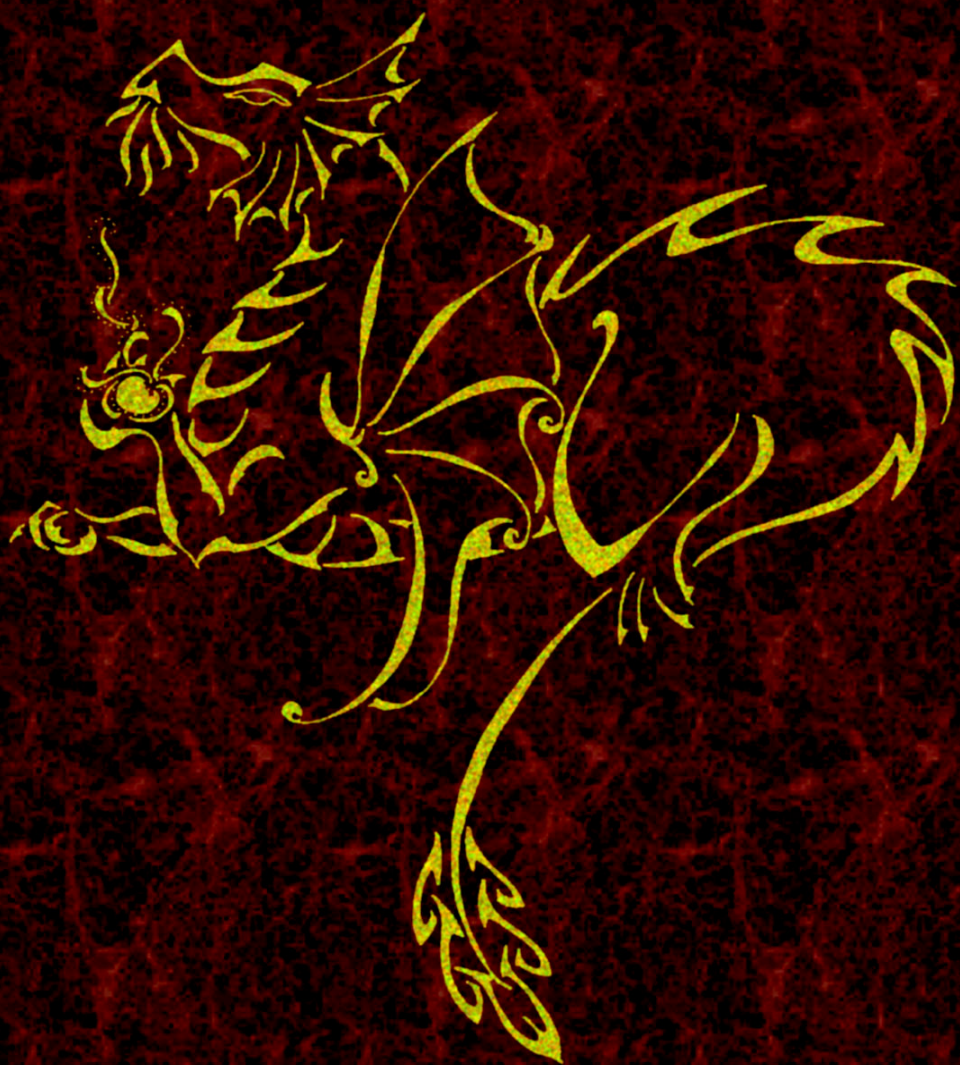


Hoard



A Roleplaying Game

Credits & Copyrights

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Significant editing credit is due Anthea Sack.

Major Inspirations

The best things in Hoard find their original roots in these works.
(The worst parts are entirely my own.)

Spirit of the Century; Rob Donoghue and Fred Hicks

Polaris, Ben Lehman

...In Spaaace!, Greg Stolze

Wushu, Dan Bayn

Dogs In The Vineyard, Vincent Baker

The Shadow of Yesterday, Clinton R. Nixon

Cheetoism, Kyle Aaron

Local Playtesters

Levi Kornelsen, Laura Hamilton, Holly Tetz, Kimberley Lam, Nathan Skarupa, Anthea Sack, Teddy Stewart, Timothy Lam, Jason Morton.
My external playtesters, sadly, are known to me only by their internet 'handles'; hopefully, this will be corrected in future.

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1. Introduction



What Is Hoard?

While playing Hoard, you will pretend to be a dragon. You'll do this in ways that are common to roleplaying games. There are players, each with their own dragon, and a Guide, who takes on the role of the situation itself. Rather than trying to explain this in detail, just imagine that we're sitting at a table, and I say to you "So, you're a dragon, and you're up on a mountaintop, looking around. You've just seen a group of people making their way towards your lair, and they look like dragon *hunters*. What do you do?" - and you respond "Well, I guess I'm going to try and figure out if I can beat them in a straight fight, first, so I'm going to slip down closer and scout them out". I think about it, and tell you a couple of possible ways to slip down the mountain to get closer, and you pick one, and I respond with more stuff; and we're playing. I'm the Guide, and you're the player. We have a fictional role (you're a dragon), and we've got us a situation that works, one where you have a goal, some obstacles, stuff like that. So far, easy.

ADDING IN RULES

Now, we might not agree on just how tough your dragon is, or how sneaky, and those matter, so I get you to describe him a bit more, and we figure some way of resolving it so we don't end up bickering. We'll bias things in your favor if your dragon is good at sneaking and fighting, or against them if they're bad at it. In the interests of being fair, we'll try to codify how we did it this time, and write it down, so that we can keep it in mind for the next time that he has to bash some stuff; it's good to be consistent. And we'll make up a few other rules to make it feel more like being a dragon - benefits for collecting treasure, to keep the motivation solid, for example.

AND PLENTY OF DETAILS

Those are the basics of a roleplaying game. In the case of *Hoard*, the work of finding clear and consistent ways to create and resolve situations, and describe characters in ways that everyone can agree on, has been mostly done for you. Only *mostly*, because when you play in any roleplaying game, you will find things that you want to add to, adjust, fine-tune, or change hugely - and that's good. That is, to many, part of the fun. As you might expect, there are plenty of details - a simple situation like the dragon hunters won't last us long unless there's a lot more to it than it appears, and building more involved ones is a bit of a trick, but one that can be managed easily enough. Having solid and understandable descriptions of 'who the characters are' and 'what the world is like' gets some attention, and ways of making those things central to play. There are rewards and methods for keeping everyone interested and engaged in the game at hand. And separating the jobs at the table, so that everyone knows who is in charge of this thing or that one, is discussed. But if you've read up to this point, you already understand how the basics work.

The World Of Play

The world of Hoard is a fantasy. It has a sun, moon and stars; lands, seas, and all the features of a world. It is occupied primarily by natural animals and humans; while there were once other populous humanlike races, they have been decimated by human conquest, and those that remain have withdrawn as best as they are able. Two vastly differing inhuman races still have an impact on the world - the dragons and the diabolicals.

DRAGONKIND

By nature, dragons are territorial, predatory, pack hunters. They possess mystical abilities which develop as they age, notably including elemental powers and shapeshifting into a human form. Most dragons believe their own kind to be inherently superior to other races. Humanity, for their part, long ago discovered that the bodies of dragons retained some of their mystical potency after death, and that the hide, claws and blood of dragons are of great use.

A few generations past, clever human artificers learned how to create mystical artefacts from the flesh and bones of dragonkind. The resultant boom of hunting and crafting urbanized humanity and threatened dragons with extinction. As a result, dragonkind retreated to a well-defended island chain known as the Reach. The Reach has grown rapidly, and dragonkind is increasing their numbers and territory at a terrific rate, clashing with human society as they do so. In the meantime, the most powerful artefacts - known as "city hearts" - have begun to grow perilously close to breaking down, presenting the danger of collapse to the human cities, and pushing their guild into offering greater and greater sums for a successful dragon hunt.

DIABOLICALS

There is a layer of reality that underlies the world; a network that connects it to other worlds. Long ago, being called Diabolicals seized power there and transformed that place into their home, naming it Tartarus, and began to infiltrate and invade other worlds, seeking more and greater power. Those humans that could hedge these creatures out and seal the world against their influence banded together, forming the human church. Some few sects within the church sought ways to capture and bind diabolicals; a few "went rogue" and created cults of diabolists, who worshipped these beings.

In recent days, human cities have begun to grow desperate for new means to produce artefacts, and have begun to turn to and support those that bind diabolicals. This pressure has twisted the structures of authority within the human church. It is becoming ever more common for the church to summon and bind diabolical forces from beyond the world into new devices. In their desperation to maintain their society and build this practice to the heights reached when the artificers held sway, humanity weakens the veil between worlds. They grow perilously close to irreparably opening up the fabric of the world, and inviting invasion from beyond.



Being A Dragon

As a dragon, you hatched from an egg with fragmented and inherited memories that, over the course of the first few days, allowed to ‘remember’ how to walk, fly, use language, and hunt. As time and experience accumulates, you’ll pass through several intense spurts of growth, becoming larger, stronger, more mystically potent, and able to fly longer and faster.

As with all dragons, you were quickened in the egg ceremonially, and have an affinity for and the ability to manipulate a single element - flame, frost, spark, wood, or wind. These abilities, too, will grow as you age.

You have a physical ‘type’, as well as abilities and impulses matching one of the three breeds. Drakes are swift, barbed-headed, and love getting new things. Linds are froned, slender-necked, and curious. Wyrms are heavier-set, plated, and miserly. There’s a slim chance that you might be *aberrant*, which means that you have traits of two breeds; if so, you are also likely oddly-shaped and are certainly sterile.

And since not long after your hatching, you have been raised with other dragons that hatched out on your island at around the same time - some might be from the same clutch of eggs as you, but dragon eggs incubate at different rates, so that’s not a given. These other dragons are your *fledge*; they are the pack you hunt with, your closest social connections. Most fledges eat together, share treasure troves as one group, often sleep piled on one another, and almost always trust each other as they trust no other creature.

Dragons deprived of their fledge, and unable to bond with another, often become completely deranged. They depart from dragon society, take up solitary existence, and prey on whatever dwells in the region. Most human impressions of dragons are based on the fledge-lost; they are vicious, filthy, broken and desperately alone.

Raurtha

Dragon society makes no provisions for, and provides no support to, any dragon that is incapable of what dragons consider to be “basic tasks”. Such individuals are simply culled as they are discovered - a dragon hatchling with wings apparently incapable of flight will simply be dropped from a height. If they can manage a flight and landing, they can look forward to other, equally pitiless trials throughout their life. Dragons are expected to be capable of fending for themselves at all stages in life.

THE FLEDGING TRIAL

The final culling of hatchlings takes place as they grow near to fledging, and is known as ‘Raurtha’; those hatchlings that succeed are treated as, and generally grow swiftly into, fledgling status. During Raurtha, a fledge of hatchlings is isolated and placed in the way of some form of danger - but one where there is some profit or gain in overcoming it. Their tutors measure the expected danger fairly carefully, seeking something that will test the fitness of the individuals and the fledge as a whole. The specific dangers of Raurtha may reflect the problems facing a given group of islands - such being put in a position to fight human raiders. Or the danger may be more along the lines of a problematic chore, such as clearing one of the rocky fishing outcrops around the island, or some series of smaller caves of problematic vermin. Also, it is not unknown for the tutors to misjudge such dangers; some fledges have died entirely or vanished completely into capture during Raurtha.

The “assumed starting point” for a game of Hoard is Raurtha.



On Adventures

The adventures that your dragon will take part in will usually spring from the conflicts of dragon society itself. The most constant of these conflicts is the struggle between dragonkind and humanity, but other conflicts do exist. Some are fairly personal, such as territory division, competition between fledges, fights between mates over eggs, or between those attempting to win the same mate, over the nature and practice of ritual, and much else besides.

ADVENTURES FOR HIRE

Especially at an early age, dragon fledges have a significant variety of needs and want. Treasure, territory, and recognition are basic dragon motives, and the treasure troves, territories, and social connections of older dragons are often vast enough that 'hiring' younger fledges is easy. These older dragons are often hugely ambitious - they want to destroy pirate fleets, claim islands currently outside the bounds of the Reach, capture members of the human church, seize power over or destroy diabolical cults, and the like. For such older dragons to achieve these sweeping goals often involves plans that need additional eyes, assistants, distractions, or any number of tasks; young fledges can often acquire payment for taking on such jobs.

ADVENTURES OF SITUATION

As fledges of dragons acquire territory and social standing, they often become involved more deeply in dragons society. In some cases, this is as simple as being able to share equally in profitable ventures (such as inland raids) with other fledges. At other times, they may become involved in the dealings and projects shared by all of the fledges residing on the island where they hold territory. It's entirely possible, if the players are interested, for 'adventures' to exist that are focused less on action and more on political troubles, tricky negotiations, resolution of personal obligations, and other parts of life as a dragon. For other groups, the added complications that come with draconic holdings will be used as a source of backdrop, of 'adventure hooks', and of revelations and 'twists' in the growing body of active adventures.

ADVENTURES OF AMBITION

A fledge that ages to significant power will usually begin to pursue their own agendas. They may attempt to take control of factions within human society, hedge out diabolical influence in larger regions, make direct war on humans, mate and make arrangements for the rearing of their young, work to acquire unique treasures or vast territories, fall to diabolical temptations, seek the means to travel beyond the world itself, and so on. As they accomplish lesser goals, they tend to set their sights ever-higher and span their plans out over greater periods, filling the years with new challenges and acquisitions. Eventually, this can lead to acting as patrons to younger fledges in turn, becoming the greater powers that they served in their own youth.

2. Basics Of Play



Start-Up

At least two people are required to play; one takes on the job of being the Guide, and the others are players. The Guide should have access to the rules at all times, and should read over the entire rulebook and prepare their material in advance. Most often, a prospective Guide decides to "run a game", does some basic groundwork, and then invites potential players to take part. Players will need to be familiarized with this section and with the character creation rules, though it's entirely possible for players to learn most of the rules during play.

PLACE AND PROPS

You'll need somewhere to play that is fairly free of interruptions. And you'll need a total of at least twelve 'coins' (which may actually be candy, buttons, poker chips, pennies, glass beads, or whatever you wish) per person, player or Guide. You'll need some way of keeping notes; usually, some pencils and paper. It's nice to have a shallow bowl in the middle to toss tokens into and pull from, but not required. Finally, you'll also need dice (regular, six-sided ones); while it's possible to 'get by' with as few as five dice, it's much more desirable to have four to five dice per person, be they player or Guide.

CREATING CHARACTERS

Each player will need a character. All characters should be created with the same age trait. It's recommended that for the first time out, the group play hatchlings, and that the Guide use this first session for their Ruartha trial, but this is not absolutely essential. Once characters are complete, the Guide may need to adapt their notes so that their prepared material fits those characters as well as possible - if the Guide wants to do a truly thorough job of this, the group might want to schedule character creation as a separate get-together.

STARTING COINS

At the start of the first game, each player at the table should have seven coins at hand. This is *their hoard*, which they'll add to, spend, and swap around using various rules. Coins are the 'currency' of the game. The Guide should certainly know how coins are used before play starts, and will likely want to go over this with the players as well. If this is not the first game, coins will be tracked from the last game (unless there was enough 'downtime' for coins to be affected).

ACTUAL PLAY

Once the Guide has their material ready to go, the players have characters, and everyone has their hoard, the group can start playing. Play lasts until the group needs a break or is done playing for the night (you can come back to it later), or the current situation is resolved, and the adventure is done, in the opinion of the group. At first, play will pause to reference the rules and get familiar with how things work fairly regularly, but as the group gets more comfortable with the rules, such delays will occur less and less often.

The Modes Of Play

Most of Hoard is played out just by talking, but there are a few different ways of talking and doing things in the game that might take some getting used to.

EXPLORING

When the group is exploring, which is the basic way of playing, the Guide will set a scene, the players will describe what their characters are doing. The Guide will state how this affects the scene, telling them what happens next, and back and forth it goes. If the Guide described some ruins, a player might say "I explore the ruins, looking for anything interesting". The Guide might check with the other players to see what they're doing at the same time, and then jump to the first interesting thing in the search, or the first thing that interrupts it. Or the Guide might ask the player what they think is interesting, to tailor the results. So, the Guide is adding new details to the setting all the time. When exploring, players are in charge of, and concentrate on, their characters; the Guide manages everything else.

ACTING

Sessions will include portions where players take on their characters, speaking as if they were those characters. These may be lengthy discussions, or quick exchanges of a few words. Moving to this kind of play is easy; if Arathmus the dragon does some scouting and discovers that the dragon hunters are, on close examination, something else entirely, you might state "Why do you little ones intrude on my territory?" as if you were Arathmus. When someone begins speaking this way, it's normal to go with it, speaking as the characters. This can end just as naturally, returning to exploring. Smooth changeovers, without any real division, are standard. While acting, everyone is in charge of the same thing - the character they play.

ADVERSITY

For especially climactic or engaging conflicts, or when there are multiple scripts available, the group will change over to the adversity rules given later in this section. These rules uses many of the components of regular play (such as narration, coins, and character traits) in different ways. In adversity, players declare actions for their characters, and the Guide declares for their opposition.

SCRIPTING

When a player wants their character to attempt something more complex, or has a detailed vision of how they'd like things to go, they enter into scripting. The player gives (sometimes on their own, sometimes by being asked), a full description of "what happens next", and others can contribute to it, change it, veto it, or propose their own versions. There are specific ways to propose and negotiate scripts, discussed later on. While scripting, anyone can declare anything, but everything is open to being vetoed.

Scene To Scene

A scene is a chunk of time in which the overall location, characters, and action remain generally the same. When any of those things changes in a “jump”, that’s a new scene - though transitions in the midst of the action, such as an argument turning into a fight, or a few extras entering or leaving, don’t make for a new scene. For mastery use, a scene can *also* mean “the amount of space some abilities affect”, but that isn’t what’s being discussed here.

SETTING THE SCENE

The Guide sets a scene by describing it and how the characters enter it. This description will start with a basic sketch - the characters are in deep in the catacombs of a human cathedral, soaring over the Reach by night, whatever the case is. It will move on to the most overall sensory impression; by describing the stench of the catacombs, the darkness of the night. A few more details of setting, describing the street below or the tables and crowds around them, finish that sketch. After making that sketch, the Guide will almost always go on to add an active element - something that is happening that is there for the characters to interact with, whether that’s someone to talk with, enemies to fight, or whatever the case may be.

WHAT TO SET

Not all scenes deserve attention. Characters sleep. They eat. They fly from lair to lair. Sometimes, there will be fascinating stuff to deal with here. But most of the time, nobody at the table will care how the characters slept, or the details of how much they ate, or other such trivia. Most of this will just be glossed over with “You sleep. You wake. The next day...”, or something equally quick. Equally important to the skill of setting a scene well is the skill of knowing when to set a scene at all. A good scene always includes at least one of the following, and often has the potential for more:

- An obstacle of some kind - from a fight to a calm bargaining situation.
- Any significant choice that the players should make about what to do next.
- Something that they characters ought to know which is important to the current situation.
- A chance for the characters to acquire something that they might want, or get closer to achieving a goal.

SCENE CHANGES

While the Guide describes the changeovers from scene to scene, players will often make it clear through action what the next scene should be - “We go talk to the ancient one he told us about”. Players will also occasionally ‘cue’ scenes with action; if the Guide is describing the transition with a few details, and a player declares that they want to do something about one of those details, that’s a player initiating a scene, and means it’s time for the Guide to set it up. Both of these are not only normal, but should be expected.

Coins

Coins, the tokens mentioned in ‘what you need’, are a player and Guide resource. Players gain coins by playing out actions suitable to the parts of their character represented by the rules, and can sometimes be gained by having your character rest. Players use coins to reduce the impact of conflicts on their characters, and to fuel special abilities. Guides gain and use coins a little differently, but the basic idea is the same.

TREASURES

Treasure is an ongoing resource collected by the characters, inside the fiction of the game. The pool of treasure that a fledge of dragons keeps, and the way that they interact with it, can cause players to gain and lose coins when the characters rest or when there is significant “downtime”.

COIN REMINDERS

- You draw coins by acting on your drives.
- You draw coins by acting on the influences of other characters.
- You discard (spend) coins to use most masteries.
- You can discard (spend) coins to block attacks made on you in adversity.
- You can wager coins with others in order to cause events to turn out as you envision when scripting.
- When your dragon rests, you might gain or lose coins based on treasure.



Aspects And Traits

An aspect is a descriptive “label” applied to something (or someone) in the game. Otherwise, it’s something “added on” - a character that has been beaten up might very well have the aspect “bruised and bloodied” or just “hurt”. Equally, a torch is just a torch, but lighting it adds an aspect, which might be “burning” or “lit”, or whatever suits.

ASPECT ‘HARDNESS’

As aspects, *Winded* and *Collapsed Lung* may have the same basic effect in play, but it’s pretty plain that one of them should be easier to remove. So, aspects can be graded as trivial, notable, or lingering. A trivial aspect is something like *Winded* - it’s pretty easy to change or remove if you can take time out to do so, but still could be important while it’s present. A notable aspect might be *Battered Ribcage*; changing or removing it isn’t a quick matter, but it’s still obviously possible. A lingering aspect is like *Collapsed Lung*; without some serious or long-term intervention, the character simply won’t be the same. There’s a fourth level of ‘hardness’, where an aspect generally can’t be removed at all; an aspect like that is a trait, as below.

COLORFUL ASPECTS

The words chosen for an aspect matter. Really colorful wording implies all sorts of interesting things about whatever the aspect is attached to; if an argument attaches the aspect “Weeping burning tears” to a flame dragon, that’s neat and atmospheric. But the longer the aspect sticks around, and the more it is used, the more contrived it gets. So, as a general guideline, the less time an aspect will spend ‘on stage’, the more colorful it should be.

TRAITS

If an aspect is permanently, inherently part of the thing it describes, then it is *also* a trait (and harder to affect with abilities). Every character in the game world will have at least one trait that describes them, and dragons have at least four. The traits used in character creation - Age, Breed, Affinity, and Personality - are packaged with masteries, drives, and influences; a character that possesses the trait at creation or gains it by experience gains everything it is ‘packaged’ with. A character that is given an aspect which duplicates a trait by means of some other ability does not gain such features.

MASTERIES, DRIVES, AND INFLUENCES

These are character features that are sometimes packaged with traits. Masteries allow the character to perform some unusual stunt or action, at a cost to the player in coins. A drive allows the player to gain coins by performing actions as described by that drive. An influence allows that character’s player to award *other players* with the right to draw coins, if those players have their characters act in specific ways.

3. Adversity



Setting Up Adversity

As play continues, there will be plenty of direct conflicts. When a character is attempting to do something to another character that the other will directly oppose, and the players involved want to go for a win, that's a conflict, and moving to these rules is a good idea. When a character is mainly attempting to alter a whole situation, but the conflict isn't direct or exciting, the scripting rules are a better match.

HOW TO START A CONFLICT

To start a conflict, you need only declare a goal - the thing that your character is going to attempt to do. "Anduma is going to try and beat him to death" is a pretty simple example of a goal. Depending on how practiced your group is at spotting such declarations, you may also want to state "I want this to be a conflict". It's also possible that someone else will ask you, as you describe actions, "Do you want that to be a conflict?", or prompt you in other ways.

KINDS OF CONFLICTS

Not all conflicts are physical fights. Action can certainly be conflict - a chase scene or an attempt to sneak past a group of guards can work. Attempts to out-politic other dragons in island councils, or to intimidate a town or cult into obedience could be conflicts as well. Setting up and managing such conflicts works just the same as for a fight - the examples here using fighting as the example because it tend to be the most common and engaging form of conflict.

CLEAR GOALS

A well-stated goal is clear on what it will accomplish in the end; "Verita will try to scare him off" isn't as clear as "Verita is going to try to scare him into fleeing the scene and staying away for at least a week". If your goal isn't clear, others may interpret it according to the letter, rather than the intent. So, when you name a goal that isn't clear, don't be surprised if someone asks you to clarify. If someone else isn't clear, ask them what they want, exactly.

REACTIONS

Whoever is in charge of the character or group that you're opposing can simply say "okay, you win", and accept the goal as being accomplished. They can set their own goal. Or they can veto the conflict entirely, or ask you to move to scripting if they believe that it suits the situation better. If there's disagreement on whether something should be a conflict or not, that's something the group needs to settle.

GOALS ALL AROUND

If everyone can agree that the situation is a direct conflict and that your stated goal is acceptable, then everyone who has a character (or group of extras) involved should also state the goals held by those characters.

Declaring Actions

Once all the goals are declared, actions are declared, traits are called, and dice are gained. Each notable character or group of extras gets a “go”, in which they describe the actions that they are taking in the round. Each action is a single maneuver, and it’s possible for a player to declare several actions in a single sentence. “I slash him with my barbed tail^(#1), slip between his legs to trip him up^(#2), and back him into the rocks so he can’t dodge easily^(#3). Then I bite at him with burning jaws^(#4)” - that’s four actions.

ACTIONS AND ASPECTS

Each action must be based on a *different* aspect or trait, whether your own, your opponent’s, or that of the scene - in the example above, the actions are based on the barbs of a drake^(#1), the size of a hatchling^(#2), the rocky ground of the scene^(#3), and the flame affinity^(#4). This is all there is to “calling in” an aspect. Players can question your declarations if they’re unclear which aspects those actions call in. It’s fine if multiple people call in the same aspect - everyone can use the scenery differently, for example - but each character or group can only call in each aspect once.

ACTIONS AND DICE

Each action you declare that calls in a trait gains you one die, which you will roll after everyone has declared their actions. Because dice are not rolled until all actions are declared, it isn’t very important what order actions go in.

ACTION LIMIT

Every character or group has a “action limit” - a maximum number of actions that they can declare each round, regardless of the number of aspects available to them to in it. Some mastery uses count as actions against this limit, but do not provide the player with dice; see the specific mastery descriptions. For hatchling dragons, the limit is four actions, and this number increases as their age increases. For Guide characters, very flexible limits apply which are described later on.

THINGS HAPPEN WHEN DECLARED

When you describe an action, it happens. If you declare that you have hit a foe, then you’ve just hit him. You cannot declare the *effects* of your actions beyond the cosmetic. If you state that you hit a target, you can’t state that you’ve injured them - but you can declare cosmetic effects such as knocking them backwards.

ANYONE CAN VETO

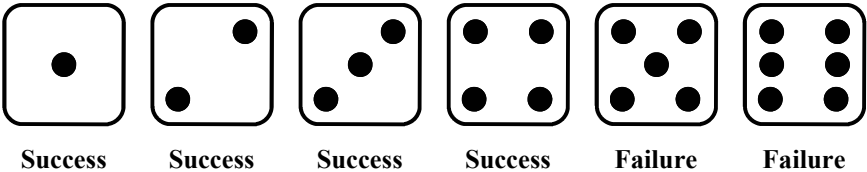
Anyone at the table may veto any or all of your actions as being inappropriate, just not ‘feeling right’, or being too repetitive and similar to previous rounds. If they do, you may simply declare more actions to replace those ones.

The Dice

After everyone has declared all of their options, had their actions (and trait calls) approved, and picked up dice, they secretly spit those dice into striking and blocking; striking dice affect your target, while blocking dice help stop actions from harming you. There's no absolute rules on how you can split your dice, unless you're using a mastery that requires some specific division.

AN ASIDE: SUCCESSES

When you roll dice in Hoard, you'll be looking for the dice to come up with results of four or less. Each die that gives a result of four or less is considered "a success". So long as the result remains within this range, having a *lot* of high number is a little bit better; the best possible result on a roll is all fours.



STRIKE

Each player holds out their striking dice in a closed hand (or more than one hand, if they're controlling extras); the Guide does the same. Once all the striking dice are held, everyone reveals how many they are holding, and rolls those dice, all at once. Each success is held onto for now - if it isn't blocked, it'll have an effect.

