ablutions. Needless to say it's a disaster waiting to happen.

For more information about Antecedents as backseat drivers, see page 143 in this chapter.

### **Twilight Bound (Mild)**

The character begins to see entities in twilight states simultaneously with entities in material states. These beings shimmer to clearly differentiate them from the Daylight, but they are incredibly distracting. Thankfully, the only feeling affected is sight. In places with thick ghostly overtones (such as in the proximity of her Heart), the character suffers an appropriate penalty to perception rolls.

### **Precipice of Worlds (Severe)**

As the minor derangement, "Twilight Bound", but the shimmering has vanished and now all feelings are affected. The character perceives ghosts constantly, and cannot tell them apart from living people.

### **Slow to Adapt (Mild)**

Your character has lost the ability to hop aboard the latest fads and technologies. She always seems to be a few months behind everybody else. While this could be considered simply a social stigma, it is incredibly dangerous for an Oroborei to be unable to ride the wave of the future. Any evidence she's

archaic makes her an easy target for Bloody Chalice Knights.

### Time-Locked (Severe)

Your character has become completely unable to adapt to the changing world. She will insist on using clothes and technology that was contemporary to the time she acquired this derangement. If she does not cloister herself from the world, she will stick out like a sore thumb.

The dragon may update her time-lock with extended sessions of intense therapy or radical reinvention at the hands of another party, but she must be forced. Also, this simply shifts her year of freeze forward. If she is not helped along repeatedly, she will continue to freeze in the past.

## The Antecedent

For those that are stricken with the Last Hand, the region around their Heart becomes their anchor, and permanent residence. Because they are those that owned the Heart before, they are called Antecedents. Unlike the Oroborei 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 consuming the spectral energy of consumables (which are worth triple the meals) and the disadvantage of an anchor. As a result, edibles around a dragon's Heart tend to go missing or crumble to ash inexplicably, and nearby furniture is bizarrely fragile. Anything within 25 yards of the Heart is fair game for ghost snacking, and anything chomped by the Antecedent ceases to be nutritious (for anybody, including the Oroborei).

Antecedents must pay up Breath each day to avoid starving to death... or rather second death. Being deceased, though, their Degrees of Divinity no longer pose any strain to the human portion off their body (since it's gone), and thus they mustn't deal with the accelerated hunger those degrees bring. They are free to maintain True Form as long as they wish.

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 disorporate 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, just as the ghosts of the **World of Darkness** Rulebook (page 170) do. 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 Ablutions, 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. This is reflected by the death derangement "Antecedent on the Shoulder".

For the Antecedents that do grab a ride, the dragon's body becomes their anchor until 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. This also makes "Antecedent on the Shoulder" and "Two Souls, One Body" the only death derangements that can be removed by (relatively) normal means.

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

Ablutions. 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 Ablutions), 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 Ablutions, but he may make proclamations with Edicts that he knows. 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 Ablutions 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 three dots of Furnace (or just exceeding one dot for True Heart dragons), 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 time is instantly extended by a month and the Pearl begins to bestow benefits unto its new wielder. The Oroborei 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 resurfaces, 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 Oroborei can commit.

### Benefits of a Red Pearl

For an Oroborei 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 three dots less than the source dragon's Furnace (or one dot less for a True Heart dragon) at time of harvest (this means a minimum Furnace of 4 is required to harvest a Red Pearl, or 2 for a True Heart dragon). Owning any type of Pearl extends the lifespan of the owner by half again, and causes wounds to heal in half the time.

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*Slayer Pearl:* The crystal brain of a Slayer Oroborei 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, but may exceed mortal limits.

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*Finder Pearl:* The crystal brain of a Finder Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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's result is determined.

*Inheritor Pearl:* The crystal brain of an Inheritor Oroborei is probably the greatest record of Oroborei history that exists. 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 (and he IS for the purposes of fatigue). 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.

## The Last Hand

Not every Oroborei 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 intentional 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 (since the new Oroborei does not possess the necessary death derangement).

## Eternity and a Day

The Furnace gives a Dragon the regenerative ability to reshape her body, and as such it slows the aging process tremendously. For each decade that goes by, a dragon ages only one year. If the waves of time are still too much for her to bear, she can dim her flame to make her candle burn longer. By giving up a DOT of Furnace and a DOT of Willpower, an Oroborei may delay the aging process for one decade.

It takes a very long time for an Oroborei to reach old age, but she suffers from the trials of age just as any mortal would. However, she may use the heat of her Furnace to reforge her body. For five DOTS of Furnace and three DOTS of Willpower, an elderly Oroborei may return to the age of her prime. Due to the severe cost involved, this effect is permanent.

Conversely, an Oroborei may choose to burn brighter for a shorter time by shortening her candle. For a DOT of Willpower the dragon may force herself to age 20 years in a 10 year span, receiving a free dot of Furnace in the process. Some dragons choose this alternative if they've selected human mates, with whom they'd like to share a normal death.

## 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 to the 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 Ablution 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. All of these mean one thing: a Health meter that expands and contracts.

Should a dragon’s expanded health meter contract while wounds are occupying it:



changes to this:



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.

