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## GAME STATISTICS

This section provides game statistics for the various types of dragons and dragon-like creatures described in the **Dragons** sourcebook. It also expands the rules on various dragon powers, provides information on dragon magic and how to use dragons in an Earthdawn campaign, and also describes the abilities of dragon-kin, a unique crossbreeding of dragons and Name-givers.

Aside from the **Earthdawn** rulebook, players and gamemasters may find the following **Earthdawn** products useful complements to the material in this book: **Earthdawn Companion**, **Magic: A Manual of Mystic Secrets** and **Arcane Mysteries of Barsaive** all provide rules for abilities mentioned in the rules that follow. Some of the creatures described in this book appear in the **Creatures of Barsaive** sourcebook, while **An Explorer's Guide to Barsaive** (in the **Barsaive Campaign Set**) offers an overview of dragons. **Prelude to War: An Earthdawn Epic** provides the fictional backdrop for many of the plans and goals of the dragons described in this book, including the assassination of King Varulus III and the disastrous Battle of Prajor's Field between Throalic and Theran forces. In addition, the dragon entries in this book refer to a number of people and places in Barsaive that have been described in previous books, including **The Serpent River**, **Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom**, **The Blood Wood**, **The Theran Empire**, **Secret Societies of Barsaive**, **Crystal Raiders of Barsaive**, **The Ork Nation of Cara Fahd**, and more. These books are not necessary to use this book, but the information in them will help players and gamemasters more fully understand the relationships between the dragons of Barsaive and the people described in these products.

Though the material in this book is presented as fact and should be treated as accurate in terms of FASA's Earthdawn continuity, you are the ultimate author of your campaign. If a fact in this sourcebook contradicts something you have already established in your game, or if you find it inconvenient, go ahead and change it in whatever way you feel will work best for your player group, adventure or campaign.

In the fictional sections **Concerning the Nature of Dragons** and **Concerning the Diverse Types of Dragons**, the great dragon Vasdenjas offers his views and opinions regarding dragonkind. Not everything the dragon has to say is necessarily the complete truth. It is up to the gamemaster to decide on the accuracy of any particular statement about dragons made by the Master of Secrets, and how this information will impact his campaign.

Likewise, neither the Outcast nor Mountainshadow are infallible or above a little deception, and comments made by them may be wrong, half-truths, or outright lies.

## Creature Statistics

The following statistics are used to describe each of the types of dragons and dragon-like creatures in this section. In the explanations of each statistic, the term dragon refers also to dragon-like creatures.

**Attributes:** Each dragon has a step number for the following Attributes: Dexterity (DEX), Strength (STR), Toughness (TOU), Perception (PER), Willpower (WIL), and Charisma (CHA). Use the Action dice for the step number indicated when making tests based on Attributes.

**Initiative:** Use the Action dice for this step number to make the dragon's Initiative Tests.

**Number of Attacks:** This number describes how many attacks the dragon may make in each Combat Round. A number in parentheses means that the gamemaster must subtract other actions the dragon takes in that Combat Round from the Number of Attacks. For example, if a dragon with Number of Attacks: (1) wants to cast a spell, it must give up its attack for that round to do so. A dragon with Number of Attacks: (2) may make one attack and cast a spell in the same round.

**Attack:** Use the Action dice for this step number to make the dragon's Attack Tests. If the dragon can make more than one type of attack, the step number for each type of attack is listed separately.

**Damage:** Use this step number to make Damage Tests resulting from the dragon's physical attacks. Separate Damage step numbers are provided for each type of attack a dragon can make.

**Number of Spells:** This number describes how many spells the dragon can cast in one Combat Round. A dragon may sacrifice one of its spells to weave spell threads required by another spell. A number in parentheses means that to use Spellcasting, the gamemaster must subtract an action from the number of attacks or other actions the dragon may take in a round. For example, a dragon with Number of Spells: (1) must give up an attack to cast a spell. Note that dragons occasionally must choose between a physical attack or a magical effect in combat.





**Spellcasting:** This is one of the most important abilities used by dragons. Use this step number to make tests whenever the dragon attempts to cast a spell or create a magical effect. Dragons also use their Spellcasting Talent to weave any spell threads they need for a spell or magical effect.

**Effect:** This is the step number of any of the dragon's magical effects or spells. This entry describes the spell or effect that results from the creature's successful Spellcasting Tests. Most dragons and dragon-like creatures don't have a step number listed. Instead, the effects of their spells and magical abilities are based on the specific power or spell the dragon uses.

**Physical Defense:** This is the dragon's Physical Defense Rating.

**Spell Defense:** This is the dragon's Spell Defense Rating.

**Social Defense:** This is the dragon's Social Defense Rating. Characters must be able to communicate to use social talents against the dragon. Battle Shout and other non-verbal talents work on most dragons.

**Armor:** This is the dragon's natural Armor Rating. A dragon's natural armor is its tough scales.

**Mystic Armor:** This is the dragon's Mystic Armor Rating.

**Knockdown:** The dragon uses this step number to resist knockdown. A notation of "Immune" means the dragon cannot be knocked down. A notation of "NA," or "Not Applicable," means the creature cannot resist knockdown; it is knocked down any time the dragon suffers a Wound.

**Death Rating:** This number represents the dragon's Death Rating.

**Wound Threshold:** This is the dragon's Wound Threshold. A notation of "Immune" means the dragon cannot be Wounded.

**Unconsciousness Rating:** This represents the dragon's Unconsciousness Rating. A notation of "Immune" means accumulated damage does not render the dragon unconscious.

**Recovery Tests:** This represents the number of Recovery Tests the dragon may make each day. Dragons use their Toughness step for Recovery Tests.

**Combat Movement:** This is the number of yards the dragon can move in a Combat Round while remaining able to attack or take some other action.

**Full Movement:** This number represents the number of yards the dragon can move if it takes no other action in a Combat Round.

**Flight:** Certain flying creatures, including dragons, have separate listings for their Flight Movement. The number before the slash is the dragon's Combat Movement when flying. The number after the slash is its Full Movement when flying. The Combat/Full Movement designation also applies to those dragons who can move underwater or underground.

**Karma:** All dragons and most dragon-like creatures can use Karma to enhance their abilities. See the various Karma-related abilities under **Dragon Powers** (p. 11) for more information.

**Powers:** This entry lists all the powers possessed by the dragon, including innate powers. For detailed information on how these powers work, consult **Dragon Powers** (p. 11), **New Dragon Powers** (p. 14), **Innate Dragon Abilities** (p. 15) and **Dragon Magic** (p. 18). For those powers that require a test be made when using the power, a step number is also listed. Powers without a step number do not require tests.

**Legend Points:** Characters receive this number of Legend Points for defeating the dragon. Keep in mind that defeating a dragon does not necessarily mean killing it. A character who outwits, bypasses, or befriends the dragon has defeated it and so receives the full amount of Legend Points.

**Equipment:** This notation refers to any weapons, armor, magical items and the like the dragon possesses. At the gamemaster's discretion, a dragon may have more equipment than what is listed.

**Loot:** This notation lists the valuable items or body parts the dragon possesses, including items worth Legend Points. For more information on treasure and Legend Points, see **Earning Legend Points**, pp. 218–220 of **Building Your Legend** in the **Earthdawn Rulebook**.

## Sample Dragon Statistics

The following statistics describe an "average" member of each type of dragon or dragon-like creature. However, there really is no such thing as an "average" dragon. Dragons are as individual and unique as other Name-givers, and gamemasters should feel free to vary the statistics and powers listed in these sample statistics as desired. See **Customizing Dragons**, p. 10, for more information on altering the statistics and powers of dragons and dragon-like creatures.

Each of the following dragons and dragon-like creatures is described in **Concerning the Nature of Dragons** (p. **Error! Bookmark not defined.**) and **Concerning the Diverse Types of Dragons** (p. **Error! Bookmark not defined.**). The Commentary section of





each lists the page on which the description of the particular dragon appears.

hatchlings are raised are generally Safe regions for the purpose of casting Raw Magic.

## Hatchling

### Attributes

**DEX:** 12      **STR:** 12      **TOU:** 10  
**PER:** 12      **WIL:** 15      **CHA:** 12

**Initiative:** 13      **Physical Defense:** 13  
**Number of Attacks:** 3      **Spell Defense:** 13  
**Attack:** 13      **Social Defense:** 11  
**Damage:**      **Armor:** 8  
    Bite: 15, Claws (x2): 13      **Mystic Armor:** 5  
**Number of Spells:** (1)      **Knockdown:** 10  
**Spellcasting:** 13      **Recovery Tests:** 4  
**Effect:** See Powers

**Death Rating:** 70      **Combat Movement:** 40  
**Wound Threshold:** 12      **Full Movement:** 100  
**Unconsciousness**  
**Rating:** 65      **Flight:** 120/240

**Karma Points:** 8      **Karma Step:** 10

**Powers:** Armored Scales, Astral Sight 12, Dragonspeech, Dragon Breath 15, Karma Points, Regeneration 8, Suppress Magic 3, Venom 10.

**Legend Points:** 800

**Equipment:** None

**Loot:** None

### Commentary

Hatchlings of western dragons are described on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.** of **Concerning the Nature of Dragons**. Hatchlings start at about 12' long, and have only one set of limbs and a pair of wings. hatchlings have slim bodies and size, and their strength and power are nowhere near that of a full grown dragon. Hatchlings of other types of dragons share physical characteristics with their parent dragons, and are described in the individual entries in **Concerning the Diverse Types of Dragons** (p. **Error! Bookmark not defined.**).

These statistics represent a hatchling no more than a few decades old (barely a toddler in dragon terms). Still, a dragon hatchling can be a dangerous opponent for a group of low Circle adepts, particularly when the effects of its magical powers are taken into account. Add to this the fact that hatchlings are usually found in small groups, and that their guardian great dragon is never too far away, and it becomes clear that attacking a dragon hatchling is asking for trouble.