BLOCK

The Guide and players then roll their remaining, blocking, dice. Each blocking success cancels one striking success directed at the character or group it was rolled for, from *each* character or group striking it (if you are being struck by five foes, and have one blocking success, it blocks the first successful striking die from each foe). Whatever striking successes remain take effect.

PAYMENT, FALLOUT, AND GIVING IN

If there are striking successes still held against you after you block, then you must either "cover your losses" with some combination of payment and fallout, or accept the goal that the character or group holding those successes has for you. You *can* just give in and accept their goal, if things look too ugly. But if you choose to cover your losses, there are two methods for doing so:

- **Payment:** You can 'cover' a successful striking die by discarding as many coins as *the result on that die*. You may cover as many dice as you have coins to pay for in this way.
- **Fallout:** You can 'cover' successful striking dice by gaining aspects and blocking off your own drives and masteries. For details, turn the page.

Fallout

If payment to negate unblocked strikes represents catching a lucky break, fallout represents taking a hit - but not a hit that finishes the conflict. Taking fallout can cover multiple dice, but grows progressively more severe as the number of dice covered rises. In any given conflict, a character may only take one trivial, one notable, and one lingering aspect; after that point, they may no longer cover strikes made against them in this way. All such aspects should be noted on the character record of the affected character.

- **1 or 2 Dice:** *Trivial:* By describing a trivial condition now affecting your character as a result of the strikes made, a single successful striking die is covered, regardless of value. If you also name a drive or mastery of yours which you cannot use so long as the aspect remains, two dice are covered.
- **2 or 3 Dice:** *Notable:* Taking a notable aspect works in just the same way as taking a trivial one, but covers two dice (or three, if a drive or mastery is 'blocked' by the aspect).
- **3 or 4 Dice:** *Lingering:* Taking a lingering aspect works in just the same way again, covering three dice (four if a drive or mastery is 'blocked').

REMOVING FALLOUT

Because aspects acquired through fallout are generally negative - and thus usually quite easy for opponents to call against you, and tricky to call for your own benefit, removing them is often desirable. While there's no replacement for a Radiant ally, here are some notes on removing aspects the hard way:

- **Trivial:** Removing a trivial aspect with rest or other recovery should require only a short side scene or the like.
- **Notable:** Removing a notable aspect with work, or through recuperation of some sort, should always require at least two days of game time spent healing or working at this removal.
- **Lingering:** Removing a lingering aspect without Radiant aid should be a 'side adventure' unto itself.

SOME EXAMPLE ASPECTS FROM FALLOUT

TRIVIAL	NOTABLE	LINGERING
Taken Aback	Frightened	Traumatized
Winded	Bruised Ribs	Collapsed Lung
Nervous	Humiliated	Timid
Stunned	Fuddled	Graceless
Grieved	Overwrought	Woeful
Nipped	Battered	Maimed



Going In Rounds

Most readers will have realized by this point that a single set of declaring goals, then actions, with dice-rolling and covering losses, usually won't resolve a conflict. It's not usually expected to; what has been described so far is a single round of conflict. At the end of a round, if there's still conflict to be had, everything starts over again. There are a few refinements that start happening after the first round of a conflict:

GOAL AND TARGET CHANGES

Between rounds, characters and groups may maintain the same goals and targets as in previous rounds, or may choose new targets, new goals, or both. It's quite possible for a conflict to shift from being an argument into being a murderous brawl between rounds. Equally, characters and groups that were not in a starting round may join in the conflict, or become targets and be brought in. Characters and groups that aren't targets but were previously involved may choose to leave the conflict, or even just "sit out" a round.

WHERE IT MUST END

A character or a group that has unblocked strikes which they cannot cover with fallout or coins *must* accept the goal their striker has for them. The more absolute the goals involved, the more likely it is that a conflict will "go the distance". If a conflict was about sneaking past a guard without getting caught, very few players find it reasonable for their character to get seriously screwed-up in the process, and that makes fine sense within the game - not many dragons would be willing to risk serious injury throwing themselves into pinched spaces or get so tensed up with close calls that they're totally flustered, simply to get past a guard.

SIMULTANEOUS ENDINGS

It's possible, though rare, for a player character and an opponent to force one another to accept each other's goals at the same time. When this happens, the player character achieves their goal, and the opponent does not, *if* the player covers as many of the strikes aimed at them as they possibly can.



4. Scripting



“Script That!”

Scripting is a way of negotiating, as a group, on where events in play lead. It's no fun to dicker over just how the people of a village “ought to” react to a dragon arriving and threatening them with annihilation. On the other hand, it's often entertaining to hear how that dragon's player envisions things going, and modifying that vision (or replying with your own), and sorting things out from there. Any time it looks like resolving something isn't a matter of clearly-defined authority (or is, but the person who is most interested in their vision of what happens next isn't in charge of that), anyone can call for a script to be proposed, or can propose one. Sometimes, you'll want to propose a script, by saying "Here's my script for this..." or something similar. Other times, you may want to call for someone else to do so, telling them to "Script that".

THE SCRIPT PROPOSAL

When proposing a script, anyone can describe anything - but because a script is only proposed, not instantly made fact in the game, it can be altered, shot down, and contested against other possible versions of events. A script proposal describes all of the following:

- **Actions:** Always begin by describing the actions being taken by the character or characters you control (for players, this would mean their dragon and possibly underlings; for the Guide, this basically means ‘anyone else’). Remember that you're sharing a vision of how you want things to happen; avoid describing the character as attempting something and talk about *how they succeed or fail*.
- **Reactions:** Scripts also include reactions, and you can describe whatever reactions you like, including the reactions of other notable characters and the setting itself, even if it's just scenery being moved (or being blown apart). A script that doesn't have an impact on something or someone else is boring. Again, share your vision - avoid saying what the reaction might be, and state what it *is*; if others would rather have something else happen, they'll have their chance to say so.
- **Consequences:** Finally, scripts include the results of the action and reaction. A script proposal makes it plain what has been changed by the events described in the script, and how. If characters are hurt in the script, the script should also include how badly they hurt, and in what way. If characters are driven off, but will return, then both their departure and the flat statement of their return should be noted. Creating interesting consequences can be tricky in part because the only limits are what other players will alter and veto, and is discussed in more detail later on in this section.



Negotiating Scripts

Once a script has been proposed, it can be negotiated. The Guide, and each player at the table whose character is involved in the action, has the following options available...

ACCEPTANCE

Stating that you're fine with the script proposed, nodding along and agreeing, or applauding the script's coolness, signals that you've got no problems with events going the way that was stated. If everyone accepts a script, it happens.

AMENDMENTS

Sometimes a script is acceptable to you except for a niggling detail or two; what you want to say is "Yes, *and...*" or "Yes, *if...*" or "Yes, *but...*". That's an amendment; state that you're willing to accept the script, if your amendment is solid. The person who proposed the script can either accept your amendment, or stick with their original script. If they don't want to change their script, you can accept it as-is, or move on to the next option...

COUNTERING

You can propose an entirely different script for the action, in response to hearing one, with action, surrounding effects, and consequences as similar to or as different from those of the first script as you like. In turn, others can accept, describe amendments for, or shoot down your counter-script. If everyone accepts your new script, it happens; if the group is left with multiple scripts as possibilities after trying out amendments, then it's time to *wager* on those scripts - see the next page for more on that. When you propose a counter-script, you are also accepting that the original script might become the 'what happens'. So, what you're saying is "That's not bad, but I think that *this* is even better."

VETOING

If a proposed script, brought into play, would make it impossible for you to suspend your disbelief enough to engage in play (because of what it does to the setting), or would make play notably un-entertaining for you, say so. That script is discarded, though the proposer may certainly propose a new one. Tell the person proposing the script *why* this is, so that they can understand where it is that the two of you disagree on "how things ought to work".

ADVERSITY

Any player may call a halt to the scripting process and check if the group should switch over to the adversity rules instead. This is a good idea if it seems that the group is focused on resolving a conflict, *and* each of the players is more engaged in seeing to the interests of their individual characters than in collaborating on events.

Wagering

When there are multiple scripts available, and unanimous agreement doesn't come quickly on which one to use, it's time to wager. Here's how that works:

1. CALLING ASPECTS

Everyone who proposed a script that's 'on the table' goes over it quickly, noting how it fits with the varying aspects of the scene and of the characters. Each aspect that was taken into account in the script, or which can be agreed to support the way the script describes events, will grant that script a one-point bonus (up to five points of bonus at most). So, if your script involves your dragon spearing a foe with their tail, and the target failing to dodge because they're slowed by wounds and the chill of the storm outside, you might note that your dragon is a wyrm, with a tail perfect for spearing (+1), that the target actually was wounded by one of your fledgemates earlier on (another +1), and that the chill does aspect things - but not you, since you're the frost dragon that created it (a third +1). Your script would thus have a three-point bonus in total.

2. PICK, HOLD, REVEAL

Each player involved in the wager (anyone with a character in any of the scripts out there, and always the Guide) picks up their hoard of coins and chooses a number of coins to add to their bonus. They hold these out in a closed hand, making sure that it's clear which script those coins are being added to beforehand. Once everyone has their coins held out, everyone reveals them.

3. COMPARE

When all coins are revealed, total up the ones that go with each script, and add in the bonus. So, if Levi and Laura each put two coins towards a script with a three-point bonus, that's $(2+2+3=)$ seven. Whichever script has the most coins towards it is the one that will "win". If there's a tie, it goes first to the script with the largest number of actual coins wagered. If it's still a tie, the coins in play stay there, and everyone picks, holds and reveals again, *adding* the new 'throw' to the coins already wagered. On the rare occasion that a tie results *again*, the Guide picks a script.

4. REWARD AND DISCARD

Those players that put coins into the script that 'lost' get their coins back, and (if there are enough for all of them), each take one coin from those that 'won'. And remaining coins that were wagered on the 'winning' script are then discarded back to the common pile or bowl.

5. FICTION HAPPENS

The script that 'won' becomes 'what happens', and gameplay resumes normally.

Scripting Consequences

When proposing a script, consequences are always named, and those consequences can be anything that makes sense. Amendments can add further consequences to those, with the approval of the person who proposed the script to begin with. Here are some guidelines on good consequences:

A KIND OF BALANCE

An epic script for total victory or crushing defeat is only rarely as interesting as one where victory comes at a cost, or defeat comes with a consolation. The larger and lengthier the events described by a script, the stronger this should be. For example, a script on how your dragon tricks a pirate into a trap can be very one-sided, but a script on how your fledge and all their underlings slip into a heavily-guarded fortress manned by inquisition hunters by cover of night should come with at least some small cost. If you do propose a one-sided script like this - especially as “what I’m *trying* to do”, expect the Guide or the other players to attach a cost to it.

TWISTS AROUND

Some of the best consequences aren’t about “good stuff” and “bad stuff” for the characters, but instead describe simple change. If, as part of a maneuver to gain control over the council of their home island in the reach, a character crushes the projects of the current leaders - the ends of those projects might have all sorts of odd effects, which could be added to the script as consequences. Again, a player proposing an especially straightforward script, based on what their character is attempting, should expect the Guide or the other players to make things a little more complicated.

(USUALLY) AVOID ABSOLUTES

Seriously changing, removing, or killing a notable character by means of scripting is rarely a good idea. There will be occasions when it fits smoothly enough into play that it simply makes sense to do so, but such events are usually climactic enough to warrant setting up adversity with that goal and throwing the dice around a bit.

CONSEQUENCES CAN SET UP ADVERSITY

When undertaking actions that set up interesting adversity, it’s easy for one of the consequences of a script to *be* that set up. If a fledge wanted to destroy a bridge being crossed by a powerful dragon hunter, for example, they might script the ignition of the bridge, and the deaths of the majority of extras - but not the leader. The Guide might then set up a conflict where the goal of the fledge is to kill the leader during the burning and confusion, and his goal is to hack his way out past the fledge. The bridge *will* burn (it’s already scripted!), but the fight that takes place while the bridge is burning is still up for grabs. Setups like this sometimes require a little negotiation, but are often worth it.

Styles Of Scripting

Over time, groups in action begin to develop differing approaches to the process of scripting. The way that your group uses the scripting rules will have a very strong impact on how your play ‘feels’ and the kind of fun that it creates. Here are a few possible ways that a group might approach scripting, and some of the effects.

CLARITY

Some of the time, a call for scripting is all about *finding out what a character is trying to accomplish* with their actions, so that the Guide can fit those actions into the whole situation. On these occasions, the idea is “Tell me what you’re trying to do, and I’ll tell you what it costs you - and what else happens as a result”, and a common reaction to a script is for the Guide to amend it with “Yes, but...” or “Yes, and...”. Players that enjoy really getting into character often prefer scripting like this.

COLLABORATION

Some groups are interested in *building together on the story of the game*, and scripting provides a springboard for that. A group might use the scripting process all the time, and not only allow but expect players to make script proposals that describe actions and motives for other players. In such a style, “Tell me what happens next, and I’ll build on it” is central to the fun, and the most common reaction to a script is for anyone (or everyone) to amend it with “Only if...” or “Yes, and...”, though all the other options are also exercised as they’re needed.

COMPARISON

The process of scripting and counter-scripting allows the people at the table to show off and compare differing ideas for what ought to happen. Sometimes, there’s a dynamic of *trying to come up with the coolest thing*. And that can create really great play - or it can create a kind of harsher one-upmanship that actually ruins the fun. If the group starts consistently and reflexively countering scripts as they’re proposed, it’s everyone’s job to make sure that doing so is helping, instead of hindering.

CASUAL Vs. FORMAL

It’s possible to treat almost any action as a casual, partial script proposal, and ask for the rest of the details when they’re needed. When a groups approaches scripting in this way will often see the specifics of the process come apart, as those parts are replaced with their own social conventions on what’s needed and how. It’s equally possible to treat scripting as a specific, formal arrangement that must be called for and is managed with a fair degree of precision. Casual use serves collaboration very well; formal use serves comparison well.

5. Your Dragon



Dragon Creation

Since your dragon is your sole representative in the game, to the point where the rules occasionally use “you” to mean “your dragon”, quite a lot of the rules of *Hoard* are related to creating and acting in the role of your dragon.

NAME & AMBITION

A dragon name generator has been supplied next page; while entirely optional, having character names that all “sound right” can add a lot to gameplay. The page following names discusses ambitions - long-term goals that your dragon might possess. Choosing an ambition for your character is not required (unless you choose the Aspirant personality trait), but can flesh out your character significantly.

CHOOSING AN AGE TRAIT

Depending on the group, age may be something chosen by the Guide before inviting players, or it might be something that the players decide as a group before carrying on. The majority of the advice in this book assumes that a group will choose to create hatchlings, and advance from that point onward, but groups already experienced with *Hoard* or with other roleplaying games will have little trouble doing otherwise. Age selection determines the scope of your dragon’s abilities, the number of personality traits they possess, their dice limit, and can grant masteries.

BREED, AFFINITY, PERSONALITY




Every dragon will have a breed trait, an affinity trait, and one or more personality traits (depending on age - see the age traits to determine how many your dragon should have). Breed describes the physical build, hoarding instincts, and a few other minor features of your dragon. Affinity determines what kind of elemental powers your dragon possesses. Personality traits indicate not only what your dragon is like, but how they tend to fit into the society of dragons. These are quite significant chunks of rules; each includes short-term motivations for your character, ways that their presence influences others, and a special ability unique to that personality type.

TREASURE

Each fledge will have a treasure pool; for a brand-new fledge, this starts at “no treasure”. Treasure is a whole-fledge trait, and a major motivator for dragons. If your character is being created beyond the age of hatchling, they will contribute a sum based on their age: A fledgling brings twenty items worth of treasure, a soaring forty, a lordling eighty, and a sovereign brings one hundred and sixty. Starting characters of lordling or sovereign age may “cash in” equivalent sums of treasure to begin play with a single unique treasure of their choice, whether active or not.

Naming Your Dragon

All dragons have two names - their 'hatch name', and their 'use name'. A "hatch name" is three parts - beginning, middle, and end, and is written on the egg itself (dragonic script is from right-to-left, the opposite of this text). Hatch names signify only *how and why their egg existed*; they are basically labels. Almost all dragons have their names shortened in creative ways by their fledgemates or caregivers early on, creating their common "use name". To name your dragon, create a hatch name, and then shorten and alter as desired. As an example, Tatan, Anduma, Tutanu, and Danum are all shortened versions of Tand-uta-numa. Altered forms include Thandu, Tandi, and Annimi.

BEGINNINGS	SOUND	MEANING
	VAL-	This egg was clutched from a mating flight that took place out of pure, mutual desire.
	TAND-	This egg was clutched from a mating flight that was advised as fortunate or destined.
	KISK-	This egg was clutched from a mating flight that sealed an alliance between two groups.
	VAKAS-	This egg was clutched from a mating flight between partners that mate with no others.
	RAST-	This egg was clutched from a mating flight that took place for unusual (or private) reasons.
MIDDLES	SOUND	MEANING
	-ITHI-	This egg was the first viable, fertilized egg that was laid in it's clutch.
	-URI-	This egg was the second viable, fertilized egg that was laid in it's clutch.
	-AKA-	This egg was the third viable, fertilized egg that was laid in it's clutch.
	-ALA-	This egg was the fourth viable, fertilized egg that was laid in it's clutch.
	-UTA-	This egg was the fifth viable, fertilized egg that was laid in it's clutch.
ENDS	SOUND	MEANING
	-VAR	Any dragon who wishes may pay the nest to have this egg quickened or reared as they prefer.
	-RISS	This egg is to be quickened and raised according to the predicted future needs of the island.
	-SATH	Basic care only, quicken as convenient (this egg is suspected to be defective in some way).
	-GRA	One of the parents of this egg will tend to it; others are not to interfere with it.
	-NUMA	Instructions for quickening and rearing of this egg are specific; see the keeper of the nest.

Ambitions

The basic draconic motive is enlightened greed. While dragons are naturally immensely self-serving, they are also aware that the only real limits on their life spans are the actions of others. As a result, dragons are quite willing to serve causes and hold ambitions that *seem* charitable or generous to short-term thinkers, but which ultimately exist in order to create a comfortable long-term environment in which the dragon can accumulate whatever it is they desire, for however long they like. Even the youngest and most confused dragons have a few ideas on how things could be made ‘better’, though they rarely have any kind of real plan for accomplishing those goals.

Ambitions are optional; you don’t need to describe one for your character, and aren’t bound to playing one with any real vigor. That said, it’s almost always worth considering which ambitions they would find appealing. Of course, not all dragons agree on how best to accomplish that, and pursue the same basic desire in a number of ways...

- **Alliance:** The dragon intends to create some form of potent pact, which should be sketched out in increasing detail as they age. They might wish to expand on the existing and concealed network of the Hierarchy. They might want to cut a deal with Diabolical forces, or force a growing break in the human church and ally with one side of the schism. They might wish to see the council-style government of the islands of the Reach expanded and clarified, to create a fully-functional nation.
- **Conquest:** The dragon intends to eventually seize control of a group of islands, coastal territory, or larger region. Their chosen target, and their plans for gaining control of it and managing it, should grow increasingly detailed as time goes on.
- **Destruction:** The dragon intends to weaken, cripple, and (if possible) annihilate all of the enemies that threaten their long-term survival. Their plans for doing this may include some alliances, some subversion, or some conquest, but the ultimate goal is not a secure state of mutual benefit; it’s to expunge their enemies from the world.
- **Subversion:** The dragon hopes to control the structures of their enemies from within. Threats, ‘gunboat diplomacy’, blackmail, secret deals, spies, disguise, extortion, assassination, sabotage, and the like, are among their preferred methods. The goal is to arrange affairs so that whatever the apparent surface of affairs, the dragon and those they value are not only safe, but central to the real levers of power.
- **Transformation:** The dragon seeks a way to “change the game”. Ambitions of this sort are most common among the mystically-inclined, who looks for ways to create a substitute for their own bodies which can be used to “buy off” the human Arteficers, or who look for a way to traverse Tartarus and find either some new world to retreat to, or some body of lore that will change the world.

On Treasure

Dragons are great treasure-seekers and hoarders. Each fledge of dragons maintains a well-secured treasury in at least one of their lairs, and draws confidence and comfort from it's existence. The treasure of a fledge can have a significant impact on the game.

TREASURE ITEMS

A treasury is defined by the number of treasure items it contains. A treasure item need not be a single object; a small coffer filled with silver coins is a treasure item, but a single silver coin is not. Significant items of jewelry, finely-crafted human weapons, engraved and inlaid skulls, and coffers of rare spices are all examples of treasure items. Not all treasure items are purely wealth for the sake of wealth; some older dragons possess washing basins, sand-painting tools, larder chains for hanging meat, and other items of significant utility, all of which are also treasure items in their own right.

THE EFFECT OF TREASURE

When a player's dragon rests for the day, that player must discard one coin from their hoard, unless that dragon rests near (within the same lair as) a treasury that belongs to their fledge. If they rest in the same lair as a treasury belonging to their fledge, they may gain or lose coins, depending on the size of that treasury. If they have less coins than the rating of the treasury (see the table at the bottom of this page), they draw one coin. If they have more coins than the rating of that treasury, they lose one coin. If they have the same number of coins as the treasury rating, they neither gain nor discard coins.

RATING	TREASURY IS	TREASURE ITEMS	LAIRS AND TERRITORY
7	Negligible	1-3	If the Guide wishes to add further detail to this system, they may wish to grant a 1 point bonus to the treasury rating of any fledge whose lair or territory (or both) are larger than their age "needs", and a one-point penalty to the treasury rating of a fledge that has outgrown their lair or territory. This details the value dragons place on these things, and the motive to keep "trading up".
8	Puny	4-7	
9	Poor	8-15	
10	Simple	16-31	
11	Common	32-63	
12	Substantial	64-124	
13	Impressive	125-249	
14	Grand	250-499	
15	Vast	500-999	
16	Incredible	1000+	

Rare Treasures

Human artefacts are constructed either from the bodies of dragons, or by binding diabolicals into items. Most dragons find these items deeply repellent, and neither kind of item provides dragons with the comfort of treasure; they do not provide treasure points. However, there are rare and potent items which are sought after by dragonkind, though they are not great in number. Chapter thirteen describes a number of these in detail, along with the special rules associated with such objects.

Treasury Management

Even hatchlings being raised in a nesting area are given a space that is treated as ‘their own’, which the fledge guards jealously. The first priority of most fledges after Ruartha is to obtain a territory for their lair, and to secure it with as much ingenuity and paranoia as they can. Most fledges establish a separate area for receiving visitors, which is often entirely separate from the lair where their treasury is located. In addition, there are a few ‘tricks’ that dragons practice with regards to their treasure...

CAMPING LAIRS

Dragons are quite capable of tucking coins and other equally-small objects into their scales; a hatchling is capable of transporting a single ‘treasure item’ in coins in this fashion, a fledgling two, a soaring three, and so on. When ‘camping out’, a fledge will normally find and secure a location for the night, enough to feel somewhat secure, and pile their carried treasures in the center, curling around and over this pile in a heap, and treating that pile if it were a treasury.

TREASURE CACHES

Most fledges maintain several hidden (and sometime trapped) caches around their territories, and hide small amounts of treasure in these. When a fledge travels, they often split up their main treasury, carrying what they can and caching the rest in multiple locations. Some better-established fledges go so far as to cache ‘secondary treasuries’ on other islands where they hold added territories.

ON THEFT

Any act of theft that takes treasure from a fledge is solid grounds for a bloody and horrible fight between the fledge and the thieves. Since most dragons are well aware of this, and equally aware of the Wyrms ability to hoardmark items and allies, very few dragons would contemplate theft. Humans, of course, are less aware of these abilities, and cannot easily understand the reasons why dragons gather treasure or the fury that comes to those that dare lay hands to it.

6. Age



Dragon Ages

The first stage in creating dragons for Hoard is to determine which age trait they possess - which category they fall into. As dragons age, they grow ever more powerful. Most new groups will begin the game as hatchlings, but experienced groups might wish to create more potent characters. It's generally best for all the dragons in a group to possess the same age trait.

AGES ARE TRAITS

Each listed age trait includes a 'package' of other features. An age can be 'called in' during conflict, determines the action limit of the character, sets the scope of their abilities, and other details.

AGE IS ADVANCEMENT

As dragon characters undergo adventures, they will age through the categories given. The basics of what a dragon can do and can't do, in terms of basic physical strength, flight speed, size, and so on, all change as a dragon ages. Characters move from hatchling to fledgling after only a single adventure, for example. The most significant changes take place upon becoming a soaring or sovereign; new personality traits are chosen and gained at these ages. Since greater age traits add more details (masteries and personality traits) to a character, the game becomes more and more complex as age increases - choosing an age also sets a level of complexity.

ON AGE AND SCOPE OF EFFECT

The scope of effect of your dragon is determined using three things, listed as "extra", "group", and "scene". The first, 'extra', is used to determine what kinds of Guide characters are considered disposable, throwaway bit parts, and which are not. The second, 'group', defines how large a group of extras can be affected with some abilities. The third, 'scene', defines about how big an area the dragon can affect with their abilities. So for example, a hatchling flame dragon can breathe enough fire to burn a swarm of rats, while a sovereign flame dragon would be able to blast several squads of dragon hunters. Note that duration is not affected by scope - aspects always last as long as is reasonable (starting from the basic standard of "for as long as the characters remain on the scene").

AGE CAN AFFECT ADVENTURE LENGTH

In general, the 'older' the dragons in a group, the longer and more complex their adventures will be, especially if the characters were created at younger ages - ambitions, contacts, allies, obligations, and other bits of setting material relating to the characters become much more fleshed out as the game progresses, often leading to adventures becoming less 'missions' and more like 'situations' over time.

Hatchling

Hatchling dragons are relatively small and exceptionally clever creatures. Upon hatching, the main body of a hatchling dragon is no larger than that of a human toddler, but the neck, tail, and wings of a hatchling mean that it occupies significantly more actual space. To a hatchling, much of life is not so much a discovery as a *rediscovery* of bits of memory passed down to them as part of their heritage. A hatchling can fly within hours of hatching, and use its affinity abilities within a day, though almost all of its skills lack refinement. While impressively capable and formidable in comparison to the young of other species, dragon hatchlings are quite capable of making youthful errors. Their primary weaknesses are a lack of weight and stamina; hatchlings are light and easily fatigued. Hatchlings grow quickly from the beginning, and most undergo a radically accelerated growth spurt within a few weeks, as they become fledglings.



Valut, a Hatchling Regnant Fire Drake, collects the lesser beasts of his island as allies to supplement the abilities of his fledge. He holds a distinct preference for flying creatures, but has also begun to see some merit in taking on poisonous snakes. He feels that snakes and spitting lizards might make excellent cache guardians for once his fledge has enough treasure to be worth setting guards for it.

Creating & Advancing

A hatchling character has this age trait, as well as one affinity trait, one breed trait, and one personality trait chosen by its creator. After one adventure, a hatchling becomes a fledgling; their description and scope of abilities change, and they gain the fledgling mastery. This adventure usually takes the form of the Ruartha trial which all dragons undergo, though some Guides will arrange more unusual adventures.



The Hatchling Scope

- **Extra:** Any character or other creature with only a single trait, or which can only possess a trait when operating in groups, is considered an extra to a hatchling. Characters with two or more traits are notable characters.
- **Group:** A group or extras with three or less total traits is within the scope of hatchling group-related masteries. Groups with four or more total traits are outside the scope of hatchling abilities.
- **Scene:** A scene to a hatchling is about the size of a one-room hut, a stand of about three to five trees, or a small cave hollow.