There is a natural extension of logic that comes from this declaration: the Willpower meter can be used to track three different kinds of mental exertion.

**Dragon the Embers** taps into that potential by converting Willpower to a measure of mental well-being. Whenever fear is experienced (including the fear caused by Degree of Divinity), it inflicts bashing marks on the Willpower meter. Whenever Willpower is expended for an action, it inflicts lethal marks on the meter. And certain supernatural situations (like the aforementioned roll-over) inflict aggravated marks on the meter.

- **With Regard to Bashing Marks:** There is no effect for having a Willpower meter filled with bashing wounds, unlike the Health meter which places a character 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.

All bashing wounds on the Willpower meter are removed each time a 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 Marks:** When the Willpower meter has filled with lethal marks, it signifies a significant degree of mental exhaustion. A character may no longer choose to spend Willpower, until some of the lethal marks are removed.

Lethal marks 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.

Characters suffer a lethal wound to their Willpower meter whenever they spend Willpower, and whenever bashing marks roll over (just like Health).

- **With Regard to Aggravated Marks:** When the Willpower meter has filled with aggravated wounds, the character immediately suffers a new derangement independent of her Ethics (or Morality) until such time as her meter is completely emptied. Aggravated wounds on the Willpower meter can only be removed one at a time, by upholding the character's Virtue or succeeding at meditation (see the **World of Darkness** Rulebook, page 51). Unfortunately, Vices have no effect on so severe a mental injury.

#### So the Gist is this:

A Bashing mark recovers once per minute.

Vices remove one Lethal mark and all Bashing marks.

Virtues remove one Aggravated mark and all Lethal marks.

Virtues and Vices are inverted for a Five Evil Scholar's "Bad" mode, as per usual.

This mechanic is further extended in the "Willpower as Health" system presented for Dreamers in the first Appendix, as found on page 174.

## Bombastic Combat Features

New features of equipment found in certain Ablution Weaponry and Edicts are explained here, at least in greater detail.

### Deadly Wound

We will discuss Deadly Wound first, as it is a very simple mechanic. Attacks with a Deadly Wound rating grant a number of bonus successes equal to their rating if the attack roll scored three or more successes to begin with. 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 more than three successes with a Deadly Wound weapon.

### Piercing Strike

Piercing Strike is a variation of Armor-Piercing ammunition, found in the **World of Darkness** Rulebook on page 167. Piercing Strike only applies to melee equipment, and causes said equipment to ignore a number of points of close armor equal to its rating. For example, a weapon with Piercing Strike 3 is used against an opponent with 1/2 armor and 3/3 bio armor. The attack suffers a -1 penalty from the opponent's total armor (as opposed to the -4 another weapon would face). Alternatively, a Piercing Strike 5 attack is made against an opponent with no armor. The Piercing Strike provides no benefit.

You're probably wondering what makes this different from the Armor-Piercing feature. Well, Piercing Strike is not defeated by the Bulletproof quality. The weapon is just as effective against bulletproof materials (and True Form dragon flesh) as it would be against anything else.

### 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 theoretic, 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). Armor reduces damage from Knock-back by its close rating, so long as it is not biological armor. After all, 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

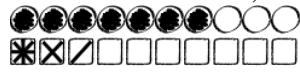
The Defensive Flourish feature grants a spontaneous boost to Defense equal to its rating. This boost occurs even if Defense was sacrificed in an earlier action this turn. The boost lasts until the start of the next turn.

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.

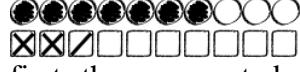
### Restorative Action

When an action with this feature is successful, a number of wounds the acting character suffers are downgraded equal to the rating of this feature. 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.

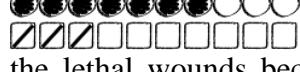
For example, if a dragon was successful taking a Restorative Action, rated four, while suffering:



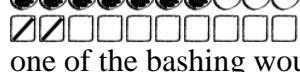
an aggravated, a lethal, and a bashing wound,



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 Ablution).

This damage reduction occurs even against resistant wounds, though it does not remove the resistant status unless the wound is completely healed. Because this feature requires the erasure of wounds for downgrading, it is recommended that wounds be marked *lightly* in pencil.

### Health Complications

Two of the following 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.

The other two complications (Allergy to Jadeite and Fossilization) are new to this template, but spiritual successors to ideas from other supernatural entities in the new World of Darkness. Jadeite as a secret bane works much like a Werewolf’s vulnerability to Silver or a Vampire’s fear of sunlight, but the very whiff of the stone against a mundane object imbues it with dragon-killing power. Fossilization, on the other hand, inverts an idea presented in Geist, where a dot may fill a wound slot under certain conditions, leading to a less grievous injury down the road. Whereas Geist’s ‘dot’ wound is a voluntary affair to make injuries less severe, Dragon’s ‘shade’ wound is serious business. But more on that momentarily.

## Trauma

Trauma is a new affliction found in the Mutilation and Oath Edicts and the Venoms Ablution, though the Storyteller may attach it to certain weaponry where applicable. 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 suffer a -3 penalty her 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.

