



NEW RULES BROOD BIDDING

BY DARRELL HARDY & ROB VAUGHN

Brood bidding is a dynamic character creation process that makes each new Fireborn campaign, or even one-shot adventure, unique. First, the Game Master develops several story hooks or extras, called brood fates, that he wishes to incorporate into his game. He can do this after reviewing the characters as they have developed thus far, or can create them blind. The GM could also run a brood bidding session after the characters are totally completed, but that would limit the players' ability to react to the personal impact their brood role would have on their character concept. We recommend running the brood bid phase after character backgrounds and sires are chosen but before bonus points are spent on skills and bonus ranks are used to purchase edges and fighting style ranks. This allows players to develop their basic character concepts, including their careers and attitudes, before the discovery, windfall, disaster, or surprise of their brood fate enters their characters' lives. Afterwards, they may tailor their characters to reflect the brood fate, or not, as they like, by upgrading and promoting skills, choosing fighting styles, and of course developing their dragon breeds and powers.

The GM should develop around twice as many brood fates as he has players in his campaign, to ensure that everyone has at least some choice that appeals to them. The brood fates should be things he can work into the first adventure (or not) without too much trouble, depending on the players' choices. He should not offer a brood fate that is immediately essential to his adventure storyline, however, as he will be in dire straits if no one chooses it. Applying a passed-over brood fate to an NPC is an option, but not an ideal one.

As the brood bidding begins, the GM should describe each brood fate with as much or as little detail as he wishes. Some GMs like to tempt their players by giving the name of the brood fate, and nothing more; others describe one aspect of the fate, such as which aspect of life it will influence; others prefer to make it a mystery or a riddle, describing a brood fate by assigning anything from a historical figure to a band to a season that reflects aspects of that trait. Regardless of the GM's style of describing the brood fates, each brood fate should receive the same level of description.

Once all of the players have at least a summary understanding of what each brood fate involves, they secretly rank them on a sheet of paper, from their favorite choice to their least favorite. Next to each fate, the player may offer between 0 and 5 karma as a bid for breaking ties; if two players select the same brood fate,

the one who bid the most karma receives it. Karma bid in this way does not "return" . . . the players are actually reducing their characters' total karma pool by the amount listed. Only karma bid on the brood fate a player gains is "spent," however; players who lose a tie do not lose the karma bid.

SOME BROOD FATE IDEAS INCLUDE:

Knowledge of your Draconic Heritage

You begin the campaign awake and aware of your draconic heritage. Perhaps you've had flashbacks since long before magic awakened, or your family or culture could be keepers of knowledge from the mythic age. Maybe you were captured by the government or a secret society and experimented upon until memory of your previous existences was unlocked. Regardless of the source of your As such you can easily become a de facto leader of your brood, someone that the other less aware characters look up to for your knowledge and experience.

In terms of game mechanics, you start the campaign at awakened level 1, even though your hoard, humanity, and heritage ranks are all 0. This means that one of your aspect scores will have a superhuman rank of 1, you will be able to manifest a cost 1 draconic trait and you will have a superhuman aspect score. However, you will have no ranks in powers other than Group Mind. once you align yourself with your brood, you return to a more "eventual" style of advancement, however; you need twice the number of humanity and heritage points to increase your humanity and heritage ranks to 2.

Knowledge of the Mythic Age

While you may not realize that you are yourself a dragon, you're no stranger to the truths underlying our modern reality. You know that the mythic age existed, you know that it was populated by strange creatures and that it was a time of magic, and you can put two and two together to realize that it's coming back in the modern day. As with the Knowledge of Draconic Heritage brood fate, you could have come by this knowledge through inheritance, diligence, or pure accident.

In terms of game mechanics, you are the brood's librarian, lorekeeper, or walking textbook. Any time a new creature is encountered, you're likely to know what kills it; any time you meet a strange new culture, you're likely to know how to get on its good side. You begin the campaign with an elite rank of 3 in Knowledge: Mythic



Age. You also gain the rank 2 independent edge Skill Expertise with the Knowledge: Mythic Age skill and rank 2 in the Network edge; your network is comprised of mortals who are similarly aware of the mythic age and can point you to more “exotic” contacts, like supernatural creatures.