Hatchlings In Conflict

Actions that call in the hatchling trait are those where the size, shape, or social position of the dragon is used to advantage. In physical fights, this might mean running under a larger opponent to get past them, trying to trip someone up by coiling around their legs, or simply dodging about in and among scenery in ways that larger or less serpentine foes cannot. In action scenes, this can mean staying low (hatchlings can stay *very* low) or, again, using scenery in ways a larger opponent can't. In personal interactions and social scenes, hatchlings often rely on - sometimes innocently, sometimes not - the preference of other dragons to educate rather than punish them.

Hatchlings are expected to...

- Treat unhatched eggs they are near as deeply valuable; egg-breaking is considered a death-worthy offense, even if the eggs are suspect. 'Eggsucker' is an extremely foul insult among hatchlings, and most hatchlings are punished for using it.
- Quarrel and wrestle constantly with their soon-to-be fledgemates, attempting to establish a pecking order.
- Protect the nesting area of their island if it is in danger.
- Be as self-sufficient as possible given their age.
- Undergo Ruartha without complaint.

Fledgling

By the time that a dragon ‘fledges’, finishing the first significant growth spurt of their life, they have a main body about the size of a barrel-chested adult human. With their extensive neck, wings, and tail, they appear significantly larger; a fifteen-foot wingspan is *small* for a fledgling.

A fledgling is defined by their ability to fly from one island of the Reach to another without needing to stop for rest, and by the mastery of the mystical ability to summon up a human (or humanlike) form. Fledglings tend to be highly capable individuals; their primary weakness is that they are still somewhat impetuous.

Dragons believe that shapechanging is a power that some part of the species infused into itself in ages past which has since “bred true” into all of dragonkind. Dragons tend to use their humanoid forms sparingly; the process of transformation is tiring. On the whole, though, dragons think about this ability no more than their claws or wings; it’s simply part of being a dragon.



Shortly after fledging, Valut has assigned the majority of his animal allies to locations he wishes to become fledge caches (and where a few small treasures are stored), and has begun to consider and plan how best to gain somewhat more potent human underlings.

Creating & Advancing

A fledgling character has this age trait, one affinity trait, one breed trait, one personality trait. A hatchling becoming a fledgling gains the shapechange mastery below, an altered description, a greater scope, and an increased dice limit. After four further adventures (for a total of five), a fledgling becomes a soaring.



The Fledgling Scope

- **Extra:** Any character or other creature with two or less traits, or which can only possess up to two traits when operating in groups, is considered an extra to a fledgling. Characters with three or more traits are notable.
- **Group:** A group of extras with five or less total traits is within the scope of fledgling group-related masteries. Groups with six or more total traits are outside the scope of fledgling abilities.
- **Scene:** A scene to a fledgling is the size of a poor house or small forest clearing. A round area with a radius of thirty feet would be such a scene.

Fledglings In Conflict

Actions that call in the fledgling trait generally involve use of those features of a fledgling that are now developed beyond the capacity of most flying creatures - stooping, tail strikes, bombardiering with significant-sized stones, and the like. Fledgling status isn't especially socially useful; this trait should only rarely be called in personal interactions.

The Fledgling Mastery: Shapechange

A fledgling may spend coins from their hoard in order to take on a human (or human-like) form for two hours per coin spent (they may spend coins to extend this while changed). Once this form has been taken on and described, it is set and cannot thereafter be changed; a fledgling has only one alternate form. While in this form, the dragon retains all their normal abilities except for the ability to fly; their strength, speed, and sensory acuity remain unchanged regardless of form.

Fledglings are expected to...

- Grow ever more independent of dragons outside their fledge, and ever more interdependent within the fledge.
- Grow out of wrestling and bickering over fledge dominance.
- Seek treasure and territory, often by working for older dragons.

Soarling

After their second serious burst of growth, a dragon becomes capable of flying over almost the full course of a day, and at such speed that they can traverse a significant portion of the Reach. At this point, they are generally deemed a soarling. By the time a dragon is capable of such a feat, their learning has progressed measurably, and their body (not including tail or neck) is about the size of an ox-cart. In terms of raw physical power, a soarling is capable of picking up an adult human with one set of claws and pitching them fifteen to twenty feet away. Soarlings are full adults, though not necessarily especially influential or respected ones.



As a soarling, Valut has discussed mating flights with his fledge. The fledge has received a fair bit of work by patronage from Valuts' parents, and he wishes to operate in a similar fashion, providing work to any clutches he sires and further developing his family as a social network. While his fledge considers this foolishly fashionable, they're not opposed to helping arrange a match that would aid this.

Creating & Advancing

A soaring character has this age trait, one affinity trait, one breed trait, and two personality traits. All soarlings possess the fledgling mastery of Shapechanging. A fledgling becoming a soaring gains one personality trait, an altered description, a greater scope, and an increased dice limit. After nine further adventures (for a total of thirteen), a soaring becomes a lordling.



The Soarling Scope

- **Extra:** Any character or other creature with three or less traits, or which can only possess up to three traits when operating in groups, is considered an extra to a soaring. Characters with four or more traits are notable.
- **Group:** A group of extras with ten or less total traits is within the scope of soaring group-related masteries. Groups with eleven or more total traits are outside the scope of soaring abilities.
- **Scene:** A scene to a soaring is about the size of a large house. A globe with a radius of sixty feet would be just within the scope of what a soaring could consider a scene.

Soarlings In Conflict

Physically, a soaring is simply stronger and faster than any creature outside of the draconic and diabolical races. In combat and action, this trait may be called in with actions that show off these abilities. A soaring is large and strong enough to intimidate humans and beasts with ease as a social action. Finally, a soaring is experienced enough to have several well-practiced maneuvers built up through play; these can be used as calls on this trait.

Soarlings are expected to...

- Ensure that their fledge is represented in island councils in a responsible fashion. There is no expectation that soarlings will be deeply interested or engaged by matters of island government; only that they be responsible.
- Develop a mating instinct as well as mating preferences, and begin tracking potential mates - but only actually participate in a mating flight if a perfect partner is located. Development of *any* sexual or romantic impulses outside of the specific desire to create young may be considered attractive, frivolous, or flatly irrelevant, depending on whose opinion is questioned.
- Work with their fledge to develop “standard procedures” of action and a reputation for skill at some specific kinds of tasks.
- Develop territory and treasuries with their fledge.

Lordling

A lordling dragon is one that has grown to the size of a small house. Their hide has grown thick enough to turn most arrows, and their physical strength has reached the point where they are capable of picking up a cart with one set of claws and hurling it across a field with bone-splintering force. While incredibly swift, the size of lordlings means that they are no longer as nimble; lordlings often use elements of scenery as weapons rather than as cover. Socially, most lordlings are respected adults among dragon societies; lordlings are also terrifying to humanity, and are considered wily foes to be cautious of even by most diabolicals.



As a lordling, Valut and his fledge have gained significant holdings. They maintain two territories in the Reach, and control a small coastal human community. Their presence in the region is a matter currently under investigation by the human inquisition, and the fledge is amusing itself by falsifying evidence to send the inquisition after another town.

Creating & Advancing

A lordling character has this age trait, an affinity trait, a breed trait, two personality traits, and the fledgling mastery of Shapechanging. A soaring becoming a lordling gains the mastery below, an altered description, a greater scope, and an increased dice limit. After sixteen further adventures (for a total of twenty-nine), a lordling becomes a sovereign.



The Lordling Scope

- **Extra:** Any character or other creature with four or less traits, or which can only possess up to four traits when operating in groups, is considered an extra to a lordling (thus, hatchlings and fledglings are considered extras to such a character). Characters with five or more traits are notable.
- **Group:** A group of extras with twenty or less total traits is within the scope of lordling group-related masteries. Groups with more than twenty total traits are outside the scope of their abilities.
- **Scene:** A scene to a lordling is about the size of a large mansion. A globe with a radius of two hundred feet would be just within the scope of what a lordling could consider a scene.

Lordlings In Conflict

Actions that call in the lordling trait are those that call upon their physical size and strength, the fear that they inspire in other creatures, or the respect that they are due within dragon society. Also, as with soarings, most lordlings have several practiced “usual” maneuvers; use of such can call on this trait.

The Lordling Mastery: Terribilitas

A lordling may spend a coin from their hoard to engage in an act of incredible ferocity. Paying one coin is sufficient to simply destroy a group of extras that have two or less traits each, and with ten or less total traits, with raw physical violence. In conflict, this counts as an action (and one that can be directed at creatures other than your target), but does not gain a die; the ‘destroyed’ extras still act in the round it is used; they are destroyed after rolling.

Lordlings are expected to...

- Actively protect dragonkind from hunters of all kinds, and take part in revenge actions against any successful, known dragon hunters.
- Occasionally mentor and employ younger dragons so that those younger dragons can gain worldly experience.
- Take an active interest in the island council of their home territory.

Sovereign

A sovereign is one that has grown to the size where they could not enter or navigate a human city while in their natural form; even on the broadest of thoroughfares, they would splinter the fronts of buildings with their shoulders. Very few dragons accumulate the power, mass, and life experience required to become sovereign. Those few that do are central to draconic society; they are the greats around whom the action of the Reach revolves. A single sovereign is capable of tossing a siege engine as if it were a toy, or facing down a fully-manifested diabolical. A sovereign fledge exerting their full power is capable of sinking a fleet or blasting a town from the face of the world in minutes - but so few dragons survive to sovereignty that it is questionable whether a full fledge of sovereigns exists anywhere on the face of the world. The few known single sovereigns bear old scars from bygone years, almost (but never quite) to the point of being crippled. Most existing sovereigns lair on the strongest nesting isles at the very core of the reach, guarding the rapid expansion of dragonkind. A few others are known to have vanished into human civilization, though their intent in doing so is not completely clear.



Valut dreams of one day becoming a mighty sovereign... But only time will tell.

Creating & Advancing

A sovereign character has this age trait, an affinity trait, a breed trait, three personality traits, the fledgling mastery of Shapechanging, and the lordling mastery of Terribilitas. A lordling becoming a sovereign gains an additional personality trait, an altered description, a greater scope, and an increased dice limit. Advancement beyond sovereign is not covered by these rules.



The Sovereign Scope

- **Extra:** Any character or other creature with four or less traits, or which can only possess up to four traits when operating in groups, is considered an extra to a sovereign (thus, hatchlings and fledglings are considered extras to such a character). Characters with five or more traits are notable.
- **Group:** A group of extras with forty or less total traits is within the scope of sovereign group-related masteries. Groups with more than forty total traits are outside the scope of their abilities.
- **Scene:** A scene to a sovereign is about the size of a battlefield. A globe with a radius of five hundred feet would be just within the scope of what a sovereign could consider a scene.

Sovereigns In Conflict

Any action showcasing the force and power of a sovereign dragon, be it physical, mental, mystical, or social, may call upon this trait. In physical and action conflicts, sovereigns typically use direct force; subtle maneuvers are rarely necessary for a creature that can shatter stone with a backhanded blow, and who is an object of fearful respect even for lesser dragons.

Sovereigns are expected to...

- Make war upon any force that directly threatens the Reach with military force, without hesitation or delay.
- Give wise advice and mentorship to lesser dragons that request it, if those dragons show due respect - such as by bringing and sharing food and speaking deferentially.
- Create and maintain large networks of obligations owed to them, calling in those obligations as needed, and dispatching out-of-hand and dragon that fails to repay their obligations.
- Discuss and aid in shaping the rough course of draconic society itself with the aid of other sovereigns.

7. Breed



Choosing A Breed

There are three draconic breeds. The breed of your dragon will set their physical description, and will also reflect on their hoarding practices. Drakes are barbed dragons drawn to new things, Linds are froned knowledge-seekers, and Wyrms are plated and highly possessive.

BREEDING TRUE

The three breeds of dragon are cross-fertile, but individual eggs produced by such a mating are each distinct. If a Drake and Lind mate, the resulting clutch will often include both Drakes and Linds. Aberrant “hybrids” and strange throwbacks are not completely unknown, but rules for these oddities are not included here.

DRIVE & MASTERY

Each breed includes a drive, which is, an activity that is rewarded with ‘coins’ when it is taken. Each breed also includes a mastery, a special ability that the player may spend coins to make use of. These drives and masteries encourage specific styles of play, and players are encouraged to consider how they’ll end up playing their character based on their selections. The drive and mastery tied to a breed strongly reflect to their hoarding practices.

GROUP NICHES

A group that is interested in ensuring that each character possess their own ‘niche’ will likely want to spread players out more-or-less evenly among the breeds to help enforce this. Making sure that each character has distinctive skills is one way to help ensure that every player has something interesting to do, and while personality traits are the most solid way of doing this, they aren’t the only one.

WHAT YOU ARE SAYING

When you choose a breed, there’s often a playstyle preference involved in that choice. This preference isn’t always obvious; you might choose to play a Lind because you like investigating mysteries and having secrets during play - or because you prefer to get everything out in the open as quickly as possible, and ensure that the characters are sharing information. The reasons for your choice are just as important as the choice itself. Sharing those reasons with the Guide and the group can help everyone play to your preferences, and listening to others when they do the same can help you play to theirs.



Drake

Drakes are barbed dragons, with sharp chest plates, spiked crests, and an almost hook-like tail. As with other breeds, they make distinctive use of their tail, in their case using it as a ‘heavy manipulator’ as they age; while wyrms and linds carry items and prey in flight with their hindclaws, drakes just as often employ this appendage. In addition, the nose of a drake is a fairly heavy, beaklike plate; while not especially sharp, it is often used for shoving soft materials about. When these manipulators won’t suffice, drakes are typically much more eager to take on their humanoid forms than other breeds.

Drakes are the most superficially greedy of the dragon breeds, though they lose any real interest in their acquisitions rapidly. Drakes can sense (and compulsively hoard) small objects that have previously been exposed to mystical workings, which they can channel their own energies into. By energizing such items, drakes can create ‘echoes’ of the mystical workings that created these items to begin with.

Most drakes enjoy travel and exploration, though they are motivated to do so mainly by the possibility of discovering new kinds of mythical trinkets that they have not yet discovered. Drakes also generally covet the possibility of acquiring Body Gilding (one of the classes of rare treasures that dragons find mystically useful).

When relaxing, drakes often roll in beds of dry sand, to the point of half-burying themselves and wallowing. The drier and more abrasive the sand, the better; scouring the complex barbs that cover the drake is the idea.



Drakes In Conflict

In physical confrontations, drakes often grapple or slam with their barbs, or snap and bite at foes; in general, the best possible tactic for a drake is to grab an opponent and roll with them around an area. In active situations, drakes often use their tails as a tool to snag and throw objects, or to hook heavier objects and structures in order to swing about them - many drakes can corner in mid-air unbelievably quickly by means of this trick. In personal or political encounters, drakes are often wildly garrulous, simply talking over their opponents without pause.

Drake Mastery: Trinkets

You may expend coins from your hoard into a “trinket pool”, a separate stack of coins set off to one side. You may only place one coin into this pool each scene, and must describe your character finding something ‘echoing’. This might be as simple as stating “Oh, hey, neat rock” quietly, as background to an in-character scene you’re not engaged in, or might be more plain, such as picking up a melted stone that has been charred by the breath of a flame-affinity fledgmate.

At any time that you possess a trinket pool, you may expend a coin from this pool in order to ‘wake up’ one trinket, and gain an affinity mastery that you do not otherwise possess, for one use only (and which you must pay for in addition to this cost, though you spend several coins for multiple-effect uses). You might spend a token from your pool to gain the mastery of Frost dragons for a use, and then spend two more to use that mastery on a group and their named leader.

Drakes may give one another “trinkets”, sharing coins in these pools. In conflict, activating *and using* a trinket counts towards the action limit of the drake, and grants a die only if the mastery use involved would grant one. It is possible for the mastery use to call in the ‘phantom’ affinity granted by this mastery to gain one die, and for the drake to also use their other innate features in a different action to gain a second and separate die in the same round.

Drake Drive: Shiny New Thing!

You may draw a coin to your hoard when you acquire an item of value for yourself, or when your fledge as a whole acquires such an item. If you have already drawn a coin for this drive earlier in the session, you may do so again only if the group agrees that the new acquisition is more notable, significant, or dramatic than any previous acquisition you have made in the session. This drive often *does* mean that the first coin a drake spends on their mastery in a session is immediately regained.

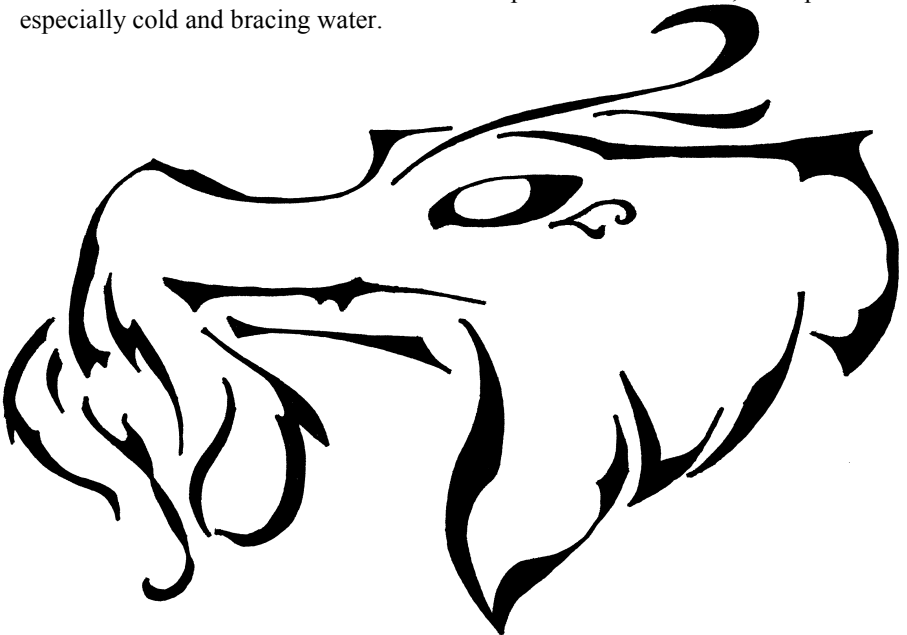
Lind

Linds are the sleekest of the draconic breeds, and are froned rather than truly horned. These fronds are barbels, as might be found on a catfish, but are sensitive to currents of air, heat, and energy. These fronds also move to reflect the mood of the dragon; they stand out stiffly on an excited or angry lind, and relax as the dragons does. The tail of a lind is also froned and fairly delicate; it is rarely used in combat - linds make up this fighting shortcoming with their claws, which are narrower and sharper than those of other breeds.

Linds treasure knowledge and lore over material goods, lairs, or underlings, but are not typically secretive about their lore and discoveries. Linds possess an innate ability to ‘feel’ energy flows in their environment. Most Linds are fairly talkative, though when discussing their perceptions and the beliefs resulting from those perceptions, they can be somewhat confusing.

Linds rarely wander without purpose; before traveling, they often make a point of clarifying where they are going, what might be gained or learned by going there, and what their exact objectives are. These habits allow a lind to determine when it is and isn’t useful to exert their senses to a more potent (and tiring) extent than usual.

Linds often relax by bathing; most make do with swimming in the ocean, but most linds prefer heated water. Those that regularly deal with humanity often find some excuse for an occasional bath in such environs, and those few islands where hot springs naturally occur often make shared arrangements for use of this resource. Frost linds are exceptional in this case, and prefer especially cold and bracing water.



Linds In Conflict

In physical confrontations, Linds often feint and distract their foes with sudden movements that draw attention away from the actual strike. When attacking directly, a lind might use any or all of their claws; in very close quarters, a lind will sink in it's foreclaws and *rake* - that is, pull both hindlimbs up against the foe's belly and kick down, claws extended.

The lind proficiency with feinting also applies in personal and political situations, in a variety of ways. Creating a large number of obvious attacks which conceal one or two actual attempts to find and exploit a weakness in their foe is a common lind tactic. In addition, because of their abilities, linds are masters of using the environment and the qualities of their enemies to their own advantage.

Lind Mastery: Sensitivity

You may expend coins from your hoard in order to make expanded use of your unusual sensory abilities. When you do so, you immediately learn the permanent and current aspects of one named character, group of extras, or scene, and may continue 'scanning' such targets so long as you take no other action (and do not move from your current location).

In a conflict, using this mastery to check over a target "uses up" and counts as one of the four actions allowed to the character each round, but *does not* grant a die or count as 'calling in' this trait. The continue observation also applies; each added target uses up another action, and as soon as the lind takes any other action, the mastery use ends.

Because of the lind drive, making use of this mastery when preparing for or engaging in a conflict can 'pay for itself' - often more than once, if the danger of the conflicts continues to rise throughout the session.

Lind Drive: Shared Wisdom

You may draw a coin to your hoard when you share knowledge that you possess with those who wish to learn it. If you have already drawn a coin for doing so in the same session of play, you may only do so again if the group agrees that the new information is more dramatic, crucial, or relevant than any previous revelation you have made in that session.



Wyrms

Wyrms are the heaviest of the dragon breeds, and are thickly plated and powerfully horned, with a long tail-spike capable of spearing smaller creatures. The deadliest features of a wyrm are found at both ends - their bite, ram, and tail strikes are deadly, but wyrm claws are comparatively wider and more blunt. A wyrm typically uses its claws for traction on the ground rather than for striking. On the whole, wyrms are heavier and more solid than dragons of the other two breeds.

Wyrms are also the most possessive breed; they aren't necessarily interested in acquiring new things, but tend to be fiercely miserly. This possessiveness extends to their own fledge and relationships, making Wyrms the most typically trustworthy breed, and even has a mystical side to it; a Wyrm has the capacity to 'mark' their hoard by spending time handling it.

Wyrms do not like to travel without first ensuring security at home. When a wyrm is content that their possessions and holdings will not degrade, they enjoy journeying out to gain further treasures, but wyrms don't like to "drop everything and go looking" as drakes do.

In off-times, many wyrms sort, organize, and even polish the fledge treasures, often displaying things to best advantage. If a fledge lair requires household management, wyrms are often the ones to take on the task.



Wyrms In Conflict

A wyrm enraged will usually dig in with one shoulder facing their target, and bite, ram, and stab with their tail from that position. In combat, a wyrm tends to use it's foreclaws to trip and buffet, rather than to rend at their foes. In action situations, wyrms often rely on their dense plating - many opponents have been shocked to see a wyrm touch down from flight on their belly and slide under or past obstacles. In personal and political situations, wyrms tend to fluctuate between the laconic and the furiously unpredictably; they are the least likely breed to succumb to a feint, and the most likely to allow an attack (or whatever sort) to simply pass by in order to make a point of destroying the limb, political resource, or underling that made it.

Wyrms Mastery: Hoardmark

You may expend coins from your hoard in order to permanently aspect an item or collection of generally similar items, or to temporarily aspect a named character or group of extras for one month, as "Hoardmarked by (your character)". You may likewise expend a coin to remove such a mark; either use requires that you have spent at least an hour with the target or targets.

If a target of this ability is in danger of death or theft, the Guide will notify you of this, as a 'bad feeling'. The guide may choose to give you further insight into the danger, in the form of flashes of sensory input (sight, hearing, even smell), if doing so would be interesting.

You (and only you) may call this aspect in during conflict, when describing actions where you defend or assist such a person or thing, and it may be called in addition to the wyrm trait. When you do so, if the target is a character, you may give the die gained to the controller of that character; they must use this as a blocking die. If you do so, gaining this die counts against your action limit rather than theirs. Doing this may activate the wyrm drive.

At character creation, you may have as many "already existing" hoardmarks as the number of dragons in your fledge (not including yourself), though these marks may be placed on targets other than your fledgemates.

Wyrms Drive: Defensive

You may draw a coin to your hoard whenever you defend a fledgemate or any person, group, item, or collection that your have hoardmarked from theft or from harm (including mystical and social harm). If you have already drawn a coin for doing so in the same session of play, you may only do so again if the group agrees that the new threat is greater than any previous such threat you have defended against in the session.

8. Affinity



Choosing An Affinity

Dragon eggs must be ‘quickenened’ by exposure to elemental energies before they will mature, harden, and hatch. There are five common elements which dragons use for this purpose - Fire, Ice, Thunder, Wood, and Air - and each has a lasting effect on the dragon that will hatch from the egg quickened. From the moment of hatching, a dragon possesses abilities based on the element which quickened them. In addition, a dragon’s wing shape and coloration are strongly influenced by their elemental affinity (in the egg, a dragon’s wings are wrapped around them, causing this effect).

AFFINITY MASTERIES

Each affinity includes a single mastery, including a list of uses for that mastery. There are a wide number of potential uses for affinity masteries, as shown. Use of an affinity mastery outside of conflict is *always* considered a script proposal, and the coins spent for that use are set aside if that script is wagered on, and spent only if the script occurs. Ongoing, mystical effects of these masteries normally last until a change of action takes place or a few hours pass, but may be extended beyond that point if desired. In a conflict, using an affinity mastery “uses up” and counts as one of the four actions allowed to the character each round, and may act as ‘calling in’ either this trait or an aspect created by the mastery, at the user’s choice. Describing actions in conflict that use a mastery only cosmetically (a flame drake biting with burning jaws, for example), *for purposes of calling in the trait and gaining dice only*, do not cost coins. Uses that apply specific aspects, alter the basic properties of a scene, or otherwise have effects beyond generally taking an action, always cost a coin.

CREATIVE USE

Making creative use of affinities is not only appropriate, but highly desirable. However, each affinity has at least two unique uses (the last two listed under the mastery); cleverly appropriating this use with other affinities should be discouraged - or should simply cost two or more additional coins. If possible, adding more unique uses to each affinity is preferable to having the affinities “blend in” to one another any further.

LODGES

The ceremony of quickening is normally performed by an dragon that shares the affinity to be gained. Such a dragon is an “inceptor”, and the dragon quickened is considered to owe them a debt. In most areas of the Reach, the dragons of each affinity share local inceptors, and the regional inceptors themselves gather regularly, forming a loose social network. These loose networks can solidify into more permanent local “lodges” for each element, each of which attempts to follow their own ancient tradition. Not all dragons support lodges - many sneer at such arrangements as pointless.

Flame

Flame Dragons are attuned to fire and stones; each of their black scales holds a reddish inner glow. Their wings are heavily-boned, with a double spike at the main joint, and are very dark crimson or black in color. Their body temperature is slightly higher than that of other dragons, but not high enough to scald other creatures. Their power is almost entirely one of destruction, and they are entirely aware of this, often seeing themselves as the most effective defenders the Reach possesses against the wooden ships of mankind.

- **Rules Note:** A character with the “flame affinity” aspect cannot be directly damaged or aspected by use of the firebreathing mastery unless they wish to be, and may ignore ‘regular’ fire with impunity (though not incredible heat, as might be found in a volcano). This applies even if the character possesses this aspect without possessing the mastery, due to aspect duplication, fallout, or other events.



Lodges of Flame...

- Use the formal ranks of Apprentice and Inceptor.
- Expect any flame dragon of fledgling age or greater to join as an apprentice, as repayment for their inception.
- Expect all apprentices to make use of affinity powers at least once each month at their practice site, and harvest their heavily flame-imbued practice site for drake ‘trinkets’, which are used as trade goods.
- Teach the inception ritual to any apprentice that keeps these strictures for at least ten years (this requires no trait), and expect them to perform it for free.
- Expect the local inceptors to maintain a practice area and inception materials, paying in trinkets.
- Work to match any flame dragon whose fledge is lost with a new one, preferring fledges which already include flame dragons.
- Act, in general, as a ‘social club’ and support network for flame dragons.

Flame Dragons In Conflict

The flame affinity applies almost exclusively to physical conflicts. The most common flame dragon tactic is to blast an opponent and their immediate area with flame, and then tackle the target into the fire itself. In truly significant combats, a flame dragon might expend significant strength in order to blast cover and weapons away from their opponent. In less strained circumstances, a flame dragon simply fills their mouth with fire and burns foes along with their bite (this is a cosmetic effect used to call in this trait).