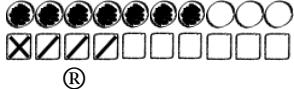
Another interesting thing to note is how trauma stacks. Usually it only sticks as the highest exposure, but if the trauma is from separate sources it becomes cumulative. The highest instance of trauma from an Ablution, an Edict, and a Weapon are all added together to give the total trauma rating. A man suffering from the Reprimand law of Oath, at effect rating 5, 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 Ablution-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 to the roll.
- 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 Ablution is struck with Trauma 3 from another Ablution. The subject now suffers Trauma 3.
- A subject suffering Trauma 1 from an Ablution is struck with Trauma 5 from an Edict. The subject now suffers Trauma 6, as the Edict is considered a different source than the Ablution.
- 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.

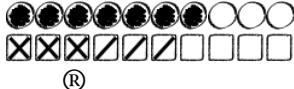
## Resistant Injuries

Some wounds inflicted or suffered can only be mended by the material world. Resistant wounds cannot be healed by supernatural means (though the Nurse Law of the Comfort Edict 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 dragon with the Comfort Edict 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 Oroborei. Some believe this is a built-in secret weapon of the original dragons, designed to punish the Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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.

## Fossilization

The Oroborei, as usurpers, are cursed by the dragons that they dethroned. As they were mortals once, mortals hold a power over them rivaled by none other. The Oroborei, being tied to the Dreamtide, are dependent on the thoughts and adulations of the masses. They are the heirs of forgotten gods, and if their divine right is forgotten they will literally cease to exist. When a mortal successfully challenges the authority of an Oroborei, a portion of her body transmutes to stone.

If a mortal challenges the authority of an Oroborei, that mortal rolls the social check as normal and, if successful, then makes a second roll using strictly his Presence. Success means that his callout was so jarring to the Dragon that a portion of her flesh has fossilized. Such challenges may only be issued once per mortal per scene.



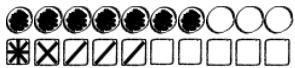
When subjected to fossilization, shade in the leftmost health box.



It's gone. Shift any other wounds one place to the right. When a health box is fossilized with a 'shade' point, it is treated as an aggravated wound for all purposes except recovery. The only way to remove the shaded point is to turn the stone back to flesh, or to amputate the fossilized piece. We'll start with the former.

An Oroborei may regain the function of her fossilized flesh if she puts the mortal in his place. She must prove her authority through some means,

then roll her Ethics. Success means that the mortal has been sufficiently humbled, and a fossilized piece of the Oroborei's flesh reverts to normal. Well... almost.



When a 'shade' point is removed, it is replaced with an aggravated wound. Stone and minerals are not functional substitutes for sinews and bones, so the region has tremendous damage when it begins to function again.

If the mortal that challenged the dragon's authority is no longer available (due to geographic distance or even his demise), then the only way to repair the fossilization is to amputate the affected region and then treat the resulting gaping wound. Doing so causes the dragon to suffer three aggravated wounds, rather than the single one she would suffer if she had resolved the fossilization through proper means. Amputation may cause other complications as well, such as the loss of digits or in extreme cases, limbs.



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Also, the three wounds are resistant.

Any mortal may only ever inflict fossilization once on a single Oroborei. In this way, no one person (or single Bloody Chalice cell) may repeatedly torment a dragon until she turns to stone. If the Oroborei undoes the fossilization, it refreshes the mortal's power, allowing him to challenge her again (through not until the next scene at least).

Death does not treat fossilization. When the body is completely repaired, the stone sections remain. This also means that extreme levels of fossilization (those that would result in a 'shade' point within three slots of the Health meter's right end) prevent the Oroborei from resurrecting. In such cases, a portion of the fossilized flesh must be chiseled off of the dead (and statuesque) dragon by a friend before she can revive. Each 'shade' point removed from a dead dragon results in the permanent loss of one dot in a physical attribute. No attribute may be reduced to zero. If none *can* fall (all physical attributes possess only one dot), then removing the fossilized tissue results in the Oroborei suffering her Last Hand. What's left of her crumbles to dust.

Fossilization may be plied against the dragon's Ablutions as well, preventing her from using her complete arsenal.



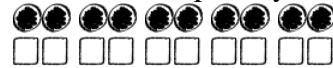
Fossilization of Ablutions can only occur if those Ablutions are manifest in some capacity when the mortal challenges the dragon's authority. It occurs in lieu of a fossilization of the Health meter, but is removed in the same manner (and with the same consequences). Whether fossilization strikes Health or an Ablution is at the Storyteller's discretion.

## Health Penalty Shifts

Prompted by the use of the Agony or Comfort Edicts, a Health Penalty shift takes all the penalties on the health meter and shifts them up or down, as specified by the Edict used. This makes the penalties more severe, or grants bonuses for high states of health. There are restrictions, though.

- Up shifts and down shifts cancel each other out. Having the penalty shift three steps up and four steps down means it moves only one step down. As four is the larger number, three is subtracted from it and it determines the direction of the shift.
- 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.

