

DRACONIS
LACRIMÆ

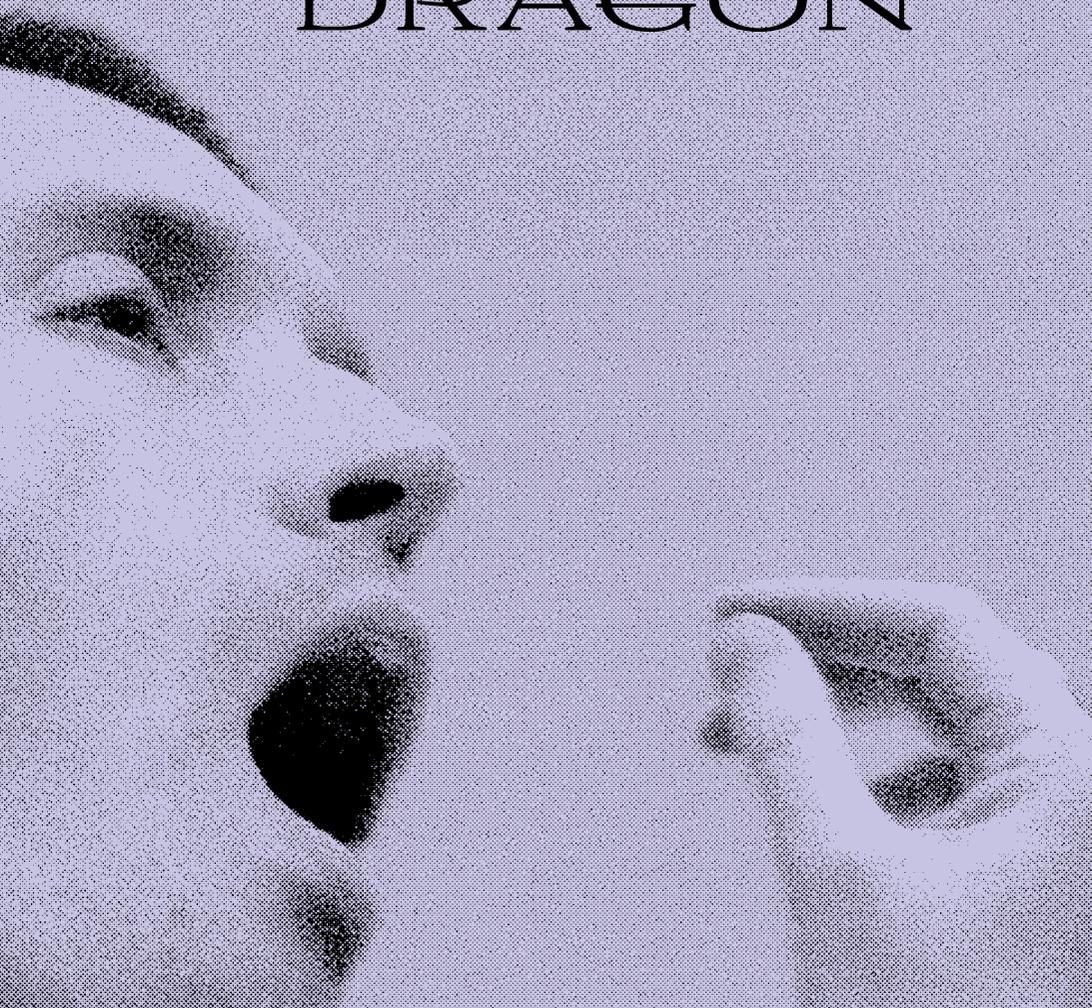
ESCAPE
FROM THE
GUTS
OF THE
DRAGON

THE
PLAYER'S
HANDBOOK



DRACONIS
LACRIMÆ

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THE PLAYER'S HANDBOOK

A Fantasy Role-Playing Game
for 3 to 6 players and no Game Master



A PIECE BY

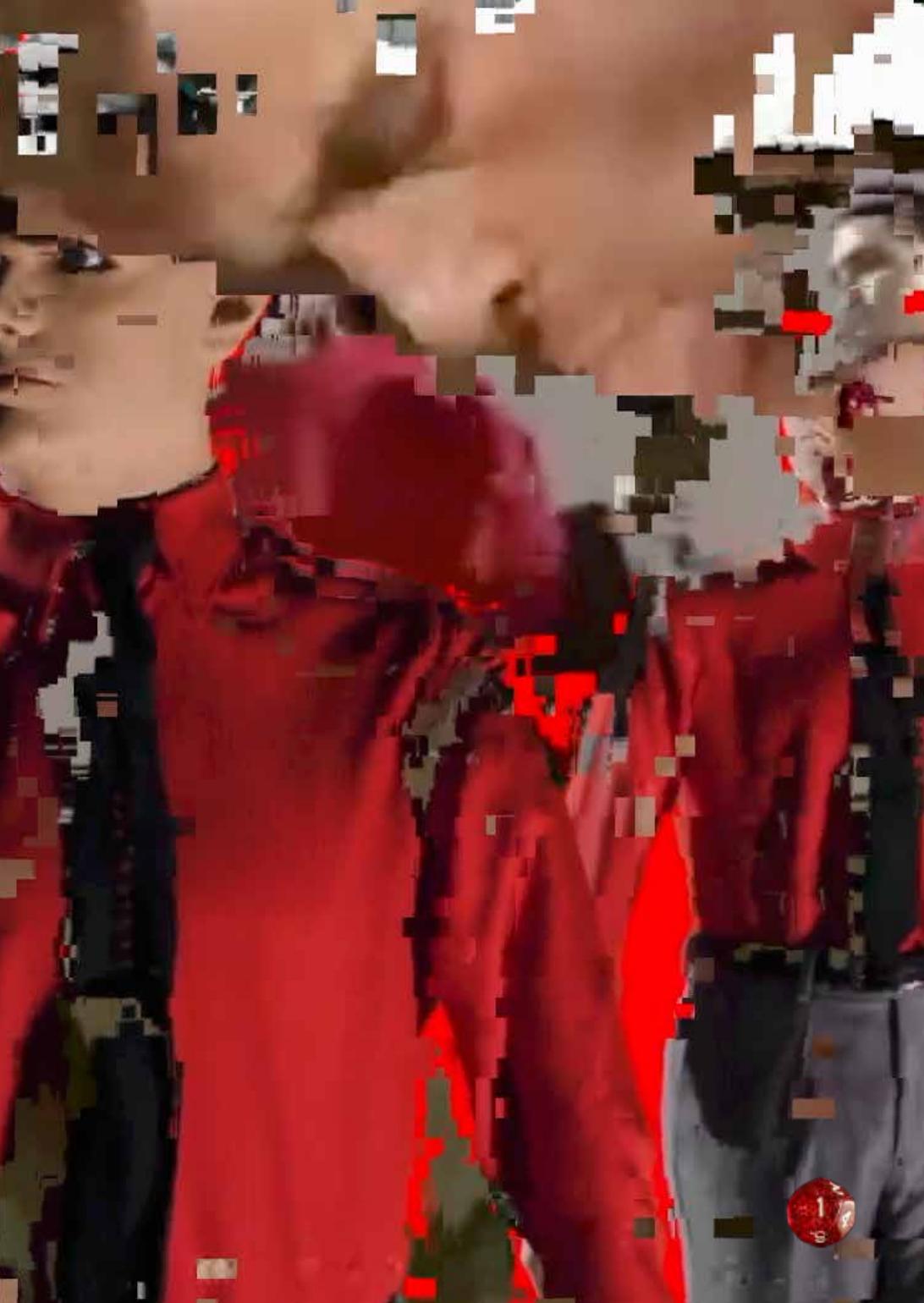
PABLO
ESBERT
LILIENFELD

&

FEDERICO
VLADIMIR
STRATE
PEZDIRC

In this Player's Handbook you'll find the rules of a Fantasy Role Playing Game: *Draconis Lacrimæ*. It can be played by a group of 3 to 6 players. You will only need to meet with your friends around a table and be prepared to spend many evenings together. You will also need pens, papers, and some ten-sided dice (d10). Don't forget snacks and drinks.

First, you will create the *Characters*, then you will create the *World* and, lastly, you will *Role-Play* to escape from the inside of The Dragon.

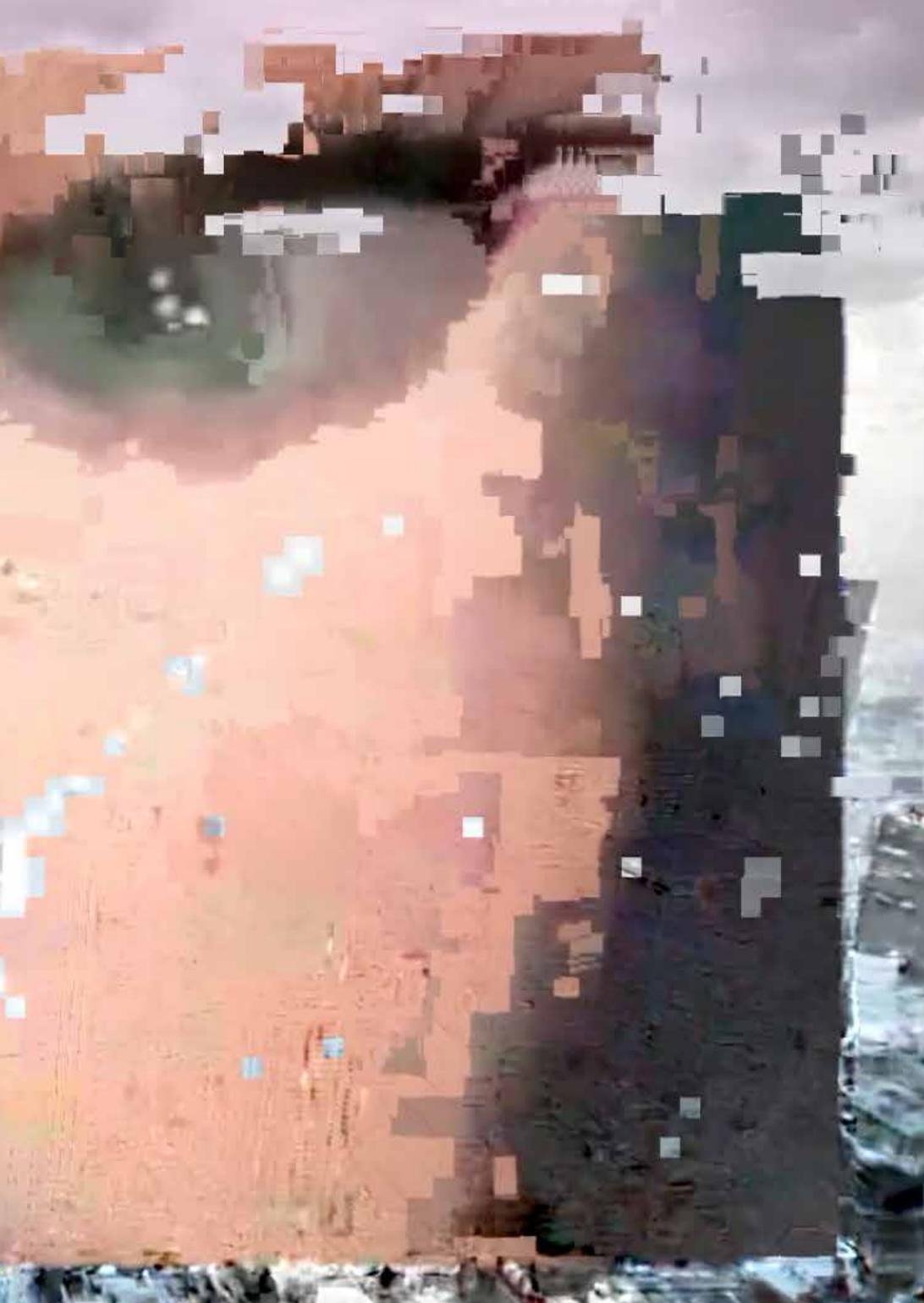












A PREFACE FOR PABLO

(and also for the readers)



First, came love. Or rather, first, came **The Virus**. When you and I made love, love brought along an HIV infection.