While most hatchlings have not yet learned formal spells, they can still cast spells using Raw Magic like any dragon (**Dragon Magic**, p. 18). The lairs where

## Common (Western) Dragon

### Attributes

**DEX:** 18      **STR:** 25      **TOU:** 27  
**PER:** 19      **WIL:** 22      **CHA:** 20

**Initiative:** 21      **Physical Defense:** 25  
**Number of Attacks:** 3      **Spell Defense:** 22  
**Attack:** 23      **Social Defense:** 20  
**Damage:**      **Armor:** 29  
    Bite: 32, Claw (x2): 30      **Mystic Armor:** 14  
**Number of Spells:** (2)      **Knockdown:** 27  
**Spellcasting:** 23      **Recovery Tests:** 15  
**Effect:** See Powers

**Death Rating:** 240      **Combat Movement:** 80  
**Wound Threshold:** 25      **Full Movement:** 160  
**Unconsciousness**  
**Rating:** 220      **Flight:** 100/200

**Karma Points:** 25      **Karma Step:** 10

**Powers:** Armored Scales, Astral Sight 19, Disrupt Fate 25, Dragon Breath 25, Dragonspeech, Fear 25, Karma Points, Lair Sense 20, Natural Spellcasting, Regeneration 10, Spells, Summoning, Suppress Magic 8, Venom 25, Wingbeat 30.

**Legend Points:** 230,000

**Equipment:** None

**Loot:** Magical items and a hoard of coins and gems worth around 300,000 silver pieces. This counts as treasure worth Legend Points.

### Commentary

Common, or western dragons as Vasdenjas refers to them, are described on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.** of **Concerning the Nature of Dragons** and page **Error! Bookmark not defined.** of **Concerning the Diverse Types of Dragons**. They average 65' in length, the tail is another 55', and their wingspan is 100'. Though they are the most common type of dragon in Barsaive, one of the quickest ways to die in Barsaive is to call a "common" dragon by that Name to his face. Indeed, the Name is a misnomer. Though the people of Barsaive use it because nearly all the dragons they know of are of similar size, shape, and general appearance, they are by no means common. In fact, few people in Barsaive have ever seen a dragon. Common dragons much prefer the Cathay term "western dragons" when referring to dragons of their type.

Common dragons can vary greatly in individual appearance, goals, mannerisms and abilities. Gamemasters may consult the information in the other





chapters of this book for ideas on the nature and variety of common dragons, particularly the descriptions of the Named common dragons Charcoalgrin, Asante and Nightsky, described in the **Dragons of Barsaive** section.

Most common dragons know spells of at least one magician Discipline, and many know spells from more than one. Dragons who know spells of only one Discipline know spells up to and including Circle 9. Those who follow more than one Discipline know spells up to and including Circle 7.

## Leviathan

### Attributes

**DEX:** 15      **STR:** 25      **TOU:** 25  
**PER:** 12      **WIL:** 20      **CHA:** 15

**Initiative:** 16      **Physical Defense:** 25  
**Number of Attacks:** 3      **Spell Defense:** 20  
**Attack:** 16      **Social Defense:** 15  
**Damage:**      **Armor:** 25  
    Bite: 30, Claw (x2): 25      **Mystic Armor:** 10  
    Tail: 15      **Knockdown:** NA  
**Number of Spells:** 1      **Recovery Tests:** 12  
**Spellcasting:** 14  
**Effect:** See Powers

**Death Rating:** 220      **Combat Movement:** 40  
**Wound Threshold:** 25      **Full Movement:** 100  
**Unconsciousness**  
    **Rating:** 200      **Swimming:** 75/150  
    **Flight:** 50/100

**Karma Points:** 20      **Karma Step:** 10

**Powers:** Armored Scales, Astral Sight 12, Disrupt Fate 25, Dragon Breath 25, Dragonspeech, Fear 25, Karma Points, Natural Spellcasting, Regeneration, Spells, Summoning.

**Legend Points:** 85,000

**Equipment:** None

**Loot:** Elemental water collecting organ worth 10,000 silver pieces; treasure hoard worth up to 100,000 silver pieces. The latter counts as treasure worth Legend Points.

### Commentary

Leviathans are described on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.** of **Concerning the Diverse Types of Dragons**. They average 60' long overall, and have four short, stubby legs about 6' long. Leviathans in Barsaive are found primarily in the Aras Sea, but also live in the Selestrean Sea to the west and the Sea of Storms near the Theran province of Indrisa (see **The Theran Empire** sourcebook).

These aquatic dragons are the most reclusive of all dragons, only rarely interacting with other dragons or Name-givers, except when their domain is threatened. When dealing with smaller ships, swimmers, and various other floating enemies, leviathans prefer to swallow them whole. Leviathans can swallow anything that measures up to a tenth of their entire length, and a successful swallowing attack does Step 30 damage to the victim. Against larger creatures and boats, the leviathan often coils around the victim and then tears at it with its powerful claws. To coil around a creature, the leviathan must make a successful Attack Test against the target's Physical Defense; when attacking ships, the leviathan must make a successful Attack Test against the vessel's Maneuverability Rating (see **Ship Combat**, p. 129 of the **Earthdawn Companion**, or p. 93 of **The Serpent River**). Once coiled tightly, the leviathan may then cause Step 25 damage with its claws in every round until it is killed or driven off. The leviathan can even use its twisted tail as a weapon to cause Step 15 damage.

Only roughly one-third of all leviathans can cast spells of any of the magician Disciplines, and nearly all those cast spells of the elemental Discipline. Those who do so generally have mastered the spells of their Discipline up to Circle 6. Leviathans, like all dragons, can use their natural spellcasting ability to cast spells using raw magic (see **Dragon Magic**, p. 18).

## Cathay Dragon

### Attributes

**DEX:** 14      **STR:** 27      **TOU:** 24  
**PER:** 28      **WIL:** 28      **CHA:** 25

**Initiative:** 26      **Physical Defense:** 24  
**Number of Attacks:** 3      **Spell Defense:** 30  
**Attack:** 20      **Social Defense:** 28  
**Damage:**      **Armor:** 22  
    Bite: 38, Claw (x2): 35      **Mystic Armor:** 16  
**Number of Spells:** 4      **Knockdown:** 27  
**Spellcasting:** 35      **Recovery Tests:** 20  
**Effect:** See Powers

**Death Rating:** 200      **Combat Movement:** 75  
**Wound Threshold:** 25      **Full Movement:** 150  
**Unconsciousness**  
    **Rating:** 175      **Flight:** 125/250

**Karma Points:** 40      **Karma Step:** 15

**Powers:** Armored Scales, Astral Sight 30, Dispel Magic 30, Disrupt Fate 25, Dragon Breath 30, Dragonspeech, Fear 25, Karma Points, Natural Spellcasting, Regeneration 13, Spells, Summoning, Suppress Magic 10.





**Legend Points:** 340,000

**Equipment:** None

**Loot:** Scrolls, books, gems, artwork and precious metals worth around 300,000 silver pieces. This counts as treasure worth Legend Points.

**Commentary**

Cathay dragons are described on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.** of **Concerning the Diverse Types of Dragons**. They generally measure about 50' in length, with their tail adding another 50'. Cathay dragons come from Cathay, a land to the far east of Barsaive, beyond even the realm of the Theran Empire.

The most sociable breed of dragons, Cathay dragons often hire Name-giver servants, and have also been known to keep Name-giver slaves. They sometimes invite travelers to dine with them, to entertain the dragons with tales of other places and exciting times. Though sufficiently skilled entreaties can entice them to show off their treasures, Cathay dragons allow no one to touch or have any of their truly valuable possessions.

All Cathay dragons can cast spells of one or more of the magician Disciplines. Most pursue either the illusionist or elemental Disciplines, or both, though some also cast spells of the wizard Discipline. Nethermancy is rare among Cathay dragons. Cathay dragons who know spells of only one Discipline know spells up to and including Circle 11.

Those who follow more than one Discipline know spells up to and including Circle 8.

**Feathered Dragon**

**Attributes**

**DEX:** 18      **STR:** 23      **TOU:** 23  
**PER:** 22      **WIL:** 25      **CHA:** 25

**Initiative:** 23      **Physical Defense:** 23  
**Number of Attacks:** 3      **Spell Defense:** 27  
**Attack:** 23      **Social Defense:** 24  
**Damage:**      **Armor:** 20  
    Bite: 30, Claw (x2): 28      **Mystic Armor:** 15  
**Number of Spells:** 2      **Knockdown:** 23  
**Spellcasting:** 28      **Recovery Tests:** 15  
**Effect:** See Powers

**Death Rating:** 200      **Combat Movement:** 75  
**Wound Threshold:** 25      **Full Movement:** 150  
**Unconsciousness**  
    **Rating:** 175      **Flight:** 110/220

**Karma Points:** 30 **Karma Step:** 12

**Powers:** Armored Scales, Astral Sight 22, Disrupt Fate 25, Dragon Breath 25, Dragonspeech, Fear 20, Karma

**Book of Dragons:** An Unpublished Earthdawn Sourcebook

Points, Lair Sense 20, Natural Spellcasting, Regeneration 10, Spells, Summoning, Suppress Magic 10, Venom 25, Wingbeat 23.

**Legend Points:** 200,000

**Equipment:** None

**Loot:** Magical items and a hoard of precious metals and gems worth around 300,000 silver pieces. This counts as treasure worth Legend Points.

**Commentary**

Feathered dragons are described on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.** of **Concerning the Diverse Types of Dragons**. They average about 40' in length, with a 40' tail, and a wingspan of 60'.

Feathered dragons originate from a land far from Barsaive, near Araucania (see the **Sky Point and Vivane** campaign set), but are also found in the jungles of lands such as Indrisa (see **The Theran Empire** sourcebook). Feathered dragons tend to avoid contact with Name-givers except in their distant homelands.

All feathered dragons can cast spells of one or more of the magician Disciplines. Most cast spells of either the illusionist or elemental Disciplines, or both, though some also follow the wizard and nethermancer Disciplines, the latter being especially common among those feathered serpents who pursue blood magic. Feathered dragons who know spells of only one Discipline know spells up to and including Circle 10. Those who follow more than one Discipline know spells up to and including Circle 8.