Flame Mastery: Firebreathing

You may expend coins from your hoard in order to breath out a roiling cloud of fire, blasting targets with enough flame to seriously damage them or change their state. Each of the following uses costs a single coin:

- Alter the scene by removing elements such as wooden objects and structures, blasting them to flinders or ash. An element of the scene can only be completely destroyed if the whole target falls within the scope of the dragon's power.
- Aspect the scene by adding "burning" or "on fire" aspects to it's (non-character) contents. These are generally considered trivial aspects, as the fires can be extinguished relatively easily - but, as with any fire, they may grow in strength or diminish entirely on their own if time permits.
- Defeat a single extra, rendering them unconscious and badly injured, or killing them outright, by burning or charring them.
- Aspect a notable character or an entire group of extras, giving them "burnt" or similar aspects. In the case of groups of extras, aspects such as "frightened" and the like are also appropriate. If this mastery is used to inflict physical damage on a notable character during a fight, the aspect is also considered notable - and is treated as 'taking up' their opportunity to take a notable aspect from fallout. "Multiple hits" of flame applied in this way do not combine for greater effect.

AN EXAMPLE

Terrifying a pack of wolves (1 coin) while burning their savage leader enough to injure him (1 coin) and setting the nearby trees aflame (1 coin) would cost three coins total. This use of the flame mastery would require only one action if it were done in conflict.

GETTING DICE

Using the flame mastery in conflict grants a die only if the action directly affects the target of the character's other actions, and if it harms or impairs that target. Setting the trees around a foe on fire does not grant a die; setting your target on fire *does*.

Frost

Frost Dragons are attuned to ice and water; their scales are a slated blue-grey (though often hidden beneath frost). Their wings are planed and sharp-tipped; the bone and hide making the joints appear pointed. Frost dragons are not usually inconvenienced by cold or by being submerged, though they remain air-breathers. Because their abilities make it easier overall to resist and restrain their foes, many frost dragons prefer to capture and interrogate those that would strike at them.

- **Special Note:** A character with the “frost affinity” aspect cannot be directly aspected by use of the winter chill mastery unless they wish to be. This applies even if the character possessed the aspect without the mastery, due to aspect duplication, fallout, or other events.



Lodges of Frost...

- Use the formal ranks of student and inceptor.
- Allow (but do not expect) any frost dragon of fledgling age or greater to join as a student, as repayment for their inception.
- Expect all student to assist in maintaining the local “cold caves”; apprentices are permitted to harvest and keep ‘drake trinkets’ in the caves as payment for this service.
- Rent “cold cave” space to various fledges, generally for food storage.
- Teach the inception ritual to any student that keeps these strictures for at least ten years (this requires no trait), and expect them to perform it for free.
- Expect the local inceptors to maintain a practice area and inception materials, paying from the lodge “cold cave” funds.
- Act as a business held in common by all local frost dragons, allowing them to connect with one another completely away from island council in order to pursue business and personal activities.

Frost Dragons In Conflict

In physical confrontations, frost dragons most commonly simply chill their claws to near-freezing, and puff out tiny clouds of mist to obscure their own blows (these are cosmetic effects, and do not cost coins). If the conflict is especially dangerous or high-stakes, armor, numbing effects, sudden creations of icy terrain, and many other possibilities are at the disposal of a frost dragon. In active conflicts, such as chases, these tactics are even more heavily employed. The frost abilities are rarely useful in social or political conflicts unless those conflicts are set up to be “long-ranging”, with each round of conflict lasting several hours or days, and each action taking up a significant piece of that - in which case, frost abilities are a good way to pay short term allies to aid in one task or another (again, a cosmetic effect, when dealing with a conflict set up in such a way).

Frost Mastery: Winter Chill

You may expend coins from your hoard in order to chill the area immediately around you, often frosting over your own body. Each of the following uses costs a single coin:

- Alter the scene by adding elements made of fog or ice, or by changing water into ice. Examples include freezing over liquids, causing icy spikes to shoot from the ground, and causing an area to become slick. These changes may add “frozen” or “slippery” aspects to it’s (non-character) contents.
- Grant yourself (and only yourself) physical armor formed of ice. This is a trivial aspect that wears off after a day, or after any physical conflict, and which carries a special effect: So long as the armor is in existence, your blocking dice succeed on rolls of one through *five*.
- Aspect a notable character or an entire group of extras, giving them “numb”, “chilled”, or similar trivial aspects. If you aspect a notable character in this way, and are aware of a mastery they possess, you may also state that so long as they are aspected in this way, they may not use that mastery.

AN EXAMPLE

Frosting yourself over with armor (1 coin), while chilling the two notable inquisitors you are facing (1 coin each), and coating the ground with a slick layer of ice (1 coin), would cost four coins in total. This use of the frost mastery would require only one action if it were done in conflict.

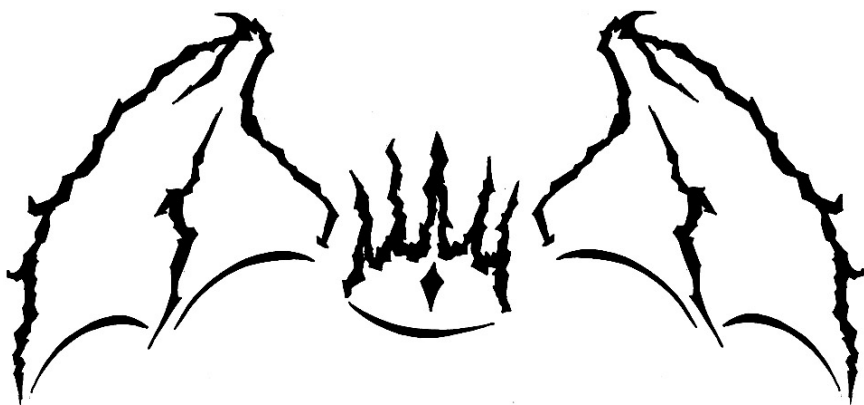
GETTING DICE

Using the frost mastery in conflict grants a die only if the action directly affects the target of your other actions, and if it harms or impairs that target. Freezing the ground they’re on doesn’t give a die; numbing the target *does*.

Spark

Spark Dragons are attuned to lightning and metal; their scales are silver and blue. Their wings are leathery, cracked membranes with irregular juts of bone, and small trceries of metal, which crackle with energy when the dragon makes use of their abilities. They can completely ignore the problems created by their own elemental powers, and similar effects. Lone spark dragons often choose static-rich or magnetically reactive environments - some mines, deserts, and other such. Spark dragons are generally more energetic and outgoing than their training and breed would otherwise indicate, and become even more enthusiastic when using their abilities.

- **Special Note:** A character with the “spark affinity” aspect cannot be directly affected by use of the Energy Flow mastery unless they wish to be. This applies even if the character possessed the aspect without the mastery, due to aspect duplication, fallout, or other events.



Lodges of Spark...

- Do not use formal ranks, or formalize membership. Elect, by open acclaim, a local administrator for meetings known jokingly as “the crown”, holding a new election whenever the lodge feels that the current crown takes their job too seriously, or not seriously enough, or becomes bored of it.
- Teach their version of the inception ritual to any spark dragon that wishes to know it (this requires no trait).
- Occasionally hold meetings in which age, council status, obligations, and many other bounds of status and propriety are completely disregarded, at which all attendees are encouraged to speak honestly and personally. These meetings are ‘managed’ by the crown.
- Pitch in a bit of tradable stuff now and again so that the crown can set up pleasant meetings at interesting locations.

Spark Dragons In Conflict

Sudden bursts of blurring speed are the most common hallmark of spark dragon tactics, and actions described in such a way call in this trait without needing to spend coins. If there are multiple spark dragons working together in a more serious conflict, it's common for a battlefield to hum briefly with their power, stunning foes, and then for the dragons to blur across it.

Spark Mastery: Energy Flow

You may expend coins from your hoard in order to temporarily summon powerful electrical charges and to cause such charges to ground out explosively. Each of the following uses costs a single coin:

- Alter the scene by causing elements of it to melt, burst or shatter, after suddenly receiving a powerful charge and grounding out. Destroy metal objects and structures with surges of magnetism.
- Aspect the scene by causing flammable items or structures to catch fire.
- Aspect a notable character or an entire group of extras, either by burning them with electrical discharges, or by battering at them with tiny metallic shrapnel (which must already be on the scene).
- Stun a notable character or a group of extras, reducing their action limit by one next round (and only next round). A given spark dragon may reduce the action limit of a given target only once per round; however, multiple spark dragons may affect the same target repeatedly.
- Overload your own nervous system in a physical or action-based conflict, taking “Overloaded” as a trivial aspect (it does not count as fallout). While you have this aspect, you may not make use of affinity masteries or call on *any* affinity trait, even if gained by means of the drake mastery or other powers, though you retain immunities. Instead, starting at the beginning of the next round, your action limit is increased by one; this increase lasts as long as you retain the “overloaded” aspect. When using this mastery in this way, no die is gained unless you also make use of this mastery to harm or impair your target in the same action (and paying and added coins to do so).

AN EXAMPLE

Causing the cage around a captured fledgmate to fly apart (1 coin) and the pieces to hurl themselves at a group of extras, injuring them (1 coin), while the resultant thunderclap stuns their leader (1 coin), would cost three coins total. This mastery use would require only one action if it were done in conflict.

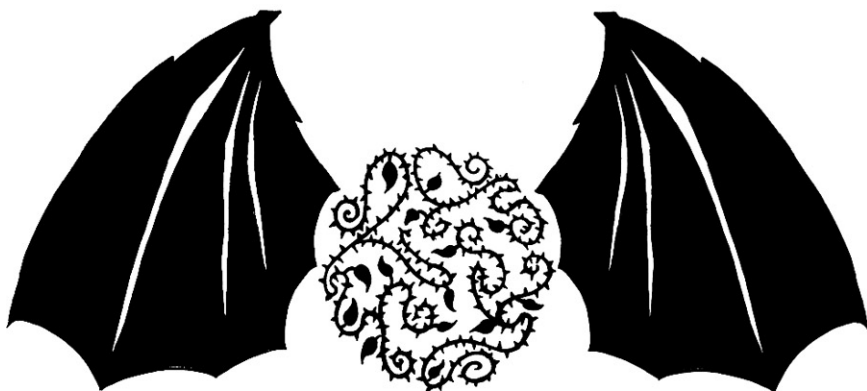
GETTING DICE

Using the spark mastery in conflict grants a die only if the action directly affects the target of your other actions, and if it harms or impairs that target. Stripping apart the cover they're behind doesn't give a die; blasting them *does*.

Wild

Wild Dragons are attuned to wood and creeping life; each of their scales shades from grey to brown or green, and their wings are leathery and batlike. Plants around them seem to move and grow with greater urgency, and wild dragons can move easily in overgrown regions. Wild dragon lairs, whether lone or communal, tend to be overgrown with vines and mosses. Wild dragons themselves tend to be somewhat more introspective and natural than their breed or training would normally indicate.

- **Special Note:** A character with the “wild affinity” aspect cannot be directly aspected by use of the woodwaker mastery unless they wish to be. Animated plant creatures will not attack or attempt to hinder a character with this aspect, even if commanded mentally to do so. This applies even if the character possessed the aspect without the mastery, due to aspect duplication, fallout, or other events.



Lodges of the Wild...

- Use the formal ranks of Listener, Speaker, and Elder.
- Treat all wild dragons of fledgling or hatchling, and all regnants with animal followers, as Listeners.
- Treat all wild dragons of greater than soaring age, and any regnant with mystical animal followers as Speakers.
- Allow any Speaker to earn the post of Elder by serving the lodge with a total of three full years of service, divided any way the would-be Elder prefers.
- Stock their territories and islands with prey animals, track whale pod migrations, and generally observe and attempt to maintain *long-term* hunting and fishing around local islands.
- Ask members to work with their fledges to maintain the plant and animal life in their territories in the long term, especially including prey species and the plants and animals related to those.

Wild Dragons In Conflict

Wild dragons make extensive, constantly varied use of natural terrain - any action that uses natural scenery may be treated either as calling on this trait, or on the scenery if it is an aspect of the scene, as desired.

Wild Mastery: Woodwaker

You may expend coins from your hoard in order to have the plants in your vicinity snag at others, clear room for passage, block up narrow entries, and the like. Each of the following uses costs a single coin:

- Alter the scene by having plants in it move about, creating or blocking paths or passages, or by revealing or surrounding anyone or thing.
- Aspect the scene by having the plants within it shift about unpredictably, or twist and shudder violently.
- Aspect a notable character or an entire group of extras, entangling them in nearby vegetation.
- Create extras by animating plants. These plants are described as moving slowly and operate only under your mental control, having no will or senses of their own; they are always treated as extras, and always as a unified group of extras if there are several on the scene - they cannot be split up without “breaking the spell”, so to speak. Animating a plant costs *half* as many coins to gain as (their number of traits + their action limit + their number of masteries), and always costs at least one coin. You can’t animate a plant with an action limit higher than your own. Examples...

COIN COST	NAME	COINS	TRAITS	LIMIT	MASTERY
1	Patch of Vines	0	1	1	-
2	Sapling	0	2	2	-
3	Bramble Thicket	1	1	3	1 (Rampant)
4	Large Oak Tree	1	3	3	1 (Defiant)

AN EXAMPLE

So, to animate a patch of vines as an extra (1 coin) while shifting about the other trees to seal a clearing (1 coin), and entangle a group of unwelcome visitors (1 coin), would cost a total of three coins. This mastery use would require only one action if it were done in conflict.

GETTING DICE

Using the wild mastery in conflict grants a die only if the action directly affects the target of your other actions, and if it harms or impairs that target. Awakening a patch of vines grants no die; tangling a foe in branches *does*.

Wind

Wild Dragons are attuned to wind and sound; their scales are pearlescent and opal-shaded. Their wings are curlicues which curl up on their backs rather than folding in the same jointed motion as those of other affinities. Wind dragons often hum or sing to themselves. Because they prefer to spend more time in the air than other dragons, wind dragons prefer lairs that are up high, or which have entrances and exits that are extremely difficult to reach for any creature that cannot fly. These pose less of a problem for transport of items in and out than for dragons of other affinities, because of the unique methods of carrying available to wind dragons.

- **Special Note:** A character with the “wind affinity” aspect cannot be directly aspected by use of the harmonic shriek mastery unless they wish to be. This applies even if the character possessed the aspect without the mastery, due to aspect duplication, fallout, or other events.



Lodges of Wind...

- Use the formal ranks of Apprentice and Inceptor.
- Expect any wind dragon of fledgling age or greater to join as an apprentice, as repayment for their inception.
- Expect all apprentices to act as heavy transport at need for fledges that are moving from one island to another, contributing a tithe of 1/10 of the proceeds to the lodge.
- Teach the inception ritual to any apprentice that contributes at least 100 treasure items in this way, and expect them to perform it for free.
- Expect the local inceptors to maintain a practice area and inception materials, paying from the tithes accumulated.
- Work to match any wind dragon whose fledge is lost with a new one, preferring fledges which don't have a wind dragon.

Wind Dragons In Conflict

Wind dragons are *loud* in conflict. Almost any shouting, roaring, or attempt to talk or intimidate a target is an action that calls in this trait, without needing to use the mastery. When the mastery *is* employed, wind dragons have a significant range options available, from disarming foes by smashing weapons to throwing items with strange harmonics.

Wind Mastery: Harmonic Shriek

You may expend coins from your hoard in order to use your voice as a resonant instrument. Each of the following uses costs a single coin:

- Alter the scene by shattering objects in the scene with a scream, or by causing loose particles to scatter (thus cleaning surfaces, for example).
- Aspect the scene by shaking leaves from trees, blasting loose dust into the air, or otherwise destroying visibility, or aspect a notable character or an entire group of extras, deafening them with sound or nauseating them with lower notes.
- Remove a reasonably-described aspect from a scene - extinguishing fires, fracturing ice, and so on.
- Shove back a notable character or entire group of extras with a wide sonic blast, and reducing their ability to attack effectively. In physical conflict, this reduces their ability to strike effectively; they count only die results of one through three as successes.
- Hold an object up to about half your own size in the air, held aloft by sonic vibrations. This may be kept up so long as you concentrate; you may move but may not take other actions. This method of using this mastery can be used to carry objects in flight, and may also be used in physical conflict to attacks enemies by throwing them into the air and dropping them. This application may also be used in physical conflicts to fling an extra out of the scene (and the conflict) completely; they still act during the round in which they are thrown, but are afterwards out of the conflict; the Guide may determine if they are shaken by being hurled, are injured, killed, or simply shrug it off, as appropriate.

AN EXAMPLE

Assaulting a well-entrenched group by shattering their barricades (1 coin), extinguishing their arrows (1 coin), nauseating their foot troopers (1 coin), and blowing up a dust cloud preventing their archers from gaining a line of fire (1 coin) would cost a total of four coins.

GETTING DICE

Using the wind mastery in conflict grants a die only if the action directly affects the target of your other actions, and if it harms or impairs that target.

9. Personality



Choosing A Personality

Every dragon will possess at least one personality trait, and may possess more if they are old enough. Your choice (or choices) of personality trait will define the way that you play your character to a degree that other trait choices cannot. Here are some of the things to consider when choosing personality traits:

MASTERY

Each personality trait includes a mastery. Each expands on some capacity of the character or adds some new ability. Many of these capabilities vary significantly from one another in terms of rules; the best way to become familiar with what personality masteries do and don't do is to read them. In regular play, use of a mastery is always treated as script proposal, just as with affinity masteries.

CONFLICT

The different personality traits and masteries can be called upon during conflict in varying ways. In general, use of any mastery in conflict counts as one of the four actions a character receives. Some masteries affect the rules for adversity in specific and unusual ways, and may ignore this general rule.

DRIVES & INFLUENCES

Each personality trait includes both a drive and an influence. Drives allow you to gain coins for "playing to type", while influences allow you to reward others for playing up the effect your character has on theirs.

NICHES

Players should attempt to avoid duplicating personality traits from character to character if they are playing hatchlings or fledglings. Once the characters have reached soaring, however, having 'crossover' of a trait or two can often work quite well.

WHAT YOU'RE SAYING

When you choose a personality trait, it's very possible that you're choosing that trait because you'd like to play the game in a way that the trait enables or assists with, or you'd like to be able to 'smooth over' some part of the game you're less comfortable with. In either case, it's a good idea to speak up and let the group know why you chose that trait. This can help others get an idea of how to make the game fun for you, just as knowing why other chose their traits can let you do the same for them.



Ascendant

Ascendant dragons are enthralled by the powers that come to dragons of great age and experience. They have made a serious study of how the essential nature of a dragon changes with age, and study the memoirs of ancient dragons where possible. With exertion, they can call such power into reality for short periods of time, pushing beyond the normal limits of age with their other abilities, or raising the capabilities of others up to a greater level.

The most common use of ascendant abilities is to magnify the affinity powers of their fledgmates. This occurs both in and out of conflicts; many fledges which contain an ascendant as well as a variety of affinities have found that they are capable of putting those affinity powers to much more lucrative work with the aid of their fledgmate.

Ascendant study of elder dragons is limited to those elders that were willing to keep records or hold audiences, or pass on their experiences orally. In seeking to gain the powers of greater age, ascendant dragons have learned emulate *these* dragons. As a result, most ascendants are polite, formal, scrupulous mentors and record-keepers, and consider the same kinds of behavior to be 'mature' in others.



Kisagra, a Soarling Ascendant Wild Drake, crafts a sand painting as an aid to understanding for her hatchling pupils. By showing them how the various essences that a dragon taps into are combined into a harmonious flow, she hopes to give them a greater understanding of how that same flow of reality can be increased beyond it's normal levels.

Ascendants In Conflict

Ascendant dragons often make use of “classical tactics” - in a conflict, any action may call in this trait if is declared *in a way* that shows a history the character could have studied: “I tail-sweep his feet while pivoting on my left foreclaws, as Tanam did against the lord of the first crusade.”

Ascendant Mastery: Strength of Elders

You may expend coins from your hoard in order to increase the scope of one mastery, so that it is treated as if it were being used by an older dragon. This requires ritualistic gestures, and the affected mastery must be one that has effects which alter with scope. The holder of the mastery must be willing, and can be yourself. Added coins may be spent, but doing so affects multiple targets, rather than increasing scope further. This increase in scope to the targeted mastery (or masteries) lasts for the entire scene.

THE IMPERIAL SCOPE

Increasing the scope of *sovereign* abilities yield the following results...

- **Extra:** Any character or other creature with five or less traits, or which can only possess up to four traits when operating in groups, is considered an extra to an imperial (thus, Guide character dragons up to Lordling age are considered extras to such a character). Characters with six or more traits are notable.
- **Group:** A group of extras with eighty or less total traits is within the scope of imperial group-related masteries. Groups with more than eighty total traits are outside the scope of their abilities.
- **Scene:** A scene to an imperial is about the size of a town. A globe with a radius of a mile would be just within the scope of what an imperial could consider a scene.

Ascendant Drive: Traditional Stability

You may draw a coin to your hoard when your dragon performs or takes part in any traditional, formalized activity (such as making a pact or similar) If you have already drawn a coin for this drive earlier in the session, you may do so again only if the group agrees that the new formalized activities were more entertaining and appropriate than those which last allowed you to draw a coin.

Ascendant Influence: Holding Court

Once each scene, you may award any one player the right to draw a coin to their hoard when they act in a formal, respectful fashion towards other dragons and do so clearly as a result of the presence and attitude of your dragon.

Aspirant

Aspirants are dragons that are consumed with a single driving ambition. Their focus magnifies their personality and force of will - other dragons find themselves swept along with an aspirant's vision, simply because it is clear and directed, and because of the conviction the aspirant possesses. Aspirants are often incredibly ruthless in pursuit of their goals, sometimes even judging their own fledge based on how well those allies aid them in achieving their goals.

In order to play an aspirant, you must define an ambition.



Rathigra, a Soaring Aspirant Wind Drake, believes that dragonkind deserves nothing less than reverence and veneration from humanity; his fledge is working with him to infiltrate and seize control of a human diabolist cult popular among sailors, intending to turn them to the service of the fledge and then use them in mutiny to raise the beginnings of a fleet.

Aspirants In Conflict

In conflict, any action that describes an Aspirant as ignoring losses, risks, and damage in order to achieve their goals may call upon this trait; despite their sociability, Aspirant dragons border on the obsessive. Also, in social and interpersonal conflicts, Aspirants often speak in ‘big picture’ terms, talking about the future that they imagine or about how the current situation affects larger and more sweeping events. In action and combat, they tend to move directly and openly towards their goals, simply ignoring and ‘pushing through’ obstacles and opposition.

Aspirant Mastery: Contagious Focus

You may bribe others with coins from your hoard in order to “convince them”. That is, if your character is attempting to get another character to join in on some plan or activity, or to believe some statement, you may slide a few coins over towards that player (or to the Guide, if the character is a Guide character). They may take those coins and add them to their hoard, but only if they then play their character as convinced to join in on the action, or as believing your statement. If they refuse these coins, you regain them. This mastery may not be used during adversity.

Aspirant Drive: Towards The Goal

You may draw a coin to your hoard when you obtain some status, ally, or possession that moves you towards achieving your stated ambition, or furthers your already-described plans for achieving that ambition. If you have already drawn a coin for this drive earlier in the session, you may do so again only if the group agrees that your most recent conquest, ally, or possession is more significant than any other you gained in the same session. “Generic” gains, such as acquiring regular treasure items, are never cause for gaining coins in this way; the gains must be specific to your plans.

Aspirant Influence: Joint Agenda

Once each scene, you may award any player the right to draw a coin to their hoard when they show their character as having “bought in” to agreeing your ambition without any prompting from you. For example, if you mentioned that a specific item or source of information useful to your ambitions might be acquired by traveling, you might award another player a coin if their character simply assumed that the fledge would be traveling, and began to make preparations or discuss specifics, rather than discussing whether or not the idea of going was a good one in and of itself.

Concordant

Concordant dragons are aware that if any essential nature is manifest in a region, it can be made manifest elsewhere with greater ease. With practice, they have learned to cause such duplicate manifestations. Most concordant dragons practice this trick with flame at first, and know that they have succeeded when they can cause flames from a bonfire to suddenly “copy over” onto their claws, burning there without harming the dragon at all.

Diabolicals, who must weaken the essential nature of a thing in order to apply that essence to their own person, seek the power of concordance for themselves. Many cults have standing orders to capture any concordant discovered, to allow for invasive research.

This focus on duplication spills over into their life - it causes them to be most pleased when others are pleased, most annoyed when others are, and so on. It affects others as well; those around a concordant dragon often find themselves able to agree on affairs they normally could not.



Kiskath, a Sovereign Flame Lind, has finally acquired the power of concordance. Kiskath and his fledge are engaged in a running battle with an cult possessing elemental powers; he intends to make use of this ability to “layer” himself with the aspects of other affinities for their protective value.

Concordants In Conflict

Concordant may only be called as a trait during adversity when it's mastery is used to inflict harmful or impairing conditions on foes.

Concordant Mastery: Multiplicity

You may expend coins from your hoard to duplicate an aspect from one target to another; a target may be a notable character, a scene, an extra or group of extras, or even an object. You must be able to describe how the aspect functions on the new target once duplicated in a way that makes sense and satisfies the group; copying the “flaming” aspect from a torch to a character might light them on fire, or might grant them a fire that burns in their palms.

This mastery may not be used to change the actual “base state” of a character; it cannot kill or transform them, only add to them. It can be used to duplicate aspects taken as fallout, but doesn't ‘fill up’ fallout uses per conflict on the new target. Duplicating a trait *does not* duplicate any attached mastery, drive, influence, or change in scope, but may grant some other attached conditions; frost armor and spark dragon ‘overload’ may be copied with their effects intact. When creating a duplicate aspect, a concordant dragon must pay for it based on the “hardness” and natural duration, as follows:

- **One coin:** Creates an aspect that will persist for a scene and may be removed as normal for a trivial aspect.
- **Two coins:** Creates an aspect that will persist for a day and may be removed as normal for a trivial aspect.
- **Three coins:** Creates an aspect that will persist for ten days and may be removed as normal for a trivial aspect.
- **Doubling the Cost:** Makes the aspect more difficult to remove during it's duration; it is treated as notable.

Concordant Drive: Agreeable Nature

You may draw a coin to your hoard when given one for fulfilling another's influence. That is, when another player has you draw a coin meeting their influence condition, you draw two coins instead. You may only draw an additional coin in this fashion once per scene.

Concordant Influence: An Accord

Once each scene, you may award any player the right to draw a coin to their hoard when their character agrees with another character in the scene that they do not normally agree with outside of your presence, or comes to an agreement that seems unusual for them.

Defiant

Defiant dragons are, in a sense, throwbacks to the time when each dragon was a solitary force alone. They sneer at social bonds and ‘soft’ politics, and while their fledge and personal bonds are generally just as strong as those of any other dragon, defiants feel the need to affirm that this is because they *choose* for it to be so. Because the breaches of etiquette that defiant dragons indulge in are based on a desire for self-sufficiency and personal freedom through strength (qualities dragons value highly), such breaches are forgiven more often than is usual; defiant dragons act out impulses that are shared by even the most more civilized.

In tense situations, such as when a fledge believes that ambush or other attack is imminent, defiant dragons tend to take the most dangerous posts. They also tend to “be the bait” when their fledge sets an ambush of their own. Defiant dragons have very little fear, often to the point of recklessly ignoring pain and danger. It is common for a defiant dragon to fight on, apparently completely unhindered, while bleeding from a dozen wounds.