The virus, neither living nor dead, neither organism nor machine, was the other¹. The virus was not only inside of you, now it was also inside of me. The virus kept mutating and reproducing, through our cells and through the fictions we created together. It became the spaceship of a Golden Alien, the image cover of our music album, the logo of our tv-channel, the wedding ring tattooed on our chests... the virus became **The Virus**, a figure to understand our relationship, a figure to narrate each other.²

After **The Virus**, came **The Adventurer**. **The Adventurer** is the blonde European migrant, the backpacker, the settler, and the free spirit that we will never get to be. **The Adventurer** carries her issues, traumas, referents, and other precious stuff in her backpack. **The Adventurer** is the figure that narrates our past, our foreign surnames, our ancestors, and our nationalities. This blonde adventurer is the result of the intercourse between my German Strate, my Slovenian Pezdirc, your Austrian Lilienfeld and your Spanish Esbert. And our Argentinian mums, the two Monicas.³

And now, comes **The Dragon**. Oh! Los dragones, die drachen, quod dracones... Those creatures that exist in many different legends, myths, and folklore. Why are dragons so popular? Do they come from snakes? From birds? From dinosaurs? You and I know where they come from. Dragons come when our sex roles are blown up, when we top and bottom each other and our scales get covered in sweat... That's El Polvo Dragón⁴: when I fuck you and you fuck me and we are devoured by our dragon. Then, once inside the belly of **The Dragon**⁵, inside her guts, that's where we meet our kin. **The Dragon** is the figure that extends the couple, that expands the kin, that narrates the community.

But, Pablo, how to do that? How to narrate the kin? How to extend our couple? Ay, qué difícil. We both know how to be swallowed by our dragon and get in the belly of **The Dragon** but, how can we explain this to everyone else? How can we bring people into her belly? That's what this is about, right? You said: I know! *Dungeons & Dragons!* I used to play it as a kid.

*Dungeons & Dragons*⁶ is a fantasy tabletop Role Playing Game (RPG). In most fantasy tabletop RPGs, players create their own characters which then embark on imaginary adventures. You told me that you used to play *Dungeons & Dragons* with your grandfather Rudolf and your brother Juan. Rudolf would be an Elf Wizard, Juan an Orc Fighter and you were the Game Master (aka Dungeon Master). In RPGs, you explained, the players often sit around a table and create a story collectively by taking responsibility for their roles. In some games, as in *Dungeons & Dragons*, a player adopts the role of the Game Master, serving as the game's arbitrator and narrator. But, there are also games in which there is no Game Master; the responsibility and narrative power of the Game Master is distributed among all the participants.

In RPGs, players follow a formal system of rules and guidelines in order to interact with each other and with the fictional universe their characters inhabit. These rules and instructions are often compiled in a handbook.

The duration of a game can be anywhere from an afternoon to a longer campaign, spread over weeks or months. Sometimes, players become so attached to their characters that they can spend long periods of time (even years) playing the same character.

That was how you explained RPGs to me and then, we began to imagine *Draconis Lacrimæ*.

Draconis Lacrimæ is a game that is set in the guts of **The Dragon**, where the adventurers meet after being swallowed/eaten/devoured/teletransported/etc. by their own dragons. It





doesn't matter where they come from or what they are, since dragons exist in many universes. The adventurers might have been devoured by the Leviathan or by Xiuhcōatl, by Ryu, or by the children of Daenerys Targaryen, Mother of Dragons. Dragons inhabit different universes and manifest in many different shapes but their guts are the same; they all share the same viscera. There are as many dragons as universes but on the inside, there is simply **The Dragon**. **The Dragon** is the multiverse portal within all dragons. **The Dragon**'s guts are the landing where many staircases cross. In *Draconis Lacrimæ*, the adventurers come from different background universes and they all meet in **The Dragon**'s guts. There, they must join forces in order to “escape”, whatever escape might mean.

We then imagined my character and yours. Mine is a Giant Barbarian that comes from a Prehistoric Universe inhabited by enormous creatures. There, dragons are Godzillas. Your character is a Cyborg Warlock that comes from a Cyberpunk Universe where dragons are big corporations, digital monsters like Google. But once swallowed by the dragons, they meet in her guts.

Again, qué difícil. How to bring other people into the guts of **The Dragon**? *Draconis Lacrimæ*, the handbook that we have in our hands, will show others how to create their characters, how to visualize the body of **The Dragon** and how to build up a story together by sharing, imagining and role-playing. This handbook proposes a series of rules and tools that the players can use (and adapt) to create a story collectively, but not always consensually. *Draconis Lacrimæ* has no Game Master, players will build on each other's ideas. Every player has vast creative power but they also depend on each other.

So, first, it was love. Or rather, first it was **The Virus**. And, as viruses do, we got inside the body of the host.

Then, it was **The Adventurer**. And, as adventurers, we carried our most precious personal belongings in our backpack.

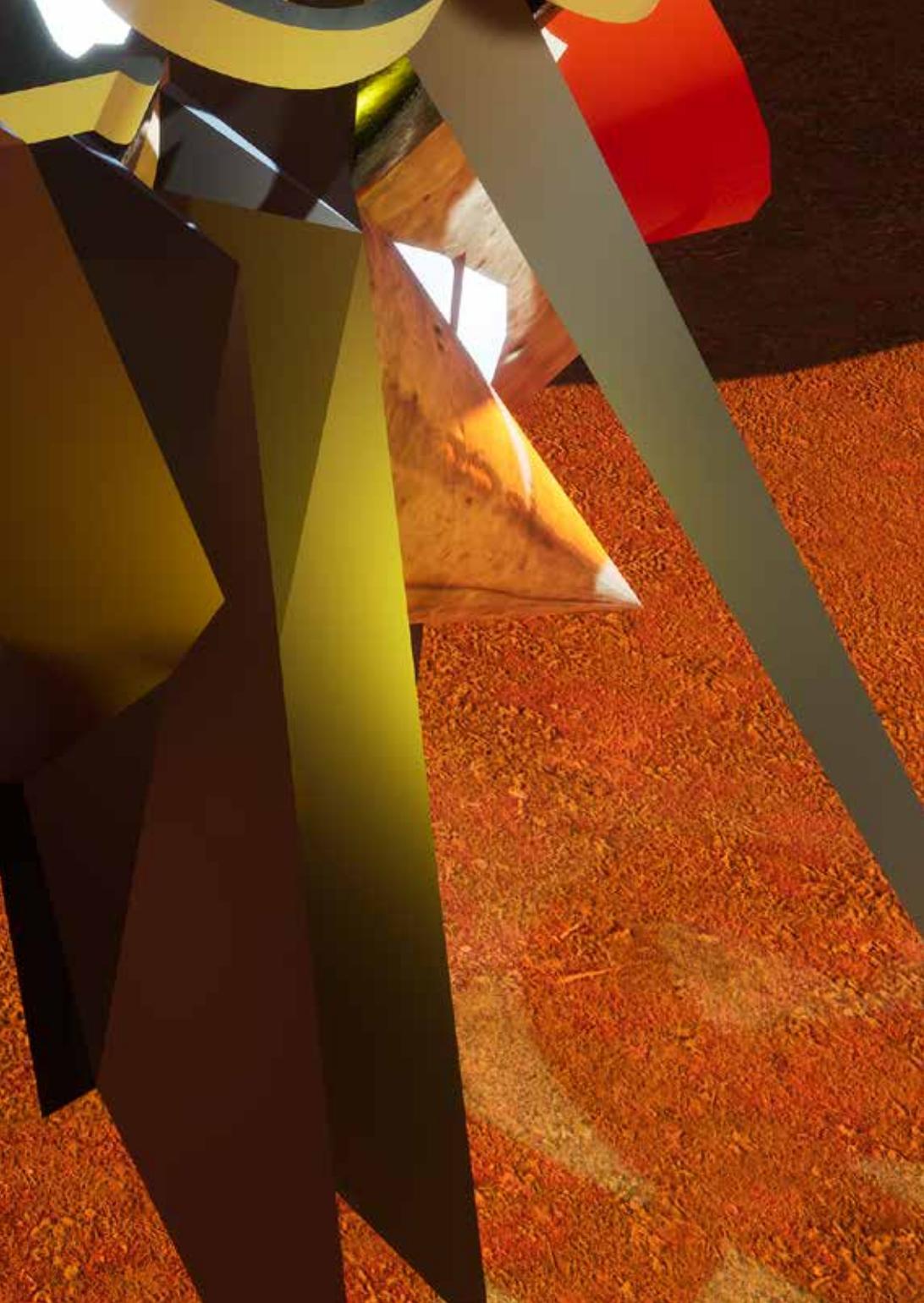
And finally, **The Dragon**. Once inside her body, we met our community. And with the precious issues that we all carried in our backpacks, we were able to start building a story together, to narrate each other.

Draconis Lacrimæ may only last as long as it takes to read this manual. Or it may last weeks or months while we play it with our friends, feeling very attached to our characters. In any case, like all fiction, it will last as long as we believe in it.