**Great Dragon**

**Attributes**

**DEX:** 19      **STR:** 33      **TOU:** 28  
**PER:** 27      **WIL:** 26      **CHA:** 26

**Initiative:** 24      **Physical Defense:** 26  
**Number of Attacks:** 5      **Spell Defense:** 33  
**Attack:** 28      **Social Defense:** 29  
**Damage:**      **Armor:** 32  
    Bite: 40, Claw (x4): 38      **Mystic Armor:** 30  
**Number of Spells:** 5      **Knockdown:** 25  
**Spellcasting:** 37      **Recovery Tests:** 30  
**Effect:** See Powers

**Death Rating:** 280      **Combat Movement:** 120  
**Wound Threshold:** 30      **Full Movement:** 240  
**Unconsciousness**  
    **Rating:** 240      **Flight:** 180/360

**Karma Points:** 50      **Karma Step:** 18

**Powers:** Armored Scales, Astral Sight 26, Disrupt Magic 26, Disrupt Fate 26, Dragon Breath 30, Dragonspeech, Fear 26, Karma Cancel 26, Karma Points, Lair Sense 26,





Lend Karma 26, Natural Spellcasting, Regeneration 20, Spells, Summoning, Suppress Magic 15, Venom 30, Wingbeat 22.

**Legend Points:** 450,000

**Equipment:** None

**Loot:** Magical items (some quite ancient) and a hoard of coins and gems worth around 500,000 silver pieces. This counts as treasure worth Legend Points.

**Commentary**

Great dragons are described on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.** of **Concerning the Diverse Types of Dragons**. Great dragons are not really a unique type of dragon. Rather they are the oldest and most powerful specimens of the other types of dragons. There are great western (common) dragons, great Cathay dragons, great feathered dragons, and great leviathans.

These shrewd, highly intelligent creatures spend their long lives hatching and nurturing their plans for the world. Great dragons often interact with the world around them, but usually work through a web of contacts and agents rather than acting directly. Believing that the world holds powerful enemies, these great creatures apparently prefer to use discretion in their dealings.

All great dragons can cast spells of at least one of the magician Disciplines. Most great dragons can cast spells of two Disciplines, and there are some who cast spells of three, or even all the magician Disciplines. Great dragons who know spells of only one Discipline know spells up to and including Circle 13, those who cast spells of two Disciplines know spells up to and including Circle 10, and those who know spells of three Disciplines know spells up to and including Circle 9. Keep in mind that these statements describe the average abilities of great dragons. Individual great dragons' abilities vary to a degree, some greatly, some very little. See **Customizing Dragons** (p. 10) for more information about adjusting the abilities of great dragons.

**Drake**

**Attributes**

**DEX: 12 STR: 15 TOU: 12**

**PER: 15 WIL: 17 CHA: 16**

**Initiative:** 15

**Number of Attacks:** 3 (1\*)

**Attack:** 15

**Damage:**

Bite: 18, Claw (x2): 19

Weapon: (by type\*)

**Number of Spells:** 2

**Spellcasting:** 16

**Physical Defense:** 16

**Spell Defense:** 18

**Social Defense:** 1

**Armor:** 15 (Rating of Armor\*)

**Mystic Armor:** 9

**Knockdown:** 20 (15\*)

**Recovery Tests:** 6

**Effect:** See Powers

**Death Rating:** 62

**Wound Threshold:** 18

**Unconsciousness**

**Rating:** 54

**Karma Points:** 18

**Combat Movement:** 100

**Full Movement:** 200

**Flight:** 120/240

**Karma Step:** 10

**Powers:** Armored Scales, Astral Sight 10, Dispel Magic 12, Disrupt Fate 5, Dragon Breath 12, Dragonspeech, Fear 15, Karma Points, Regeneration 8, Spells, Suppress Magic 3.

**Legend Points:** 3,400

**Equipment:** Varies in Name-giver form

**Loot:** Scales and blood worth D6 x 5 silver pieces. Also counts as treasure worth Legend Points.

*\* Statistics in parentheses apply when in Name-giver form.*

**Commentary**

Drakes are described on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.** of **Concerning the Diverse Types of Dragons**. Drakes are magical constructs created by dragons, primarily great dragons, as their servants. Although there are both male and female drakes, they are not capable of reproduction on their own. Each drake represents the investment of considerable time, effort and magical power, so dragons do not use them casually.

Drakes have two forms. Their "natural" form is that of a miniature dragon about five to seven feet long from head to tail. They can also assume the forms of the different Name-giver races. Drakes cannot assume windling or obsidiman forms because duplicating the special magical natures of those Name-givers would be too difficult. It requires one of the drake's Spell actions to switch between forms.

In Name-giver form, drakes can follow Disciplines and learn talents and skills just like other Name-givers. Most drakes are adepts, and most of them follow one or more of the magician Disciplines. Some drakes follow the Disciplines of beastmaster, scout, swordmaster, thief or warrior. A typical drake will be at least Sixth Circle in its chosen Discipline. The drake's talents and Discipline abilities function only while it is in Name-giver form, although magician drakes can still cast spells in dragon form.

In addition to their Discipline abilities, drakes share many of the powers of their dragon masters, some of which can be used in either form. In Name-giver form drakes can use only Astral Sight, Dispel Magic, Regeneration and Suppress Magic. In addition, while in Name-giver form they have the abilities listed in parentheses above. When a drake switches forms, all of







the clothing and equipment from their Name-giver form vanishes into an astral pocket similar to the Nethermancer talent of the same name (see p. 24, **Earthdawn Companion**). The equipment returns when the drake returns to Name-giver form.

While working as envoys and agents of their dragon masters, drakes prefer to remain in Name-giver form so as not to give away their true nature. They assume their dragon form only when circumstances require it. A drake in Name-giver form can be detected by someone who examines the drake's pattern in astral space. Detecting a drake's true nature requires an Excellent success on an Astral Sight Test against the drake's Spell Defense. A failure on this test results in the viewer seeing an astral form of the drake's Name-giver form.

### Lesser Drake

#### Attributes

**DEX:** 12      **STR:** 12      **TOU:** 10  
**PER:** 10      **WIL:** 13      **CHA:** 12

**Initiative:** 12      **Physical Defense:** 15  
**Number of Attacks:** 3      **Spell Defense:** 14  
**Attack:** 15      **Social Defense:** 15  
**Damage:**      **Armor:** 10  
    Bite: 14, Claw (x2): 15      **Mystic Armor:** 6  
**Number of Spells:** 1      **Knockdown:** 12  
**Spellcasting:** 12      **Recovery Tests:** 4  
**Effect:** See Powers

**Death Rating:** 50      **Combat Movement:** 100  
**Wound Threshold:** 14      **Full Movement:** 200  
**Unconsciousness**  
**Rating:** 43      **Flight:** 120/240

**Powers:** Armored Scales, Astral Sight 10, Dispel Magic 10, Dragon Breath 9, Suppress Magic 2, Venom 5.

**Legend Points:** 1,865  
**Equipment:** None  
**Loot:** None

#### Commentary

Lesser drakes are described on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.** of **Concerning the Diverse Types of Dragons**. These creatures are most commonly found in the Blood Wood (see **The Blood Wood** sourcebook), but are occasionally found in other areas of northern Barsaive as well. Lesser or "false" drakes strongly resemble true drakes, but they are not intelligent and are somewhat weaker physically. They also do not share a true drake's ability to assume Name-giver form. Though lesser drakes cannot speak, they emit fierce cries of pleasure as they hunt or swoop through the Blood Wood, weaving intricate patterns as

they fly around the trunks and branches of the Blood Wood's largest trees.

Lesser drakes use their dragon powers in much the same way as dragons and true drakes. However, a lesser drake's Dragon Breath power produces a thin stream of fiery breath that can strike only one target at a time, similar to the Flame Spout power knack (p. 12).

### Hydra

#### Attributes

**DEX:** 15      **STR:** 22      **TOU:** 22  
**PER:** 8      **WIL:** 15      **CHA:** 10

**Initiative:** 15      **Physical Defense:** 12  
**Number of Attacks:** 7      **Spell Defense:** 10  
**Attack:** 17      **Social Defense:** 10  
**Damage:**      **Armor:** 25  
    Bite: 25, Claw: 22      **Mystic Armor:** 5  
**Number of Spells:** 1      **Knockdown:** 20  
**Spellcasting:** 10      **Recovery Tests:** 10  
**Effect:** See Powers

**Death Rating:** 150      **Combat Movement:** 50  
**Wound Threshold:** 15      **Full Movement:** 150  
**Unconsciousness**  
**Rating:** 130

**Karma Points:** 10      **Karma Step:** 8

**Powers:** One or more of the following: Astral Sight 15, Dispel Magic 15, Dragon Breath 15, Fear 15, Karma Points, Regeneration 10, Suppress Magic 8, Venom 15.

**Legend Points:** 20,000  
**Equipment:** None

**Loot:** Up to 10,000 silver pieces worth of treasure hidden in its lair. This counts as treasure worth Legend Points.

#### Commentary

Hydras are described on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.** of **Concerning the Diverse Types of Dragons**. They are up to 40' long head to tail. Hydras are magical abominations originally created from the merging of seven western dragon hatchlings. The magician who created the first hydra is one of the ancestors of the Denairastas Clan of Iopos. Only recently was the truth of the hydra's creator revealed, to both Uhl Denairastas and (inadvertently) the great dragons of Barsaive. What, if any, form of retaliation the great dragons plan is not known at this time.

A hydra usually attacks by biting its opponent with its many heads. Each combat round, a hydra can attack with up five of its heads, as well as with its front claws. Hydra armor, like dragon hide, is extremely tough, requiring an Extraordinary success on an attack





test to score and Armor Defeating Hit against the hydra. Unlike the Armored Scales ability, hydra armor does not offer increased mystic armor protection.

A hydra may have any of the dragon powers listed above, but each individual hydra possesses only one of them. If the player characters are more than a match for a normal hydra, the gamemaster may add additional dragon powers to create a very powerful and dangerous hydra sufficient to withstand the player characters.