Vakasil, a Soarling Defiant Frost Wurm, has been driven into a corner by hunters, inquisitors, pirates, cultists, and many others. This isn't a problem, by her reckoning - she prefers to fight out of corners; most of the time, it just means that the enemies trying to hurt her and getting in each others way have their backs to the rest of her fledge.

Defiant In Conflict

In order to call this trait in conflict, you must describe how you are resisting or “toughing out” the physical pain, social pressure, or personal manipulation inflicted by your opponents.

Defiant Mastery: Shrug Off

In conflict, you may change up to five blocking dice into automatic successes. This mastery is used after dice are called, and after striking dice are rolled, but before *blocking* dice are rolled. Pay coins appropriate to the number of automatic successes you are buying, and take those dice out of your rolling pool, setting them in front of you with a “4” showing. You cannot buy more automatic successes in this way than you have blocking dice to roll. The costs for using this mastery are as follows:

- **One Automatic Success:** Costs one coin.
- **Two Automatic Success:** Costs three coins in total.
- **Three Automatic Success:** Costs six coins in total.
- **Four Automatic Success:** Costs ten coins in total.
- **Five Automatic Success:** Costs fifteen coins in total.

Defiant Drive: Snarling Revolt

You may draw a coin to your hoard when you refuse to respond to social pressure, threats, or manipulation. This refusal may be indirect; if another character describes some danger that might result from your actions, you may draw a coin by ignoring it. If you have already drawn a coin for this drive earlier in the session, you may do so again only if the group agrees that your most recent refusal is more clearly the result of your desire to maintain your own bravado in the face of the world than any previous act.

Defiant Influence: Our Path Alone

Once each scene, you may award any player the right to draw a coin to their hoard when they show their character reacting to threats or manipulation by being insulted or enraged.



Dissonant

Dissonant dragons are natural-made critics, self-taught to sense weaknesses in ideas and mystical workings, and to explore those weaknesses. Popular and often-consulted dissonants are constructive critics, noting possible solutions along with weaknesses; more curmudgeonly and disliked dissonants tend simply to cut down their opposition verbally and negate mystical creations. Most dissonant dragons alternate between the two, attempting to be constructive when working with their fledge, but nugatory and grating whenever their enemies are at hand.

Fledges that come into regular conflict with artificers and diabolicals often find their dissonant members to be more and more central to their tactics as time goes on. A highly energized dissonant can, with effort, halt and ruin group rituals and uses of dangerous powers. Since artificers and diabolicals both tend to rely on these abilities, such interference can cripple their plans and stymie their effectiveness.



Kisuri, a Soaring Dissonant Spark Drake, often acts as 'backup' to the more active members of his fledge. While the others have ambitions, plans, and high hopes, Kisuri sees it as his role to keep them grounded, operating in the moment, and working up to any great accomplishment in practical steps. While his fledgemates sometimes sigh when he speaks, they know that they couldn't have come as far without him.

Dissonants In Conflict

Snappy insults, social cutting, and maneuvers that botch up carefully-laid plans are the kinds of actions that allow this trait to be called in conflict. Mocking a foe in order to cause them ‘get sloppy’ is a common action that calls in this trait - just take the time to be original in your insults.

Dissonant Mastery: Contrarian

You may expend coins from your hoard to counteract the use of any mastery that is described as being visible in it’s use and as working in a mystical fashion (all affinity and breed mastery uses, and most uses of concordant and radiant, fall into this loose category). This costs as many coins as were spent on the power that you are counteracting, and negates the use of that mastery entirely. If used to counteract a ritual or other use of power where the cost is divided among a large group, the group must be within your scope.

When using this mastery in a conflict under the adversity rules, it can be used out-of-order, and denies the target both the action spent using their mastery and any die they would have gained for using it. It also “costs” you one of your actions on your next ‘go’ (whether that will be in the same round or the next). When using the dissonant mastery, adding touches that insult or confuse the enemy can be treated as calling in this trait, gaining a die. However, if you have already taken your actions and gained as many dice as your action limit, you may not gain another die in this way - the ability to “borrow” an action against your limit for the next turn does not allow you to go above your limit *in terms of dice gained*.

Dissonant Drive: Critical Thinking

You may draw a coin to your hoard when you question a plan or the stated intentions of another character, pointing out potential problems that might need solving. If you have already drawn a coin for this drive earlier in the session, you may do so again only if the group agrees that your new line of questioning is more relevant, useful, or insightful than any previous such set of questions you have asked in the session.

Dissonant Influence: Constructive Use

Once each scene, you may award any player the right to draw an additional coin to their hoard when their dragon questions or revises their stated plan of action based on your criticisms.

Hierophant

The Hierarchy is a network of dragons and humans into which some are born, some adopted, and some inducted. Among humans, it is a widespread secret society composed of those that trade with and revere dragons, one which the human church passionately attempts to eradicate. Hierophants are those that have earned, or were born to, a place in this structure.

- **Special Note:** *While it is possible for a Hatchling to possess this trait, it is not generally recommended; in most play, this trait is best gained upon becoming a soaring or sovereign.*



Katesk, a Sovereign Regnant Aspirant Wind Wyrm, has recently become a Hierophant as well, and has begun to integrate his net of contacts with theirs. He believes that the vat number of 'casual' members held by the hierarchy will act as an excellent buffer, introduction, and medium for his own underlings.

Hierophants In Conflict

Any action that notes how you are making use of information that gained from Hierarchy contacts earlier, may be considered to ‘call in’ this trait. In addition, in scenes where there are Hierarchy contacts available, actions describing how you are working as a team with them also call in this trait.

Hierophant Mastery: The Network

You may expend coins from your hoard in order to declare a single, unnamed extra within any group to be a Hierarchy member that you have recognized (if you ‘tag’ one of a group of dragon hunters as a Hierarchy member, the Guide may decide that they were along with the group as a saboteur - or for whatever other reason they like). When you use this mastery, you are giving a “sign” and receiving “a countersign”, and you are recognized by your opposite as well.

Human Hierarchy members revere, respect, and trade with dragons; they believe that it is to the benefit of humanity for the two species to cooperate. Their ideal society is one where each community of humans is tied to a single fledge of dragons, with the fledge and the most important members of the community sharing leadership. Human members of the hierarchy will *always* become willing to aid you and trade with you in any fashion that does not endanger them, and *may* be willing to take risks on your behalf. Gaining “inside information” related to the group that they are part of from such agents, and passing down warnings of places and activities to avoid or to use as sanctuaries, is the most common interaction.

You may also use this mastery to determine which dragons in a gathering are Hierarchy members. Among dragons, fellow-members are to be bargained with openly and fairly under all circumstances (giving you a guarantee of fair dealing).

Hierophant Drive: Like for Like

You may draw a coin to your hoard whenever you strike a deal with or provide aid or assistance of any kind to a member of the Hierarchy. If you have already drawn a coin for this drive earlier in the session, you may do so again only if the group agrees that the new action is more substantial than any previous aid, agreement or trade made in the session.

Hierophant Influence: Backing

Once each scene, you may award any player the right to draw an additional coin to their hoard if they aid you in making contact with, meeting with, or otherwise dealing with other Hierarchy members.

Radiant

Radiant dragons meditate upon, and are deeply focused around, their “essential self”. They have gained the capacity to draw things back toward their essential natures, and others around them find that they are more confident and centered in their natural tendencies than they would be normally. This thinking carries with it mystical abilities; a radiant dragon is able to actively apply power to force a creature back towards its essential form. Radiant dragons become almost monastic in outlook as time goes on, holding only to a bare minimum of needed items and holdings.

Diabolicals, who are almost entirely formed of shifting abilities and stolen forms, hate and fear radiant dragons to a degree that cannot be emphasized enough. A radiant dragon with enough energy, and backed up by others capable of ensuring that the diabolical cannot make clever use of their environment, can strip away the abilities and powers of a diabolical in seconds. Many diabolical cults are taught carefully to turn all their efforts to destroying any creature with the powers of a radiant dragon.



Vakaliss, a Lordling Radiant Flame Lind, has joined his fledge in claiming a small island just outside of the Reach, and is now a personal enemy of the cults of Mussushu, a diabolical of significant power. Vakaliss and his fledge have been picking away the small cult enclaves that Mussushu continues to send to their region of the outliers.

Radiants In Conflict

When the mastery for this trait is used in conflict to remove “beneficial” aspects from a target, this trait can be called on and a die gained. Otherwise, this trait does not normally grant dice in conflict.

Radiant Mastery: The Essential Being

You may expend coins from your hoard in order to remove aspects that you are aware of from any target. The aspects removed may not be actual traits, represent equipment, or represent outside social conditions such as “bad reputation”, but may be helpful or harmful. With this ability, a radiant dragon may heal wounds, strip away bonuses, and otherwise drive a target back towards its natural state. In rules terms, this means that a radiant dragon can remove aspects from other characters. Multiple radiant dragons can combine their coins by means of ceremony, which players may improvise as desired. In conflict, the actual removal of traits occurs after dice are rolled. Removing an aspect taken as fallout in the same conflict does allow the target to take a different aspect of that same level - if you heal yourself of a trivial aspect taken from fallout, you may take another trivial aspect as fallout in the same conflict. Coin costs for using this mastery are as follows; Costs to remove aspects do *not* change if the aspect is “blocking” a mastery:

- **Removing a trivial aspect:** 1 coin
- **Removing a notable aspect:** 4 coins
- **Removing a lingering aspect:** 9 coins
- **Reversing a complete change of state:** *Examples include death, or being transformed by a unique treasure:* 25 coins, plus one added coin for each day the change has been in place.

Radiant Drive: The Simple Life

You may draw a coin to your hoard when you pay off an obligation (even a small one), reduce the number (though not necessarily the value) of your possessions, consolidate your holding or territories, or in some other way simplify your affairs. If you have already drawn a coin for this drive earlier in the session, you may do so again only if the group agrees that the new action simplifies things more thoroughly than any previous such action.

Radiant Influence: Be Yourself

Once each scene, you may award any player the right to draw an added coin to their hoard when they fulfill their own drive and draw a coin for doing so.

Rampant

Rampant dragons are truthful, often blunt, and get directly to the point. If the point is business, they open with the deal. If they are being threatened, they either back off, or rear up to free their claws for immediate battle, as their one and only warning. This doesn't mean that rampant dragons don't enjoy social events, or that they're impatient - they simply aren't interested in *evasive* niceties, or in wasting time with things that *distract* them from accomplishing something. This somewhat confrontational approach can easily lead to conflict, but that's not exactly a bad thing, from a rampant perspective.



Tarsath, a Fledgling Rampant Frost Wyrmling, has no great ambition, no especially grand plans. He's as the leading claw of his fledgling when they've got work they think they can all profit from, and that's fine with him.

Rampants In Conflict

Actions that describe moving directly towards your goal in conflict call in this trait. In physical conflict, going for the throat; in a chase, arrowing towards the objective; in a social facedown, facing down the target and snarling - actions that get right to the point.

Rampant Mastery: Mad Assault

In conflict, you may change up to five striking dice into automatic successes. This mastery is used after dice are called, but before striking dice are rolled. Pay coins appropriate to the number of automatic successes you are buying, and take those dice out of your rolling pool, setting them in front of you. You cannot buy more automatic successes in this way than you have striking dice to roll. Costs for using this mastery depend on how many dice are changed into successes in this way *and* on what the resulting success number is, as shown on the chart below (taking three dice out of your striking pool, and placing them in front of you as successes resulting in “2s”, would cost six) coins.

	1 DIE	2 DICE	3 DICE	4 DICE	5 DICE
PLACE ON 1	<i>Free</i>	<i>Free</i>	<i>1 Coins</i>	<i>3 Coins</i>	<i>6 Coins</i>
PLACE ON 2	<i>Free</i>	<i>1 Coins</i>	<i>3 Coins</i>	<i>6 Coins</i>	<i>10 Coins</i>
PLACE ON 3	<i>1 Coins</i>	<i>3 Coins</i>	<i>6 Coins</i>	<i>10 Coins</i>	<i>15 Coins</i>
PLACE ON 4	<i>3 Coins</i>	<i>6 Coins</i>	<i>10 Coins</i>	<i>15 Coins</i>	<i>21 Coins</i>

Rampant Drive: Plain As Daylight

You may draw a coin to your hoard when you make your intentions with regard to another named character or a group as plain as possible in advance, or cut through offered distractions to get straight to the point. This can include threats (but never hollow ones), direct proposals of mating, open offers to deal, or the like. If you have already drawn a coin for this drive earlier in the session, you may do so again only if the group agrees that *your actions have pushed the pace of play towards more interesting events*.

Rampant Influence: To The Point

Once each scene, you may award any player the right to draw an additional coin to their hoard if their character gets down to business especially quickly, and do so clearly as a result of the presence and attitude of your dragon.

Regnant

Regnant dragons consider dragonkind to be the peak of the natural order, and draw upon the essential strength of the dragon-as-ruler. Regnants care for the lesser creatures in return for service - a talent that is part training, part deal-making, and more than a little mystical. The most potent regnants maintain significant communities of non-dragon underlings, be those underlings animal, mystical, or human. Hatchling regnants commune with and possess communities of snakes and lizards; these communities grow in power and variety as the dragon ages.



Kassuris, a Fledgling Regnant Spark Wyrn, has recently lost the majority of his followers in battle. She is considering stationing those that remain at home in order to take the time to gather up a 'working group' of more potent creatures - hopefully, winged ones that won't be so easily destroyed in a fight. Her player is discussing possible creatures with her Guide.

Regnants In Conflict

This trait may not be called in conflicts. However, the extras it allows are also under the control of the player, and (if present) act as a separate group of extras in conflict (but only as *one* separate group), having independent goals and actions. See the Antagonists chapter for rules on groups of extras in conflict.

Regnant Mastery: Underlings

You may expend coins from your hoard in order to gain the service of one or more underlings. These underlings remain in your service so long as they remain alive and you see to it that their basic needs are met. Doing so also requires at least an hour spent “recruiting” in a place where your desired followers are available. Such followers are always treated as extras, and always as a unified group of extras if there are several on the scene - the mystical portion of your ability to lead collapses the more you attempt to treat them separately. Gaining the loyalty of an extra costs as many coins to gain as (their number of traits + their action limit + their number of masteries), and always costs at least one coin. You can’t gain a follower with an action limit higher than your own. You can create new “kinds” of followers with the Guide (and needing their approval); here are some examples...

COIN COST	NAME	COINS	TRAITS	LIMIT	MASTERY
2	Bat / Raccoon	0	1	1	-
4	Hound	0	2	2	-
6	Wolverine	1	1	3	1 (Valiant)
8	Firebird	1	2	4	1 (Radiant)

Regnant Drive: Helping hands

You may draw a coin to your hoard when you make use of your followers in a way that assists the dragons in your fledge (but not when acting through your followers makes action by the players character irrelevant or unnecessary). If you have already drawn a coin for this drive earlier in the session, you may do so again only if the group agrees that the aid was more useful in getting the fledge into the “interesting stuff”, whatever that may be.

Regnant Influence: They can come, too.

Once each scene, you may award any player the right to draw an additional coin to their hoard when the character or characters they are playing ‘spotlight’ or include your followers in ways that ways that entertain the other players.

Revenant

Every dragon has some small ability to recall events from the lives of their ancestors - enough that they spend many of the first days of their lives 'remembering' how to walk, fly, and speak clearly. However, this capacity is stronger in some dragons than in others, and meditative methods exist which can heighten both the ability to recall ancestral memories, and to clarify your own memories for recall. This process of clarification often includes creating powerful mnemonic devices, often in the form of sand paintings or rhyming chants which summarise such things. Revenant dragons possess such 'clarified' memories, to the degree that they often think and speak, and possess motives, as if they *were* the ancestor or ancestors whose memories they share, summoned up by means of these same devices (a revenant sketching on the beach or chanting is often calling up old memory).

The same practices that allow this clarification are the basis for creation of two of the rarer treasures that dragons prize - revenancy crystals and stone eggs. For details on these items, see chapter thirteen.



Tarsis, a Fledgling Revenant Wind Lind, often meditates on his ancestral memories, seeking memories that will prove useful to his current endeavors.

Revenants In Conflict

By describing any action as guided by or recalled as appropriate from ancestral memory, you may treat that action as calling this trait.

Revenant Mastery: Another Memory

You may expend a coin from your hoard in order to declare “remembered” events and actions taken by your ancestors. These events must be ones which occurred at least a few years before your hatching, and may be ancient history if desired. This declaration is negotiated with the Guide (and only the Guide) as if it were a script proposal, and may thus be vetoed and amended as usual. If it is vetoed, you regain the coin spent to activate this ability. This ability may be used to add aspects or additions to a scene - declaring that “My ancestor Alganth was here, and he found a hidden room in which he rested. It’s here.” is entirely legitimate (though it might or might not be vetoed or amended, depending on circumstances).

Revenant Drive: As Another

Upon taking this trait, choose any other personality trait which you do not possess. You gain that drive (but no other features of that trait).

Revenant Influence: The Sacred Past

Once each scene, you may award any player the right to draw an additional coin to their hoard when they show caution or reverence for historical objects, accounts of historical events, or mnemonics employed by revenants.

Revenancy And Adventure Hooks

From time to time, the Guide may create and narrate added memories for recall by a revenant dragon. Ancient lairs, lost treasures, hidden histories - these are all basic possibilities for adventures. Creating “inside information” on these, recalled when some current event prompts this occurrence, can be a handy way to add more to an adventure.

In groups that don’t possess a revenant dragon, or if the group as a whole doesn’t find this trait to suit their playing style, the group can broaden this specific part of the general “inherited memory” that all dragons possess, in order to allow this trick to work normally. In such a case, it might be that all dragons will possess a hint of the talents described here, or the fledgling might be an unusual case for some reason.

Savant

Savant dragons are canny thinkers; they believe in seizing whatever advantages are presented to them, and incorporating those advantages into tactical plans for victory, acquisition, or whatever else it is that they are seeking. Rather than planning in intricate detail, however, Savants tend to keep their plans fast and loose, and focus on preparing ‘wild card’ resources - reinforcements, hidden environmental hazards they can exploit, unrevealed alliances, and the like - that can be used to push things back on track when their planning meets reality.



Katha, a Fledgeling Savant Wild Wym, has found ways to serve the ideals, ambitions, and desires of each of his fledgemates, often simultaneously.

Savants In Conflict

Any action which is described in a way that shows your character acting on plans that they have prepared or discussed in advance, or coordinating the actions of the fledge in the conflict, calls in this trait. Describing how you move about to change positions relative to others, and give helpful directions to others, is the most common use in physical conflicts.

Savant Mastery: Tactical Coordination

You may expend coins from your hoard when a conflict is declared (after goals-setting, but before calls or dice) in order to create a ‘strategy pool’. You may place as many coins into this pool as desired; any coins remaining in it at the end of the conflict are lost.

During any conflict round where you have a strategy pool, and have called upon the savant trait, you may expend coins from it after dice are rolled, but before results are applied. Doing so allows you to move a single success from the striking or blocking dice held by yourself or by any ally to those of another, with their permission. The dice must remain the same kind - you could move one successful striking die from one ally to another, but may not change a striking success into a blocking success when you do so, or vice versa.

The coin cost for moving dice depends on the total number of dice moved in this way, as follows...

- **Moving One Die:** Costs one coin.
- **Moving Two Dice:** Costs three coins in total.
- **Moving Three Dice:** Costs six coins in total.
- **Moving Four Dice:** Costs ten coins in total.
- **Moving Five Dice:** Costs fifteen coins in total.

Savant Drive: The Way We'll Do It...

You may draw a coin to your hoard when you create and explain a plan to overcome some challenge that faces you or your fledge. If you have already drawn a coin for this drive earlier in the session, you may do so again only if the group agrees that the challenge being faced in this situation is complex, dangerous, or outright important, than any previous challenge in the session.

Savant Influence: Like Clockwork

Once each scene, you may award any player the right to draw an additional coin to their hoard when their characters conform to the plan that you have laid out, and do so clearly as a result of the presence and attitude of your dragon (rather than because “it’s what they would have done regardless”).

Siblant

Siblant dragons are maestros of social interaction and group dynamics. Anywhere that groups gather, they spend their time, listening and gossiping and slowly piecing together small rumors and observations.

As a result, siblant dragons often end up in possession of facts that others might keep quiet - they know where there's something to be gained, not only for their own fledge, but for other fledges as well. With such information at hand, a little trading about of action can often be arranged; a siblant might well ask a fledgemate to perform a favor for one dragon, who will in turn do something for a friend, who will in turn do something for the siblant's fledge. Arranged carefully, these services are magnified each time, so that the "return" on the first favor is much larger - it's all a question of finding something that someone needs done badly enough, or quickly enough, or *quietly* enough, to return the favor with a larger one.

- **Special Note:** *This trait is especially valuable in extended games that include significant political and personal elements. For short-run play, or play that will take place almost entirely as action-adventure, it is much less valuable.*



Tagra, a Lordling Siblant Frost Lind, has fledgemates that make a practice of controlling and commanding significant companies of lesser creatures. Tagra thinks that, all things considered, her fledgemates lack ambition - while it may be more dangerous, it's also more interesting to manage those with more power, not less.

Siblants In Conflict

Siblant may only be called as a trait in conflicts where their goal is blatantly political, interpersonal, or social. In such conflicts, any action that describes the character as speaking, rumoring, or manipulating may be used to call in this trait.

Siblant Mastery: What They Might Gain

You may expend a coins from your hoard to add a minor detail to the setting, describing it to the Guide (who may amend it as needed). The setting detail that you add must always relate to characters that have already been introduced to play, and describe a potential motive for conflict. You cannot declare or describe any existing conflict, nor the attitude a character has to that motive.

For example, you might declare that two fledges share a badly-defined territorial boundary, and that the land along the boundary is especially rich; however, you could not declare the actions that those dragons intend or have taken with regard to that fact. You might declare that at least a few of treasures once belonging to - and stolen from - a specific sovereign are now in the hoard of a different named dragon, but could not declare how those treasures got there.

The Guide will often add further details to the motives that you propose, and need not share those details; if you added the “weak, rich boundary” as described above, the Guide might decide that the two fledges had made a secret pact allowing them to share that territory. The Guide should never make your declaration worthless, but they can always make it different than it appears when first declared.

This mastery cannot be used during a conflict.

Siblant Drive: Join Us

You may draw a coin to your hoard whenever you manage to convince (or apparently convince) someone that helping you is in their interests. If you have already drawn a coin for this drive earlier in the session, you may do so again only if the group agrees that the target was more opposed to agreement than any other such target.

Siblant Influence: Informers

Once each scene, you may award any player the right to draw an additional coin to their hoard when they inform you of conflicting motives or conflicts between others that you would not have been otherwise aware of.

Valiant

Valiant dragons focus on caring about important things, and are typically idealists (from a draconic point of view). They are willing to fight for what they believe, whether the battle is social, mystical, or physical, despite terrible risks. They are boundlessly energetic, and are known for taking wild and unpredictable chances.

The daredevil who instantly plunges into an armed encampment that has displayed their capture of one of his fledgemates is a valiant dragon, but so is the one that implacably stalks them for weeks to come, picking them off one by one; both believe that whatever the odds, one should never give up the fight in anything but the most temporary sense.

Valiant dragons often get along quite well with defiant dragons; the philosophies share many similar features. Outsiders rarely realize that such dragons are friendly at first, seeing only the constant bickering over values and ideology, and not the vast pleasure that both sides take in the argument itself.



Vakuri, a Soaring Valiant Spark Lind, is often considered more active than makes any sense at all by her fledge; they have a running joke that she must be eating something different from the rest of them 'on the sly', since she never, ever seems to get tired. When things turn truly ugly, though, the jokes stop, and Vakuri is suddenly at the enemy in a flash of speed.

Valiants In Conflict

This trait may only be called in on conflicts where a valiant dragon faces a foe that intends to do them permanent harm. This includes permanent social harms such as banishment, and other nonphysical dangers. In order to call this trait in conflict, describe actions that show your character taking risks to accomplish their goals, standing firm against danger, or the like.

Valiant Mastery: Boundless Speed

This mastery may only be used in conflicts where the valiant trait may be called upon. In any round of such a conflict where the character has reached their action limit, but has not yet called in the valiant trait, they may take one further action and call in this trait.

The first time that a valiant dragon takes this “added action” in a conflict, it costs them one coin to do so. For the remainder of that specific conflict, however, they may use this ability without cost.

Valiant Drive: Taking a Stand

You may draw a coin to your hoard when you knowingly and deliberately commit to actions that will provoke a conflict between yourself and others. If you have already drawn a coin for this drive earlier in the session, you may do so again only if the group agrees that your new actions will be even more provocative, and the provocation is directed at the *same* individual or group. You may choose to forego drawing your first coin of the session, even when earned, and ignore those specific actions for purposes of this drive, stating that the target of that provocation is not your “real target” for the session.

Valiant Influence: Committed Together

Once each scene, you may award any player the right to draw an additional coin to their hoard when the character or characters they are playing choose to commit to the same conflicts you have provoked, or are inspired by or ashamed by your dedication and brave example.



10. The Setting



An Overview

The world of Hoard is not a peaceful one. In every region, struggles over power, wealth, and land are the standard. The forms of those struggles vary significantly depending on what part of the setting is being discussed.

THE REACH PROPER

The Reach is a chain of islands significantly larger than most earthly equivalents, that stretches out westward from one of the major continents of the world. It is sub-tropical in climate, and weather is usually dependant on whether it is the hot season or the rainy season - though on the higher mountains of Reach islands, the rains often take the form of sleet or even snow. The central body of this island chain is comprised of some forty-three major islands, with vastly more rocky points and “juts” surrounding each. Outside of this central ‘core’ of islands are many smaller groupings of two to five islands each, generally called “the outliers”.

The central core of the Reach is the provenance and stronghold of dragon society, and is not shared with any other sapient race. While some powerful draconic regnants host human guests for exceptionally long terms, any attempt by these guests to create self-governance or petition for any form of equality would almost certainly be met with terrific violence, directed at both the humans and their supposed regnant.

THE OUTLIERS

The outlier islands are much more of a mixture, and much more dangerous overall. The rapidly-expanding dragon population of the Reach has caused the “seeding” of many of these islands with fledges hoping to take territory that they can consolidate without competing with other, older fledges. These fledges often find that their islands are inhabited - sometimes with native tribes, sometimes as havens for smugglers and pirates, sometimes with more civilized humans. Word of islands harboring young fledges occasionally reaches the ears of the Arteficers, who often make that information known along with a listed bounty (live captures fetch higher prices).

HUMAN LANDS

The main continent to the east, and for over a day’s flight inland, is almost purely human. The other humanlike races have been driven away or ‘bred in’ to human lines (sometimes in conditions of captivity) to such an extent that while a human noble might well have “Elfin features”, no living human within that range has ever actually seen, or even heard tell of, a living Elf.

Human society is composed of city-states, many of which have outgrown their agricultural base and grown deeply reliant on the powerful sustaining devices crafted from dragon bodies and maintained by Arteficers. These city-states are each individually ‘ruled’ by a sorcerous noble family, but are tied together by the great guild conglomerate, and by the Faith.