*Tè quiero mucho,
Fede*

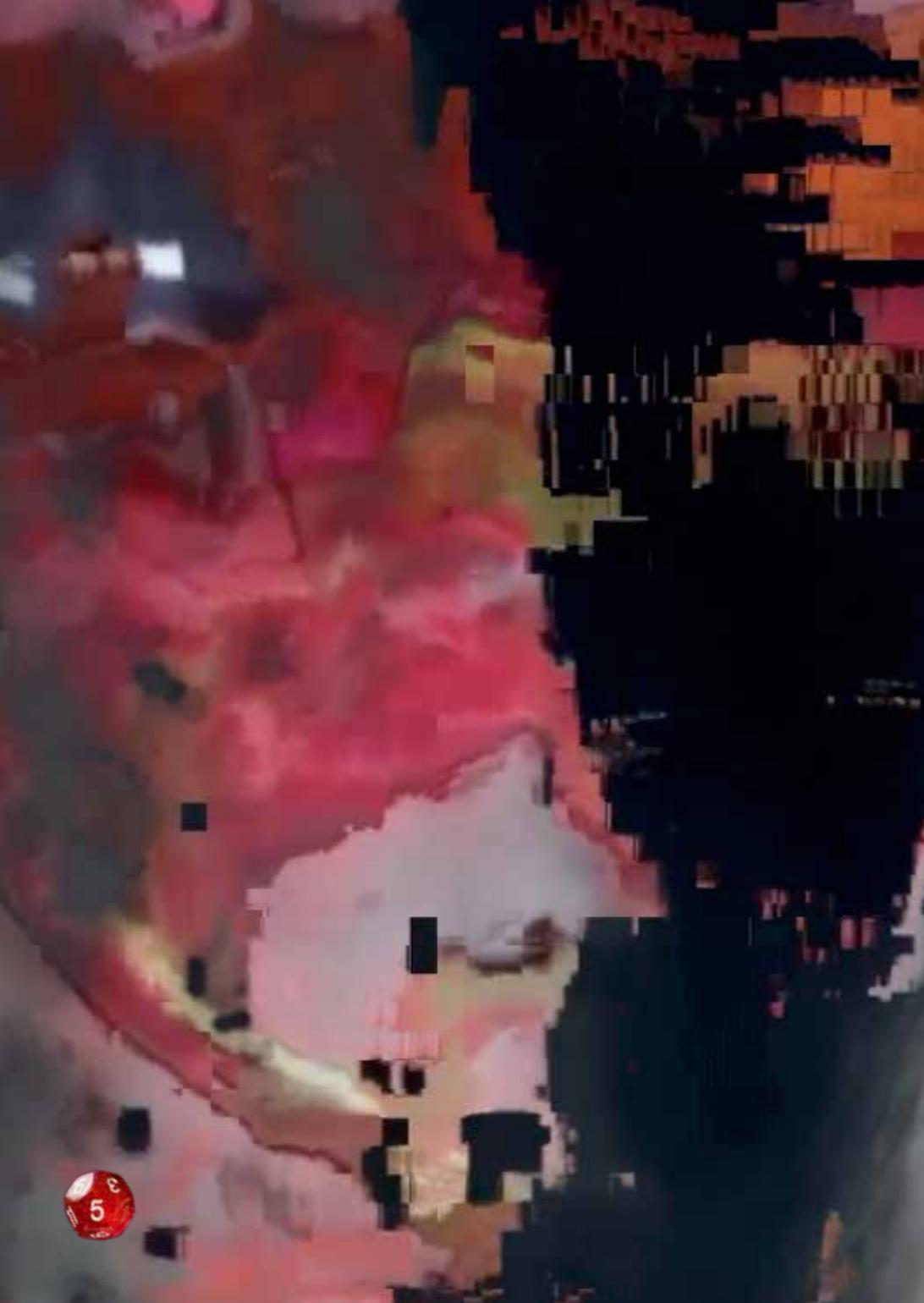










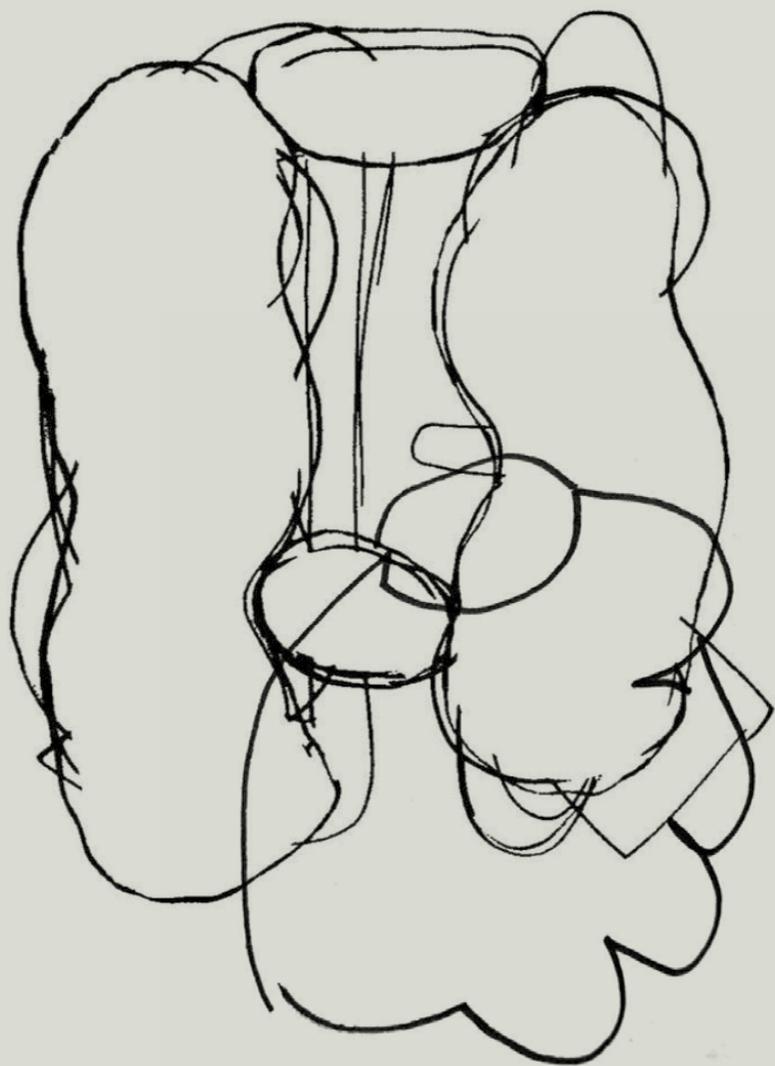






CHAPTER ONE

CHARACTER CREATION



The first sessions of the game consist of developing your character. Depending on the number of players this process will take between a few hours and a few days.

This is a very important part of the game because your character will become your vehicle to navigate through The Dragon and interact with your fellow adventurers. The more attached you are to your character, the more you will enjoy role-playing it.

To create your character, you will be asked to share personal stories with the other players. In order to fictionalize yourself you will dive into your intimacy. Share what you feel like sharing, there is no obligation to share things you don't feel comfortable with. Great characters might be built upon personal stuff, but secrets and things that are not named can also nurture your character.

Because playing *Draconis Lacrimæ* can take you on a very personal journey, before starting the game it's good to...

...Make the list

Make a list of subjects or themes that you don't want to be part of the story you will create together. In order to do so, every player will write down on a piece of paper what he or she doesn't want to face during the game. Try to be precise with what you write on the paper. If needed, you can even write a short paragraph to explain it. Make sure you all write at least one thing. If you can't think of anything, just write something random, for example: "Cats" or "Roses". The idea is that everyone writes at least one issue, so that everyone participates in making the list. You must all commit not to bring up whatever is on that list during the game. If someone has questions or doesn't agree with this list, it's better to discuss it and negotiate now. This will help you avoid misunderstandings during the game. If there are big disagreements, it's better to find it out before starting. Remember to have the list at hand during every game session, in case you need to remember what is written.

HI, I'M MY GRANDMA

— 01 —

You are all sitting in a circle and one by one you introduce yourself to your fellow players. You speak in first person but you pretend to be one of your ancestors. You can be your parent, your great-grandparent... There is no need to stick to the nuclear family. Feel free to travel far in time and space. This is an oral exercise, make it short and fresh.

—Example—

Hi, I'm Vladimir Pezdirc. I was born more than one hundred years ago, in 1917. I was born in Ljubljana, which is now Slovenia. But back then it was still the Austro-Hungarian empire.

I'm the second of four brothers: Jože, Vladimir, Bogomir and Slavomir. Vladimir is a Slavic name and it means something like Ruler of the World, or Ruler of Peace.

I studied Law and when I was very young, I joined the Domobranci, a Catholic anti-communist military organization that collaborated with the Nazis during the Second World War. I speak seven languages so as a Domobranci I was mainly working as a translator and assistant, I was never in combat.

That was a terrible decision. I always tell my grandchildren "don't get involved in politics, it will only get you in trouble". I had to leave Slovenia after the war, because I joined the Domobranci. I escaped to Switzerland and eventually Argentina. If I had stayed I would have been imprisoned and probably killed and buried in one of the many mass graves that populate the caves of Slovenia. Slovenia is a karst land, it's full of caves with stalactites and stalagmites. So I would have probably ended up being buried in one of those.

But I ended up in Argentina, on my own, and there I managed to restart my life. By that time, I was in my thirties. In Buenos Aires I met a beautiful woman, who was also Slovenian. We got married and had three lovely daughters. I managed to grow professionally and worked in the Latin American sales department for Texas Instruments. Argentina was a powerful country, I lived happily there. I have eleven grandchildren. One of them is named Federico Vladimir, after me. He's an artist, a good guy. They say we look alike.

Argentina became a mess, politically and economically speaking. My three daughters and their families left the country and emigrated to Spain and Canada, looking for better life conditions. So when I was in my seventies, I ended up moving to Canada. Canada is a nice country, I would say it's a “proper” country. Good values, good economy. But still, I love Argentina because it brought me so much peace and happiness.

In Canada I was also happy. It was calm there. I got Alzheimers when I was eighty five. I was well taken care by my wife and the Ontario health system and I lived until I turned ninety one. I died in my bed.

Credits: We learnt this exercise at School of Darkness, a workshop with curator Sepake Angiama in the context of The Free School (KFDA 2019, Brussels).

EMO-BIO

— 02 —

Emo: A rock music genre with confessional lyrics and an emphasis on emotions.

Bio: There is no fiction, everything is fiction.

Write a short autobiography in the style of a resume: it must be written in third person and built as a list of factual events, but instead of professional landmarks you will narrate the most important emotional moments of your life (i.e. the first time you touched the sea or the death of your best friend).

This is a written exercise. Once written, read it out loud to your fellow players.

—Example—

Buenos Aires (Argentina), 1983. Federico III (son of Federico II and grandson of Federico I) and Vladimir II (grandson of Vladimir I).

Before turning seven years old he moved to La Coruña (Spain), a place where kids speak Galician and are already able to write in cursive, but Federico only knows how to write in capital letters. Thundercats vs Dragon Ball, America vs Europe, South vs North. Shy with boys, a little less shy with girls. The middle child between two sisters... and a little brother that was born dead and that he never got to meet. He could barely read when he was in second grade but by the time he got to fourth grade he was at the top of the class.

Federico's best friends were his cousins who had emigrated to Canada. His family is spread throughout the world. He's the son and grandson of migrants. European nazis vs Argentinian picaresque. He hates food, he only likes the apple

strudel and other desserts that his Slovenian grandma makes. His teacher tells his mom that he should take vitamins, that he might be anorexic. But he's not. During his adolescence he gets tired of being told to eat and just starts eating normally.

When he turns twelve he starts making films with his sister's Barbies. Later, he starts directing his friends. Films, books, maths, chemistry... He doesn't know what to study but he knows he wants to study in Madrid. At the age of eighteen he began his studies in Audiovisual Communication. He meets Pilar: his first kiss, his first girlfriend, his first sexual experience. After two beautiful years, he still misses something. He spent his whole childhood and adolescence missing his cousins, missing his dead brother, looking for a best friend. He finished his degree and finally realizes that what he really needs is a boyfriend.

Credits: This exercise was developed during a workshop with writer Sabina Urraca.

JE ME SOUVIENS /
I REMEMBER

— 03 —

Write a short list of personal memories that relate to social and political moments that were important for you. It must be written in first person and each paragraph should start with “I remember...”. Think of these personal memories as pixels that mosh with other people’s memories and create History.

Once written, read it out loud to your fellow players. If needed, contextualize the historical moments you refer to, so that everyone understands you.

—Example—

I remember asking my father “Dad, where are we moving? Spain or Europe?” “You can say either, Spain and Europe are the same thing”.

I remember asking my dad what I should say to the Pan Am flight attendants when they offered me coffee or tea. “Nou, zenk iu”. My first time on a plane, moving to another continent.

I remember the lice in my hair and the irritating shampoo. In Argentina, the kids at school always had lice.

I remember inventing a game/song with my cousin that went “ass with ass” and “willy with willy”. I remember showing it to my grandma, I remember her, freaking out: “Oh God, you’re gonna make yourselves ill by doing that”.

I remember asking my mum “If you hadn’t named me Federico, like dad, what name would you have chosen?” “I always liked Santiago”, she said. That would have been the name of my dead brother, I thought.

I remember when they did a Cartoon Marathon to raise funds for HIV, merging cartoons of Disney, Looney Tunes, etc. (like in the final scene of the film Roger Rabbit). I didn’t know

what HIV was but I really wanted to watch the cartoons.

I remember the kids saying I spoke weird because of my Argentinian accent. I remember the stress of not knowing if “cinturón” was spelled with s, c or z.

I remember being in a driving lesson with the radio on. News said that a small plane had crashed into the Twin Towers. When I arrived home the news channels were showing the towers collapsing.

I remember memorizing my Spanish ID number in order to write it down on my first university exams. I got the Spanish nationality when I turned eighteen.

I remember 11-M (the biggest terrorist attack in Madrid). I remember calling my girlfriend because she passed by that train station every morning on her way to university. I remember the demonstration for peace and the rain on that day. I remember seeing people from very diverse ideologies, even a group of extreme right with the fascist Spanish flag.

I remember the first time I accidentally attended the pride parade in Madrid. It was my first year of university and my dad and little sister had come to visit me. We were touring around downtown, we got off the tube and it was full of people singing “Lesbianismo feminista anticapitalista” with the melody of Suzanne Vega's song: tu tu turu tu tu ruru (Tom's Dinner is the title).

I remember when I was diagnosed HIV+. I remember when I told my sisters and my parents. My mother's hug.

Credits: This exercise was developed during a workshop with writer Sabina Urraca and influenced by George Perec's Je me souviens.

GUTS STRIPTEASE:
A CARTOGRAPHIC
BIO-NARRATION

—04—

One by one, you will tell the other players the history of your body: what you like, what you don't, scars, traumas, hang-ups, glorified parts, g-spots... Include how you felt about your body as a kid or a teenager, how you felt you were perceived. In the Guts Striptease you don't take off your clothes, you only need to reveal your relationship with your own body.

It's an oral exercise. Don't be shy but also, don't share things you don't feel like sharing. At this point of the game you might have already shared personal stories. The Guts Striptease can be challenging if you don't feel totally comfortable with the group, before starting, it is good to make sure that everyone is on the same page.