## Wyvern

### Attributes

**DEX:** 12      **STR:** 12      **TOU:** 10  
**PER:** 6      **WIL:** 8      **CHA:** 5

**Initiative:** 13      **Physical Defense:** 14  
**Number of Attacks:** 3      **Spell Defense:** 8  
**Attack:** 13      **Social Defense:** 7  
**Damage:**      **Armor:** 9  
    Bite: 15, Claws: 13      **Mystic Armor:** 2  
    Tail: 12      **Knockdown:** 10  
**Number of Spells:** 1      **Recovery Tests:** 4  
**Spellcasting:** 8  
**Effect:** Venom (Step 13, see below)

**Death Rating:** 80      **Combat Movement:** 40  
**Wound Threshold:** 14      **Full Movement:** 80  
**Unconsciousness**  
**Rating:** 72      **Flight:** 50/100

**Legend Points:** 600  
**Equipment:** None  
**Loot:** None

### Commentary

Wyverns are described on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.** of **Concerning the Diverse Types of Dragons**. They average 30' in length.

Wyverns bear a strong resemblance to adolescent western dragons (and are somewhat larger than western hatchlings). Not only do they share the physical characteristics of western dragons, but they also have the fierce, aggressive nature of adolescents. No information is known about the breeding or mating habits of wyverns, how they raise their young, or how old they live, giving some scholars (Tiabdjin the Knower among them) cause to consider the possibility that wyverns are in truth directly related to western dragons.

Wyverns prefer to attack non-flying targets with sweeping flybys, tearing the victim apart with a few slashes of their claws. Each clawing attack causes Step 13 damage. If a wyvern can't cause enough damage

quickly, it will land on the ground near its opponent and rear up to its full height. This stance allows the creature to bring its venomous tail into play. The fast acting venom functions like the Venom power of dragons (p. 13), inflicting Step 13 damage on each turn if the wyvern makes a successful Spellcasting Test against the victim's Spell Defense.

## Customizing Dragons

The sample statistics above provide only rough guidelines regarding the powers and abilities of the different types of dragons and of dragon-like creatures. These are intended as a starting point from which the gamemaster can customize the abilities of a specific dragon. Dragons are unique creatures, as individual as any other Name-givers. They are not simple "monsters," but gamemaster characters, with their own personalities and motivations. Two dragons will have as much in common as any two other Name-givers.

Gamemasters should reflect the individuality of dragons by adjusting the various abilities, attributes and step numbers given in the sample statistics, based on the specific characteristics of the dragon in question. For example, one dragon might be more perceptive (having a higher Perception step) while another could be relatively oblivious (lower Perception step). The entries on the Named great dragons of Barsaive each include specific details about the abilities of the dragons described. For instance, both Aban and Usun are described as being larger and stronger than most dragons. This should be reflected by slightly higher physical attribute steps, Attack and Damage step numbers, and by higher Death and Unconsciousness Ratings. Likewise, Mountainshadow is said to be the most skilled at magic, suggesting a slightly higher Spellcasting step number.

Beyond their attributes and characteristics, individual dragons may also have different ratings in various dragon powers, or even powers entirely different from those listed in the sample statistics. Beyond giving a specific dragon different powers or adjusting the step numbers of their powers, dragons can also know a number of different dragon power knacks (see **Dragon Powers**, p. 11) which offer another means of customizing an individual dragon's abilities.

In addition to their game statistics, each dragon has a unique appearance, personality and goals. The gamemaster should take time to consider these unique aspects of the dragon's nature. What sets it apart? How does it act? What does the dragon want? These things help to make a dragon less of a faceless monster and more of an individual. The material in the chapter **On the Nature of Dragons** (p. **Error! Bookmark not defined.**) can provide additional ideas on





personalizing dragons of the gamemaster's creation, while the individual dragon entries can provide additional ideas on personalizing the statistics of the dragons described in this book.

## Dragon Powers

Dragons have a wide range of magical powers at their command. All dragons have at least some of the powers listed here, and great dragons often have all of these powers (and more) to call upon. Adult dragons always have the Disrupt Fate, Dragon Breath, and Fear powers, as well as their other innate abilities including Armored Scales, Astral Sight, Karma, and Regeneration (see below). As a dragon ages, it is able to improve its existing powers and to develop and learn more powers, not unlike the modification of an adept's True Pattern over time as the adept improves and learns more talents.

## Dragon Power Knacks

In addition to their various powers, many dragons also develop dragon power knacks. These are similar to an adept's talent knacks (p. 18, **Magic: A Manual of Mystic Secrets**), and allow dragons to use their powers in new and different ways. Some dragons know many power knacks while others know very few. Most adult dragons choose to specialize in learning knacks for a few powers. Great dragons often know many, many knacks for their various powers, learned over their extremely long lives. The gamemaster can decide if a dragon knows any of the power knacks described here and should also feel free to create new power knacks to ensure that dragons and their powers are always an unknown quantity. Example knacks are listed for a number of the dragon powers described below.

## Dragon Powers From the Earthdawn Rulebook

The following descriptions expand on and clarify the dragon powers which originally appeared in the Earthdawn rulebook. These power descriptions supersede those in the Earthdawn rulebook.

### Dispel Magic

With their power over the forces of magic, many dragons can dispel many types of magic at will. A dragon using this power makes a Spellcasting Test against the Spell Defense of the magician who cast the target spell, or of the creature or character that created the magical effect the dragons wishes to dispel. If the test is successful, the dragon makes a Dispel Magic Test against the spell's Sensing/Disbelief or Dispel Difficulty

Number (pp. 166 and 156, respectively, **ED**). A successful Dispel Magic Test breaks the spell.

Like the Dispel Magic spell (p. 183, **ED**), this power can also be used to dispel other magical effects and abilities, such as talents and creature abilities (including Horror and dragon powers) that have a sustained duration. The Dispel Difficulty for creature powers is based on the step number of the power or ability. The Dispel Difficulty for talents is based on the talent rank. Find the step number (or rank, in the case of talents) on the Circle column of the Dispel Difficulty Table (p. 184, **ED**). The corresponding Dispel Difficulty is used for the talent or power to be dispelled. If a creature power or ability step number is higher than 15, add 1 to the Dispel Difficulty for each step above 15. For example, the Horror power Corrupt Reality at Step 17 would have a Dispel Difficulty of 28 (26 + 2).

### Disrupt Fate

Dragons with this power can alter the fate of other creatures. To use this ability the dragon spends a Karma Point, which entitles it to make an immediate Disrupt Fate Test against the Spell Defense of a single target character or creature. If the test is successful, the target must immediately repeat the most recent test he made. The new result of the test stands, and cannot be disrupted a second time. Disrupt Fate counts as a simple action; use of this power does not use up one of the dragon's attack or Spellcasting actions. As long as the dragon has Karma Points, it may make as many Disrupt Fate Tests as there are targets.

Note that the Karma Point expenditure entitles the dragon to use its Disrupt Fate ability; the dragon does not roll its Karma dice when making the Disrupt Fate Test.

### Dragon Breath

The most famed and feared power of dragons is their fiery breath. Every culture has horrific legends of the destruction of villages, towns, and cities by furious dragons.

Dragon Breath targets everything within a 90° arc, using the dragon's mouth as the arc's center. The distance the arc extends is based on how much Strain the dragon is willing to take, as shown on the table below. Note that if a dragon using this power takes a number of Strain points equal to or greater than his Wound Threshold, the dragon suffers a Wound.

### Strain Points Range

1 Strain Point 25 yards  
5 Strain Points 50 yards  
15 Strain Points 100 yards  
30 Strain Points 200 yards





Dragon Breath engulfs every target within the arc. Each arc of Dragon Breath requires one of the dragon's Spellcasting actions. If it has enough actions available, a dragon may lay down more than one fiery arc per round. To determine which targets within the area of effect are damaged by Dragon Breath, the dragon makes a Spellcasting Test and compares the result to the Spell Defense of each target within the arc. If the test result exceeds the target's Spell Defense, the target catches fire, taking damage. As long as the dragon stands within 1,000 yards of the flames, they cannot be extinguished by normal means. Only a successful Willpower or Dispel Magic Test against the dragon's Spell Defense can put out the Dragon Breath fire. The affected character makes the appropriate test; if the test is successful, the flames stop burning.

A burning target takes damage during each Combat Round that the fire burns. The dragon makes a Dragon Breath Test each round as a Damage Test. If the Dragon Breath attack inflicted an Armor Defeating Hit (p. 194, ED), even normally non-combustible objects burn. Dragon fire can burn anything, including weapons, boulders, bricks, and metal or crystal armor. Burning armor degrades at a rate of 2 Armor Points per Combat Round. Weapons degrade at the rate of 2 steps per Combat Round. These losses are spread evenly among whatever steps or Armor Ratings the object has. For example, a ferndask shield would lose 1 point each from its Armor and Mystic Armor per round when burning, rather than losing both Armor Points from either the shield's Armor or Mystic Armor. Once the object's steps or points are reach 0, the object is reduced to slag.

Dragons have developed various power knacks to control and refine the power of Dragon Breath, such as the following:

**Flame Spout:** With this knack, the dragon breathes a line or bolt of flame at a single target rather than an arc. The Strain cost of a Flame Spout is half the normal cost (round up) and it causes normal Dragon Breath damage to its target. Dragons can use this knack to strike at a number of targets in one attack with bolts of flame, as long as all the intended targets are spread out to a maximum of 50 yards. The dragon uses this knack as described above, but must also take an additional 3 points of strain for each additional target beyond the first.

**Flame Ball:** Using Flame Ball, a dragon can spit a bolt of flame that explodes into a sphere of fire on impact with its target, creating an effect similar to the elemental spell Fireball. The sphere has a radius equal to half the range of the bolt, based on the Strain taken by the dragon. So a Flame Ball with a range of 100 yards has a 50 yard radius. The dragon makes a normal Spellcasting Test and compares the result against all the

targets within the radius of the fireball to determine who takes damage. Damage from a flame ball attack continues to damage the targets each round as normal for Dragon Breath.