Dragon Society

Each island of the Reach is independent, acting in many ways as a ‘small village’. Less than two thousand dragons survived the great hunts that plagued the last generation. Though that total population has more than tripled since dragonkind retreated to the Reach, there are still only about one hundred and fifty dragons total per major island in the core of the Reach - and enough lair in juts and outlier islands, or are newly-hatched, that the actual number of socially active dragons on such an island is often between thirty and seventy. Each dragon is tied to others in networks of varying sorts; here are some examples:

THE FLEDGE

Dragon eggs hatch singly, after varying lengths of time, making it rare for two dragons of the same clutch to be raised together. Dragons are generally raised in groups of those that hatched within a span of a few months, in areas of the island they were hatched on, and are often mentored towards loosely defined ‘local needs’, in order to strengthen local society as a whole. These groupings are generally known as ‘fledges’, and are the most powerful social bond that dragons ever enjoy; a suspicious dragon may not trust anyone else at all, but will still trust and defend their fledgemates. The fledge is, plainly, the basic building block of dragon society - mating between dragons of differing fledges is seen as an alliance between fledges as much as a union of individuals, and many mating flights are pursued for this purpose rather than any personal bond. A dragon who has survived their fledge may seek to be adopted into another, or might become suicidally rash in their choices.

THE CLUTCH

Though clutches are raised separately, most dragons bear some fellow-feeling towards those that came from the same clutch of eggs, as well as towards their parents. Some parents work to maintain these bonds, taking time to assist in the rearing and mentoring of their offspring, and creating extended families. This practice is gaining in popularity, but has not yet become common.

REVENANCY & HIERARCHY

Dragons that possess the Hierophant trait are part of a network of dragons that have been working at the infiltration of humanity since time out of memory. Despite it’s name, the hierarchy is not well-organized; it has slowly become more of a joint body of tradition than an strict organization. The tie between those dragons that share the revenant trait is an even looser network, formed only of tenuously-held friendships and enmities of past generations.

THE LODGE

Affinity Lodges exist only on some islands, and not at all on others. Where they exist, they always manage the quickening ceremonies of their own element, and often have other (varying) social purposes.

Language & Vocalizations

Dragons ‘recall’ the ability to speak from experiences passed down to them from their ancestors rapidly. This ‘recall’ applies to all the significant languages of the world, human and otherwise; while there are a few far-flung groups whose abilities have never been ‘codified’ into inherited memory, these are rare exceptions

TONGUES OF THE WORLD

- **Draconic:** The Dragon language is largely composed of harsh sounds, of sibilants and gutturals. While dragons are capable of producing other sounds, even in their native forms, these are the easiest sounds a dragon can produce comfortably.
- **Elder Arcana:** Hearing this language actually spoken often surprises dragons, despite their ability to recall and speak it; the language was a trade pidgin used for trade between dragons and the now almost-extinct races of mystically-empowered humanoid races.
- **Imperial:** The common human tongue. While the majority of humanity does not actually form an actual empire, it does form a singular culture that is often referred to as “the empire” by those outside its purview. Imperial would be considered a linguistic relative to Latin in the real world.
- **Diabolical:** The language used by Diabolicals is a patchwork language, a pidgin that fluctuates slowly, and draws “loan words” from an uncountable number of sources - individual words and phrases might sound like *anything*. Draconic memory is generally out-of-date where the Diabolical language is concerned; a dragon attempting to speak Diabolical would have about the same effect as a traveler speaking Shakespearean English, and the draconic ability to understand Diabolicals speaking their native language suffers to about the same degree.
- **The Savage Tongues:** There are a vast number of ‘savage’ languages used by smaller regional groups outside the bounds of the common human state.

OTHER VOCALIZATIONS

Despite their inborn mastery of linguistic forms, or possibly because of how this knowledge is acquired, dragons often express themselves in preverbal ways. A dragon in pain or trouble does not curse or shout; it simply screams. Likewise, dragons almost always roar rather than shout battle cries or intimidating phrases.

Other common sounds and vocal expressions used by dragons include hissing at threats or at lessers that are out of line, purring or rumbling when basking or contented, yawning, growling, yelping with surprise. Dragons also make use of a snapping “bark” to frighten or startle other creatures, or to warn their fledge of danger, though the sound itself is relatively unearthly. Finally, dragons occasionally puff up their cheeks and “chuff” a sudden exhalation - the vocal equivalent of rolling eyes at the sheer stupidity of a situation or person.

Dominance & Posturing

As sociable predators, dragons are prone to a degree of “pack behavior”. Most of this behavior is fairly low-level, existing as background to the more developed social life of the creatures. Even so, it remains an underlying structure of draconic life.

FLEDGE DOMINANCE

Fledges don’t usually possess single ‘alpha types’; it’s rare for a fledge to have a singular leader. Instead, in each fledge, different members acquire dominance in relation to different tasks and locales. One member of the fledge might well be the strongest voice in matters related to upkeep and improvements in the lair, while another acts as the leader when hunting, and so on. Most older dragons don’t really consider a fledge ‘settled’ until each member of that fledge has found some aspect of the life of their that they manage and dominate.

MARKING AND SCENTING

Dragons have extremely underdeveloped scent glands located around their jawlines. These glands, and the scent secreted by them, have little specific use in draconic society - but the action of rubbing the jawline against something when ‘claiming’ it is not only normal but almost unconscious. It is fairly easy for one fledgemate to determine what another values by keeping an eye out for what they “show face to” regularly. After a crisis where one dragon in a fledge is wounded or seemed likely to be killed, it is fairly common for the others to show them this behavior - the equivalent of clutching at a loved one previously in danger.

OTHER BODY LANGUAGE

While marking is the most unconscious piece of draconic body language, there are plenty of other physical indicators of dragon moods...

- A dragon that is angry is likely to ‘arch’ up their shoulders and back slightly, as if preparing to rear up at a moment’s notice.
- A tense or frightened dragon will often tense up and tighten their back legs and coil their tail slightly against the ground, as if in preparation to leap skyward. A *terrified* dragon will do the same, with their hindquarters twitching quickly.
- A relaxed or amused dragon will sprawl about on one side of their body; a dragon wishing to physically ‘sneer’ at another might do the same - as a way of stating “you’re no threat, and I’m confident in letting down my guard”.
- A dragon wishing to show disapproval of another dragon will refuse to make eye contact with them.
- A dragon that is deeply ashamed will keep their head low, sometimes even to the point of laying it on the ground. If apologetic, they may “go human” in order to make it clear that they’re no threat.

Social Rituals

As with any extended community, dragons have an overall culture of things that are and are not normally done. Some parts of the tradition...

PLEASANTRIES

The simplest dragon pleasantries is the “high entry”; when visiting another, flying into their territory or to their location from a visible angle, and landing in a gentle arc is good manners. On the other side, waiting at the edge of a clear landing area large enough that an ambush would be tricky is equally good manners, and having fresh water available to offer it to visitors at such a spot is a plain greeting. In formal circumstances, presentation and sharing of water can be almost ceremonial, and is often followed by walking together through the guest regions of the territory, as a form of social display. In informal and friendly circumstances, guests may be invited to visit the ‘wallow’ - wherever the hosting fledge keeps hot sand, bathing pools, and the like.

BOAST AND WAGERS

Dragons do not have organized sport, but they do have boasting and wagers. Where dragons of like age are gathered (in lodges, after councils, or during visits), boasting is common - on speed, cleverness, fighting prowess, and the like. Such boasts may well be met with comparisons to others, often followed by informal contests such as races, nonlethal duels, attempts to ‘call coup’ and the like. These contests are usually public, and often the grounds for serious betting between not only the participants, but others. Humanity has chariot races and arenas; dragons have contests and wagers - and just as humanity has sporting fanatics, dragons have keen bettors and odds-makers.

GREAT HUNTS

The largest form of social gathering practiced by dragons is the ‘great hunt’. A great hunt always occurs whenever an island is claimed (or reclaimed) for dragonkind, and may also occur if an island has a significant and swift increase in population for some reason. The purpose of such a gathering is to clear that island and a significant area of the waters around it of all other territorial predators - without doing so, the draconic population will likely deplete the natural herds and schools of the region disastrously. Dragons from all neighboring islands are notified of the dates of the hunt, which may last up to a week; the visitors are plentiful, and the social status of a well-carried great hunt can make the reputation of a new-settled island.

NON-RITUAL ACTIVITY

Dragons have added social rituals in places where humans do not - but they also lack certain human social rituals. Communal eating and sleeping are almost entirely informal events. Equally, matchmaking and mating flights are most often discussed openly and in a simple, businesslike manner.

Cultural Standards

As with any extended community, dragons have an overall culture of things that are and are not normally done. Some parts of the tradition...

DEBTS AND OBLIGATION

Dragons are taught to think in terms of “debts owed”. A young dragon owes debts to the nest that reared them, to their parents, and to whomever performed their inception. Anything done for a dragon ought to be repaid, including wrongs done - revenge isn’t a typically malicious practice among dragons; it’s a matter of obligation. Dragons that ignore their debts and obligations will find that their whole fledge will be shunned, even pressured to leave the Reach.

LAIRSCAPING

Dragons don’t practice or care for most industries; the ‘cold caves’ of frost lodges are their height of normal organized business, and the gildsmiths that create body gilding are deeply anomalous. Basic social status cannot be measured by work, and so is measured by accomplishments in action, age, and by the lair and territory of the fledge. As a result, dragons practice landscaping and large-scale gardening, as well as a degree of herd husbandry, in their territories. They improve their lairs and guest areas with gravel, sand and clay surfaces, and paint with colored sand (either temporarily for meditation, or glazing the designs into surfaces), and show off these alterations with significant pride.

THE PROPERTY CLIMB

As a fledge ages, it will want to occasionally “trade up” for more territory, a larger lair, and so on. While a fledge of soarlings or fledglings can often afford not to worry unduly, the reasons for moving up can be pressing for lordlings, and are often a very serious matter for sovereign fledges. The value of a given lair and territory is measured by a number of different factors...

- **Food Supply:** Older, larger dragons eat significantly more. Islands that are full, or where a significant number of the dragons are older, mean longer and further fishing and hunting trips, losing time for other things.
- **Space:** A lair able to host fledglings often simply cannot accommodate older and larger dragons. Sovereign lairs have entries large enough for several hatchlings to fly through abreast and span entire cave systems; such a property simply cannot be handled by smaller dragons.
- **Development:** A well-kept territory, excellently built-up with conveniences and fully landscaped, is often worth the value of a much larger one that is newly opened-up. Some fledges delay “trading up” until they can refine their territory to such an extent, while others neglect such details.
- **Activity:** Core islands have few opportunities for action, while the farthest outliers are precarious, constantly threatened, poor sites for socialization, but can be bases for accumulation of significant wealth.

Territories

Each island of the reach is divided up into a number of territories. A tiny jut of rock might be a single territory, while a larger island might comprise anywhere from twenty to fifty territories. Territories are held by fledges, though some fledges hold multiple territories and lair in smaller groups. Some notes:

ACQUISITION

The most common form of territory transfer occurs at the death of a fledge; in such cases, small parts of that territory are sometime claimed by neighbors, and the island council will often place the remaining territory up for trade, dividing the income among the fledges of the island that did not claim bits of the territory. In addition, powerful fledges, whose territories tend to be significant in size, often work to ‘pacify’ outlier islands. When they succeed, they may go there to live, and divide up their original territory into parcels, assigning these to fledges that aided them. Or they may divide up the new island among the assistants, keeping choice territories for later trade. Acquisition of territory by force does occur, though very rarely, and many new fledges acquire their first territory by going into debt to an island council or older fledge.

VALUE

A territory’s value is defined by a number of factors - secure lairing, elevation, hunting area if any, and proximity to the sea (well over half of an average dragon’s diet is seafood; tuna, dolphin, shark, and whale are staples, though whale hunts are often multiple-fledge affairs). Seaside cliffs that can be burrowed into are exceptionally sought-after.

BOUNDARIES

The borders of most territories are defined by natural features; “all the land that is not the peak, between the two streams that come off the peak, to the edge of the sea” would be a common description.

THINGS TO BUILD

A territory is often slowly modified and improved by the fledge that occupies it. At the center of fledge life is the lair and the fledge treasury, which is most often a natural (but cleaned and often improved) cave. In addition to this, areas are set aside and built up to provide a water supply, a wallow for cleaning and relaxation, hunting areas if the region has prey animals, ‘catch pools’ for holding live fish, salt dries, guest areas (often built up almost to the point of becoming ornamental gardens), treasure caches, and potentially a lodge holding maintained by a fledge member.

COUNCIL

Each fledge which holds a territory (regardless of size or disposition) on an island is entitled to a single vote on the island council.

An Ordinary Day

For a fledge of three fledgling dragons, an ordinary (and fairly dull) day ‘at home’ might look something like the following. Such days will not usually be the focus of play, but give a degree of insight into normal life on the Reach.

- **Early Morning:** The dragons wake in the lair, possibly from a communal sleep, possibly having slept separately. They divide the daily tasks. One goes on a quick flight around the territory and borders, another goes only a little offshore to do some fishing, catching only enough for the early meal, and the third does cleaning and maintenance of the lair and guest landing.
- **Midmorning:** The early meal is eaten, and the fledge discusses recent prospects and rumors. They decide that only one of them will bother with council tonight, as there are no pressing affairs on the agenda. They discuss stocking their larder in order to clear the time needed to spend a few days venturing back and forth to the nearest human-occupied outlier island, since one of the sovereign dragon fledges of the island offers a standing bounty, paid in treasure, for each five proven human kills from that island made by a fledge that verbally relinquishes any claim to the territories there.
- **Noon:** The fledge checks and clears out the tidal pools on their shoreline, scraping them fairly smooth in order to have the pools accumulate salt for preserving fish.
- **Afternoon:** The fledge visits a friendly fledge in their territory across the island, admiring and complimenting their hosting plateau. Two of the dragons - a drake of each fledge, one of them male and the other female - go walking, exchanging trinkets and discussion, flirting awkwardly. The others, after their departure, joke quietly and make a few small wagers on the chances of a mating flight between the two drakes in the years to come.
- **Early Evening:** All three dragons take flight over the sea, traveling out almost an hour (and to a different location than in recent days), and fish for the late meal, skimming over the surface and snatching up what they can, as well as attempting to attract larger fish in various ways. They catch only smaller fish, which means that the fishing goes on longer than they prefer.
- **Late Evening:** One of the dragons attends council. The other two check on their tidal shore, and discuss times when the pools will need to be checked for salt drying. They then go their separate ways; one visits their concordant mentor, studying the nature of essence-calling. The other collects some harvested tree-sap and colored sands, and spends a few hours coating a space of lair floor in sap and painting it in designs of colored sand.
- **Night:** The fledge regathers, and council-going dragon relates that one of the other fledges of the island has stated it’s interest in creating a nesting area in the island’s heart. The fledge agrees that they will spend the majority of the next day fishing, and will all attend council that night. The drake is made the butt of some friendly teasing, and the fledge settles in for sleep.

Politics And Pacts

Dragon politics focus around the nightly meeting of the island council. On most nights, a council lasts only a few minutes, and is attended by only one dragon of each fledge - it's usually the personal dealings that are proposed and occur after a council meeting that of greatest interest.

- **Council Matters:** Meetings typically take place just as the last light of the sunset is fading, on a plateau at the highest point of the island, which is not part of any territory. Meetings open with the question “Is the island threatened?”; any possible threats or sightings are gone over in some detail if any have occurred. After this point, any disputes between fledges that have annoyed the other fledges are brought up; censure is rare, but the threat is enough to keep most feuds simmering quietly. Finally, whole-island projects may be proposed or discussed, including whale hunts, nesting arrangements, joint arsenals (an island arsenal, if maintained, is a small valley full of rocks used to drop on threatening ships), and the usually-tired debate of whether specific regnants will or should be allowed to host human guests. Depending on how well-established the island is, these projects may be nonexistent, with the council struggling only to agree on one or two to attempt, or there may be significant holdings and investments in such joint projects up for discussion.
- **Voice:** On the occasions when a firm decision is called for, a council votes. Each territory may speak once before voting (failure to keep it short and to the point *will* result in being hissed and snarled down), and then one vote is cast for each territory, by means of a secret ballot using colored pebbles. The right to vote is known as the “territory voice”. A two-thirds majority is required to carry any decision for unified action; failing that majority, fledges are expected to act independently in the interests of the island.
- **Voice Transfer:** Territorial voice can be transferred to another fledge, stating trust that they will speak and vote in the interests of the fledge they represent. Such transfers are announced (and rescinded) at council. Powerful older fledges sometimes hold territory on more than one island, and transfer their voice on the ‘secondary’ islands to other strong fledges; by means of this trick, each gain more than one vote on their home island. In addition, some fledges ‘rent out’ their voice, or use it as the stakes of wagers between their fledge and other friendly fledges on the same island. Wagers between feuding fledges that put the voice of either fledge up as the stakes are less common, but any contest where this is the case is expected to create high entertainment for the whole island.
- **Pacts:** The last, and often most important, purpose of a council is to witness any deal, open offer of payment-for-work, serious wager, or agreement which warrants it. Such agreements are known as pacts, and pact proposals and negotiation form the bulk of after-council discussion, as well as the foundation of almost all serious business arrangements on an island. Breaching a pact is the most common grounds for council censure.

Dragon Mysticism

The dragons of the Reach do not believe in any kind of sapient divinity. At the same time, dragons are entirely aware of the existence of the diabolical, and dragons are also aware that they are mystical creatures; their affinities and flight both defy purely rational existence, as do many details of their biology.

Dragons do, however, believe in *essential natures*. Every fire is tied to ‘the essential fire’, a template built into the fabric of existence. Every stone is tied to ‘the essential stone’, and so on. These essences, draconic mystics say, inform mundane reality as to the shapes and behaviors that it ought to have. Study of essential natures takes a variety of forms - ascendant, concordant, and radiant dragons evidence this study in the most obvious ways, but almost all dragons are at least aware of this body of lore.

The simplest forms of this study are based around attempts to understand the creation of the quickening rituals. It is believed by many dragons that the first quickenings occurred *accidentally*, fusing some other creature’s essence with that of an element, and creating the first dragons. Thus, all dragons make use of the mystical “calling” and “shaping” of essences to some degree or another.

The intellectual exploration of this lore is largely confined to individual practice, to mentor-student relationships, and to elemental lodges. Dragons do not maintain common libraries or academic schools (collective nests act as practical schools and testing grounds, not as places for thoughtful study). This being the case, the various traditions of calling on these mystical forms remain separate. Rare and secret abilities based on this lore, and the supposed holders of the same, are the subject of regular rumors.

For far more detail on this topic, see the Cosmology chapter.



Human Society

A few hundred years ago, a human group blending mystical power and craft skills transformed the body of sovereign flame drake into a huge and potent device known as a heart of flame. This artifact was capable of creating and manipulating heat on a scale previously unheard-of. Within a few years, this union had dozens of such creations; hearts of frost condensing water from the air, hearts of thunder shivering open mines and stripping them of metal in hours, hearts of song as communications systems, and hearts of wood as means for vastly accelerated plant growth within limited spaces. With these tools, and others that would come later, the guild of Artificers rose among humanity, decimating dragonkind, financing wars on other humanoids, and centralizing humanity into city-states. After the retreat of dragonkind to the Reach, their merchant power began to falter, but has not yet collapsed.

A LAND OF CITIES

Human cities are vast slums built of rough brick and tile. At their center lies a huge complex composed of hulking blocks of buildings, fashioned from stone and metal plates (often with obvious joins and rivets). Most of these buildings are ornately decorated with artificer ornamentation and church propaganda. Life in the central areas of the city is fairly high-quality, while life at the outskirts of the city is a struggle to rise above the workhouse and the dole lines. Overall, human cities are amid the throes of an industrial revolution based on artefact - a revolution that is *failing*.

THE NOBLE STOCK

Holders of the theoretical and legal power of the cities, the noble-born in many cities are moving to reclaim real power over their people. Noble blood is indicated by natural sorcerous talent; many nobles possess traits similar to the concordant and radiant traits of dragons. The nobles believe that their powers are the result of long-forgotten crosses with the near-human races decimated in the wars of centuries past. Some seek new mates that will increase the family powers, even hiring hunters in hopes of captive breeding. Others hope to lead an exodus to a simpler life, or an overthrow of guild and church.

THE GUILD

The real lords of the cities, the Guild is led by the Artificers, but contains all other skilled crafts as well. The guild is presently under tension as many city hearts are beginning to age and weaken, requiring greater and greater maintenance. Bounties for dragon-hunts are rising to astronomical sums.

THE CHURCH

With the advent of artefacts of faith, the church has begun a meteoric rise. While only a handful of human cities have replaced even one of their city hearts with a church-made artefact, the pressure to do so is growing.

Contested Ground

Dragon society conflicts with human society in a great many ways. The Artificers dispatch hunters against dragons whenever possible in order to retain their power. The current practices of the church are seen by many dragons as a threat that must be stamped out. The exodus beginning to take place from the human cities results in refugees and raiders crossing into areas that dragons wish to claim, and the expanding nature of Reach society means only serves to throw more fuel on the fire. While there has been no formal declaration, no massing of great armies, dragonkind and humanity are, from any large-scale perspective, at war. There are hundreds of 'fronts', dozens of conflicting agendas, and no clear-cut leadership to any side. Efforts among both kinds to unify their efforts have failed miserably; dragons simply don't organize well above the levels they have achieved, and human efforts are too factionalized and regionalized.

OUTLIER CONFLICTS

The vast majority of conflicts between humanity and dragons occur in the outlier islands and coastal regions. Territory claims, hunts, fights with smugglers, raiding, construction, and settling are all common and riddled with skirmishes, chases, and more subtle forms of conflict.

DRACONIC INFILTRATION

Some powerful and far-thinking fledges have recently begun to spend significant time using their allies and underlings to undermine the church practice of creating artefacts of faith. Some even go so far as to take on human form on occasion in order to accelerate this process. These efforts have only just begun to show results; a few church complexes have been isolated, had their guard and equipment rotations reduced, and then been subjected to direct assaults from fledges aiming to annihilate their practices. These first few successes, and the plunder of the destruction, have inspired other fledges to begin similar efforts - and have also caused the church to heighten security as much as possible.

HUMAN SOLDIERS

The only clearly-defined human soldiers in the war are dragon hunters and the inquisition. City-state garrisons and small armies play an occasional part, but only in select circumstances. Dragon hunters are largely mercenary; they're in it because the artificers pay very well indeed. The inquisition is a branch of the church whose cause is to root out and destroy any inhuman influence upon humanity, be it from other races, from dragons, or from diabolical powers. Inquisitorial units are heavily armed, are approved of by both church and guild, and often act almost entirely as a law unto themselves; their composition and training, however, vary so completely as to make any simple analysis impossible.

Making War

From a draconic perspective, the natural means of making war is to divide their enemies into smaller and more manageable groups, wear away at the groups, and remove them. If all goes well, the process is commonly as follows...

RECONAISSANCE

Before any offensive can begin, the enemy is scouted out. This is often done personally by the fledge managing the offense. In small conflicts, this is often the only fledge involved; in larger efforts, this is the fledge that will become central to the effort once they have plunder, territory, and other spoils to promise their future allies.

ISOLATION

The first objective any group of dragons has when fighting their enemies is to destroy all communications and supply lines, and “set pickets”. This step of an offensive is often ‘hired out’ for plunder; an older fledge may arrange for several younger ones to capture incoming shipments, destroy watchtowers and the like, burn boats, and patrol the region in return for the contents of those shipments.

RAIDING

Immediately after isolating the enemy, or at the same time if possible, more severe raids are made on the edges of main body of the human community. Fogs descend, buildings are set to burn, guards are picked off, wells fouled, potential plunder is taken where possible. Where possible, the community is broken into separate components. At all times, supplies and known leaders are attacked first.

“BREAKING THE BACK”

In most cases, after significant disruption and raiding, any given human population will take up a siege mentality, with a solid core of defenders attempting to keep things under control. In most draconic offenses, this is the point at which the main event occurs - the most powerful dragons involved engage the *perceived* strength of the defenders in an attempt to swiftly and visible destroy this core. Timing of this ‘showdown’ is essential. A successfully executed showdown may scatter the remaining resistance, making it easy to pick off piecemeal, while a failure most often causes the remaining humans to gain morale and “hold the line” to the bitter end.

FAILURE AND FLEXIBILITY

These tactics are hardly foolproof, but typically remain viable and useful even where enemies are prepared for them. Dragons do not so much practice specific maneuvers as an overall way of fighting, so that they can adapt to each situation as it arises.

The Diabolical

Once, long ago, there were many worlds, and it was possible to journey between them by means of a mystical network tucked ‘just behind’ common reality; through this medium, the souls of the dead migrated to new rebirths and reincarnations. However, one of these worlds was occupied by a group of creatures that learned to draw sustenance from essential forms, binding more and more essences into their bodies until they took on composite forms which obeyed odd rules of existence. These creatures became known as the diabolicals, and they became the most proficient travelers of the network between worlds, conquering and raiding and binding essences from many worlds to their own selves. Over time, their world was tied so strongly into the net between worlds that the two fused.

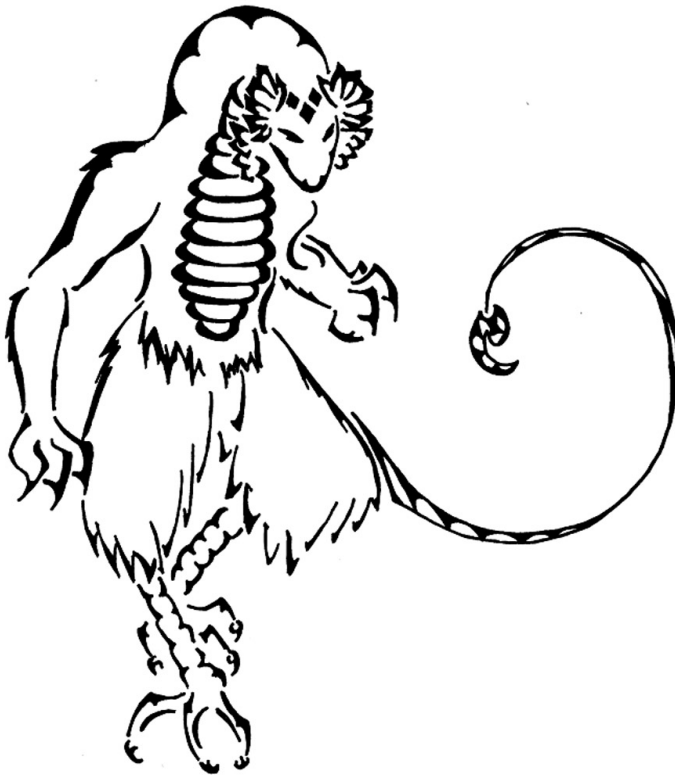
Tartarus was the result of this fusion, a hellish plane of reality that underlies the world of Hoard (and, indeed, many others besides), and the creatures that dwell within it are known as the diabolicals. It is their goal to gain entry to every world that they can, and to drag those worlds into Tartarus by assimilating the mystical natures of all things that exist within them.

A “regular” diabolical appears as a large beast made up of many other beasts and elements in a disquieting patchwork. A creature with eye sockets filled with blazing lightning, the hind legs of an antelope, the front legs of a jaguar, and the wings and head of a vulture, is undoubtedly either a diabolical or some creation of theirs. Because they share in the essences of multiple worlds, diabolicals cannot be slain; however, their bodies can be ‘killed’, which banishes them from the world and forces them to amalgamate a new form before they can be summoned or ‘break in’ once more.

The one great wisdom of humanity, in their youth, was to found a great organization of those that knew the means to cast out diabolicals and to ward against their coming. This organization became the church of mankind; and though the church worships no deity, they lay claim to guarding human souls traveling from life to life with their funerary rites, and protecting humanity from diabolical incursion.

The church has bent its goals in the last generations, and begun to believe that it is their duty not to ward out diabolicals, but to call those same diabolicals into the world and bind them into service, and away from harm, in the form of faithful artefacts. While this may seem a worthy goal, each diabolical called from Tartarus and bound into the world provides yet another anchor tying Tartarus closer to the world, reducing the efficacy of wards and making travel easier. Though the church denies it, every dragon understands that the binding of diabolicals in this fashion could ultimately result in the world collapsing into Tartarus itself.