Up shifts increase penalties, so technically it's a negative number. Take the character's highest health penalty and add the up shift to it. Starting from the rightmost health box, write the increased penalty and then work towards the left, decreasing the penalty by one for each box until the penalty is depleted to 0 or it reaches the left end of the Health meter. For example, a level 4 up shift applied to someone with a normal health penalty of -3 increases that penalty to -7.



-1 -2 -3 -4 -5 -6 -7

And a level 8 up shift ...

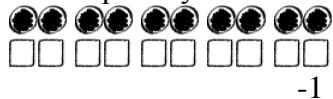


-2 -3 -4 -5 -6 -7 -8 -9 -10 -11

causes its victim to suffer wound penalties after simply a scratch. Both examples are presented with individuals in possession of unusually high levels of Health (10 dots is a bit much), but the idea is clear: calculate the highest penalty and count down from the right.

Down shifts decrease the penalties suffered, so they can be classified as a positive number. Subtract the character's highest penalty from the down shift. If the result is still negative (or zero), each penalty can simply be reduced by the down shift.

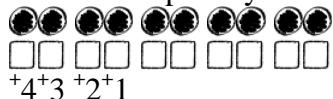
A level 2 down shift on a character with a -3 max Health penalty...



reduces all the penalties by 2, leaving the max penalty at -1.

If, however, the result is a positive number (the down shift exceeds the maximum penalty), what's left is a bonus that counts down from the left.

A level 7 downshift applied to someone with a -3 max Health penalty:



creates a +4 bonus that counts down from the left, benefiting the first four Health boxes.

The Merit Iron Stamina from the **World of Darkness** Rulebook (page 113) may be treated as a down shift, the level 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.

## 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.

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. If the limb has suffered any kind of aggravated damage, a -3 situational penalty to actions involving its use is not unreasonable. Finally, any limb that has fossilized tissue could reasonably result in a -4 penalty to actions that utilize the limb.

## Anatomy of the Heart

The Oroborei Heart consists of nine chambers, four of which are atria with the remaining five serving as ventricles. The Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei are capable of life on land or sea without consequence, even if they are not manifesting a single Ablution. 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 Oroborei 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 (due to its high durability), 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 (it doesn't detract from the Health meter's recovery).

Destroying an Oroborei Heart is a sin against Ethics 1. No dragon would partake in the act lightly.

#### Preternatural Detection

Are Oroborei aware of each other when they aren't utilizing their Ablutions? Usually not. Even to dragon-kind an Oroborei in mortal form is indistinguishable from any other human. That is, without immediate proximity.

When an Oroborei 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 Oroborei had intended to manipulate the other. When an Oroborei 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 shape called a "signet", the Oroborei 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 Oroborei. It is usually not recommended, though, as such sigil brands are visible through infrared imaging technology.

## Grafts

The Graft Merit (page 41 in Chapter 2) gifts a dragon one of these mysterious 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. There is no refund of Merit dots for this destruction.

The ritual to create the cursed object (and subsequently create a graft) is a tightly held occult secret. Very few dragons know how to perform this wretched act, and those that do aren't going to share the knowledge. It is, however, rumored to be a technique stolen from the Knights of the Bloody Chalice, so whatever the ritual may be it is a grave affair.

## 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei. 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei fear losing themselves in the monster, while older Oroborei 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 is no creature 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 do 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 shuffling 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 Ablutions 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 Oroborei 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

## 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

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 Oroborei 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 such is not the case in your game. 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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. 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 backstory 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.

## Do Running Starts

Like the Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei Heart, cursory study shows that these people were not actually Oroborei. 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 Oroborei, 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei. 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei? 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?

## The Evil Within us All

As you get comfortable with the setting, and after the players have tangled with the Scholars of the Five Evils at least a few times, you may wish to embellish the themes of **Dragon** with this setting hack.

Get in touch with one of the players (preferably one who can keep a secret) and make a "Bad" mode character sheet using the rules for the Scholars of the Five Evils (You can find the specifics for this in Chapter 3 on page 140). Then, during one of your sessions force the character to snap and transition into "Bad" mode.

This time it's different from a regular Five Evils encounter. This time the maniac is part of the Den. No matter the outcome (though you should ensure the player you made the pact with survives or at least is able to resurrect), a serious threat looms on the horizon for every dragon in the den. It seems the Saintly Devils aren't the only ones with a Jekyll/Hyde complex, and every one of the players is at risk. Between the sessions to follow, have each player construct a wicked alter-ego and pick a Vice to trigger the transition. From that point forward, remind them there's always the looming chance that one or all of the Den will snap and stir up trouble.

If you intend to use this hack, make the decision before you start the chronicle, and make sure none of your players are using the Saintly Devil Philosophies.

## 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 Oroborei, 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei. 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei.

**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

Oroborei 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	3 (L)	30/60/120	7+1	4
Pistol				
Knife	1(L)	Close	-	5
Brass	1(B)	Close	-	5
Knuckles				

**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. 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 Oroborei. 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.