**Friendly Fire:** Dragons with this power knack have the amazing ability to choose which targets are affected by their Dragon Breath and which are not. Targets in the affected arc whom the dragon chooses not to affect are completely unharmed by the dragon fire. Their clothing and equipment aren't even singed. Other targets take damage normally. This knack is so selective that a dragon can use it to burn a Name-giver to ash while leaving his clothing and equipment untouched (or vice-versa, leaving a helpless and very embarrassed Name-giver).

**Smoke Cloud:** The dragon using this knack breathes not fire, but a thick cloud of choking black smoke. The smoke covers an arc similar to the Dragon Breath. The dragon makes a Spellcasting Test and compares the result to the Spell Defense of each target within the intended area effect. If successful, the dragon makes a Dragon Breath Test to determine how much damage the targets take from the heat and choking vapors. Targets do not burn, but temporary blindness will cause them to suffer a 3 step penalty to all actions for the next five rounds. A character can make a Willpower or Dispel Magic Test against the dragon's Spell Defense to overcome this penalty; a successful test allows the character to see and removes the penalty from that character.

## Fear

Dragons radiate a fearsome aura. Many heroes who try to confront a dragon flee in terror upon seeing the beast. To use its Fear power, a dragon makes a Spellcasting Test and compares the result to the Spell Defense of all characters and creatures within 100 yards. Within this distance, the dragon's bellow rattles the ground, enough to make the most dauntless character nervous. A successful test means the dragon's Fear power affects the characters; its victims tremble, sweat, stammer and exhibit other hallmarks of extreme fright. Having afflicted its victims, the dragon makes a Fear test. The result becomes the Difficulty Number for any attempts to resist the dragon's Fear power. Before an affected character can take any action that requires a test, he must resist the effect of the Fear power by making a successful Willpower Test against that Difficulty Number. While under the influence of Fear, however, he can move, talk, or perform other actions that do not require tests.

Some of the more common Fear knacks include the following:

**Awe:** A dragon using this power knack does not inspire just fear but more of a powerful sense of awe





and respect mixed with a touch of fear. The effects are the same as described for Fear, except victims are less frightened, and more impressed.

**Paralyzing Gaze:** This knack allows a dragon to focus the power of its Fear on a single individual, rendering that character incapable of any action. The dragon makes its Spellcasting Test normally. If it is successful, the victim is paralyzed, unable to do anything except stare in fear at the dragon for as long as the dragon's gaze is upon him. In order to take any action at all, the victim must make a successful Willpower Test against the result of the dragon's Fear Test.

**Terror:** The Terror knack allows a dragon to instill blind panic in its victims. It costs the dragon 5 Strain Points. On a successful Spellcasting Test, the victim flees from the dragon as quickly as possible. To take any action other than fleeing madly, the victim must make a Willpower Test against the result of the dragon's Fear Test.

#### Lair Sense

A dragon makes its lair an extension of itself, and can use Lair Sense to notice intruders anywhere within its lair. Whenever a character makes a test within the confines of the dragon's lair, he triggers the dragon's Lair Sense. Simple movement and quiet conversation tend not to activate this power, though they can on occasion. To use this ability, the dragon makes a Lair Sense Test against the Spell Defense of the character whose action activated the power. If the test succeeds, the dragon detects the character and his location within the lair. Dragons often booby-trap their lairs to take advantage of this power, forcing characters to beat the traps by performing an action that reveals their presence.

Many dragons develop Lair Sense knacks such as the following.

**Absent Lair Sense:** Lair Sense normally works only when the dragon is in its lair, protecting the dragon from being surprised while in *shal-mora* (p. **Error! Bookmark not defined.**) or otherwise distracted. A dragon with this knack may use Lair Sense to detect intruders even while away from its lair. The Lair Sense works normally otherwise. Characters who wait for a dragon to depart before raiding its lair may still be in for a surprise if they trigger the dragon's Lair Sense.

**Identify Intruder:** A dragon with this knack not only senses the presence of an intruder, but also gains some information about him. The dragon gets a visual image of the intruder in his mind and knows his Name. The dragon may recognize characters with sufficient Legendary Status (p. 226, **ED**) and will certainly recognize anyone it has encountered before.

**Lair Mark:** This knack allows a dragon to place an invisible astral "mark" on a character detected by its Lair Sense. The dragon makes a Spellcasting Test against the target character's Spell Defense. If successful, the dragon is able to know the exact location of the marked character for a year and a day, up to 5,000 miles away from the dragon. The mark does not allow the dragon to affect the character in any way, just to know his location. Many Name-givers who thought that had successfully robbed a dragon's lair have been hunted down using this knack.

**Lair Vision:** With this knack, a dragon whose Lair Sense detects an intruder can see and hear everything happening at the intruder's location in the lair as if the dragon were physically present. This allows the dragon to see any companions the intruder might have, and to listen in on their plans. Many would-be dragon hunters have been surprised to find their prey waiting as if the dragon was expecting them.

#### Spells

Dragons are natural born spellcasters, with an inherent knowledge of the workings of magic. They use spell magic regularly. This power refers to the dragon's use of spell magic as practiced by magician adepts (spell matrices, threads, etc.), but dragons also have their own unique form of spell magic. See **Dragon Magic**, p. 18, for more information on dragons' use of spells.

#### Suppress Magic

With their natural knack for manipulating astral space, most dragons can suppress magic used by other creatures. To use the Suppress Magic ability, the dragon makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test is successful, the dragon makes a Suppress Magic Test, reducing the target's use of magic by a number of steps equal to the result. In addition to reducing spells, Suppress Magic reduces the steps of all talents, the damage from magical weapons, and any other magic use. Suppress Magic lasts for a number of Combat Rounds equal to the result of the Suppress Magic Test. If it prefers, a dragon can use this ability to suppress one specific type of magic, such as talents, magic items or spells, instead of suppressing all types.

#### Venom

Dragons with this power have venomous teeth and claws, and any tooth or claw attack that causes damage to a character also poisons him (No Spellcasting Test is required for a dragon to affect a character with poison—if the character is physically struck and damaged by tooth or claw, they are automatically affected by Venom). After taking damage from a dragon's teeth or claws, a character must make a successful Toughness Test against the dragon's Spell





Defense each round for 10 consecutive rounds to resist the effects of the venom. If the character fails this Poison Resistance Test during any of those ten rounds, the attacking dragon makes a Venom Test for that round to determine how much damage the character takes from the venom. (For more information about poison damage, see **Adventuring in Earthdawn**, p. 207 of the **Earthdawn** rulebook.) Each use of the Venom power lasts only 10 rounds, after which time the poison ceases to damage the character. A single target can only suffer damage from one use of the Venom power at a time.

Some knacks based on the Venom power include the following.

**Pain Venom:** Instead of causing damage, the Venom of a dragon with this knack causes excruciating pain, rendering most victims unable to do anything except writhe on the ground in agony. The dragon makes the Venom Test as usual, except the result becomes the Difficulty Number for the victim to take any action. The poisoned character must make a Willpower Test against this Difficulty Number in order to take any action. The Venom lasts for 10 rounds as normal.

**Sleep Venom:** A dragon with this knack can use its Venom power to render victims unconscious, rather than killing them. Damage from the venom ceases to affect the victim once his Current Damage reaches his Unconsciousness Threshold. Venom damage done when using this knack does not kill the victim.

**Spit Venom:** Some dragons have the ability to spit or spray venom from their mouths. The dragon makes a normal Attack Test against the target character's Physical Defense. If successful, the victim suffers damage from the corrosive venom equal to the result of a Venom Test. Normal armor provides protection from this damage. On an Extraordinary success, the dragon's venom hits the target's eyes, causing blindness for 10 Combat Rounds, in addition to the damage caused by the venom.

### Wingbeat

Winged dragons can use their wings to knock over opponents. The dragon using Wingbeat makes an Attack Test, then compares the result to the Physical Defense of every character up to 60 feet away, in a 90 degree arc from the front of the dragon. If the test result exceeds a character's Physical Defense, the dragon's wing hits the character. To determine whether or not the wing actually knocks a character down, the dragon makes a Wingbeat Test, the result of which becomes the Difficulty Number for the Knockdown Test that any character struck by the wings must perform. Any character who fails the Knockdown Test is knocked down and moved backward a number of yards equal to difference between the Difficulty Number and the result

of the Knockdown Test. For example, a character whose Knockdown Test result is 11 less than the Difficulty Number would be knocked backwards 11 yards. This can be especially hazardous for characters fighting a dragon somewhere high up, like the deck of an airship or a mountain top.

**Dust Cloud:** A dragon using this knack can stir up a cloud of dust, dirt, sand, ash or similar material using the winds generated by beating its wings. The dragon makes a Wingbeat Test and the result becomes the range in yards that the cloud extends in all directions from the dragon. Any character in the dust cloud suffers a 3 step penalty from the flying, stinging dust. The cloud lasts for 5 rounds, after which it settles harmlessly to the ground.

**Icewing's Special Power:** As described on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.**, the great dragon Icewing has a unique knack based on this power. To use this knack, Icewing makes a Spellcasting Test against the Spell Defense of his target. If this test is successful, the victim is encased in ice, and Icewing makes a Wingbeat Test. The result of this test is the Difficulty Number for Strength Tests to break free of the ice from the inside. The ice can be attacked from the outside, and is treated like a barrier with a Physical Armor Rating of 10, and a Damage Rating equal to the result of the Wingbeat Test (see **Barriers and Structures**, p. 209, **ED**). Each use of this power costs Icewing 5 points of Strain. Icewing can use this knack against multiple opponents, as long as all the intended targets are within an area no larger than 20 yards in diameter. Each additional target beyond the first costs Icewing 1 additional point of Strain. Characters encased in ice are in danger of suffocation. A character may hold his breath for a number of rounds equal to his Toughness Step. When the victim runs out of breath, the gamemaster makes a Damage Test every round, using a step number of 4 + the number of rounds since the victim ran out of breath (see **Swimming**, p. 123, **Denizens of Earthdawn Vol. 1**).

### New Dragon Powers

The following dragon powers appear for the first time in this book. These new powers are primarily known only by great dragons, though some adult dragons also use these.

