

URBAN SHADOWS

political urban fantasy
powered by the apocalypse

ANDREW MEDEIROS

MARK DIAZ TRUMAN

The Dragon was Designed, Written, and Edited by
Andrew Medeiros and Mark Diaz Truman

Rules editing by Brendan Conway
Proofreading by Shelley Harlan
Art direction by Marissa Kelly
Illustrations by Juan Ochoa
Layout by Mark Diaz Truman
Original Layout by Thomas Deeny

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*The Apocalypse Engine is used courtesy of Vincent Baker and Lumpley Games (lumpley.com). Much of the text of **Urban Shadows** was inspired by **Apocalypse World** directly (as well as **Monsterhearts** by Avery Alder).*

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THE DRAGON

You've always known you were special. You heard it in whispers when you were alone as a child; you felt it each time people applauded your deeds and lingered on your name. It came as no surprise that there were those who hunted you. Everyone always fears and loathes their betters.

PLAYING THE DRAGON

Ancient, driven, secretive, addicted. The Dragon is an old soul locked in a new form, a mystery lost to the ages reborn into the modern era. Plagued by memories of their nearly forgotten rule, dark visions that feed their ego and excite their baser instincts, they hunt for their fellow dragons and lost artifacts alike...yet there are still enemies who would hunt them as well.

You once ruled as a mighty dragon, a force of nature upon this earth that few could stand against. Yet your subjects turned against you, your own kin betrayed you, and you fell. You were humbled at the point of a sword.

Luckily, your fall was not fatal. You survived. You were reborn. And in your rebirth you have found the opportunity to rebuild. To claim what was once yours. Your legacy. Your destiny. Your birthright.

But those who destroyed you have not forgotten you. The Ordo Draconis prowls the shadows, seeking some way to end you, once and for all. They have waited for your rebirth, sought the tools they need for your destruction, and kept a watchful eye out for you and your kin.

They brought you low once. They scheme and plot to do it again. They wish to keep you separated from your brood, the others who have been reborn into this era like you.

Your memories are hazy, but it's possible this is not your first rebirth. It's possible that the Ordo has banished you time and time again. It's possible that you reconnected with your brood, nearly secured your legacy, and still fell to darkness. Time is a circle for you, a pattern that repeats and rhymes.

You intend to make *this* the final stanza: the last life you'll need to lead in this fragile mortal form. You will reclaim what is yours, and you will rule again.

»Notes on Your Moves

If you choose a *notable arcane tome or device*, work with your MC to construct a custom move around it (*Urban Shadows, Chapter 10: The Shadows*). Consider it the first acquisition in your new collection. After all, you have plans to recover so, so much more of what you lost to the ages.

Your **brood** offers you six options for the MC to reveal when you discover the truth of your broodmates, but only four broodmates are reborn into each era. You gain the advance associated with each of those broodmates only when you have discovered their true nature. Whatever you discover is also known to them in that moment of intimacy.

Mark corruption when you *knowingly pass on the true costs* of your actions. It's possible that your friends or loved ones might not suffer because of your selfishness, but you've got to mark corruption anyway. On the other hand, you don't have to mark corruption when something you did inadvertently hurts people. You have to *know* you're passing the costs on to someone else.

If someone refuses to affirm your obvious beauty, you may wait to take something from them until the moment is right. If you're stalling, the MC may declare that your draconic instincts take hold of you and act in your stead. Best not to dawdle or delay.

All Things Laid Bare offers you the opportunity to gain special information when you look into the lineage or history of another character. You might hit the library (or the streets) to dig into someone's past, but you might also ask probing questions when you meet someone face-to-face.

Don't You Know Me? can be used to confuse someone who doesn't know you already, but it can also trigger when you imply that you are more than you seem or more important than someone knows. It's only important that you insinuate that you are a special person who should have special access.

When you trigger **Drake**, you let loose a single burst of intense flame. You can treat this burst as an attack by **unleashing**, but you can also use it to light something on fire or destroy an obstacle. Either way, you need to mark corruption again to summon another outpouring of fire.

»Inspiration for The Dragon

- Books: Dragon Delasangre Series (Alan F. Troop), *Tea with the Black Dragon* (R.A. McAvoy), Vlad Taltos Series (Stephen Brust)
- Music: "Crossroads" (Bone Thugs-n-Harmony), "Past Lives" (Ke\$ha), "1979" (Smashing Pumpkins)
- Movies: *Dragonheart*, *The Matrix*, *The Mummy*
- Television: *Blindspot*, *Dark Shadows*, *Angel*

MC ADVICE: THE DRAGON

The Dragon is a deceptively destructive playbook, an ancient and powerful monster driven to pursue their selfish desires before their enemies catch up with them. It's a potent mix that can create some intense drama at your table... but you'll have to keep a careful eye on the Dragon's spotlight time.

Most player characters have goals and objectives they pursue each session, but few (if any) are as mechanically motivated as the Dragon's are. No other archetype gets advances for merely meeting and engaging with NPCs; no other archetype has a specially designed set of villains hunting them from the first moments of play. The Dragon is special, and the playook ensures it.

Lean hard on your PC-NPC-PC triangles—the Dragon's broodmate is the Wizard's brother!—and look for opportunities to tie the Ordo Draconis to the other PCs in significant ways. The Dragon will drive plenty of plot, but you'll need to make sure the vortex of drama and chaos sucks in the other PCs. When in doubt, drop another broodmate in to refocus the Dragon on a new part of the city or on characters that aren't getting enough attention.

At the same time, make sure that each moment of intimacy between the Dragon and their broodmates is earned. Other members of the brood may feel drawn to the Dragon and each other, but they aren't willing to jump into a vulnerable moment (physically or emotionally) without some time, space, and trust. Give the Dragon oppotunities to earn that trust, but also keep the broodmates at a distance whenever the Dragon behaves strangely or selfishly.

If the Dragon declares all of their broodmates quickly—perhaps even in the first session—use the entire brood like the Hallowed's flock or any group advancement: pit them against each other, demand the Dragon choose sides, and tie other PCs to members of the group to create PC-NPC-PC triangles.

One way to keep the brood from sucking up all the oxygen in the game is to offer the Dragon an opportunity to pursue a number of artifacts and tomes, each of which slowly reveal the truth of their origin and lineage (and require the help of the other characters to obtain). Sprinkle these throughout the game until the Dragon bites on one with **Ancient Appetites** or simply convinces the group to go after the artifact in question.

Finally, don't be afraid to bring the Ordo Draconis into play early and often. One way that the Dragon knows they are special is because they have real enemies, forces arrayed against them that demand caution and punish them for mistakes or vulnerabilities. The Ordo is as much a part of their character as a Wolf's territory or a Hallowed's flock. Show signs of them everywhere, and drop the hammer whenever the Dragon gives you an opportunity.