Diabolicals are known to teach their powers from time to time, in lesser ways, to those that worship them. Diabolical cults spring up fairly regularly, in which creatures are sacrificed in a fashion that allows the diabolical to absorb some part of their essential nature and tie it to their own.

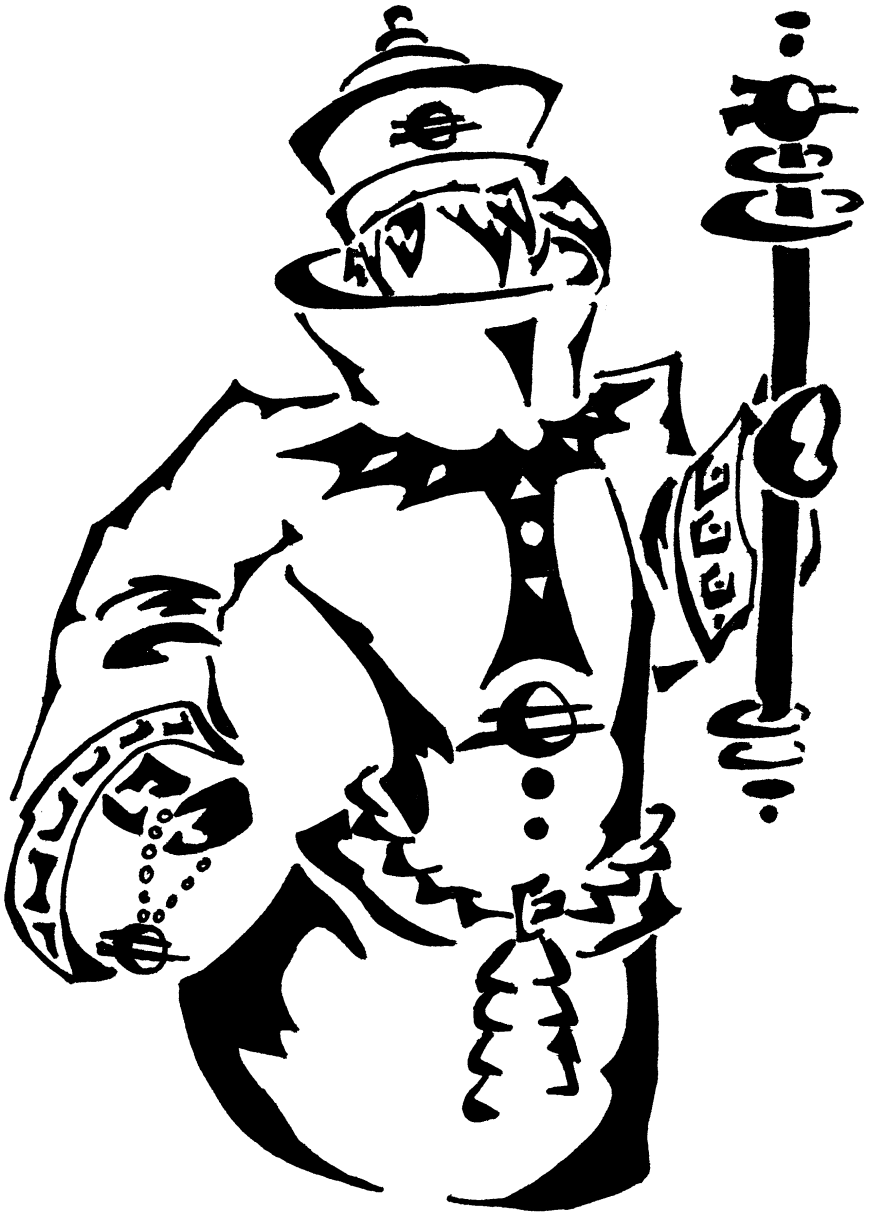


Diabolical Transformations

Diabolicals gain strength by sacrificing other creatures. This process is called rending; some part of the creature sacrificed is transferred to the diabolical or other being that the sacrifice is dedicated to - often physically. So, diabolicals are hybrid creatures. A few common forms:

- A cockatrice is a transformed rooster, given leathery wings, the sensory abilities of a bat, and added strength; they often act as “watchdogs”.
- A gryphon is a fusion of eagle and lion (or another hunting cat and bird); they acts as heavy combat troops for many cults.
- A Taric (kentar, saitar, etc..) is a transformed human, granted a lower half like that of a beast, such as a goat, horse, lion, or other creature.
- Demi-diabolicals are heavily altered humans that are in the process of becoming true diabolicals; their modifications vary wildly.
- Pure diabolicals, such as Mussushu (pictured above), often have a preferred form. Pure diabolicals, when slain, evaporate into a bloody mist; it is believed that they are not, and *cannot*, be truly killed.
- Hydras are dragons that have chosen to join the diabolicals; they often render their own fledge, gaining several sets of wings and heads.

11. Cosmology



Cosmology?

The contents of this section may be safely ignored when preparing for and playing through most Hoard adventures. It has been included here to allow players and Guides to gain a sense of why the magic and general oddities of the world operate in the way they do (allowing stronger character portrayal and adventure design). It may also be used to provide “babble” - a technical language that can be used to explain plot seeds and new creations, without breaking the sense of a cohesive world.

The terms used throughout this section (Lanan, Lares, Penat, and so on) are the terms used in the world of play itself; these are the words the characters would use to describe this material. There are a significant number of unusual terms collected here that have been kept out of the rest of the book, so that players that are not interested in such technical material can pass it by.

OVERVIEW

The world of Hoard operates on a cosmology that, if it were held in the real world, would likely be considered a set of religious precepts. In the world of the game, however, the specifics of this belief system explain most mystical workings - some of which are blatantly, obviously real.

This system of belief is held by dragonkind and the majority of humanity; the primary point of difference in their philosophies is that dragons have historical evidence that allowing a diabolical to enter the physical world, *even if bound*, allows it to undermine khala. The human church, an outgrowth of the professional performers of the death and rebirth rites, has several times treated presentation of evidence towards this possibility as an attempt to undermine their standing and destroy their power.

THE THREE PORTIONS

The general view is that the universe consists of three parts, each of which possesses distinctly different makeup and functions:

- Common experience is of Lanan, the manifest world. Each creature of the world - every hare and shark, man and dragon - is one of the Lares, the creatures of Lanan.
- The spiritual dimension is Penat; it is not an actual place in any meaningful sense, but is the net of energies and accumulations, the fabric of the laws that cause water to become ice when it chills, rocks to fall when thrown upward. Even so, there are beings that have an existence within it, though many exist only for an instant; these are the Pentates.
- Finally, there is that which lies beyond the world and the fabric that binds it into existence - Tartara, the outer darkness, which has some (but not all) of the qualities of a place, and where dwell the Tares, known to the vulgar as Diabolicals.

Rakhal

*“The rakhal of water is to boil when it is hot, to freeze when cold;
the rakhal of lightning is to make thunder, to call fire;
the rakhal of mankind is to meddle beyond their understanding.”*

-Draconic saying.

WHAT RAKHAL ARE

The world is formed by the intersection of *rakhal*. These are principles of organization, which tell all things how to behave. There is a rakhal of water, which dictates the temperatures at which it freezes, boils, becomes steam, that describes ice as floating on water. There are rakhal for each great law of existence, for each element, and for each species. Rakhal are not intelligences, but principles. If the rakhal of “lionhood” was *made manifest*, then it might become a kind of totemic “father lion”, but rakhal are not normally manifest.

Penat is primarily composed of rakhal; all energies flow in means and ways dictated by these principles. It is believed that the rakhal themselves also ebb and flow, wax and wane, and that their existence spans Tartara. Thus, it is not only possible, but likely that other worlds exist in Tartara - ones where the rakhal have different strengths and are linked in different ways, so that each of these other worlds would have fundamentally different laws of existence.

All beings except the Tares are governed by the rakhal; creatures that do not accord with the rakhal are forced out of the world, as the Tares have been. It is believed that the Tares were once beings of another world that broke the strictures of the rakhal in their quest for power, and that their world fragmented and fell into Tartara.

RAKHAL IN THE GAME

Rakhal are a means for characters in the game world to express “the way the universe works” in ways that would otherwise be anachronistic or unusual for the setting. Just as high magic replaces most application of high technology within the setting, rakhal are a magical rather than scientific description of such topics as statistical rules, cultural standards, and (most notably) the laws of physics and the various strong and weak forces of the universe. Where a person thinking in scientific terms would say that metal conducts electricity, a character thinking in the terms of the setting would say that for lightning to travel along metal is part of the rakhal of these things. This analogy applies to matters of practical proof as well - a well-educated character in the world would be dubious of a statement that such-and-such an occurrence or property was an expression of this or that specific rakhal without demonstration and experience - though the ability to use mystical powers to “shortcut” this process in some instances makes this easier than it might be for others.

Khal

*“This flame exists because of tension of the universe.
It is a part the rakhal of fire to burn where sparks are fed to dry grass.
I throw sparks on dry grass, placing tension on these things,
and the rakhal of fire spins out the kahl of a single flame. And here it is.”*

WHAT KHAL ARE

The actual and specific points of intersection between rakhal have tension; this tension gives rise to a vast profusion of lesser forms - the khal. A khal is an individual and specific spiritual essence; khal manifest into the world as specific things. Thus, every wolf in a pack of wolves possesses their own khal (or, if you like, is the current incarnation of their khal), though each of these khala were created from the tension between the “wolf” rakhal and others. Each campfire on a battlefield is a (short-lived) khal manifesting, spun out through tension with the rakhal of flame. Each dragon possesses a khal - and each dragon is quickened into the world by binding their khal to a specific elemental rakhal.

Living creatures that act in accord with their khal are centered and strengthened - and living creatures that react as the khal of another demands are likewise strengthened. Upon death, the consciousness of a being is drawn out of Lanan and through Penat, reuniting with their khal in an “endless dream” that they will wake from only if they are called to manifest in life again. This transition is not without peril; there are Pentates that would waylay a consciousness in transit, and the Tares are ever-interested in diverting the newly-dead outside of the world, to use them as a channel for consuming their khal. This journey outward is the Ajakhal, and in human society, rites are performed over the dying and the dead to aid in the passage, just as the opposite rites (Akakhal) are performed over a pregnant mother to allow a consciousness to return to life unhindered and unsullied. Dragons neither use nor require such rites; the rite of quickening is sufficient.

Tares, having broken with the rakhal, find their khala disintegrating - which leads inevitably to their own dissolution. They solve this, as best they can, by binding the khala of others to themselves; while those other khala dissolve slowly, this process empowers the Tares. However, the nature of the universe is such that khala may only be affected from within Lanan - *by definition*, Lanan is the place where khala are manifest and are affected, and any being affecting khala is therefore in Lanan.

KHAL IN THE GAME

In the game text, an “essential nature” may be either a rakhal or a khal, depending on what is affected. A radiant dragon has the power to restore a creature to the ‘template’ described by its khal; a concordant dragon can cause certain khal to “split” by focusing energy on their manifestation.

Rhet

*If you would gain height while flying, you must climb the wind.
If you would gain strength before a leap, you must tense against the ground.
If you would gain rhet in life, you must act in accord with the khala.
Each wind, each ground, each khal, is unique.*

WHAT RHET IS

Rhet is a form of *potential* energy, rather than energy in action. A static charge has potential energy; when that charge sparks, the potential is used up. Where a creature accords with the khal of a sapient being, or with their own khal, the strength they gain is rhet. Like other forms of potential energy, rhet is only really useful in the spending; spending rhet creates movement in metaphorical terms - it flexes the way that universal laws (rakhala) are locally expressed (khal). All creatures can expend their rhet to affect the world - a creature that is “on a lucky streak” is expending rhet in the simplest possible way. Trained mystical abilities are methods which allow the wielder to expend their rhet more directly.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RHET

A creature with significant rhet feels more centered and confident than the situation might otherwise call for. A creature with no rhet generally feels off-balance and concerned. So, if a dragon acts boldly and confidently, it is likely that either they currently possess significant rhet, or that they wish to give others the impression of doing so. Among dragons, this is a recognized fact; almost every dragon tries to act as if they were more centered and certain than they actually are, so that others will believe that they are currently especially well-prepared. Most humans are easier to ‘read’; only those humans with leadership abilities tend to go as far out of their way to falsify confidence. From the perspective of those humans that have actually spoken with a dragon, this often leads to the view that dragons are almost monstrously arrogant and preening. From a draconic perspective, this leads to the view that humans are amazingly passive and unable to manage even the simplest matters of social positioning.

RHET IN THE GAME

In game terms, coins in Hoard are directly representative of rhet. A character can easily gain coins for fulfilling their drives (acting in according with their khal) or for acting in ways that suit the influences of others (acting in accordance with those khala). The ways of spending coins correspond almost directly to the uses of rhet; they ‘create luck’, fuel abilities, and so on.

Harhet

*It is your nature to desire wealth for your fledge.
Wealth is suited to the rakahl of dragons, and thus with your kahl.
With treasures, you may accumulate rhet.*

WHAT HARHET IS

Harhet is the “natural panoply” of a creature, the stuff that is suitable to their kahl and which defines their role in the world. A creature that is surrounded by their harhet finds it easier to gain rhet. For a human noble, a stronghold, servants, and fine clothing are not just accessories to their life - possession of such things is part of who they are spiritually.

REPERCUSSIONS

The idea of harhet means that if a human in the world of Hoard was born into the wrong class of people, they would never be comfortable until they found their “natural place” in the world, matching their harhet to their kahl. Among dragons, harhet is fairly simple stuff; dragons want territory, lairs, and treasure because those things (possibly among others) match *what a dragon really is*.

The combined ideas of kahl and harhet also mean that while neither dragons nor humans believe in “destiny”, they can easily believe that a person might be perfectly suited for a life that they are not living and have never experienced. The idea of a “trueborn lord” would be interpreted in the world of Hoard as “one whose kahl and harhet accord with lordship”. Such a person would be born ready to fit the role, and will naturally be lucky and empowered as they move towards it, since they will accumulate rhet more easily as they do so, but there’s no sense of inevitability involved.

HARHET IN THE GAME

In the game, treasure is harhet to dragons - but, notably, not to other creatures. Should it become important enough to be worth figuring, the Guide may decide to apply the treasury mechanics to some other physical goods or circumstances for Guide characters. However, in most cases where the gain and loss of coins for a Guide character or group over time would be valuable to know, this isn’t worth doing actual calculations or writing a “treasury table” for. In such cases, the Guide should simply decide what kinds of things are the “natural surroundings” for a given kind of person or creature, and make a rough estimate of how they will lose and gain coins in such surroundings.

A group that wishes to engage with these ideas more fully might want to create just such “alternate treasuries”, and allow general lore, Lind senses, or other abilities to determine what is and is not harhet to another species or individual. Groups wanting to really run with the idea might want to adapt what “counts” on the treasury table to vary by individual, so that each member of the fledge has slightly different harhet.

11. How To Guide



What You Do

The Guide has more of a *variety* of stuff to do for a game of Hoard than players do. In general, this shouldn't be a chore - and if it becomes one, seriously consider "farming out" some of the tasks to players that enjoy them. Here are the things a Guide typically does and coordinates:

CREATE SITUATIONS AND ADVENTURES

The Guide manages and details the world. Creating and showing off an interesting world, at least in the places and situations relevant to the characters, is often aided by solid preparation. This includes assigning and managing traits and numbers for the scenes and obstacles that the characters will encounter.

INTRODUCE AND DESCRIBE SCENES

When the character fly to the territory of another fledge, the Guide describes that location and the characters in it. As characters interact with scenes, the Guide usually invents and describes the results (though Guides that make strong use of scripting will often find that some players also enjoy doing so).

PLAY GUIDE CHARACTER

When players take on character roles and speak as their characters, the Guide speaks as others. It's entirely possible to "hand off" additional roles to players whose characters aren't on the scene; some players, again, enjoy this challenge, while others don't.

HELP PLAYERS WITH RULES

During character creation and play, the Guide is often the person that knows the rules best. As such, Guides often act as teachers and reminders in play as the group's understanding of how to play Hoard solidifies.

MANAGE SPOTLIGHT AND PACE

The attention of the Guide focuses the attention of the group. When scenes drag, it's often the Guide that moves the group along. When one character isn't getting enough spotlight time, it's often the Guide that provides things to change the focus. While the whole group should always be invested in keeping the action interesting, the Guide is often in the best position to manage this.

BALANCING THE GAME

Hoard characters can be specialized in very different activities. A sibilant dragon and a rampant one are good at notably differing things, for example. It's important for a Guide to attempt to provide opportunities which will make the different kinds of characters that the players choose to play equally viable. Getting a good balance in Hoard is all about providing opportunities for every character to enjoy their chosen traits and specialties; as a Guide, always keep this in mind.

Preparing The Pieces

Adventure, as a term, is used very loosely in this game. An adventure, at base, is composed of an objective, some obstacles, some opportunities, and possibly a twist or two. These are the parts that you'll need to prepare in advance - and depending on your group and style of play.

THE CHAIN OF EVENTS

An adventure is always rooted in events - something is happening in the world. Perhaps dragon hunters are trying to set up a base on a nearby island, or a patron of the fledge finds that one of his territories, rarely visited, has been claimed by smugglers. That's the basic action; find one that suits you, and decide on reactions from different groups until you have a chain of interesting events that is going somewhere - aim somewhere full of struggle and conflict. Decide where it will go if the characters don't have an effect (and make sure you're all right with that result; when the characters get involved, they might not want to *stop* those events).

FIND SOME POSSIBLE OBJECTIVES

No preparations you make matter unless they matter to the players and the characters. Having a Guide character offer the characters territory in order to fulfill some mission matters only if the characters want territory. With 'what the characters want' in mind, think of several different ways that they could get those things from the situation you've sketched out - either by way of their own ambitions, or in response to an outside offer. Getting the smugglers off an island, subverting a human diplomat's retinue, kidnapping a diabolist, stealing the treasure from a group of artificers, or winning a wager against another fledge are all possible objectives.

OBSTACLES & ANTAGONISTS

Every objective has some form of resistance to whatever it is that the characters are attempting to accomplish. These are obstacles, and might range from storms at sea, to loyal bodyguards, to cryptic puzzles. Come up with a few obstacles that stand in the way of achieving the objective, and possible locations and "set pieces" you might use to show those off. The antagonists chapter is often helpful here, as a way quickly finding and having notes for active groups that might (or might not) act as obstacles.

TWISTS & SECRETS

Most good adventures also have a twist or two. A twist is something that complicates things, or which the characters *do not know* going into things. If the hunters that the fledge has been hired to track and capture have a captive dragon, and are in turn being hunted (with the intent of killing them) by that dragon's fledge, things can get a bit more confused. Twists that spring from the island where the characters live can spur new adventures at home.

Presenting The Pieces

In play, you won't just tell the players about the events and possible objectives, straight out. You'll present those by having them see things, having guide characters come to see them - by setting and unfolding scenes. Consider each of the pieces, and a couple of ways that you might present it to the players, in advance. A few good things to keep in mind:

HAVE A NOTABLE CAST

Information presented as statements made by other characters is more entertaining if those other characters are interesting. If another fledge mentions how a group of local smugglers supposedly possesses a stone egg, that becomes *far* more interesting if they also mention that some rivals of the characters are out to get it, too, or if it was stolen from another dragon the player characters already know and respect. Take the time to have the recurring characters that have attitudes relating to the player characters - both good and bad - and ensure that *far* any give adventure, at a couple of them want the characters to act (or not act) in specific ways.

MYSTERY, DANGER, REWARD

When presenting some piece of your prepared stuff, always make sure that each piece is presented as containing mystery, danger, or possible rewards. Encounters, twists, even "the short history of what happened" can be cast in terms of these things, and should be. If there's treasure involved, or is likely to be in the opinion of the speaker, *mention it*. If something is weird and not-right, *say so*. If the captain of the guards is a killing machine that moves with well-oiled grace, *describe that*.

KEEP SCENE DESCRIPTIONS SIMPLE

A description of a scene that takes more than two or three sentences is probably longer than is helpful. Noting that the characters are hidden in the trees behind some undergrowth, looking out at an encampment of loud, shouting human beings that have long spears, traps and strange cages is plenty to set a stage. It's good to hit at least a couple of sensory impressions in the description, and use words relating to *actions* - the dragons are looking, the humans are shouting. But trying to make every scene a tactical or sensory extravaganza is just a way of making your players eyes glaze over.

KEEP THE STRUCTURE LOOSE

There's a temptation to structure the objective, obstacles, opportunities, and twists rigidly, creating a complete "plot" for the adventure. Avoid structuring things so much that there's "a right way" to do things. It's almost always more fun to go with the players, work the pieces in on the fly, make up additions as needed and discard bits that get 'skipped'.

Starting A Session

Before starting in on any a game session, everyone should have a comfortable seat. There should be common piles (or bowls) of coins and dice within reach of everyone. Everyone should have pencil, paper, surfaces on which to write, and somewhere they can roll dice, within reach.

RULES OVERVIEW

If the group is unfamiliar with the rules, go over the basic system of coins as rewards and payments, and over the standard uses of aspects and masteries. Ensure that everyone understands the general idea of what traits do and what a character is made up of. Expect that you'll be reviewing, expanding on, and teaching further rules as you go along.

CHARACTER CREATION AND CHECKUP

Building characters can make up a significant chunk of the first session a group has together. It's not uncommon for a roleplaying group to set aside a specific gathering specifically for purposes of making characters; in Hoard, this will only usually be necessary if the characters are Soarlings or older dragons. At every session, even the first, you should always check up on the traits that the characters have, checking with the players to see if they feel as if there have been enough opportunities to make use of their various drives, influences, and masteries, and to generally show off their characters in interesting ways. If anyone notes that they feel as if one of their character features could use a bit more play, pay attention; they're telling you about very specific kinds of things that you could provide to make the game better for that player. There's a balancing point between being open and interested in what your group has to say, and dragging it out of them, though; try not to spend too long on this stuff.

HAVE A FIRST SCENE

A good session starts with a great first scene, and builds from there. Sometimes, this can be a scene that grounds the characters in their lives, making everything after feel more solid. Other times, proposing a script that ends with "and here you are, in the thick of the action", and asking players to amend in better reasons why this is so can be effective. Different ways of starting off a session or an adventure have different effects on how that session plays out - and if your adventure will span more than one session of play, always keep an eye out as the evening get later, for a great place to stop and start up again the next session.

KEEP THING HAPPENING

At all times - when goals are being set in conflict, when scenes are going on or being changed, when scripts are being tossed around - always focus on making sure that interesting things happen. If the answer on the tip of your tongue is "nothing happens", think again.

Managing The World

Managing the world includes managing the rules for world stuff. Here are some guidelines for doing so:

COLORFUL ASPECTS

Whether as part of preparation, or on the fly, it falls to the Guide to assign aspects to scenes, items, and characters. In general terms, if something comes under scrutiny, it should always have at least one aspect which describes it, and as many as are needed to give it the “weight” it deserves under the scaling rules. If that aspect cannot be removed, the Guide should note that such an aspect is also a trait. Colorful and descriptive aspects make conflicts more interesting, and also vastly improve the entertainment value of the Lind mastery; if a box of gold has the aspect “Twice-Stolen Treasure”, it’s a lot more fun (and provides a lot more interest in Lind investigation) than if it’s aspect is simply “Lots of Gold”.

TOKENS AND THE GUIDE

The Guide doesn’t manage coins in quite the same fashion as most players do. Instead, the guide manages multiple pools of coins - one for each notable character, and one for each group of extras. For the most part, these coins will only be drawn if they are going to be put into use; otherwise, there’s no point in getting them out just to put them away (although, sometimes, drawing the tokens for a Guide character can grab player attention even if you don’t expect to use those tokens).

SCREENING DICE

The Guide will often make rolls for more than one character or group at a time, and need to divide those into striking and blocking pools out of view. The easiest way to do this is to put each bunch of dice in front of you, drop a piece of paper between yourself and the players, and split up the groups. When players reveal striking dice, lift the page.



Keeping The Pace

As play begins and progresses, there will always be moments where it will be useful to get things moving a little more quickly, or slow things down a bit. Here are some tricks that help:

WHY STOP ENGAGING?

Many Guides present a few ‘adventure hooks’ to the players, and when just one of those gains their interest, stop attempting to grab the players and move on to the rest of the material. This isn’t a bad thing, but there’s no reason not to engage the players more, give them more ways to approach a situation, and present them with conflicting opportunities. Strong engagement at the beginning gives makes everything else becomes more interesting, and gives more depth and value to their decisions on how to handle things.

THE NEXT THING HAPPENS

If things are going slowly, don’t shy away from having events in the world carry on entirely without the characters. And never be shy about presenting obstacles - if there are hunters about, don’t wait for the dragons to go looking for them; have them hear scouts calling out, see hunters not far back on their trail, or just throw them straight into a fight. When all else fails, attack.

THE LAST THING UNRAVELS

If the characters are working on some plan that has several distinct stages, even if they are very simple stages, have things they’ve already completed fall apart once in a while. Their captives might escape. Their entrance to a fortress (and intended escape route) can be loudly discovered. And so on. This isn’t something to overdo, but it’s good to toss in here and there.

BREAKS AND RETRENCHING

Sometimes it’s important to slow things down a bit, and give the characters time to discuss, plan, interact, and hit a few of their drives. Or it’s time to change the spotlight to a different kind of action. In such cases, have the opposition or the targets of the action change what they’re doing. They might retreat; they might drag out the objective the characters seek and threaten it in an attempt to force a diplomatic solution. They might just hide, or call in help.

THE SHOWDOWN

Closing off an adventure is most satisfying when there’s something big involved - a climactic event. Do *not* plan these as “stage pieces” in advance; if you do, that means you’ve already decided how things end, and you’re making the choices of the players meaningless. Improvise instead; reveal your twists or your remaining obstacles, in one big scene where the characters at least have the opportunity to close things out. Players will sometimes set these up for you; when they do, go with it - with a few unexpected turns, if needed.

How Much Treasure?

A basic motivator for dragons is treasure. An adventure should contain the *opportunity* to gain a fledge anywhere from five to fifty treasure items. Keep it near the low end if the group is “building up” to an rarity, or just starting out, but otherwise let it flow regularly.

Table Rules

Changing the way that dragons work in your game is fairly easy stuff, and is most easily done by means of the following four methods:

BROADENING TRAITS & MASTERIES

It's possible to take one of the traits, and apply the drive, influence, or mastery across all dragons in the game. If all dragons have the aspirant or revenant mastery, the game changes significantly. If you broaden some part of a trait, you'll need to either exclude the rest of the trait, or replace that part so that the trait remains viable. When broadening rules in this way, it's a good idea to note whether the “flavor” of the ability is also being made universal - if you granted all dragons the rampant mastery, state if you mean to make them all up-front and blunt-spoken.

EXCLUDING

Traits can simply be eliminated from the game. If there are no Linds, fledges will operate differently. If all the affinities except flame are dropped from the game, dragons become much more clearly defined in elemental terms. Be careful in eliminating too many personality traits, though; such traits create variety in characters.

INVENTING AND MODIFYING

There's every reason to create new traits and try them out. Be aware, though, that every new trait indicates a new kind of activity that you might need to add to your adventures - be ready to rebalance your gameplay to include these traits.

SYSTEM CHANGES

The most significant changes are those that alter the basic system of play itself - removing scripting or adversity, or changing how awards work, for example. Making such changes should only be done with careful thought about how the change will affect everything else in the game. Making it so that a blocking die stops only one successful strike, rather than one from each striker, renders “leaders” far weaker (and removes one of the neatest tactical uses of the savant trait, which is stacking up attacks to overcome such blockades).