When you do this exercise you will stand in the center of a circle formed by the other players. As you talk you slowly turn around. Do several turns, so that everyone gets to see the front and the back of your body several times. The other players will draw a portrait of you while they listen and see you turning, like if in a life drawing class. The portraits do not need to be accurate or realistic, they might be influenced by the stories you relate.

—Example—

So... I'm 1'87 meters tall. I've always been very tall and thin. When I was a kid I was super thin and everyone constantly told me to eat more. I was called "spaghetti" and "lollypop". Lollypop, because I also have a big head. So, thin body and big head, like a lollypop.

Ok, I'll go from head to toes. Head: I always thought it's too big. But, at least I have good hair. I play a lot with my hair,

I often change my hairstyle. Face: I'm fine with my features. I've got blue eyes and I like them, they are very useful. I receive lots of compliments about them and when I was working in advertising, I would wear a blue shirt every time I had a meeting with a big client, because the blue enforces the eyes. It's a fact, whenever I wore blue, I managed to convince the client. I even remember one time that the marketing manager at L'Oréal complimented my eyes and, of course, she accepted the whole of the campaign I proposed.

What else? Long neck. I also wish I had wider shoulders. As a teenager I used to swim and I always wanted to have those big wide shoulders that swimmers have. My chest. I like it. It's not very hairy. Actually I don't have much body hair. I have lots of moles, my skin is very sensitive and I often get allergic reactions. I am quite allergic in general... I'm allergic to dust mites, to certain pollen, to some medicines. As a kid I had a big allergic reaction to sulfonamides, my head and neck became red and very swollen and I had to be taken to hospital. I'm also asthmatic.

Ass and dick. I'm happy about them. Can't complain. Legs. I have my grandfather's thin legs. Thin and hairy. I wish my legs were stronger. But they are very thin. I remember when my grandpa— I'm talking about my Slovenian grandpa, the one I already introduced in the first exercise— had Alzheimer's and he was in bed, I remember his skinny bony legs. I remember placing a cushion between his knees so that he was more comfortable. Yeah, I remember seeing his legs and thinking “ok, those will be my legs when I turn ninety”. My feet are also bony, thin and big. I use insoles. I dunno, the bones in my legs and feet don't quite fit together. haha.

Mmhhh. What else? Regarding my inner body and illnesses... I'm HIV+. I've been poz for almost eight years now. Getting HIV was tough. The same year I got HIV I also became an uncle. It was very scary to spend time with my nephews because I couldn't stop thinking of horrible things happening, like accidentally cutting my hand and infecting them

or being in the car with them and having a tragic accident in which my blood was spilled all over them. When you first get the diagnosis it's strange, because you feel like you're a deadly weapon. You feel like your blood or your cum can kill people. And it's scary. Once you start taking the medicine and your viral load decreases, meaning that you cannot infect others, it's only then that you chill. Now I take my medicine and I'm fine.

And I think that's it. Dunno what else to say.

HYPERTAG YOURSELF

— 05 —

Categories: Categories are tools and a tool can have opposing uses. For instance, a hammer; you can build a table with it but you can also use it to break someone's head.

In RPGs you are often asked to fill in a Character Sheet. It's a form in which you define your character through categories that are pre-given. In *Draconis Lacrimæ*, you won't be asked to fill in a form about your character. Instead, you'll be asked to fill in a form about yourself.

Draconis Lacrimæ's form contains very diverse categories ranging from "Sexual Orientation" to "Favorite app". The form has no optional responses which means you can be playful with answering and interpreting the categories. Given the playfulness, we therefore advise you to fill in the form in its entirety. The "No answer/don't know" is always a choice, but it won't lead you to the construction of a great character.

On the next page, you will find an example. You can use the same categories from this form and add as many others as you want. Hypertag yourself, saturate your life with identity[?].

Once you've filled in the form, read it out loud to the other players. They might respond to your answers, maybe because they have things in common with you or simply because they might have questions about your answers. Let the conversation flow.

Zodiac, planet
Leo ascendant Libra,
The sun

Age
Thirty-six

Animals
Tiger, Flamingo,
Crocodile, Whale

Plants
Ficus, Willow tree,
Wild flowers

Elements
Water, Slime

Machines & tools
Video camera, Tooth brush

Software app
Final cut, After FX, Grindr

Places
North Atlantic, Sea, Beach

Physical conditions
Physical, Dust mite allergy,
HIV+, Asthma, Shortsightedness,
Insoles-arch support

Mental conditions
Bruxism

Obsessions, manias, tics
Nose picking, Obsessive fruit peeling

Fears, disgusts, phobias
Horror films, Belly buttons

Origin, nationality
Spanish, Argentinian,
A bit of Slovenian

Hobbies (childhood)
Cinema, Stamp collecting,
Model building, Swimming,
Reading

Music, urban tribes,
(adolescence)
Film nerd, indie music

Privileges
White, middle class,
european, cis male

Discriminations
Gay HIV+

Nickname, bullying
Jar Jar Binks, Sid Ice Age, Lollypop

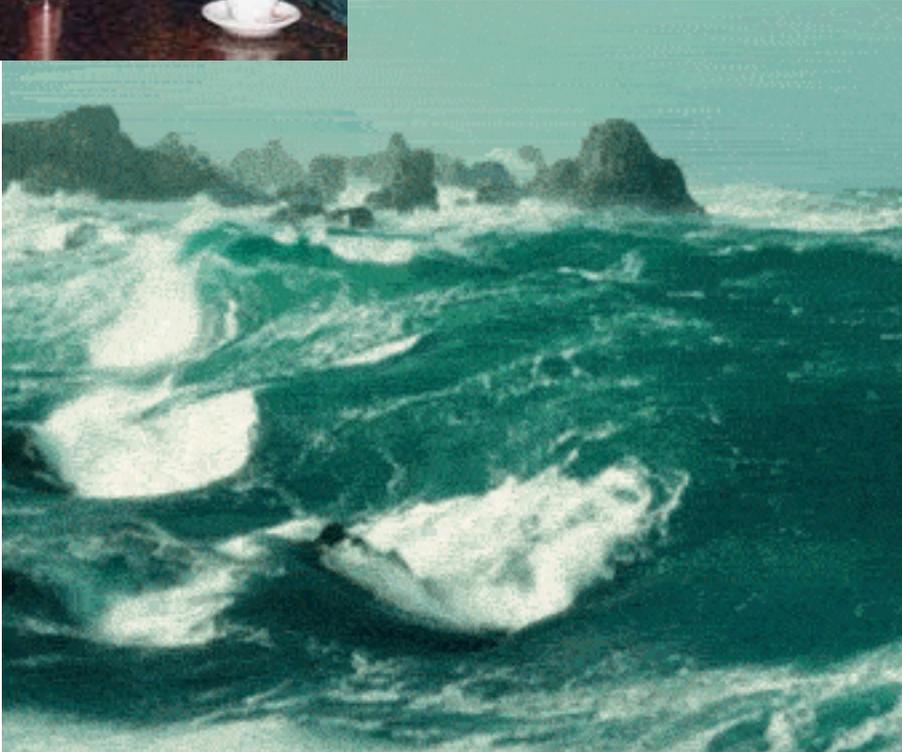
Political party
Unidas Podemos, Más País

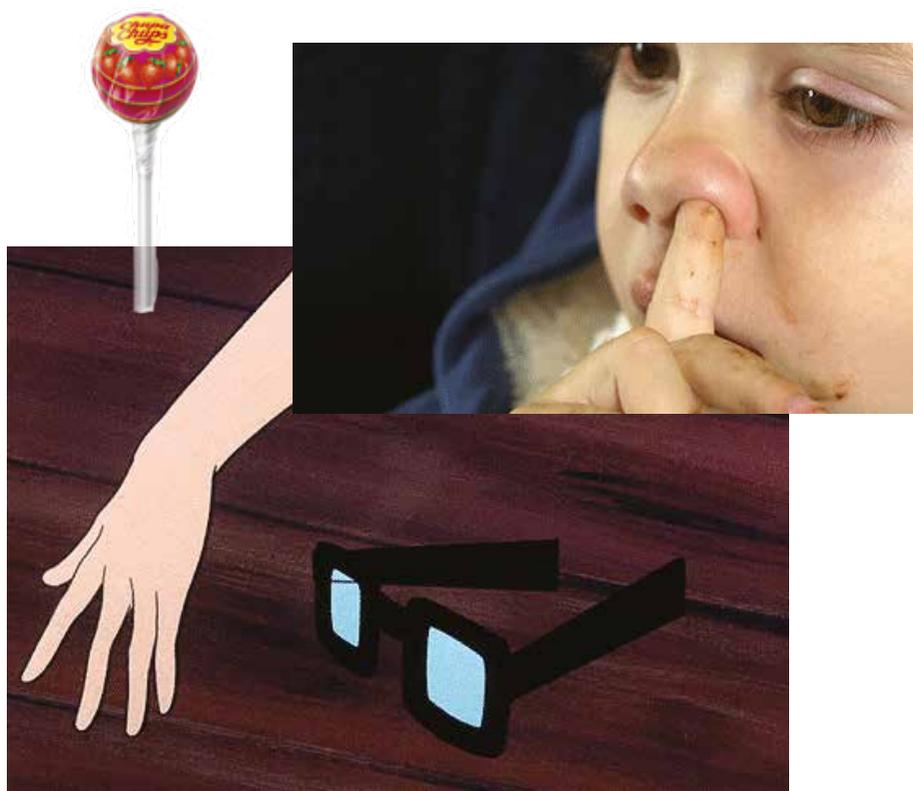
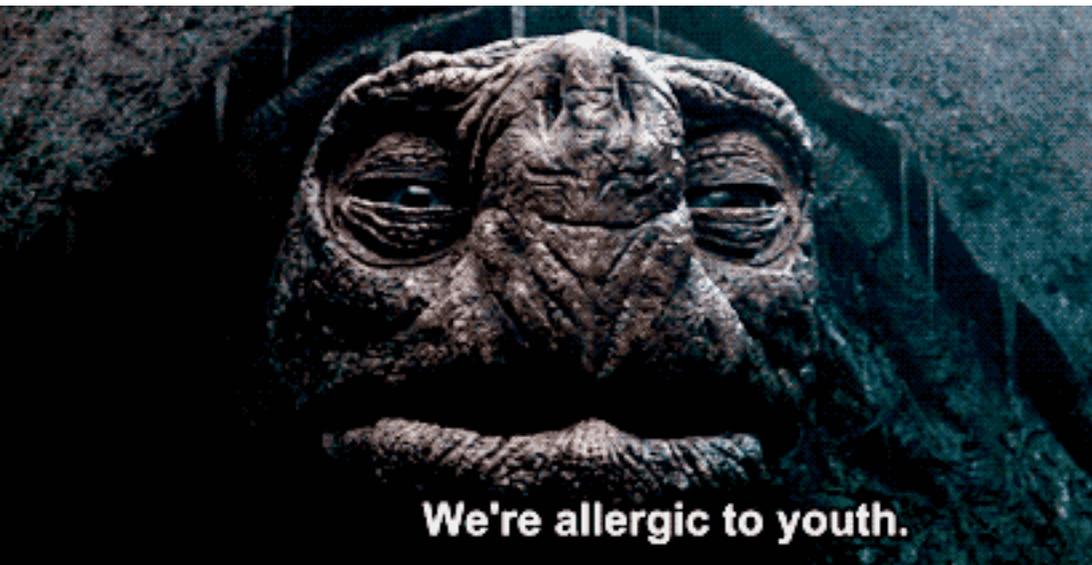
Activisms
Queer, HIV+, Feminist



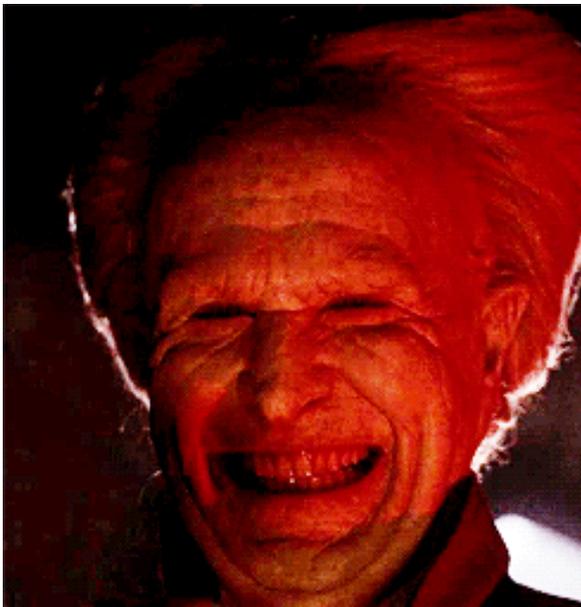














Jobs

Artist, University teacher,
Performance documentation,
Waiter, Advertising

Family members, conflicts

Husband, Parents, Sisters,
Nephews and nieces,
in good terms with everyone

Beliefs, religion

Raised catholic

Gender

Cisgender male,
Gender questioning

Sexual orientation

Currently:

Homosexual 90%,
Heterosexual 10%

Food

Chocolate, Ice-cream,
Dulce de leche

Drinks

Coke, Gin and tonic

Drugs

Ecstasy

Hygiene habits

Cotton buds

Icons:

Speculative fiction

Aquaman, Andromeda, Storm,
Tigro, Cheetara, Rafael, Dracula

Icons:

Non-speculative fiction

Humbert Humbert, Taxi Driver,
Lawrence of Arabia, Will More

Icons:

Famous people

Uma Thurman, James Dean,
Humanimal, Colby Keller,
Ian Mckellen, Vladimir Nabokov

BE TAGGED: RACE & CLASS

—06—

Many Fantasy RPGs inherited notions of race, class and gender that are discriminatory and essentialist from war-games. They abstract bodies through statistical rules that mirror 19th century eugenics. Their rules and design often carry stereotypes and create a hostile space for minority players.