Karmic Item

By hook or by crook, you begin the game with a karmic item . . . and not just *any* karmic item, but one that was part of your hoard during the mythic age.

In terms of game mechanics, the item is a rank 2 karmic item from your draconic hoard, meaning that (so long as you don’t drain it completely of its karma), your scion will be able to reach awakened rank 2 before he needs to start looking for a hoard item.

Enchanted Item

You begin the game with an enchanted item of a variable hoard cost (the GM could design several brood fates of different “values” or “styles” each with its own enchanted item). While it’s bound to be useful, odds are good that you’re not the only one who knows about the item . . . and they’re bound to come looking for it.

Totem creature

Somewhere in your previous existence, or perhaps even in the modern one, you became tied to the totemic spirit of a mundane creature. You relate to creatures of that type and look to images of that creature for guidance.

In terms of game mechanics, you begin the campaign with abilities identical to rank 1 in the Rapport power toward creatures of the same family as your totem. You may improve this power separately from the normal Rapport power during normal advancement. Additionally, the GM can offer you guidance at his discretion using animals of your totem’s species or images of such animals; for instance, someone with the raven totem might be warned away from an ambush by a croaking raven above a building he’s about to enter, or might be led toward a wounded brood-mate by a hovering raven.

Avatar of . . .

You are the living embodiment of an ideal, an aspect of nature, or even a long-forgotten god. This truth emerges slowly throughout your life, both in your actions and your thoughts.

In terms of game mechanics, the GM may allow you to re-roll one test per day per awakened rank. The test must be something completely in-tune with the ideal that you are the avatar of. If you are an avatar of Fire, for instance, it would be any Fire test. If you are an avatar of Athena, it might be a test involving knowledge or defense. If you are an avatar of truth, it might be a test to determine if someone is lying to you.

Of course, as a pseudo-deific being, you are bound to have other roles. Your organs, for instance, would fetch

an extravagant price as spell components on the mystic black market.

Ex-Government agent

You were a government agent with connections to the kind of information most folks think are conspiracy theories. Perhaps you were framed and betrayed by someone within your organization and had to leave; or you could’ve disobeyed an order you found repugnant; maybe you’re the only survivor of your group and haven’t yet checked back in with the powers that be for fear you’ll be “removed from the picture” to keep everything quiet.

In terms of game mechanics, you begin the game with up 9 street cost worth of weapons. You also have 5 ranks in Knowledge: Secret Government Initiatives (effectively rank 2 regarding governments other than your own). The downside to all this intel and hardware? You go by an assumed name, have fake I.D.s, and if you’re ever apprehended by authorities who manage to show your picture to the wrong people, you and everyone you associate with are likely to be quiet, efficiently, and irresistibly erased from existence.

BROOD BIDDING IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

When coming up with brood fates, consider your campaign’s archetype and themes, and make the fates match the campaign. If your campaign is about a top-secret team of university field researchers, your fates may tie into the university, academia, scholarship, funding, or the other personnel at the school. The fate “Old friends with the university president” might not be worth much in a club-hopping socialite campaign, but it’s very attractive to a university researcher who keeps getting into trouble.

Some fates are destined, and simply haven’t happened yet. You might want to adjust “You have a cool sword as a hoard item” to “You will someday soon have a cool sword.” Shifting fates to the future means they influence character creation less, and that you’ll have to somehow work them into the adventure, but they provide a point of anticipation for the players who win them. Instead just writing “I have a cool sword” on his character sheet, the player is now curious: is the sword hiding at the bottom of this encounter? Is it magical? Will it trigger flashbacks?

You can also use future fates for foreshadowing: “You will discover a past life—and an old enemy you thought was your friend.” Or perhaps, “You will suffer a terrible loss that leads to enlightenment and joy.” Keeping them vague leads again to player anticipation. They know something of what’s coming, but not the details, and that keeps them interested.