### 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.

**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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei, 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 Oroborei the appearance of a Lust Trickster is dependent on the Ablutions 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 wrong 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 Saintly Devil players this Oroborei 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 Saintly 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

**Furnace Bandwidth:** 5

**Breath:** 8

**Willpower:** 4

**Ethics:** 4

**Virtue:** Charity

**Vice:** Gluttony

**Health:** 8

**Initiative:** 4

**Defense:** 2

**Speed:** 9 (Fly 5 x Wings)

**Edicts:** Comfort 2 (Bliss)

**Ablutions:** Inferno 2, Wings 1, Wall Climber 1, Serpentine 1, **Weaponry:** Palm Pike 2, Acidic Saliva 1, Envoy's Passage 2

**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	2(L)	25/50/100	6

### Weapons:

Type	Damage	Range	Clip	Pool
Baseball	2(B)	Close	-	4
Bat				

### 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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

**Furnace Bandwidth:** 14

**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

**Edicts:** Network 2 (PHISH), Mutilation 1 (Sever), Ruin 3 (Defect, Embargo)

**Ablutions:** Impervious Hide 2, Weaponry: Horns 3, Fire Skin 2, Serpentine 2, Colossal Beast 2, Burrowing Body 2, Wall Climber 2, Trail of Scales 1, Weaponry: Raptor Scythe 1, Weaponry: Razor Fins 2

**Attacks:**

Type	Damage	Range	Pool
Horns	Yards Charged [Max +4] (L)	Close	2
Raptor Scythe	2 (L)	Close	4
Razor Fins	-1 (L)	Close	4

**Armor:**

Type	Rating	Defense Penalty
Thin Kevlar	1/2	0
Impervious Hide	2/2 bio	0

## Hydra

**Quote:** [Incomprehensible Hiss]

**Background:** An Oroborei 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 Oroborei condition, and even 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.

### Extra Heads

This Hydra has five heads, which means it has four dots in the as of yet undefined "Extra Heads" Ablution. This Ablution 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.

### Hydra Furnace

Any Oroborei becomes a Hydra when their Ethics plummets to zero. Though they lose a great degree of self control, the lack of restrictions an Ethics-free conscience imposes gives them further room to build divinity. Hydra do not face the burdens of Furnace Bandwidth, and no matter the number of Ablutions a Hydra is always in a state of fifth-degree divinity.

### A Lack of Virtue

Hydra lose access to their Virtue, instead acquiring a second vice. For this reason, they cannot recover from aggravated marks to the Willpower meter (well, they could meditate, but that'd require a modicum of self control).

**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

**Furnace Bandwidth:** [Unlimited]

**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]

**Edicts:** -

**Ablutions:** Inferno 2, Impervious Hide 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, +4 to scent-based perception, +2 to Weaponry Ablutions, +1 (A) to Inferno, +6 species speed factor (all fours), prehensile tail, +3 lifting Strength (with tail), Trip Protection 3 (floored tail)]

**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
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#### Armor:

Type	Rating	Defense Penalty
Impervious Hide	2/2 bio [Bulletproof]	0

## Deep Ones

To the Oroborei, 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 Dreamtide, 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

**Ablutions:** 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 Hide	1/1 bio [Bulletproof]	0

#### Ablutions 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 Ablutions. When either of these entities needs to utilize an ability that requires Essence or Breath, they spend Dread instead. Ablutions that increase one particular attribute instead increase the category (a deep one using Hoard of Knowledge increases Power by the dots owned, instead of Intelligence by the points manifest).

One other thing ... though deep ones can own Ablutions, they are incapable of turning them on and off. More detail on this subject will be provided in the first Appendix.

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.

#### 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.

Edicts follow this rule, but Ablutions do not. As an Oroborei defines what she believes to be the dragon condition, her imagination shapes her divinities to fit. In order to purchase a new Ablution, a dragon need only imagine it and practice. Existing Ablutions are similarly improved. Getting the idea in the dragon’s head, though... *that’s* where the justification comes in. Each Method provides its own unique way of discovering new traits, and researching a new Ablution 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

## Experience

Experience works practically identically to the system found in the **World of Darkness** Rulebook, pages 216 and 217. The Oroborei, just like the mortals they used to be, learn from mistakes and experiences and are bettered for it.

you could purchase the second dot (4 experience, for a total of 6). No benefit is accrued for owning Danger Sense 1, though.

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

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 Oroborig 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.

## 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 Vincent the Derelict Man would fall.

Covered in severe burns, he wore little more than a bloody lab coat and tattered boxers. His feet were mangled bloody messes, peppered with shards of broken glass. Ragged dreads of hair, singed, hung in his face, concealing his eyes completely. Beneath it hung a deep, haunting chuckle, which brewed a thunderstorm behind him as it grew. And in his hand, a sharpened shard of bone whipped about, ready to pierce anything in its path.

Some derelict mental patient being treated in the burn ward took the chicken bone from his plate, stabbed his doctor's jugular, stole the coat, and wandered around the hospital. Though he was eventually detained, his image 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 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.

## The Dreamtide

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 sinister 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 Oroborei, 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 Oroborei are the ones with that capacity. They can tune the static to clear, and once it is so they are free to step through.

From the material side entering the Dreamtide is phenomenally easy. An Oroborei 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 jade 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei. 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 three times the meals of its mundane counterpart.

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 preferable, mainly because it's 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, gods 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.