Race and class are two of the most problematic categories in RPGs. In *Draconis Lacrimæ* you will stay with the trouble. Your character will be defined by these two categories. They are problematic and they must remain as such; not as a problem to be solved but rather as a problem to derive more problems from.

Race: In *Draconis Lacrimæ*, race is not defined by racial stereotypes but instead, by fictional tropes. “A trope is a storytelling device or convention, a shortcut for describing situations the storyteller can reasonably assume the audience will recognize”⁸. Your character's race can be alien, cyborg, zombie, elf... If you need inspiration you can check the website tvtropes.org

Class: The category of class was first introduced in RPGs by *Dungeons & Dragons*. There, it's defined as “the primary definition of what your character can do. It's more than a profession; it's your character's calling”⁹. There are twelve classes in *Dungeons & Dragons*. In *Draconis Lacrimæ*, these twelve archetypes will also be the starting point to think about characters.

So, race and class. Tropes and archetypes. Before defining your character on your own, let the other players imagine it. Let yourself be tagged. Each player will choose three or more facts about you from the personal information you've shared in the previous exercises. With those facts they will write one para-

—
BARBARIAN
—

*Fierce warrior
of primitive
background
who can enter
a battle rage*

—
BARD
—

*Inspiring
magician whose
power echoes the
music of creation*

—
CLERIC
—

*Priestly champion
who wields divine
magic in service
of a higher power*

—
DRUID
—

*Priest wielding the
powers of nature
—moonlight and plant
growth, fire and
lighting— and adopting
animal forms*

—
FIGHTER
—

*Master of
martial combat,
skilled with a
variety of weapons
and armor*

—
MONK
—

*Master of martial
arts, harnessing
the power of the
body in pursuit
of physical and
spiritual perfection*

—
PALADIN
—

*Fierce warrior
of primitive
background
who can enter
a battle rage*

—
RANGER
—

*Warrior who uses
martial prowess
and nature magic
to combat threats
on the edge of
civilization*

—
ROGUE
—

*Scoundrel
who uses stealth
and trickery
to overcome
obstacles and
enemies*

—
SORCERER
—

*Spell-caster who
draws on inherent
magic from a gift
or bloodline*

—
WARLOCK
—

*Wielder of magic
that is derived from
a bargain with an
extraplanar entity*

—
WIZARD
—

*Scholarly magic-
user capable of
manipulating the
structures of reality*

graph as a possible character description. The description must include the race and class of the character.

You must all write at least one character description based on each player. If you feel inspired, you can write more than one description. But remember: it's not the time to write about your own character, you must only write about the other players' characters. When the round is finished, each player will have had several characters created upon them.

It's a written exercise. The character descriptions must be written in second person singular. Once everyone has finished writing, read the descriptions aloud, addressing the player the description is talking about.

—Example—

So, it's Federico's turn. Each of us reads aloud the character we imagined for him.

Player one

I took these four facts: you said you're named Federico Vladimir after your two grandfathers; you're Leo, the king of the Zodiac; you're tall and thin; you're the second of three siblings.

So, to me, you're an Elf Sorcerer. Race: Elf. Class: Sorcerer. You're tall, thin and strong, like a proper elf. You descend from a line of elven kings. You are not the firstborn, so you have not inherited the crown, but you have inherited magic. That makes you the most powerful in the kingdom.

Player two

Race: Liliputian, Class: Rogue. You're a little person like the Liliputians from Gulliver's Travels. You're a rogue, you're so tiny that you can sneak into places easily. You're often hired as a thief or a spy. You work for politicians and big company owners, internationally.

Liliputian comes from the fact that as a kid your hobby was model building. Also, from the fact that you're allergic to dust mites, and that you often had lice as a kid. You deal a lot with bugs, or little creatures, in your body. haha. And then, on the form, you wrote "cotton buds" as your favorite "Hygiene habit". I dunno, thinking of a cotton bud going into an ear made me think of all these little creatures sneaking into someone's body and doing things. So I thought that a Liliputian Rogue— or spy— suits you.

Player three

Your race is Sea Monster or Aquatic Monster, a big creature with dorsal fins and gills. You are very big and I dunno, I imagine you as a female. And regarding your class, you're a Ranger. You live in the verge of the oceans of a flat Earth, combating other creatures and saving lost ships from falling into the abyss at the end of the seas. I thought of the sea monster because you like whales, the Atlantic ocean, water, etc. I chose Ranger because there is something heroic and romantic in your choices. Dr Manhattan, who is this solitary superhuman; James Dean, Lawrence of Arabia... even Humber Humbert is romantic. And you like willow trees, that's definitely romantic. I think Rangers are also solitary and romantic. You're female because you like ass kicking girls like Uma Thurman or Storm from the X-Men.

WITHIN THE MOSH, A SILHOUETTE APPEARS

—07—

Mosh: To dance energetically, pushing or slamming others, often at punk or heavy metal concerts.

Datamosh: To use compression artifacts in digital video causing the playback image to distort with glitched results

Now, you will define your character on your own. As a starting point, you can take the character proposals that the other players imagined in the previous step. Try on those characters as if you were trying on an outfit. If there's something about them that you like, keep it, but don't feel obliged to. You have the last word on your character.

Again, you will have to define your character starting with race and class. You may feel constrained by these two categories. Think of the tropes and the archetypes as structural instruments that will help you build a common ground with the other players. If you create a character that is entirely unique and only exists in your imagination, it will be very difficult for others to comprehend and interact with it. Therein lies the compromise: how far do you want to go from these common places? How unique do you want your character to be? What are the handlers you give to the other players so that they can understand your character and the universe from which it comes?

If you don't know how to answer these questions, close this book, hold it with both hands and look at your reflection in its cover; see what appears within that mosh.

This is a written exercise. Write in third person. When defining your character, you can also think of your background, your appearance, your personality, how you were born, the community you belong to in your universe, your flaws, your vir-

tues, your ideals... anything that you think might be important. Make sure you also define the Universe in which the character lives, particularly if the character is strongly informed by it.

Once everyone has finished writing, read it aloud to the other players.

—Example—

Race: Giant. Class: Barbarian. Someone suggested I could be a Sea Monster. I liked that, but I see myself more like a Giant than a monster. I chose Barbarian because I want to be very strong, tall and muscular, a bit like Colby Keller, the porn star.

The Giant lives in a Prehistoric world, a world inhabited by dinosaurs, Godzillas, King Kongs and other huge creatures. The landscape is wild: earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanos. The Giant is part of that landscape. He lives by the sea and, when he lays down to sleep, he is like a cape. Like Coruña, the city in Spain where I grew up, which is a peninsula surrounded by the Atlantic.

When seen from afar, the Giant is a cape, but from close up, you can see that he's made of rocks, caves, trees and plants... He's like a karst landscape. In fact, the Giant is a Giant because he's gigantic for the creatures that live inside of him in the caves and tunnels of his body. Yeah, the Giant is inhabited by very little creatures, similar to the Liliputians someone mentioned. These little creatures live in communities and they came together to create the Giant. The Prehistoric world was too dangerous and wild for them, they were too tiny to survive there. So, they created the Giant in order to protect them, like a huge walking fortress, or like the European Union, or the UNO. I like this idea of the Giant as a supra-organization and a territory. The Giant has to protect them but he must also keep the balance between the different communities of little creatures.

Obviously the relationship between the Giant and the little creatures is complicated. Like my allergy to dust mites, or the lice you mentioned. But more than anything it's like me and HIV. I need to take the medicine everyday to keep the virus at bay. And somehow, it also echoes the multi-nationality of my family: Argentinian, Spanish, Slovenian, German...

And then, the Giant is a Barbarian because his body is his weapon. As I said before, when I first got HIV I was in shock, thinking that my blood or my cum could infect and kill someone. So the Giant also has this power. He can punch you or smash you, but he can also fart and blow you away or he can pee or even cum and dissolve you.

So that's me, the Giant Barbarian.

REDUCED TO NUMBERS: THE STATS

— 08 —

Before finishing the creation of your character, you'll need to roll the dice and do some simple Maths.

In *Draconis Lacrimæ*, every character is eventually reduced to five abilities.

Strength

Physical strength, endurance and resistance to illness and damage.

Dexterity

How agile your Character is; useful for stealth, pickpocketing, acrobatics, and tricks, etc

Intellect

General reasoning and wisdom.

Combat

A mix of training, knowledge and general ability to succeed in violent situations.

Charisma

Charm, leadership and self-determination; useful to convince or manipulate other beings.

Each of the character's abilities is defined by a score or stat: the number that determines the magnitude of the ability. The higher the score, the more capable the character is with that specific aspect. Attributing a number to each of the character's abilities has one purpose: if during the game, the players don't manage to solve a conflict through negotiation and discussion, they will

have to leave it up to chance and dice rolls. In these rolls the ability stats will be crucial. It will be explained later in detail.

In order to define each of your character's abilities, you have to roll a 10 sided dice 6 times (6d10). Then, add together the 6 numbers you rolled. The final number will be between 6 and 60.

Repeat this 4 more times. You will end up with 5 numbers (all of them will be between 6 and 60).

Now, you will have to assign each number to one of your 5 abilities. Distribute them in a way that you think will better represent your character. When you do so, have in mind the class modifiers.

What is a class modifier? Depending on the class that you've chosen for your character, one or two of your abilities will be reinforced. For example, if you're a Barbarian you will add +5 to your character's strength score.

—Example—

My race is Giant and my class is Barbarian, as such I have a class modifier of +5 on Strength.

I rolled 6d10, five times. The scores I got were: 50, 38, 40, 35 and 26.

My character is very strong and big, so I assigned 50— my highest score— to my strength ability. I added the class modifier of +5 onto my strength, making a total of 55.

I assigned my second highest score, 40, to combat. I assigned 38 to charisma; because I have a lot of little creatures living inside me, I have developed some leadership skills. I assigned 35 to intellect and 26, my lowest score, to dexterity. I'm strong and big, but clumsy and slow.