#### Dominate Beast

This power allows a dragon to control beasts, similar to the beastmaster talent of the same name (p. 102, **ED**). To use this power, the dragon makes a Dominate Beast Test against the Spell Defense of the beast(s) the dragon wishes to control. If successful, the dragon controls the target creatures for a number of minutes equal to its Dominate Beast step number. An





animal under the effect of this power will not take any hostile action against the dragon, and will perform one simple task for the dragon that does not exceed the duration of the power.

The great dragons Aban and Usun both have this power, using it to control the various creatures living in their respective homes in the Mist Swamps and the Liaj Jungle. Some power knacks based on the Dominate Beast power include the following:

**Beast's Eyes:** This knack allows the dragon to perceive through the senses of any beast it dominates. To use this knack the dragon makes a Spellcasting Test against the Spell Defense of the dominated beast. If the test is successful, the dragon can perceive everything the beast perceives. Dragons with this knack, including both Aban and Usun, use dominated beasts in their domain as scouts and spies.

**Stampede:** A dragon with this knack can cause a group of animals to stampede in a specific direction like the Incite Stampede talent (p. 109, **ED**). Using this knack requires only a single action. The dragon uses its Dominate Beast step in place of the Incite Stampede talent step.

#### Karma Cancel

Karma Cancel allows a dragon to override another character's use of Karma. The dragon makes a Karma Cancel Test against the target character's Spell Defense. If successful, the dragon may spend a Karma Point to cancel the target's use of Karma. If a target spends multiple Karma Points (such as for the use of the True Shot talent), the dragon must spend the same number of points to cancel them. Karma Cancel does not require an action; a dragon may attempt to Cancel an opponent's use of Karma at any time so long as it still has Karma Points to spend.

#### Lend Karma

This knack allows a dragon to give Karma Points or lend its Karma step to any other being the dragon can see or that the dragon has woven a thread to (see **Thread Magic**, p. 18). To use this power, the dragon makes a Lend Karma Test against the target character's Spell Defense (a willing target may lower his Spell Defense). For every success level, the dragon can give the target one point of Karma from the dragon's own Karma Points. The target may then spend the Karma Points normally. For example, a dragon who achieves a Good success on a Lend Karma test can give the target 2 Karma Points.

Alternatively, a successful test allows the dragon to give the target its own Karma Step for a number of rounds equal to the success level of the Lend Karma Test. The target must spend her own Karma

Points, but rolls Karma Dice based on the dragon's Karma Step instead of her own.

### Innate Dragon Abilities

In addition to their formidable powers, dragons have some abilities which are common to all of their kind. Every dragon has these powers in some degree. Some of these abilities have been described in previous Earthdawn products as dragon powers similar to those described above. These abilities are included among the dragon's powers in the above sample dragon statistics. Note that these abilities are not found among all dragon-like creatures. Dragon-like creatures have only those abilities listed under their Powers. This usually includes Armored Scales, Astral Sight, Karma and Regeneration, but rarely any others.

#### Armored Scales

A dragon's armored hide provides great physical and magical protection against attack. Only attacks that score an Extraordinary success against the dragon's Physical Defense Rating achieve an Armor Defeating Hit on the dragon. A dragon's Mystic Armor protects against magical attack in the same way; attacks against the dragon's Spell Defense must score an Extraordinary success.

#### Astral Sight

Dragons are naturally attuned to astral space, allowing them to see astral forms at will. To use this power, the dragon makes a Spellcasting Test. If the result of the test exceeds the Spell Defense of any subject within 60 yards, the dragon can see the astral image of the subject. Unlike most Name-givers, dragons do not have to spend Strain to use their Astral Sight. The Astral Sight power is a heightened version of the talent of the same name (p. 98, **ED**). For more information about the use of Astral Sight and other astral sensing abilities, see p. 74 of **Magic: A Manual of Mystic Secrets**.

Many dragons develop power knacks using their Astral Sight. Any of the Astral Sight talent knacks from **Magic: A Manual of Mystic Secrets** or **Arcane Mysteries of Barsaive** may be learned by dragons as power knacks. Dragons also have some unique Astral Sight knacks of their own:

**Item History:** This knack function exactly like the Item History talent (p. 110, **ED**) except the dragon uses its Astral Sight step in place of the talent step, and the dragon needs to study the item for only a day, not a full week. Use the results of the dragon's Item History Test normally for determining an item's Key Knowledges. Some dragons (including Icewing) have been known to perform Item History on especially powerful magical items with high Spell Defense





numbers), in exchange for future favors from adventurers.

**Matrix Strike:** With the Matrix Strike knack, a dragon can attack a magician's spell matrices in astral space, just like the Matrix Strike talent (p. 32, **Earthdawn Companion**). To use this power, the dragon must have first detected the astral image of the target with an Astral Sight Test. The dragon then makes a Spellcasting Test against the target magician's Spell Defense. A successful test damages one of the target's spell matrices (see p. 154, **ED**, for more information). Dragons can attack matrices only with their claws when using this power. The target's Mystic Armor protects against this damage.

**Spirit Strike:** This knack allows the dragon to strike at opponents from astral space, just like the Spirit Strike talent (p. 117, **ED**). The dragon makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If successful, the dragon causes normal attack damage. The target's armor protects against this damage, but defensive talents such as Avoid Blow cannot be used to avoid a Spirit Strike.

**True Sight:** Dragons are difficult to fool, and dragons with this knack are even more so. True Sight allows a dragon to see through illusions, like the talent of the same name (p. 120, **ED**). To use this knack the dragon makes an Astral Sight Test against the Sensing/Disbelief Number of the illusion to overcome it.

### Dragonspeech

All adult dragons have the Dragonspeech power. It allows the dragon to transmit its thoughts as speech to any being within the dragon's line of sight, by making a successful Spellcasting Test against the being's Spell Defense. The dragon can also send simple images as well as speech through its mental link. A target that wishes to hear the dragon's mental speech can voluntarily lower its Spell Defense, of course, although considering the further probing Dragonspeech can be used for, it is not always wise to trust a dragon. Under normal circumstances, the gamemaster can assume a dragon's use of Dragonspeech is successful, unless the subject has a Spell Defense higher than the dragon's Spellcasting Step (which is 20+ for an adult dragon).

Dragonspeech is the natural method of communication for dragons, and they use it most often among themselves. It is also useful because it transcends language, allowing a dragon to speak to another being whether or not it understands the subject's language. Most dragons hardly bother with Dragonspeech except among their own kind, but some have developed a number of power knacks using Dragonspeech, including the following:

**Read Thoughts:** This knack allows the dragon to not only project its own thoughts, but to read the surface thoughts of any being it can see with a successful Spellcasting Test against the subject's Spell Defense. This permits two-way mental communication between the dragon and the subject, transcending language barriers. It also allows the dragon to know what the subject is thinking. A successful Willpower or Willforce Test against the result of the dragon's Spellcasting Test is required to successfully hide a thought from the dragon, or to tell a lie. Dragons with this knack tend to have great insight into other Name-givers.

**Learn Language:** By touching the mind of a subject using Dragonspeech, the dragon can learn any language the subject knows. The dragon makes a Spellcasting Test against the subject's Spell Defense. On an Excellent or better success, the dragon may learn one language the subject knows, speaking and reading it fluently.

**Thought Probe:** Thought Probe is one step more advanced than Read Thoughts. It allows the dragon to sift through the thoughts and memories of a subject like hunting through a pile of coin and gems. With a successful Spellcasting Test, the dragon can probe the subject's mind for a particular memory or piece of information. The success level of the Test determines what information the dragon can dig up. An Average success allows the dragon to locate any memory up to a day old, a Good success up to a week old, Excellent up to a year old and an Extraordinary success can locate any memory, even information the subject is not consciously aware of.

In addition to gaining useful information from unwilling subjects, dragons can use this knack to read the memories of willing subjects (such as drake and Name-giver servants). This allows a dragon to reexperience what its servant experienced directly.

**Second Sight:** Using the knack of Second Sight, a dragon can use Dragonspeech to perceive through the senses of another being, with or without that being's consent. The dragon must first establish a connection to the subject via thread magic (p. 143, **ED**) to use this knack. Once this is accomplished the dragon may, at any time, make a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If successful, the dragon gains access to one of the subject's senses for each level of success. An Extraordinary success allows the dragon to perceive with all of the subject's senses. The dragon does not have any direct power over the subject using this knack; in fact, the subject is not even aware the dragon is eavesdropping, unless the dragon rolls a Poor success on the Spellcasting Test, in which case the subject has a brief feeling of being watched.







**Suggestion:** This knack allows a dragon to mentally plant a suggestion in the target's mind, similar to a powerful posthypnotic suggestion. The dragon makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If successful, the dragon may implant a single suggestion. This can be something immediate or it can be triggered by later circumstances. After planting the suggestion, the dragon makes a Willpower Test, which becomes the strength of the suggestion. To overcome it, the victim must make a Willpower Test that equals or exceeds the result of the dragon's Spellcasting test. Otherwise, the victim follows the suggestion as if it were his own idea.

**Reweave Mind:** This is the most powerful and sophisticated knack of Dragonspeech; the ability to tear the fabric of a living mind and reweave it to the dragon's will. The great dragon Mountainshadow is known to have reached this level of ability, but few other dragons can hope to do so. With Reweave Mind, a dragon can mentally reshape the fabric of the subject's mind, altering, removing or restoring memories, changing personality and so forth. The process is not fast, even for the powerful mind of a dragon. Any attempt at Reweave Mind takes at least one hour, longer if the changes are more complex. The dragon makes a Spellcasting Test against the Spell Defense of the subject and must gain an Excellent success or better. If successful, this power allows the dragon to alter the subject's memories and such at will. An Extraordinary success is required to make fundamental changes in personality or vital memories. This power can also literally rebuild a mind shattered by illness or madness.

#### Karma Points

All dragons have Karma Points they may use to augment any test they wish. A dragon may spend only 1 Karma Point per test. A dragon regains spent Karma Points at a rate of 1 or 2 points per day, until it reaches its maximum. Hatchlings regain 1 Karma Point per day and adult dragons regain 2 Karma Points a day. The more powerful great dragons regain 3 Karma Points per day.