## Hysteric Dreamers

Hysteric Dreamers do not know they are asleep. They make up the majority of the sleeping population. Hysteric Dreamers are a Nightmare's primary source of Dread, and they're usually the ones a dragon dream-dives to rescue.

Hysteric Dreamers have no conscious powers, though their mood colors the scenery. Hysteric

Dreamers suffer a -2 to resist all Nightmare-instigated Numina, and they wake up if their Willpower is depleted (full of lethal marks). 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, he gains a three-die bonus to all actions and Skills no longer suffer the untrained penalty. 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.

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.

A Lucid Dreamer may be able to create anything he can imagine, but he is still limited by the threat of waking. The highest Power Attribute (Strength, Presence, or Intelligence) limits the strength of his creations, the highest Finesse Attribute (Dexterity, Manipulation, or Wits) limits the frequency in a scene, and the highest Resistance Attribute (Stamina, Composure, or Resolve) limits how much such creations can be improved. If the Lucid Dreamer attempts to overpower these boundaries, he must roll Resolve + Composure, with a penalty equal to the excess of his effort, or awaken instantly. This and a Willpower meter filled with Aggravated wounds are the only two things that can forcibly awaken a Lucid Dreamer (except possibly the end of the dream).

## **Objects**

Any object created by a lucid Dreamer has a sum of utility and structure equal to his highest Power Attribute. A lucid Dreamer of Presence 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 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 Chapter 3) to add the rating of his highest Resistance Attribute to either category as a lump sum (either increasing utility or increasing structure). In the above example, if the Lucid Dreamer had a Stamina 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 Willpower-infused modifications are limited to the lucid Dreamer's highest Finesse Attribute. If in the above example the lucid Dreamer possessed a Wits of 4, he would be able to craft two more items, or enhance the disintegrator two more times (As he'd already used two of his four available acts of creation in this scene). This Finesse limitation is refreshed at the start of each Dreamtide scene.

### **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 fantasy.

### 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 rating of the Dreamer's highest Power Attribute, and Dread equal to the Dreamer's highest Finesse Attribute. Spending more Willpower gives the Dreamer dots to spend on his Nightmare's three attributes, equal to the rating of his highest Resistance Attribute. 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, Willpower as Health

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, and further clarified in chapter three of this book, starting on page 146). There are a few additional matters to take into consideration with a Dreamer, though.

- **With Regard to Bashing Wounds:** The bashing wounds a Dreamer suffers for fear is based on how terrified they feel, on a scale from one to five, by the situation. The amount of bashing wounds inflicted to Willpower is also the amount of Dread a Nightmare reaps, so in a sense Dread is a form of stolen Willpower. One point of bashing for fear, one point of Dread garnered.
- **With Regard to Lethal Wounds:** When the Willpower meter has filled with lethal wounds, a hysterical Dreamer abruptly awakens in a panicked sweat. Lucid Dreamers may remain in their dreamscape, but they must roll Composure each turn to fight awakening (this roll is reflexive and suffers no penalty, just as the roll to stay conscious from the **World of Darkness** Rulebook, as detailed on page 173). Just like in the waking world, the Lucid Dreamer is rendered unable to spend Willpower until his mind recovers at least partially from its injuries.
- **With Regard to Aggravated Wounds:** When the Willpower meter has filled with aggravated wounds, the Dreamer is immediately forced to awaken. A derangement is suffered as well, as explained in Chapter Three.

### 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 Hysterical 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.

## 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 into consciousness. The dream will not end, however, until the Lead Dreamer awakens. Also, group Dreamers are much more likely to be lucid and travel in a pack. Usually dragons will stay away from such dreams unless they are assured the group 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, for they are formed by a strong will granting others access and powers in his personal Dreamtide. Even if a dreamer were to reach the thicker waters, he 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 and the shayatin (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 Hysteric. 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 Dreamtide (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. 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 means of drawing benefit from 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). Hysteric 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 assumes a Twilight state (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 into an immaterial form 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.

#### 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 Dreamtide 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 Dreamtide 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 Dreamtide.

## 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 Oroborei, 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 Ablutions. 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 Oroborei. 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 39 to find out how much Dread it can hold, and how much it can use at once. Cold would also be used for reforging... that is if deep ones could disband their Ablutions.

### 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 Oroborei 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 Ablutions an Oroborei can use, as well as a few exclusive to them and their bargains.

## Ablutions

The primary feature that makes a deep one supernatural is also the main commonality they share with the Oroborei: they have and utilize Ablutions. 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 Ablutions; they are always manifested. Despite using Ablutions, deep ones are not entitled to True Form or Degrees of Divinity.

Deep Ones may own and use any of the Ablutions presented in Chapter 2. In addition, there are certain features that are exclusive to these beings; features an Oroborei may only acquire through bargaining.

## Suit of Omission

### (*Traits possessed of Bargainers*)

Ablutions of the Suit of Omission are traits of the bargain. Deep ones possess these characteristics to protect themselves and improve the terms of their bargains. Oroborei acquire these traits both as a mark of shame for the bargains they have made, and as a lure to draw them into further compromises. Ablutions in the Suit of Dread cannot be purchased with experience, and thus are only acquired through bargains.