These are the Class Modifiers:

Barbarian

+5 Strength

Bard

+5 Charisma

Cleric

+3 Intellect

+2 Charisma

Druid

+3 Intellect

+2 Strength

Fighter

+5 Combat

Monk

+3 Combat

+2 Dexterity

Paladin

+3 Combat

+2 Strength

Ranger

+3 Dexterity

+2 Strength

Rogue

+5 Dexterity

Sorcerer

+3 Combat

Sorcerer

+3 Combat

+2 Intellect

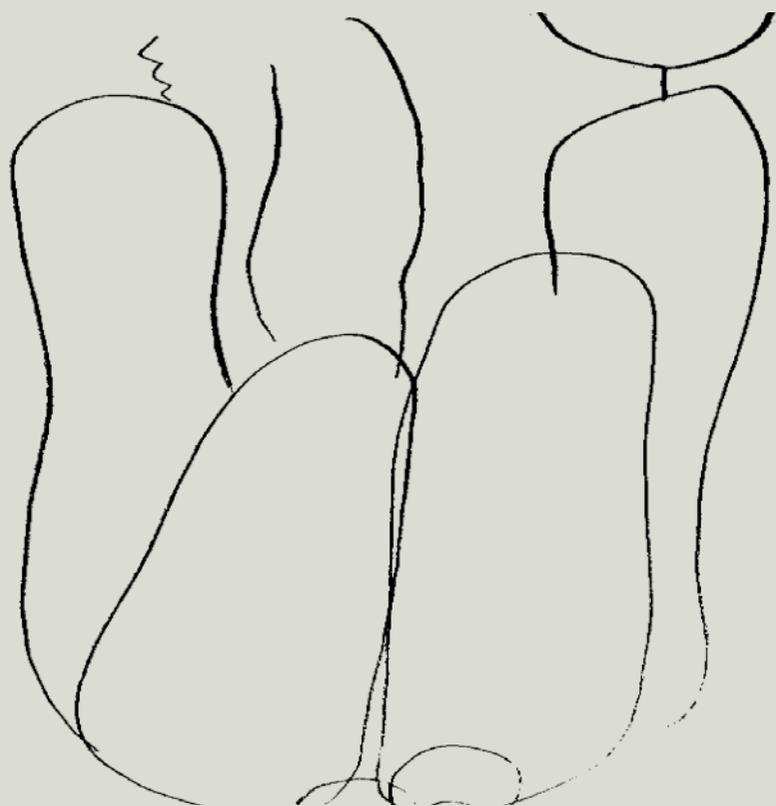
Warlock

+3 Charisma

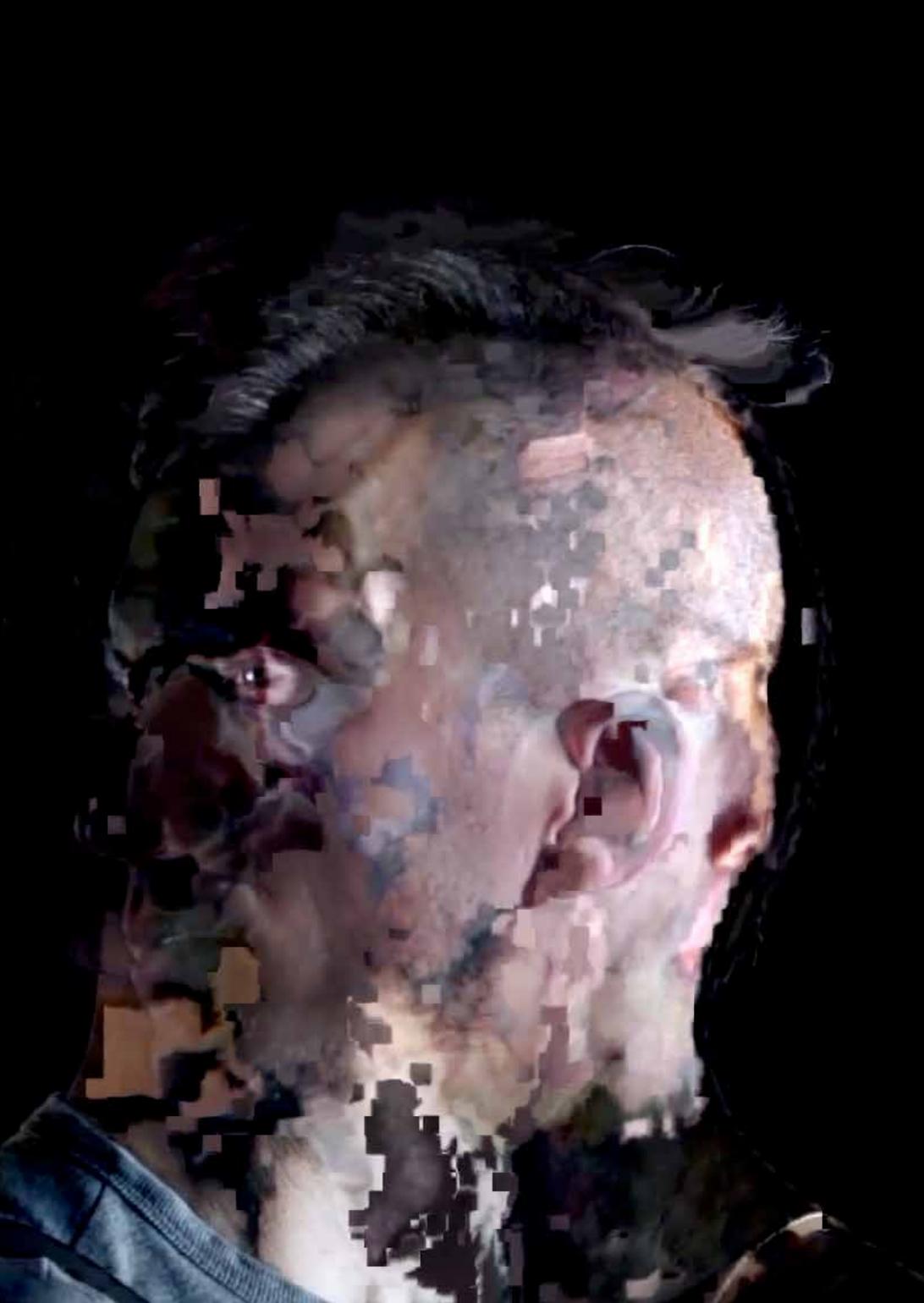
+2 Dexterity

Wizard

+5 Intellect

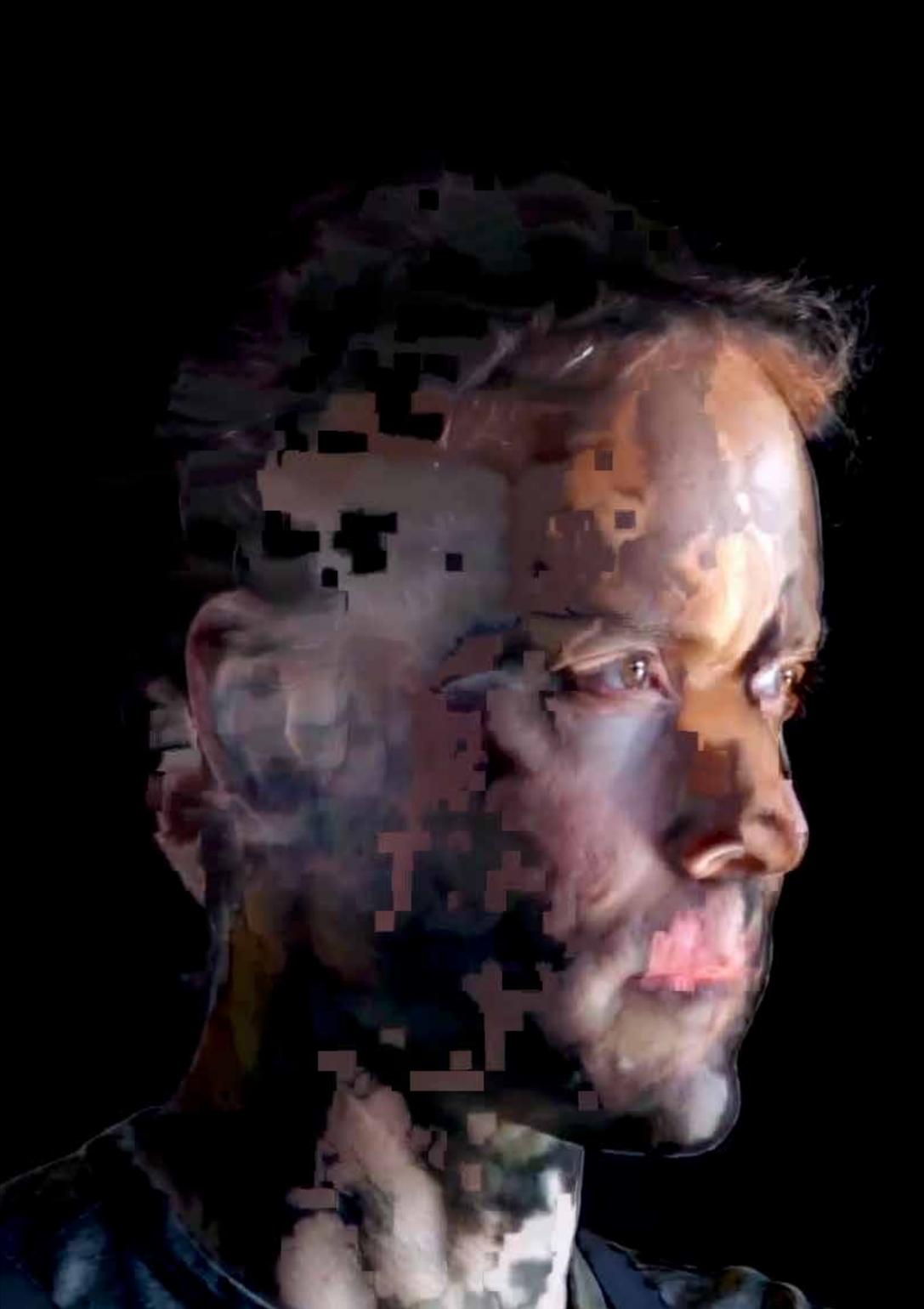








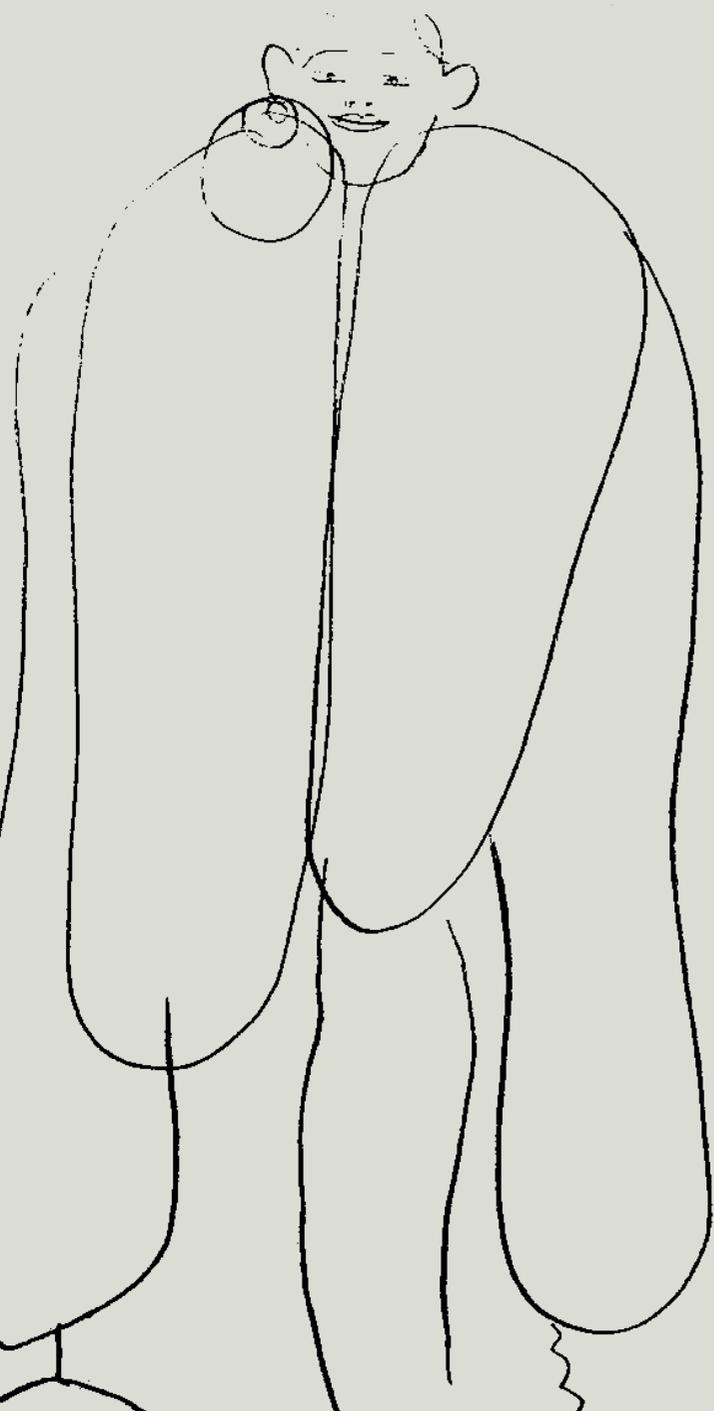






CHAPTER TWO

WORLD
BUILDING



In *Draconis Lacrimæ* there are no dungeons and dragons, the dungeon is the Dragon.