#### Natural Spellcasting

All adult dragons know how to use spell magic. The ability to manipulate the energies of astral space is inherent. Dragons can use their natural Spellcasting ability to cast any spell as Raw Magic (p. 155, **ED**). The dragon doesn't need to know the spell, it simply shapes the astral energy to its will and the spell happens. This is a natural ability for dragons. For a long time, dragons performed all of their magic in this way, grabbing magical energy and shaping it to their wills.

Hatchlings using this ability must weave all the threads necessary for the spell they wish to cast. Adult dragons need weave only one-half (rounded

down) the required threads for any spells they cast in this manner, while great dragons need not weave any threads for spells they cast using this ability. Dragons use their Spellcasting step number for all Thread Weaving and Spellcasting Tests made when casting spells in this manner. When determining certain rank based effects of spells (especially Duration), the age of the dragon casting the spell determines the rank. Hatchlings cast spells in this manner at the equivalent of Rank 8; adults cast at Rank 12, and great dragons cast at Rank 15.

Despite the versatility and power of this ability, not all dragons exploit the full potential of their spellcasting abilities. With the tainting of astral space by the Horrors, the use of Raw Magic is dangerous, even to creatures as powerful as dragons. For this reason, many dragons have adopted the more complex forms of spell magic practiced by other Name-givers. See **Dragon Magic**, p. 18, for more information.

#### Regeneration

Dragons can regenerate any damage done to them by opponents. Each use of this power lasts for 10 rounds or until it heals all of the dragon's Current Damage, whichever is shorter. Activating this power costs the dragon 1 Karma Point. While using the Regeneration, the dragon must sacrifice a Recovery Test each round. The dragon makes a Regeneration Test each round during the duration of the power, and reduces its Current Damage by the total.

Great dragons have developed a very powerful knack for this power called Regrowth.

**Regrowth:** Similar to the regenerative capacity of some reptiles, dragons with the Regrowth knack can actually regenerate lost body parts, so long as the dragon's brain and spine are intact. The lost part regrows once the dragon's Current Damage and Wounds reach 0, at a cost of one Recovery Test for a small body part like a talon, up to five Recovery Tests for a limb. Regeneration takes a number of days equal to the number of Recovery Tests required.

#### Summoning

Dragons may summon tasked, elemental, ally, and Named spirits by making a Summoning Test. The step number for the Summoning Test is equal to the dragon's Willpower step, with a Difficulty Number equal to the spirit's Spell Defense. The success level of the Summoning Test determines the number of services the spirit will perform for the summoner. On an Average success the spirit performs 1 service, on a Good success the spirit performs 2 services, an Excellent success yields 3 services, and an Extraordinary Success, 4 services. To determine how long the spirit remains, the dragon makes another Willpower Test, with the result being the number of days the spirit remains.





Dragons may coerce spirits into performing more services by engaging them in a Contest of Wills, or persuade them with a Charisma Test. For complete information on summoning spirits, see **Magic: A Manual of Mystic Secrets**.

Likewise, dragons can banish tasked, elemental, ally, or Named spirits by making a Willpower Test against the spirit's Spell Defense.

## Dragon Magic

More than any other Name-givers, dragons are masters of the magic that flows through the Age of Legend.

They are creatures of magic, in tune with the energies of astral space and able to instinctively perceive and understand the warp and weft of the fabric of astral space. This gift gives dragons great magical knowledge and ability to call upon in addition to their formidable powers. This section describes how dragon magic differs from that of other Name-givers, and describes a unique form of Ritual Magic, an earthshaking magical power known only to dragons.

### Spell Magic

As mentioned in the descriptions of the Spells power (p. 13) and Natural Spellcasting (p. 17), many dragons make use of the spellcasting methods and techniques of Name-giver magicians. A dragon with the Spells power has learned to use the spells of one or more magician Disciplines. However, because of dragons' considerable skill with magic, the rules for their casting of spells in this manner are slightly different. The following rules also apply to any dragon-like creatures with the Spells power.

#### Spell Matrix Talents

Dragons with this power have a number of spell matrices equal to their Spellcasting step divided by 4 (rounded up). For instance, a dragon with a Spellcasting step of 23 would have  $(23/4 = 5.75)$  or 6 spell matrices. One out of every three of a dragon's matrices are Enhanced Matrices and one out of every six are Armored Matrices. To continue the example above, the dragon would have three standard spell matrices, two Enhanced Matrices and one Armored Matrix. All of a dragon's matrices have a rank equal to 15 or the dragon's Spellcasting step number (whichever is lower). Dragons follow all of the normal spell matrix rules, including the need to retune their matrices.

### Thread Weaving

Dragons weave threads to their spells like other spell-casters. Dragons use their Spellcasting step for all Thread Weaving Tests. A dragon with multiple Spellcasting Actions can use them to weave more than one thread at a time, so a dragon with 4 Spellcasting Actions could weave three threads for a spell and cast the spell in the same Combat Turn.

### Spell Effects

To determine the effect of a dragon's spell, use the dragon's Willpower step. Dragons do not have the Willforce talent, nor do they ever learn it. For effects that are based on Spellcasting rank, such as Duration, assume the dragon to have a rank equal to the highest Circle spell it is capable of casting. For example, a dragon able to cast Circle 12 spells has the equivalent of a Spellcasting rank of 12. This limitation represents the one truly restriction dragons face when using the "primitive" spellcasting techniques of Name-givers.

### Learning Spells

Dragons learn new spells using their Spellcasting step instead of the Read and Write Magic talent against the Learning Difficulty of the spell they wish to learn. A dragon generally knows all of the spells for the Circles it has in a Discipline.

### Spellcasting Talent Knacks

Dragons may learn any of the Spellcasting or Thread Weaving talent knacks in **Magic: A Manual of Mystic Secrets** and **Arcane Mysteries of Barsaive** as a knack for their Spells power. Common Spellcasting knacks include Anchored Spell (used for creating lair traps), Forced Spellcasting, Increased Dispel Difficulty and Name Spell. Dragons do not need the Spell Design talent knacks to design spells, their natural sense for magic allows them to do so. Dragons use their Spellcasting step for all tests associated with designing new spells.

### Thread Magic

Dragons use thread magic like other Name-givers, using their Spellcasting step in place of the Thread Weaving talent. A dragon can have a maximum number of threads equal to its Spellcasting step, and each has a maximum thread rank of 15. A dragon's hoard may contain many Pattern Items collected by the dragon over the years, and dragons very carefully guard their own Pattern Items. These rules for dragon thread magic apply to drakes as well.





## Blood Magic

Although they are able to use blood magic like other Name-givers, dragons generally disdain it in favor of their other magical powers and abilities. Certain feathered dragons are the only dragons to regularly use blood magic. Dragons do not use blood charms or similar items, nor do they generally make use of death magic. They can and do use blood magic to seal oaths, and blood magic is also used in the Dance of Blue Spirits, the process by which great dragons create drakes. Dragons swear few if any blood oaths in their long lives. A pledge made by a dragon is a serious thing, since it may last for thousands of years.

## Ritual Magic

Other than the information given in the chapter **Concerning the Nature of Dragons**, no rules are given for dragon ritual magic. Suffice to say that such massively powerful magical rituals are capable of causing vast changes in the forces of nature, the structure of astral space and even in the very fabric of reality itself. A dragon ritual could certainly destroy a city or an entire nation. They are greater in power than Circle 13+ spells like Call Forth the Maelstrom, Call Forth the Army of Decay or City in a Bottle (see **Arcane Mysteries of Barsaive**).

Dragon rituals take time, effort and the presence of several dragons working in concert. They are magic on a truly epic scope. As such, they are better treated as major events in the history of a campaign rather than simple spells. Keep in mind that ritual magic has not been performed by any of the dragons of Barsaive since long before the Scourge and perhaps even longer before that. These massively powerful rituals are not something that dragons invoke lightly. As Vasdenjas points out in his treatise, the dragons of Barsaive have learned from their past mistakes.

## Dragon-kin

Dragon-kin are Name-givers born of or descended from the mating of a Name-giver and a dragon in Name-giver form. They have certain unique abilities as a result of their heritage. Without careful breeding and a regular infusion of dragon blood, most families of dragon-kin become ordinary Name-givers after many generations as the dragon blood is slowly diluted. Dragon tradition now forbids dragons mating with any of the Young Races to produce dragon-kin, and the practice has been banned since the dawn of the Age of Legend. Violating this tradition is one of the few actions that is likely to result in a dragon being banished from dragon society. As a result, the number of these

Name-givers in Barsaive is extremely small and is constantly decreasing.

Any Name-giver race can produce dragon-kin, with the exceptions of the obsidimen, who do not reproduce as other Name-givers do. Because of this, dragon-kin are less of a “race” and more of a subspecies of their Name-giver parent race, but also sharing certain characteristics of the dragon side of their mixed heritage. Dragon-kin are capable of breeding with other members of their Name-giver parent’s race, and their children are generally dragon-kin as well, with the trait appearing for generations.

Dragon-kin have the normal racial abilities and modifiers of their Name-giver parent, with an additional +1 to their Perception and Willpower Attribute values. All dragon-kin also have the Racial Abilities of Astral-Sensitive Sight and Low-Light Vision (p. 54, **ED**). Their abilities make dragon-kin natural-born spellcasters, and many of them follow one or more of the magician Disciplines.

Dragon-kin all have at least one physical deformity or trait tied to their dragon blood, sometimes more than one. Common traits include scaly patches of skin, pointed ears, oddly colored eyes, eyes that feature slitted pupils, or eyes that lack pupils altogether. Other traits include webbed fingers and/or toes, a vestigial tail or wings, small horns, pronounced canine teeth, a complete lack of body hair, or bony deposits on the skin similar to heavy scales. These traits make the character recognizable to anyone familiar with dragon-kin (particularly any dragon). Most dragons strongly dislike dragon-kin. Drakes particularly detest dragon-kin, perhaps because they are jealous of their close kinship with their dragon masters. Name-givers unaware of the dragon-kin’s heritage often think them cursed or Horror-touched.