12. Antagonists



A World Of Others

This section of the book summarizes a few of the overall groups of non-dragons. Each entry describes one kind of groups, where they're found, the groups they act in, and gives numbers for comparison, scripting, and conflicts.

Each group has a table showing a variety of different members, ranged from least powerful to most powerful. The tables include the following information:

- **Name:** What this type of character is called.
- **Coins:** How many coins each character of this type “comes with”.
- **Traits:** The number of traits a character of this type possesses - typical traits for members of the general group are described following the table.
- **Limit:** The action limit of the character.
- **Mastery:** The number of masteries that such a character possesses, and the scope that those masteries operate on. The degrees of scope are given as “dragon equivalents”, and they will not apply to all masteries, but are listed for convenience.
- **Special Notes:** Some tables include special notes, such as (+X) or (*). These indicate the presence of special rules described below the table.

EXTRAS IN CONFLICT

Characters whose traits are significantly lower than those of the player dragons are considered extras. Extras, and groups of extras, use slightly different rules in conflict:

- Where possible, extras always form groups of like kinds. There should never be more than two groups of extras on the same side of any scene if it can be avoided.
- Groups of extras strike and block as a group, and share coins. They can use any and all traits and masteries any of them hold. The group uses the *highest* action limit in the group, with a bonus based on the number of members in the group:

<i>Extras in group</i>	1-2	4-8	9-15	16-24	25-35	36-48	49+
<i>Action Bonus</i>	+0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6

- Extras cannot cover strikes on them with fallout. Instead, they may cover unblocked strikes by having individual members “lost” (succumb to the striker’s goal), as follows:

<i>Extras Lost</i>	1	4	9	16	25	36	49
<i>Dice Covered</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Pirates, Smugglers & Exiles

Those humans operating outside of the law operate all along the coast, and often have bases, camps, and even lasting settlements among the outlier islands. An entire 'pirate culture' exists, including not only sea-brigands, but also smugglers and settlers in exile. Most notable among these are descendants of the once-noble family of Jaina, who possess natural magic, and have become a culture-within-a-culture: The Sea Witches.



Common Groupings

A *landing party* might be a group of deckhands led by a midshipman, or group of seadogs or boarding marines led by their captain; if the ship has a sea witch among the crew, they might also go along. A *skeleton crew* for a ship occurs when several landing parties are offloaded; it is usually led by a midshipman, and composed of seadogs and deckhands. A *full crew* is dozens of men at least, a captain, and usually a witch. A *settlement* is a great number of settlers, a settlement leader (or several), and a scattering of other types, depending on who is in port. A *witch-gather* is a convocation of a dozen or more sea witches of varying ranks, called to discuss "family business".

Characters

NAME	COINS	TRAITS	LIMIT	MASTERY
Settler	1	3	3	-
Deckhand	2	3	3	-
Seadog	2	3	3	-
Midshipman	3	4	4	-
Boarding Marine	3	4	4	-
Smuggler Captain	4	4	5	-
Apprentice Sea Witch	4	4	5	1 /HATCHLING
Settlement Leader	5	5	5	1 /HATCHLING
Noble Exile	5	5	6	1 /HATCHLING
Pirate Captain	6	5	6	1 /HATCHLING
Legendary Smuggler	6	6	6	1 /HATCHLING
Adept Sea Witch	7	6	7	1 /FLEDGLING
Pirate 'King'	7	6	7	2 /FLEDGLING
Master Sea Witch	7	6	7	2 /SOARLING

Traits & Aspects

Common traits among the sailing folk include: *Dirty Fighter*, *Seasoned Sailor*, *Quick-Footed*, *Veteran Raider*, *Charming Rogue*, *Witchborn*, *Strong as an Ox*, and *Keen-eyed*. Masteries are may be 'attached' to these traits or other in whatever fashion the Guide considers sensible. The life outside the law also may leave some lingering aspects - *Horribly Scarred*, *Peg-legged*, *Hook-handed*, and *One-eyed* aren't all that rare.

Masteries

Pirates, Smugglers, and Settlement Leaders generally possess masteries that allow them to excel in straightforward conflicts; masteries that mimic the defiant, valiant, and rampant masteries are good choices for these kinds of characters; the canniest might also possess the savant mastery. Noble Exiles and Sea Witches possess masteries of a mystical nature; most of these are affinity masteries, with wind and frost affinities being common; unlike artificers and diabolicals, these are inherent abilities, just as dragons possess.

Cultists & Diabolicals

Diabolical cults often hide within other groups in civilized territory, working to spread their influence and acquire living sacrifices that they can render into greater strength. A few construct hidden centers and strongholds outside of civil territory, where the walls between worlds have grown weak enough to employ their rendering ceremonies and bring forth the hybrid beings of Tartarus (as described in the setting chapter).



Common Groupings

A *small cult* is led by a simple leader or magus, and includes a handful of cultists. *Large cults* often have several leaders, a demi-diabolical master, a fully diabolical patron, and a scattering of many other types; large cults tend to create “operating groups” for different jobs, and only rarely gather together. Powerful cults operate holding facilities, which often have *elite guard crews* as well, often made up of a large group of cultists and slaves, with a gryphon as heavy power or a tauric as their captain.

Characters

NAME	COINS	TRAITS	LIMIT	MASTERY
Cult Slave	-	1	2	-
Cultist	1	1	2	-
Cockatrice	2	1 (+2)	3 (+1)	1 /FLEDGLING
Cult Magus	2	1 (+2)	3 (+1)	1 /FLEDGLING
Cult Leader	2	1 (+3)	3 (+2)	1 /FLEDGLING
Gryphon	3	1 (+4)	3 (+2)	2 /SOARLING
Minatar / Kentar / Saitar	3	2 (+4)	3 (+2)	2 /SOARLING
Demi-Diabolical	4	2 (+5)	4 (+3)	2 /LORDLING
Weak Diabolical	4	2 (+6)	4 (+3)	3 /LORDLING
Hydra	5	2 (+8)	4 (+5)	3 /SOVEREIGN

Traits & Aspects

Actual trait numbers for cultist and diabolicals are those not listed as bonuses (+X), and include: *Fanatical Believer*, *Sacrificial Adept*, *Preacher of Mysteries*, and *Born of Tartarus*. Such traits never include masteries.

The trait bonuses (+X) are notable or lingering aspects, which include *Vulture-headed*, *Eagle-winged*, *Cat-clawed*, *Scorpion-tailed*, *Three-headed*, and *Reborn in Flames*, among others. Each of these aspects also grants a benefit to the character that possesses it, either raising their action limit by one or granting them a mastery - so, the limit listings show the regular rating, and then the rating with their bonus. All masteries held by cultists and diabolicals are gained by means of such aspects. If radiant abilities or similar powers are available to a fledge, the Guide should decide which aspects grant which bonuses, and whether they are notable or lingering, in case those aspects are stripped away.

Masteries

Cults and diabolicals have masteries that mimic almost all of those available to dragons, including breed and affinity masteries. There are three masteries that diabolicals cannot mimic - those attached to the concordant, radiant, and revenant traits. Diabolicals have their own secret network, and thus their own version of hierophant mastery, but since this mastery has no effect on player dragons (who are always notable characters), it may generally be ignored.

Hunters & Arteficers

The Arteficers guild hires dragon hunters on a regular basis, paying rates that continue to rise (as most dragon-hunters do not return from even a single hunt). In addition, they maintain work camps and significant coastal fortresses. All of these are common targets for dragons, partly out of long-term self-preservation and partly because while artefacts are typically useless to dragons, the arteficers *also* work with and pay in other goods that dragons consider treasure.



Common Groupings

A *Scouting Party* is three to seven scouts, and sometimes a master scout. *Hunting Parties* are composed five to fifty hunters and veteran hunters, led by a hunt master or legendary hunter. *Fieldwork Teams* are made up of an arteficer (of whatever rank), an a contingent of four to ten guards. *Hunting Encampments* group together several scouting parties and hunting parties, as well as a few guards. A *Butcher Fort* contains arteficers of all ranks, guards, and often a couple of encampments worth of others.

Characters

NAME	COINS	TRAITS	LIMIT	MASTERY
Guard	1	2	3	-
Green Hunter	2	2	3	-
Scout	3	2	4	-
Master Scout	4	3	5	1 /HATCHLING
Novice Artificer	4	3 (+1)	5	1 /FLEDGLING
Veteran Hunter	5	3	5	2 /FLEDGLING
Apprentice Arteficer	5	4 (+2)	6	2 /FLEDGLING
Arteficer Adept	6	4 (+2)	6	2 /SOARLING
Hunt Master	6	4	6	3 /SOARLING
Master Arteficer	7	4 (+3)	7	3 /SOARLING
Legendary Hunter	7	5	7	4 /SOARLING
Legendary Arteficer	7	5 (+4)	7	4 /LORDLING

Traits & Aspects

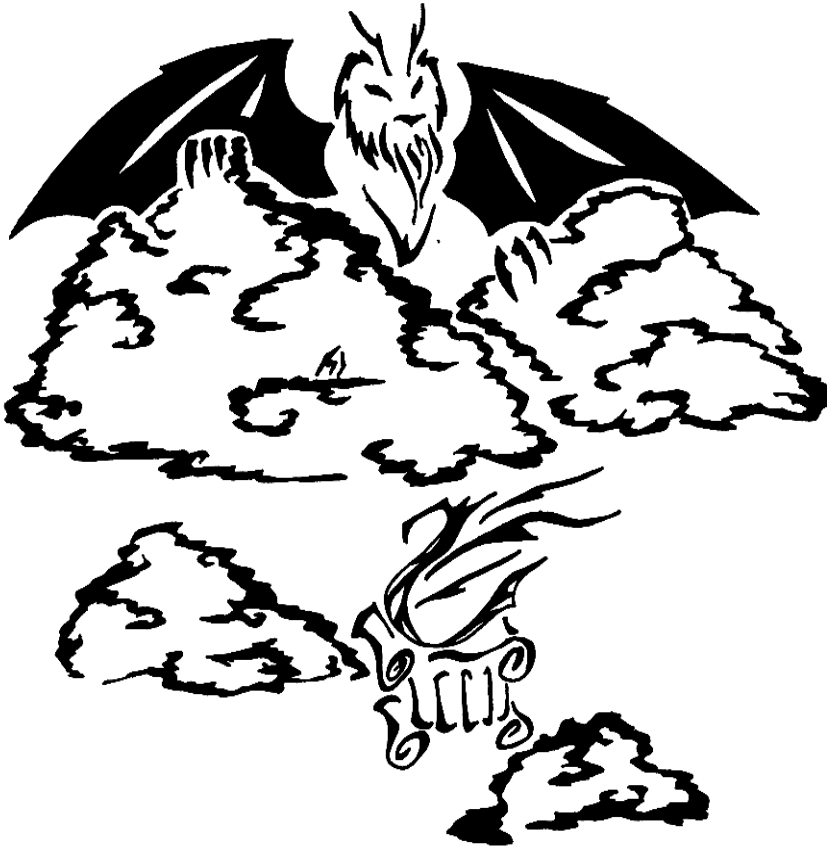
Actual trait numbers for dragon hunters and artificers are those not listed as bonuses (+X), and include: *Watchful*, *Swift-footed*, *Skilled Tactician*, *Warmonger*, *Trained Hunter*, and *Canny fighter*.

The trait bonuses (+X) are notable or lingering aspects representing equipment; these include *Lens of Restoration*, *Scales of Enhancement*, *Rod of Frost*, *Flame Spine*, *Thunder Crown*, among others. Each of these aspects grants a mastery - so all masteries held by artificers (but not hunters) are gained by means of equipment.

Masteries

Scouts and Dragon Hunters possess independent masteries, which almost always mimic one or more of the masteries of defiant, rampant, valiant, or savant. Artificers gain their masteries from equipment build from the bodies of dragons; these masteries may mimic affinity masteries, or the masteries for the ascendant, radiant, or concordant traits. Only artificers are able to use this equipment; such objects are loathsome to dragons, and *reduce* the level of any treasury they are kept with by a value of ten.

13. Rare Treasures



Rarities Of Change

While all dragons value treasure, there are certain forms of treasure that carry mystical effects, and are valued far above the standard. These are rare treasures. While artefacts are built on stolen power (whether from dragons or diabolicals), the rare treasures are built on principles of *transformation*; those that employ such items are forever changed by their use. This being the case, each of the treasures described here causes permanent loss of some feature or features, and permanent gain of others. There are abilities that can only be gained by means of rare treasures.

VALUE AND CREATION

Each rare treasure includes a basic value, as well as describing the “standard” process required to create or obtain it. In most cases, a rare treasure that *can* be traded is actually traded among dragons for more than this value - the value given is the lowest reasonable price, not the highest.

FREQUENCY OF APPEARANCE

Rare treasure usually begins to become a possibility for a fledge after they reach the soaring age; before that point, simple possession of enough normal treasure is generally a much more pressing issue. By the time a fledge reaches sovereign age, they should have had *opportunities* to claim up to two rare treasures for each member of the fledge - in most cases, the fledge won't be able to actually go after more than one per member, but there are fledges that seek rare treasures as a fairly primary goal.

SPLITTING THE TREASURY

In order to decide who ought to get any given rare treasure, fledges can keep a running tally of how much of their treasure “actually belongs” to each of them. Until a rare treasure is actually in play, though, there's no reason to be concerned with this - most fledges start keeping careful track only when some member of the fledge actually possesses such an item.

CREATING NEW RARITIES

The rare treasures described in this section are meant to also act as examples for creation of further rarities. A rare treasure should follow the general format here - it should have a basic value, description, origin or means of creation, and a description of what is lost and what is gained by making use of it. On the whole, the rarities shown in this section are of the greatest degree of complication that should be allowed; concepts that require much more complicated mechanics are generally a poor idea.



Body Gilding

Body gilding is rare primarily because of how it is acquired; most well-populated islands have a handful of gilded dragons - often in the same fledge. This form of treasure is exactly what it sounds like; a dragon with gilding has precious metals and gems built into edging and designs on their scales. Body gilding can never be found, only made, though gaining the willingness of the makers typically requires an adventure in itself.



CREATING BODY GILDING

Body gilding is created in only one place; the isle of Rakathas, found among the core islands of the Reach. The gild-smiths are dragons, but so utterly encased in precious metals that little else can be known; there is a persistent rumor that they have a metal affinity. They demand a single task of each dragon that wishes to become gilded; thereafter, the subject need only supply the necessarily value in treasure. The smiths can upgrade existing gilding as well; the subject need only bring the difference in values. The tasks asked by the smiths are always different; the Guide is encouraged to be creative.

The Shift: Influence

Upon acquiring body gilding, a dragon loses all influences granted by their personality trait or traits; if they would gain or change influences in future, that gain or change is automatically negated. Instead, they gain an aspect, an influence, and special rules as described below. This is a permanent replacement, and counts as equipment - it cannot normally be removed by the radiant mastery or similar abilities.

The Gain: Precious Form

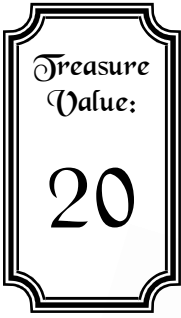
Body gilding has a number of effects, depending on how much treasure is used. It is possible for gilding to have a value of 10, 25, 50, 100, or 200 treasure items, with escalating effects. The effects, depending on value, are:

- **Your Rating:** When resting anywhere, you treat the listed number as the ‘treasury rating’ of the treasury you are with. This rating is in effect for you even if resting with a larger-rated treasury.
- **Treasury Bonus:** If other rest with you, the rating of whatever treasury they possess at rest is raised by this amount. This bonus *does* apply to other gilded dragons and their ‘personal ratings’.
- **Influence per Session:** This number indicates how many times you may use the valued influence each session of play.
- **Trait Name:** This is the specific name of the trait gained by being gilded; this trait does indicate equipment, and is thus immune to some effects.

GILDING VALUE	YOUR RATING	TREASURY BONUS	INFLUENCE PER SESSION	TRAIT NAME
10	9	-	1	Edged
25	10	-	2	Gilded
50	11	-	3	Studded
100	12	+1	4	Encrusted
200	13	+2	5	Plated

Gilded Influence: Valued

Once each scene, and up to as many times total in a session of play as the amount shown above, you may award any player the right to draw an additional coin to their hoard. You may do so only when they show that their dragon wishes to keep you near, or safe, or when they act possessive of you in some way.



Revenancy Crystals

A revenancy crystal is a flickering lump of crystal, surrounded by disjointed, moving images of a specific and ancient dragon. By examining these images, the ancient in question may be easily determined. This crystal may be activated by mediating on it for a full day and then sleeping with it in-hand; the night that follows is filled with dreams of another life, and the user awakens changed, with the crystal itself shattering into a fine white sand.



CREATING A REVENANCY CRYSTAL

In order to craft a revenancy crystal, 20 treasures, all crystals and gems, must be expended. These must be fused in a blazing hot clay kiln (a day's work and a coin from a flame dragon), under the supervision of a revenant dragon, who then meditates on the resultant piece for nine days. The revenant must be of a specific breed: A drake revenant can create Rahik and Kahamet crystals. A lind revenant can create Kalin and Satith crystals. A wrym revenant can create Tiamat and Varim crystals.

M The Shift: Drive

Upon activating a revenancy crystal, the user must choose a single drive which they possess; this drive is permanently lost, and replaced with a new drive from the listings below. This is a permanent replacement; if the ability of a radiant dragon or similar being is used to regain the sacrificed drive, the “replacement” is lost at the same time.

M The Gain: Ancient Purpose

Each revenancy crystal instills in the user a powerful new drive, drawn from the memory of the most potent dragons of ancient times. A crystal is always specifically keyed to a given drive - a crystal of Tiamat always creates bloodlust, for example. The known crystals are...

- **The Bloodlust of Tiamat:** You may draw a coin to your hoard when you kill any character, including an extra. If you have already drawn a coin for this drive earlier in the session, you may do so again only if the most recent kill possessed more a higher total number of traits, masteries, and actions per round than any previous kill made in this same session.
- **The Consumption of Kahanet:** You may draw a coin to your hoard by devouring items of value; you may eat such objects without damage to yourself. Devouring a “drake trinket” gains you a single coin. Devouring a single treasure item grants you three coins. Devouring a rare treasure has a stranger effect - you gain a separate pool of coins equal to the value of the treasure (usually just noted on your sheet rather than represented by coins) that are not part of your hoard; from that point onwards, each time you draw coins to your hoard for any reason, you draw one additional coin, and this bonus pool is reduced by one. The effects of devouring a rare treasure end when this secondary pool is empty; devouring additional rare treasures adds to the pool, rather than creating yet another such pool.
- **The Focus of Satith:** Choose any drive you already possess. You draw two coins instead of one each time this drive is ‘triggered’.
- **The Greed of Rahik:** You gain the Drake drive. If you are already a Drake, you draw two coins instead of one each time this drive is ‘triggered’.
- **The Stewardship of Varim:** You gain the Wyrn drive. If you are already a Wyrn, you draw two coins instead of one each time this drive is ‘triggered’.
- **The Wisdom of Kalin:** You gain the Lind drive. If you are already a Lind, you draw two coins instead of one each time this drive is ‘triggered’.

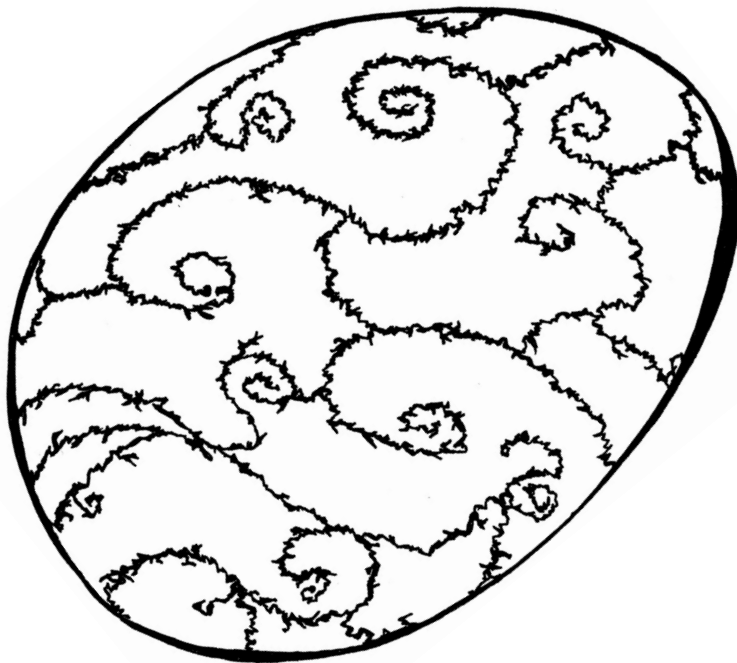


Treasure
Value:

60

Stone Eggs

A stone egg appears to be an egg made of ivory. It is incredibly hard and heavy. A dragon that swallows such an egg grows ill, withers, and falls to dust in a matter of hours; the egg remains and hatches minutes later. The new hatchling *is* the dragon that swallowed the egg, and grows to their previous age and size over the next few days - their affinity is lost, however, and the dragon is a pearlescent silver-white 'stoneborn' thereafter; the shape of their wings is all that remains of their lost affinity.



CREATING A STONE EGG

In order to craft a stone egg, one inceptor of each affinity must gather together around an egg that contains no embryo - a 'dead' egg. They must then perform all of the normal inception ceremonies for each affinity, a process costing ten treasure items (of very sorts based on affinity) and three coins *each*. The egg must then be left to 'quicken' for one week - resulting in a stone egg.

The Shift: Affinity

Upon activating a Stone Egg, the user's affinity trait, as well as the related mastery, are lost entirely. In their place, the user gains the trait "Stoneborn", and the mastery and drive described below. This is a permanent replacement; if the ability of a radiant dragon or similar being is used to regain the sacrificed affinity, the "replacement" is lost at the same time. There are a few side effects that take place when a dragon makes use of a stone egg - physical death and rebirth aren't small things.

- Body gilding, if it was possessed by the dragon, is removed, and the effects undone. The gilding itself breaks down into gold plates with about half the treasure value of the plating.
- All trivial and notable aspects are removed. All lingering aspects that relate to *physical* alteration or injury are removed.
- The dragon is rendered sexless and sterile. They are neither male nor female. They become unable to perform the inception ritual.

Stoneborn Dragons In Conflict

A stoneborn dragon become far more capable of endurance and patience than was previously the case - physical, mental, and otherwise. Stoneborn dragons feel pain and are damaged just as others are; it simply renews their resolve rather than weakening it. In some cases, this results in the dragon becoming quiet and stoic; in others, it results in becoming relentless. Actions that describe the dragon in such a fashion call in this trait.

Stoneborn Drive: Stoic

A stoneborn dragon gains coins whenever they take fallout in conflict. For each die striking success directed at them that they cover by means of fallout, they gain one coin.

Stoneborn Mastery: Pearlescent

This mastery duplicates the affinity of a radiant dragon, with two exceptions. Firstly, the stoneborn dragon may *only* use it on their own person, and secondly, they may not use it to remove the stoneborn trait. If the stoneborn dragon was already radiant, the costs to use that mastery when affecting their own person are reduced to the following:

- **Removing a trivial aspect:** 1 coin
- **Removing a notable aspect:** 3 coins
- **Removing a lingering aspect:** 6 coins
- **Reversing a complete change of state:** 10 coins

14. Appendix



Resources

ONLINE

Here are a few internet addresses where added material and information can be found or requested, and questions answered...

- **The Blog:** <http://hoard-rpg.blogspot.com/> is a webspace being used as a “collection point” for information and downloads. Updates are sporadic, taking place only as there is actual news to be had.
- **Foruming:** <http://forum.rpg.net/> is one forum where the writer can regularly be found, lurking or posting, <http://www.story-games.com/> is another.
- **Email:** levi.kornelsen@gmail.com - all feedback and questions welcome.

INFLUENTIAL GAMES

A fair number of games influenced the creation of Hoard, and might be valuable resources for those wishing to explore similar ideas or expand on their understanding or use of such ideas.

- **Wushu (Dan Bayn):** The basic dice rules used in Hoard, such as describing actions, taking dice, and dividing into striking and blocking, find their origin in this game. Wushu itself is notably much simpler than Hoard, and has a few features such as held dice and simplified adversaries which groups may find useful. There is a free downloadable form of this game, and the various wiki and related resources double as exceptional resources for Hoard as well.
- **...In Spaace! (Greg Stolze):** The underlying form of managing a game with tokens, originates with this remarkably ingenious comedy game. This game is available online as a free download.
- **Polaris (Ben Lehman):** Polaris is based upon a system of collaborative scripting - one encapsulated in “ritual” form. Groups wishing to formalize their script negotiations in new ways need look no further than this game. This game is available online from Indie Press Revolution.
- **Spirit of the Century (Robert Donoghue, Fred Hicks, Leonard Balsera):** Many of the ideas for aspects and similar ideas in Hoard found their origin in this game, and the material for this game is a mine for further ideas; the idea of “compelling” aspects in SotC might work very well with drives in Hoard. Available online from Indie Press Revolution and Drivethru RPG.
- **Dogs in the Vineyard (Vincent Baker):** The concept of fallout as a result of diced play is stolen liberally from this game. Fallout in Hoard is notably less detailed and intensive than in *Dogs* - if you’d like to add more kinds of consequences to your conflict, this is a great place to find inspiration. Available online from Indie Press Revolution.
- **The Shadow of Yesterday (Clinton R. Nixon):** The drives found in Hoard were partially inspired by Keys, as found in this excellent game. This game can also be found in Wiki format online, free of charge.

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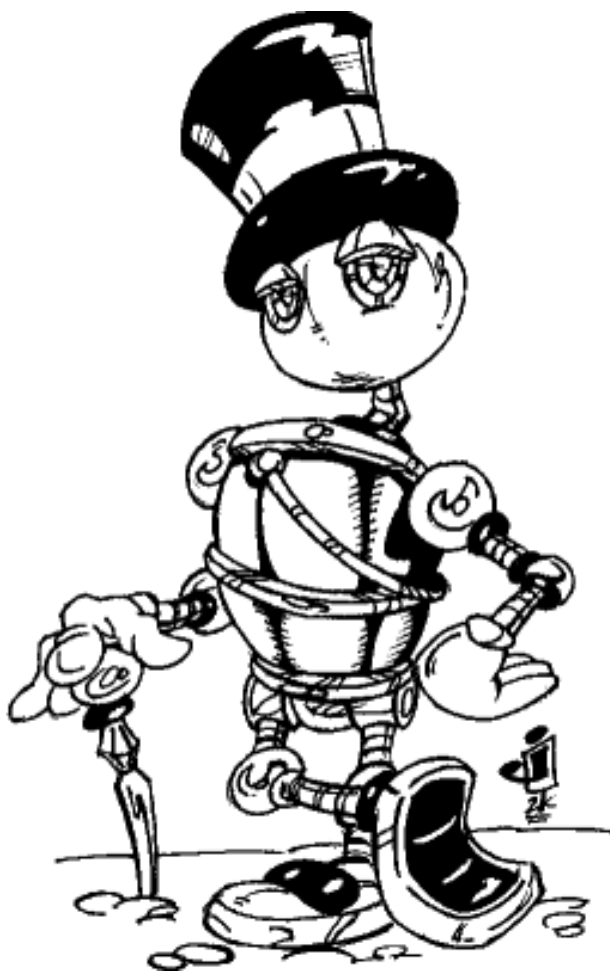
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Forthcoming...

THE COG WARS



Humanity, deprived of the draconic materials from which their artefacts were wrought, deals now with forces they do not understand.

The dragons of the Reach are expanding, growing more populous and taking new islands from the grasp of the humans who drove them to near-extinction.

The diabolicals, deprived of their world and form, and seeking new power, come into the world to consume it at the bidding of men.

Welcome to the world,
young dragon.