So, in the following game sessions you will build the world in which your adventure takes place: the entrails of the Dragon. In order to do so, you will need pen and paper cards (approx. A6 size).¹⁰

Think of the Dragon's anatomy as the map, the timeline and the pathway of your adventure. The Dragon's organs will be the settings and chapters of your story. When imagining and designing the Dragon with the other players, don't try to project or plan too much. Leave the details and concretions for later, for the role-playing. Remember, the Dragon is a figure: it will only fully appear whilst playing.

Dragons: “Nearly every culture has myths about something called a *dragon*, despite the fact that none of them can agree on exactly what dragons are”¹¹. The creatures we call dragons come from very different traditions and as such aren't technically the same monster, even though they have several common features. It was the Eurocentric vision that put all these creatures under the same category #dragon.

In this dragon mosh, it's very hard to trace their differences and origins: the Hydra (a creature from Greek and Roman mythology) was turned into King Ghidorah (the antagonist of Godzilla, the Japanese Kaiju film star); Quetzalcoatl (the plumed serpent deity of different Mesoamerican cultures) is a summoned monster in the Final Fantasy videogames; Falkor (the luckdragon of the German novel *The Neverending Story* by Michael Ende) takes its name from the Japanese language and is often portrayed as a Chinese dragon... and so on.

In *Draconis Lacrimæ*, The Dragon is the players' shared collective fiction: the figure that appears within their mosh.

THEY MEET IN THE GUTS

— 01 —

Multiverse (First person singular): “The Multiverse can be perceived as a material and metaphorical path of self-discovery, once the self has been recognized as *the others within*”.¹²

Multiverse (First person plural): You and I form a *We*. But we are not the only *We*. A *We* may not be just a *You* and an *I*, there are many other possible formations of the *We*. Each *We* lives in its own Universe. The Multiverse is the space that every *We* shares... and it's a huge space. In the Multiverse all of the *Wes* can, if swollen by the Dragon, meet in the same point: her Guts.

Each of the characters are eaten, swallowed, absorbed, teleported, injected, implanted, etc by or into a different dragon in their own Universe. Each dragon is different on the outside, but they all have guts, and those guts are one. Only one. That's where the adventurers meet, in the Guts of the Dragon; a common ground, a connector, a portal to the Multiverse.

Upon arrival, the adventurers tell each other how they got there. In turns, briefly narrate to your fellow players how you got inside the Guts. Describe both the kinds of dragons that are in your character's Universe and how your character ended up inside one of them. This short narration serves as a kind of prequel for the group's adventure.

—Example—

Giant Barbarian:

I come from a Prehistoric Universe. There, everything is always trying to kill you. There are earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanoes and tornados. There are also monsters that you have to fight, like King Kong or Godzilla. Dragons are one of these monsters

and they look like dinosaurs. I found myself inside the Dragon because I was swallowed alive by one of them in an epic fight.

Cyborg Warlock:

I come from a post-apocalyptic Universe in which dragons are big corporations, digital monsters like Google. During a routine mission in a VR environment, I got caught in the code of one of these evil dragon corps.

Ælien Druid:

My Universe is like Medieval Europe, the dragons are classical western high fantasy creatures with scales and fire. As a druid, I am a shapeshifter; I can turn into an animal when I get to understand it, when I empathize with it. Dragons are very powerful and complex creatures that I haven't yet been able to understand. I asked a dragon to eat me in order to better understand it.

Vampire Bard:

I come from a place in which the dead and the living coexist on the same plane. Dragons are the ancestors of Vampires which are smoky creatures that can be invoked. I was performing a ritual and one of my ancestors visited me, manifesting as a smoke dragon. I was chosen to be abducted in order to learn something very important for our people.

Pegasus Monk:

My world is populated by mythical and technological creatures like me. I met a dragon sitting under the ancient Tree of Life and in mutual recognition of our uniqueness we instantly impregnated each other. It was very intense: love at first sight and pregnancy at first sight. But both the dragon and its new baby died straight away, leaving me as the carrier of the only inter-dimensional portal to my Universe. Because I was carrying a baby-Dragon portal in my womb, I was sucked inwards, turning inside-out like a sock. And that's how I got here.

BOOKEND ORGANS

— 02 —

Organ: An Organ is a chapter of your story. An Organ is a setting in your adventure. An Organ is a part of the Dragon's anatomy. The series of Organs draw a storyline and a journey, a possible pathway throughout the endless possible bodies of the Dragon.

Write down on a paper card “The Guts” (orient the card tall, not wide). That's the Organ in which the characters meet and where they start the journey through the Dragon. Place it on the very left side of the table. That is the beginning of your journey, the first organ you will visit.

After this you will all have to agree on an End Organ for your adventure, the Organ through which you will (or will not) escape. You will do this collectively and consensually. Talk, discuss, negotiate. You don't need to define what happens in this End Organ. Just give it a name, write it down on a paper card (oriented tall) and place it on the very right side of the table. That is the End of your journey, the last Organ you will visit.

Now you will describe what these two Organs are. You will also do this collectively and consensually. When defining an Organ, you may think of how it looks, its physiological function, the creatures (if any) that inhabit the Organ, etc. An Organ can be close to the anatomy of an animal (e.g. the lungs) or could be completely invented (eg. the Cavity of Pain or Galaxy x45-D).

Describe both the Guts and the End Organ in a few sentences. Make sure that the description doesn't explain what the characters do in the Organ, your task is simply to discuss the setting. The action and role-play will come later in the game.

Once you've agreed on the descriptions of these two Organs, write one or two sentences about them on their respective cards, so that you have a quick reminder throughout the game.

THE GUTS

A chamber
with organic
porous walls:
things can enter
but not leave

(start organ)

TEAR GLAND

It's like the
Grand Canyon.
A river with
huge walls
on both sides

(end organ)

CONFLICT ORGANS

— 03 —

Each player imagines an Organ in which they will discover something important about their character: these are the Conflict Organs. There will be as many Conflict Organs as there are players in the game.

In the Conflict Organ that you create your character will be the protagonist. As a player you will have more power when it comes to making narrative decisions in your Conflict Organ.

How to imagine your Conflict Organ? In the Conflict Organ your character will go through a process of transformation or self-discovery. You might already have an idea of what this process will be (maybe you already thought of an issue that your character needs to address). In that case, imagine the setting that could trigger the discovery. On the other hand, you might have no clue of what your character will discover. In this case, imagine the Conflict Organ as a setting that is strongly related to your character's backstory and Universe: either by similarity or opposition. Your Conflict Organ could be an ideal setting for your character: a place where your character perfectly fits, where their abilities, powers or worldview are crucial and useful. Alternatively, your Conflict Organ could be hell for your character: a setting in which your character loses their powers and abilities or one that challenges their beliefs.

It might be difficult to imagine your Conflict Organ. Don't worry. You don't need to know everything in advance. If you're not sure why your Conflict Organ will be important for your character or what actions will take place in it, just follow your intuition. Later on, you will role-play to discover what happens.

As in the previous steps, write down on a paper card the name of the Conflict Organ, its description in a few sentences and the name of your character.

Don't explain to anyone why you've chosen that Conflict Organ or what you think your character will discover, just describe the Organ. In the case that the same Conflict Organ is

THE GUTS

A chamber
with organic
porous walls:
things can enter
but not leave

(start organ)

THE TUMOR

Its like the
Grand Canyon
A river with
huge walls
on the sides

*Giant Barbarian
(conflict organ)*

THE HEART

Its like the
Grand Canyon
A river with
huge walls
on the sides

*Pegasus Monk
(conflict organ)*

THE LUNGS

Its like
Grand Canyon
A river
huge
on the

*Vampire
(conflict organ)*

IE
IGS

e the
Canyon.
r with
walls
e sides

re Bard
t organ)

THE EYE

Its like the
Grand Canyon.
A river with
huge walls
on the sides

Alien Druid
(conflict organ)

CHAMBER OF DREAMS

Its like the
Grand Canyon.
A river with
huge walls
on the sides

Cyborg Warlock
(conflict organ)

TEAR GLAND

It's like the
Grand Canyon.
A river with
huge walls
on both sides

(end organ)

chosen by multiple players (two times spinal cord, for instance) it means that the Dragon will have two of that Organ; they will anyway be different.

In any order, each player will place their Conflict Organ on the table, somewhere between The Guts and the End Organ. When placing your card, you're already creating a storyline. For example, if you place the Lungs card on the left of The Cavity of Pain card, that means that the adventurers will visit the Lungs before the Cavity of Pain. Then, another player could place the Tumor between the Lungs and the Cavity of Pain, that's how the pathway is built.

—Example—

The Giant Barbarian is not sure what Conflict Organ he will create. He has no idea what the important fact he will discover in the organ might be, so he decides to make a Conflict Organ that will weaken him and leave him powerless. The Giant is big and strong but he's full of cavities, holes and tunnels where little creatures live. So he comes up with the idea of The Tumor: an Organ where his body will flood and swell up making it impossible for him to move. He imagines it as a big purple mousse that seeps through his body, leaving him immobile. The cancerous cells of the Tumor will infiltrate into his body and will meet the little creatures that inhabit the Giant. He explains this to his fellow players but doesn't reveal all the details.

Giant Barbarian:

My Conflict Organ will be The Tumor, a living purple mass that moves and adapts its shape around us like a mousse.

He writes “The Tumor” and a sentence describing it in a card (oriented tall), and places it between The Guts (the beginning of the adventure) and The Heart (a Conflict Organ created by The Pegasus Monk, a fellow player).

ROUNDS: FREE-PLAY ORGANS, EVENTS & SCENES

— 04 —

Through the previous steps you have created the Dragon with: a starting Organ (the Guts), an end Organ and several Conflict Organs (one for each player). For the last step of the World Building you will create more Organs and add detail to those previously created.

From now on each player will take turns, rotating clockwise around the table. On their turn, each player can create one of the following three elements: a Free-Play Organ, an Event, or a Scene.

Free-play organ

As opposed to the Conflict Organs, a Free-Play Organ is not linked to a particular character. Free-Play Organs help to enrich the overall narrative. They nurture group actions and relationships between the characters. Later on, when you role play these Organs, each player will have equal power in creating the narrative.

As before, describe a Free-Play Organ in a few sentences and place the paper card (oriented tall) somewhere along the timeline between the pre-existing organs but never before The Guts or after the End Organ.

Event

An Event is something that happens inside an Organ whilst the adventurers are there. An Event is developed in one or several Scenes. It can happen in any kind of Organ: a Conflict Organ, a Free-Play Organ, the End Organ or The Guts. There can be more than one Event in the same Organ.

Write down the Event on a paper card (oriented wide) and describe it in a single sentence. Place it under the Organ

TUMOR

A mass of purple mouse inhabited by Draconian Cancerous Cells

(conflict organ)
Giant Barbarian



EVENT

The Draconian Cancerous cells invade the Giant

SCENE

Why do the Cancerous Cells start a revolution inside the Giant's body

SCENE

Why do the little creatures that live inhabit the Giant take part of the Rebellion?



EVENT

The Giant collapses

SCENE

How do the adventurers try to hold together the body of the Giant?

SCENE

Does the Giant survive?

where it will take place, creating a nested vertical relation. If there are already other Events in that Organ, place yours above or below one of them. Chronology develops downwards.

The description of the Event should be specific enough that the other players have a clear picture of what takes place.