The Denairastas Clan of Iopos is the only extended family of dragon-kin currently known to exist, though the great dragons of Barsaive may know of or suspect others. The Denairastas are the children of the great dragon Denairastas who chose to violate dragon tradition by mating with a human female sometime before the Scourge. This dragon, now banished from dragon society, lairs in the Scol Mountains and is one of the most powerful allies of the Denairastas clan. Aside from the great dragons’ original servants, the Denairastas Clan are the only known living dragon-kin in Barsaive, perhaps in the entire world. Members of the Denairastas Clan cover their various dragon traits using clothing, makeup and illusion magic. Those children with deformities too severe to be concealed are generally killed, although there are rumors that Uhl Denairastas keeps some of them alive to perform experiments requiring dragon-kin subjects.





Legends among the t'skrang insist that members of House Syrtis are descended from a dragon, but the truth of these tales is not known.

Other families and lineages of dragon-kin may exist in Barsaive, keeping their heritage secret out of fear of persecution from both the dragons and other Name-givers. The gamemaster can introduce such isolated dragon-kin into the campaign as desired. Note however that none of the great dragons described in this book have done this. Violating this tradition is one of the most serious transgressions a dragon can commit, and none of Barsaive's great dragons would ever consider doing so.

## Using Dragons in Adventures and Campaigns

A close look at the statistics and abilities of the dragons in this book should reveal an obvious fact; these things are dangerous! Even the slightest of dragons is more powerful than most groups of adepts, and great dragons dwarf the power of adepts of nearly any Circle. Fortunately, it is (or at least should be) fairly rare that a group of characters will find themselves the enemy of one or more of the dragons of Barsaive, and the power these creatures wield is one that few characters will ever face directly. Nonetheless, using dragons in adventures in any way is a delicate business. It requires careful consideration as to which dragon to use, as well as the role the dragon should play in the adventure or campaign. Before we address these issues, however, we should ask one question. Should dragons be that powerful?

Yes. Absolutely. The dragons need to be as powerful as they are for the simple fact that they are the oldest and most powerful creatures in the world. Their abilities with magic are unrivaled. Even the most powerful and skilled magicians of the Theran Empire pale in comparison to the magical skills of dragons. Even the most mighty of adepts should feel apprehension at the thought of confronting a dragon under any circumstances.

Because dragons are such powerful and important beings, gamemasters need to exercise great care when using them in adventures and campaigns, to prevent dragons from becoming just another monster. Dragons are intelligent Name-givers with their own desires and goals. The descriptions of the Named dragons in this book provide a glimpse into just some of the goals and plans of these dragons, all of which can be used as the basis for adventures and campaigns.

There are two basic approaches to using dragons in Earthdawn adventures and campaigns: as

allies, or as enemies. In either role dragons function best behind the scenes, where they can spin their plots and pull the strings of nations and great powers. A great dragon has the power to lay waste to an entire kingdom if it wishes, but dragons tend to restrain their power, preferring to act indirectly.

This—along with the difficulties dragons have with group cooperation—explains why the dragons don't simply descend en masse against the Therans, the Denairastas or anyone else who offends them. They prefer the slow and cautious method. After all, what is a century or more to beings who measure their lives in millennia?

## Dragons as Allies

As noted above, dragons are intelligent Name-givers with their own desires and goals. Sometimes these goals coincide with those of other Name-givers, as in the case of Barsaive's struggle against the Theran Empire. These situations allow gamemasters to introduce dragons as allies or even patrons of the player characters.

A dragon, especially a great dragon, is a powerful ally. Dragons have considerable knowledge and magical power, as well as great wealth. A dragon ally can provide adepts with important information, Key Knowledges of magical items, spells and material resources (including silver!). How much the dragon is willing to give depends on how much it thinks the player characters can advance the dragon's own cause. Dragons are not known for their generosity, and they give away nothing unless it benefits them in some way. A dragon who lavishes gifts on the player characters expects undying loyalty and service in return.

Any alliance with a dragon is likely to be a temporary thing, as that is how most dragons prefer to deal with Name-givers. A typical arrangement might be as follows: the dragon asks the player characters to perform a specific task, perhaps in exchange for some service or resource the dragon has to offer. As an example, adepts might seek out a great dragon such as Icewing in hopes of learning a Key Knowledge or some particularly obscure piece of arcane lore. In return, the dragon asks the adepts to spy on a Theran operation near Lake Ban and report back to him, then he will give them the information they seek.

Gamemasters can also establish more lasting relations between dragons and adepts. A dragon can serve as a patron and mentor for the adepts, who perform tasks and serve as the dragon's eyes and hands in Name-giver society. Organizations such as the Dragon's Network (p. 6, **Secret Societies of Barsaive**) provide an ideal means for gamemasters to use dragons as patrons.





While dragons usually treat their servants well, they are not bound by the culture and beliefs of other Name-givers. Dragons are arrogant and treat other Name-givers much like children or pets. It is not uncommon for a dragon to sacrifice agents like pawns in a greater game. Adepts who are chosen for sacrifice may not take the same dispassionate view of the situation as their dragon master. If they survive, they may choose to seek revenge on their former patron.

One interesting way a dragon can become a patron of a group of characters is if all of the characters are dragon-kin (p. 19) related to the particular dragon, such as being members of the Denairastan Clan. In this case, the dragon has reasons of its own for defying the traditions of its kind and wishes to aid and support its progeny. Characters in such a campaign will tend to have many other dragon enemies, since most dragon view dragon-kin as abominations. Remember that none of the dragons detailed in this book would have dragon-kin.

## Dragons as Enemies

A dragon (especially a great dragon) makes an epic foe for an Earthdawn campaign. Dragons are very powerful creatures, perhaps the most powerful beings in the world, with the possible exceptions of mighty astral entities such as the Passions and perhaps the most powerful Horrors, such as Verjigorm, the Great Hunter. Dragons have great physical ability and magical power, and the intelligence to use both well. A fight against any dragon should never be easy; such a battle should be the climax of a long campaign, rather than a simple clash.

Fortunately, dragons rarely operate in the open where would-be dragon-slayers can come and find them. Most dragons are plotters and schemers, operating through a complex network of servants and informants to carry out their intricate plans. The nature of dragon culture and custom makes dragons aloof and separate from the day-to-day affairs of other Name-givers.

A dragon villain works best as a puppet-master, operating behind the scenes at first. While the player characters are low-Circle adepts, the dragon's presence is virtually unknown; they interact only with its servants and agents. As time goes on and the characters gain Legend Points and advance in Circle, they interact with more and more of the dragon's powerful servants and uncover more of its schemes, becoming a thorn in its side. Eventually, after a long campaign, the adepts may gain enough power to confront the dragon directly and slay it in an epic battle that shakes the earth and is retold in song and story for generations to come. The defeat of a dragon is no small thing, it is the stuff legends are made of.

The very nature of the dragons creates an interesting dilemma for gamemasters. Using any of the Named dragons in this book can easily result in the death of one or more of the player characters. When dealing with entities as powerful as the dragons, character death should not be unexpected. But while character death is undesirable, it is an important element of Earthdawn and one the gamemaster should NOT try to avoid. If every time the characters encounter a dragon they escape unscathed (or at least not dead!), the significance and power of dragons in the world of Earthdawn becomes diluted. The threat and danger they present to the world becomes less sincere.

So the question becomes, how can a gamemaster use the dragons as enemies, maintain the dragons' true nature, but not kill the characters in each adventure? Below are some suggestions for how to resolve this dilemma, without diluting the essence of the Earthdawn universe.

The first thing to keep mind is that most dragons should be long-term opponents. Some of the dragon-like creatures such as drakes are suitable for single adventures, but most should be used over a series of adventures, in which the characters discover the dragon's plans, encounter the dragon's victims, or witness its powers in use. This serves two purposes. First, it allows the players to encounter the dragon indirectly, as they learn more and more about its influence and machinations. Second, over a series of adventures, the characters will grow in power and experience, and be more ready to deal with the dragon (or at least with its servants and minions!).

Another way to look at this is to consider dragons as campaign level opponents. These are not things you battle once and slay. All dragons are very powerful, and only an experienced group of characters has a chance at defeating any of them. The Named dragons in this book represent opportunities for several different types of campaigns, based on the specific attitudes and goals of the individual dragons. Each of these dragons offers different types of adventures and stories. Also, many of these dragons prefer to use their powers over a long-term period. For instance, you should never plan for the characters to learn about, confront, and battle Vestrivan in the course of a single adventure. This would be a waste of a good dragon.

Another idea to keep in mind is that the characters need not confront the dragon itself right from the start. Many of the dragons work through agents, either willing or not. Willing agents include Name-giver servants (such the Pale One servants of Earthroot) drakes or other dragons. Unwilling agents might be Name-givers who aren't even aware that they serve the dragon's goals.





Adventures featuring the Named dragons from this book also need not conclude with the characters actually confronting the dragon itself. In some cases, characters should consider themselves fortunate to survive any type of encounter with a dragon, direct or not! A series of small, minor victories that disrupts the dragon's plans is a good way in which these powerful creatures can be used without risking the lives of the characters too much. Of course, if a dragon's plans were to be disrupted too often, it might just consider a direct assault on the party responsible.

On a slightly less upbeat topic, remember that adventures in which characters are killed are an excellent reminder for the players (and gamemaster) that the world of Earthdawn is a dangerous one. Adventure after adventure in which the characters succeed against any opponent they face only diminishes the feeling that Barsaive is a very dangerous place, one that is still far from safe. An occasional adventure in which the characters suffer losses of some sort, be it serious injury or death, helps to maintain the proper atmosphere of Barsaive as potentially lethal.

As it is inevitable that one or more the characters will suffer some misfortune, try to work it into the story, and have it be a significant event. When this occurs, try to let it mean something more than that one of the players needs to make a new character. Don't let the death (or other type of loss) of a character happen for no good reason. The characters in Earthdawn are heroes. If they are going to go down, let them go down heroically!