### Luminescent Lure (Ace of Omission)

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 Ablution to repeat this process

on land, and likewise the Oroborei who make bargains take advantage.

The deep one (or a bargaining Oroborei) 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 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 (King of Omission)

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 Ablution transfers that "crush and scar" ruthlessness to the words of its deep one owner.

The deep one (or a bargaining Oroborei)'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 Ablution) 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 (*Queen of Omission*)

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 Oroborei) 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 Ablution, but to make use of this bonus during a scene Dread (or Breath) must be spent. While this Ablution 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 (*Jack of Omission*)

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 Ablution a deep one (or a bargaining Oroborei) too gains the ability to feed on the emotions of others... specifically fear.

For deep ones, manifesting the Ablution allows for the harvest of Dread, and each dot acts as a multiplier against the bounty (equal to half the manifest 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. If the multiplier results in a fraction of Dread, round up. For the bargainers of the dark this ability is indispensable.

Oroborei are further from the Dreamtide, and so benefit less from this Ablution. For each point manifest in this Ablution, a dragon receives one meal worth of nutrition 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.

### 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 reiterate 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.

### Electric Skin (Squire of Omission)

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 Ablution develop similar organs, though they generate voltage from the subtle motion of the atmosphere.

The deep one (or bargaining Oroborei) can discharge this voltage buildup once per scene as she 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 resulting muscle contractions from the shock, 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 (Omission Joker)

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 cloud 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 Oroborei) 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 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 Ablution. This of course means that changing the degree of manifestation in the Ablution 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 Ablution 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 Ablution 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 partie 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 after the bargain the emotion is so foreign it must be forced.

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

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".

The Dread Value serves another purpose. When a dragon makes a bargain, she receives a number of dots of "Deep One" Ablutions 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" Ablutions presented earlier. Just as with character creation, the fifth dot of a "Deep One" Ablution costs two of these "free" dots. Bargains are the only means of acquiring "Deep One" Ablutions; 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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, as it has already been promised to the Forgotten God.

## Shayatin

There are, scattered throughout the Dreamtide, packs of bottom feeders that burrow in the subconscious, looking for recessed memories to eat. These half-dog, half-pig scavengers are called shayatin (that's the plural. Singular is shaitan), or chthonic ghuls.

The shayatin are social and can be friendly, but that doesn't mean they are not dangerous. Some buried memories can afford to be dinner for these beasts, but others mustn't be forgotten. The shayatin absorb the knowledge they devour, and there's no telling when a bad meal could lead to a megalomaniacal rampage. Shayatin make use of a system similar to those used by of the Ghost Rules as found in the **World of Darkness** Rulebook, page 208 (though it has more differences than the deep ones use).

### Attributes

Strength, Dexterity, and Stamina combine into Physical. Presence, Manipulation, and composure all become Social. Intelligence, Wits, and Resolve become Mental. Shayatin don't differentiate between brute force and finesse, so their attributes are condensed to reflect this.

### Skills and Merits

Shayatin do not possess skills. They suffer no penalty for attempting actions in skills they do not know. When a shaitan performs a task that requires a Skill, it rolls the attribute that the skill falls under.

Chtonic ghuls prefer Social Merits, though they are not restricted to them. They have no Merit restrictions, and any Merits they own function as written.

### Dread and Cold

Shayatin know how to make Edict proclamations, so long as they are within the bounds of the Dreamtide. As such, they require Dread to act as a substitute for Breath, as they lack the Furnace necessary to generate divine heat like an Oroborei does. A shaitan uses Dread like a dragon uses Breath (See

Chapter 3), but acquires it through alternate means. Shayatin garner Dread by consuming Dolls, Carrion, Anima, and suppressed memories (one Dread for each level of the Size attribute their victim possesses).

Shayatin use the same rules for Cold as deep ones.

### Health

Shayatin are alive, and as such they are in the roulette when death knocks. A shaitan has Health equal to its Physical + Size, with Size usually being 5. All Health afflictions and damage types apply to a shaitan, though they are immune to damage from the dreamer.

## Other Traits

Shayatin hold within them the capacity for extreme dedication, but such is simply a cast-off of the memories they have erased with their corpse consumption. Their Willpower is a result of the dreamers they use as parasitic hosts. To find a shayatin's Willpower, take Social + Mental. Shayatin may spend Willpower to boost actions or increase resistance, but may only recover it by consuming a recessed memory.

Initiative is Physical + Mental. Defense is the lower of Physical or Social. Speed is Physical + Mental + 5. Size is 5. Shayatin can learn all the Edicts an Oroborei can, and can teach them to other Oroborei.

## Edicts

Shayatin may own and use any of the Edicts presented in Chapter 2, though only while they reside in the Dreamtide. Shayatin use proclamations to disorient predatory nightmares when they're in danger, or to turn some Dreamtide denizens into mulch when they're hungry. The Shayatin will also teach Edicts to inquisitive Oroborei... for a price.

In places where Furnace is demanded the Shaitan instead uses Cold. Where Breath is required, Dread is used in its place. Shayatin may add their Social attribute to the effect rating of their proclamations, to make up for their lack of access to Degrees of Divinity.

## 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.

## San Francisco

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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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. Oroborei 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 of 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 Oroborei 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. Lead 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 1948, 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 1946 (at the beginning of the Mexican-American war). Yerba Buena was included in this conquest, and by 1947 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 Oroborigoi to the region, magnetized to the flocking masses. Or perhaps it was the glitter of gold that drew them as well.

Oroborigoi from the Americas and Oroborigoi 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 Oroborigoi to believe it was sabotage.



A picture of the ruins of San Francisco, taken by George R. Lawrence on May 28<sup>th</sup> of 1906

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 Oroborei.

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 even 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. Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 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, Oroborei 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 Oroborei, 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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. Oroborig 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei, 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 Oroborei: Michael Haze, a Greenhorn 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei. A homeless bum, Haze learned of an Oroborei 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 Oroborei.

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 Oroborei. When Delmira caught on to this charade, corporate gave Thomas a choice: surrender the position and his Oroborei 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 Oroborei, 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei: 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 an invaluable part of the Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei woman came to the clinic seeking cosmetic surgery, unaware her Ablutions 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 Oroborei 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—chief administrator—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 Oroborigi. 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 was 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 Oroborigi: 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 Oroborigi 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 of 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 cardiac pump, simply to examine it. But he couldn't help taking a bite. And then another. And soon, he was the monster. Dimain became an Oroborigi 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 an unearthed statue from the last dig... a sculpture of some kind of gargoyle, Isaiah accidentally cracked the thing's chest cavity and uncovered a soft, supple Heart. Horrified, he glued the cavity shut and fled. 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 Oroborei. 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 Oroborei 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: Ablutions 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 Ablutions 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: Ablution 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's *apparent* age, not her actual age. A record of the attributes sacrificed must be kept, however, in the event the Oroborei returns to her prime.

### 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 Ablutions 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 Saintly 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 Saintly 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 Oroborei piece of Forbidden Lore, it comes in the form of an Edict. Ablutions are a feature of the Furnace, a biological feature and not a mystical one. For this reason, they cannot use Forbidden Lore to learn Ablutions.

### Learning and Using Forbidden Lore

#### Dragon: The Embers

A character can learn Edicts 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 an Edict.

## 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 Ablution, “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 Ablution 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 Ablution 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. All that needs to be adjusted is the bonus forging points for high Ethics, and the roll to undo fossilization.

Simply add a number of forging points to her reforging action equal to the *lowest* of her Stamina, Composure, or Resolve. For fossilization, the Oroborig rolls Presence instead of Ethics to recover after putting the flippant mortal in his place. This fix assumes you are still willing to deal with derangements. If you are not, you're on your own.

## **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 Ablutions 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 reforging action is actually a type of movement action. In a way, the rules for Miniatures Play make it easier to deal with Ablution manifestation. The Ablutions 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 Ablution: Flight of the King. Altering the Initiative Mod is not the only function of this Ablution, however, so you may simply ignore that bonus.

## Action Sequences : One Second Turns

Manifesting Ablutions 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 Ablution points equal to her dots in Furnace. There are no new objectives for this combat hack.

## 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 Oroborei? 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei.

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 Oroborei 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 (or sooner, if they use their gifts). 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 Oroborei 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 Ablutions and Edicts 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 Oroborei waging war over the planet's last shreds of wealth.

### Woundgate : Supernatural Beings

Surprisingly **Dragon the Embers** is very compatible with Woundgate, though the Oroborei themselves don't care for the Shatter.

### Dragons

Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei 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 Oroborei

make daytrips to the Shatter. For groceries. Being fused with Twilight and Worldblood, the Shatter's edibles are worth triple the nutritional value.

## 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.



## ABLUTIONS

## Bandwidth

L

## EQUIPMENT

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## EDICTS

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dice pool	_____	page	_____
dice pool	_____	page	_____
_____	OOOOO	_____	OOOOO
dice pool	_____	page	_____
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dice pool	_____	page	_____

DEGREE OF DIVINITY



## TRUE FORM TRAITS

Intelligence: \_\_\_\_\_ Strength: \_\_\_\_\_ Presence: \_\_\_\_\_  
Wits: \_\_\_\_\_ Dexterity: \_\_\_\_\_ Manipulation: \_\_\_\_\_  
Resolve: \_\_\_\_\_ Stamina: \_\_\_\_\_ Composure: \_\_\_\_\_

Skills: \_\_\_\_\_ Size: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ Defense: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ Initiative Mod: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ Land Speed: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ Flight Speed: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ Climb Speed: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ Burrow Speed: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ Armor: \_\_\_\_\_

**True Form Traits:** Attributes +1 • Health +2 • Willpower +2 • Size +1 • Defense +1 • Initiative Mod +2 • Land Speed = Speed + 2 • Flight Speed = (Strength + Stamina) x Wings • Climb Speed = Dexterity + Wall Climber + 5 • Burrow Speed = Strength + Dexterity + Burrowing Body • List skills modified by Ablutions • Don't forget to add in Ablution Bonuses

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