*“The cancerous cells invade the Giant”
is an event that takes place in The Tumor,
which is the Giant Barbarian’s Conflict Organ.*

Scene

A Scene is a specific moment that happens inside an Event. There can be several Scenes in one Event. To create a Scene, you first pose a question, something you want to find out about the story. The goal of the Scene is to decide the answer to that question, this will happen later on, you will discover the answer through the role-play.

If the Scene happens inside an Event of a Conflict Organ, the question should somehow relate to the personal journey of the Character who created that Conflict Organ.

On a paper card (oriented tall) write down the Scene’s question and place it underneath its corresponding Event card. More than one Scene can be placed underneath an Event, in any order.

*Within the Event “The cancerous cells
invade the Giant”, taking place in The Tumor
(the Giant Barbarian’s Conflict Organ),
a player creates the following Scene:*

*“Why do the cancerous cells start
a revolution inside the Giant’s body?”*

And so, the World Building develops. In each round, one player will choose to add either a Free-Play Organ, an Event or a

Scene. Play as many rounds as you want but before concluding the World Building session, make sure that:

→ Each Conflict Organ has at least as many Scenes as the number of players minus one.

→ You have at least one Scene inside of each Organ.

The more rounds you play, the more the Dragon will grow in detail. The cards on the table will define the Dragon's anatomy. They will be your map, your storyline and the pathway of your adventure. They will guide you through the next part of the game: the role-play.

—Example—

You can see a detailed map/anatomy of our Dragon in the following link. There, you can see examples of different Organs, Events and Scenes created for a game.

www.pablobertlilienfeld.com/dragonmap.html







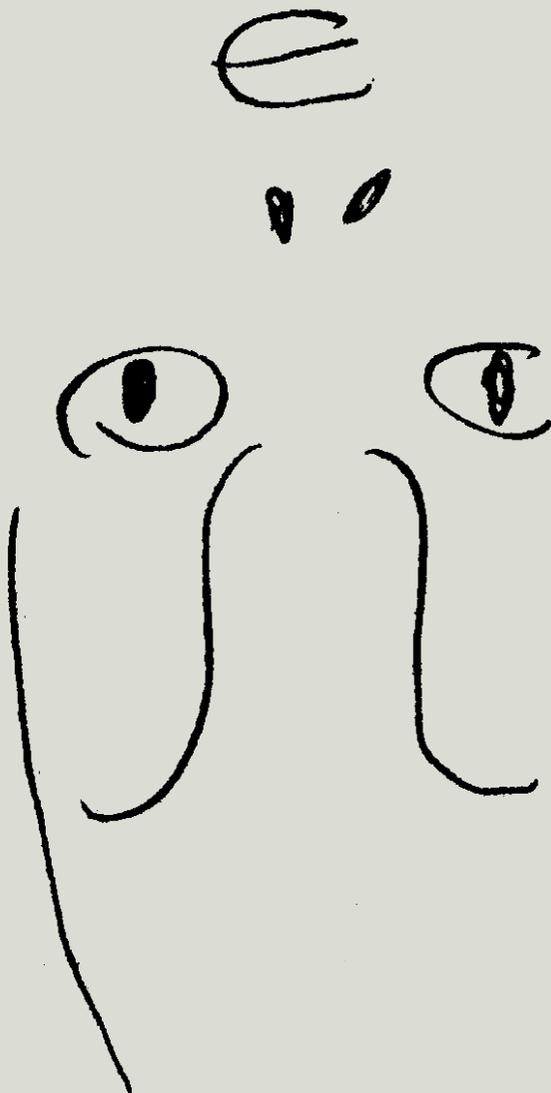






CHAPTER THREE

ROLE PLAYING



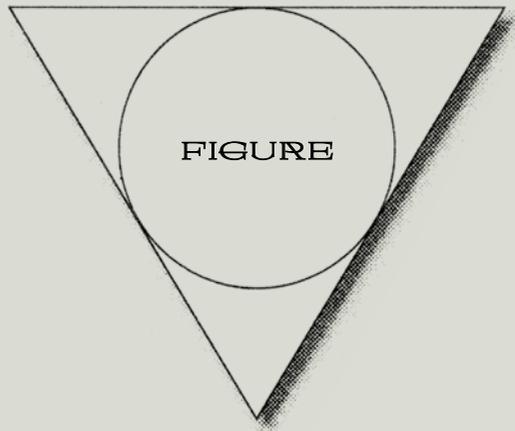
Now the actual role-play begins. Each Organ will be role-played in order, starting with the Guts all the way to the End Organ. While role-playing, you will say what your character does, sees and thinks, and by doing so you will also affect the shared world you inhabit with your fellow players. This is how you will discover together what happens during the journey.

In *Draconis Lacrimæ* there are two modes of role-playing, depending if you are in a Free-Play Organ or in a Conflict Organ. Since in *Draconis Lacrimæ* there is no Game Master, every player has immense creative power, but the creative power of each player also depends on the other players. These power relations will vary according to the type of Organ you're playing in. In Free-Play Organs you all have equal power. In Conflict Organs, the player who created the Organ plays the protagonist role while the other players will share the antagonist role.

Think of Role-play as a triangle with three vertices: player, character and performer. These three vertices are constantly moving and, as a result of the dynamic interaction between them, a fourth element appears: the Figure.

PLAYER

PERFORMER



CHARACTER

Player

The player is you when you play. You and your creative agenda: do you play to win? Or, do you want to tell a good story? Or, do you play to feel immersed and explore an alternative world?¹³

Character

Characters are different versions of the self. An idealized self, a repressed self, an augmented self, a fragmented self, an oppositional self¹⁴... or several simultaneously.

Performer

The performer is the embodiment of both the character and the player's agenda. It's the body that bleeds¹⁵ in and out, vulnerable and in a constant search between the first and the third person.

Figure

In the words of Donna Haraway, Figures are not “representations or didactic illustrations, but rather material, semiotic nodes or knots in which diverse bodies and meaning co-shape one another”.¹⁶

The Figure crystalizes and dissolves, shaped by the stories narrated by you and your fellow adventurers.

The Figure is the tabletop around which the player, the character and the performer gather to create stories together.

You will never fully grasp the Figure on your own.

PLAYING A FREE-PLAY ORGAN¹⁷

— 01 —

When playing a Free-Play Organ, follow these steps:

First Step

The player who created the Organ reminds the group about it: how it looks like, its features, inhabitants, qualities, etc.

Second Step

The group reads through the Events and Scenes in the Organ. There might be Scenes with questions that are redundant or too similar, you can try to merge them in a single Scene.

Third Step

The Scenes are role-played chronologically in the order you established during the creation of the Dragon. In a Scene, each player performs their character and all together they aim at answering the question. The Scene will end once the question is answered. At the beginning of each Scene, in turns, the players will say what their character is feeling or thinking. This helps set the stage for the Scene that is about to be developed.

Once this first round is finished, free-play begins. You can contribute whenever you want (there are no more turns). Free-playing a Scene, you may:

→ Say what your character does and thinks. You can speak in first and/or third person.

→ If someone tries to do something to your character, you describe the outcome. For example, if another character punches you, it's up to you to decide if you get hurt or if you avoid the punch.

—> Shape the world by describing what your character perceives. By saying, for example, that your character sees a castle, you're creating that castle.

—> Introduce and play secondary characters, as needed. Once a secondary character is created, all the players can perform it in addition to their own characters.

—> You must accept what the others say but you will have the last word on what happens to your character. The story is written collectively but not consensually. You add onto what your fellow players create.

Fourth Step

During the Scene, everyone tries to answer the question written on the card. The Scene ends when the players discover together the answer to the question.

—Example—

The group is about to play the Spinal Cord. In this Organ there are two Events:

“The amount of energy rises dangerously”

“The group gets lost in the tunnels”.

Inside the first event there are three Scenes:

“What important fact did the group discover about the Dragon?”

“Why does the whole Dragon start trembling really hard?”

*“Does the group manage to help
the Dragon stop trembling?”*

Looking at the two last Scenes in the Event, the group realizes that they could be merged into one. So, consensually, they merge the two Scenes into a new one in for which an answer will be revealed during play:

*“How does the group solve the issue that is
causing the Dragon to tremble really hard?”*

After the preparation, they start role-playing.

**SPINAL
CORD**

A net of
electrified
tunnels. Pitch
dark. Sparks
and flashes

(free-play organ)



EVENT

The amount
of energy rises
dangerously

SCENE

What
important
fact does the
group discover
about the
Dragon

SCENE

Why does
the whole
Dragon start
trembling
really hard

SCENE

Does the
group manage
to help the
Dragon stop
trembling



EVENT

The group gets
lost in the tunnels

SCENE

How do they
manage to
communicate
if they are all
in different
tunnels

Cyborg Warlock:

Now we're gonna play the Spinal Cord, a Free-Play Organ that I created. The adventurers enter the Spinal Cord; a net of electrified tunnels. The tunnels are pitch-dark with occasional sparks and flashes. The walls are a shiny obsidian black.

We have an Event called "The amount of energy rises dangerously". Inside this event we have a Scene with the question "What important fact did the group discover about the Dragon?".

First, we do the round of thoughts. The Cyborg is excited, feeling so much electricity flowing makes him feel great.

Alien Druid:

I feel insecure. I come from a Medieval Universe so I don't even know what electricity is.

Pegasus Monk:

The wound I got while we were in the Heart hasn't fully healed, so I feel very weak.

Vampire Bard:

Mhhh, I'm not a big fan of electricity but I'm enjoying the darkness.

Giant Barbarian:

I still feel weird with my body. The cancerous cells that invaded me while we were in the Tumor continue to bother me.

Cyborg Warlock:

Ok, now the scene begins!

Aliend Druid:

I transform into a humming bird so I can move without having to touch the floor or walls.

Cyborg Warlock:

I touch the walls with my hand-connectors looking for strong impulses. I find a strong current and manage to connect to it. This knocks me out and I start making very weird noises.

Vampire Bard:

I stay away, it seems too dangerous.

Cyborg Warlock:

The Cyborg starts reading the Dragon's network, connected to her nervous system. I start to understand that the Dragon has memories and perceptions of dragons that I have never seen, like dragons from other worlds.

Pegasus Monk:

I see the Cyborg Warlock on the floor, making weird noises. His body seems out of control, like overcharged. Suddenly, his hologram projector starts showing the images of dragons in different universes. The group watches these projected images. Is this ok with you, Cyborg Warlock?

Cyborg Warlock:

Yes, that's cool! Everything that I see, I project as a hologram so you can also see it.

Giant Barbarian:

I'm very worried about the Cyborg Warlock, I ask the Vampire Bard if she could cure the energetic overload.

Vampire Bard:

I propose to grab the Cyborg and try to pull him out and unplug him.

Giant Barbarian:

I help you grab him.

Pegasus Monk:

Me too.

Aliend Druid:

I don't. I'm still a hummingbird and I'm flying around.

Vampire Bard:

Ok, we do that and a huge electrical spark brightens the space.

Cyborg Warlock:

You manage to pull me out of the network. My circuits are damaged and I'm very confused, almost unconscious.

Aliend Druid:

Thanks to the flash, I notice that the walls and ceiling of the Spinal Cord are covered with inscriptions. I fly closer to see if I can read them.

Vampire Bard:

I try to heal the Cyborg Warlock with my chants, but I cannot heal technology. He has to be repaired, not healed.

Pegasus Monk:

Ok, but wait, with my nanotechnology I can try to transcode the Bard's healing songs into the technological body of the Cyborg.

Vampire Bard:

Cool, we do that.

Cyborg Warlock:

You manage to heal me, at least enough to be able to talk. I explain to the group what saw while I was plugged in: the Dragon has many different kinds of logic working inside of him because he lives in many different Universes. Each one of these

logics corresponds to an embodiment of the Dragon in each of the Universes. It's the largest network I've ever sensed. The network is infinitely complex because it reflects the logic of physics in every possible Universe. Some are Euclidean, some are Quantum and some are Mathematical that don't have any resemblance to logics that I know.

Giant Barbarian:

I think this is it! We've answered the question "What important fact did the group discover about the Dragon?". End of the scene.

Cyborg Warlock:

Yes, end of the scene! We already knew that the Dragon is a portal to Multiverse. What we've discovered is that her nervous system is capable of comprehending many different logics, many of which we're unable to understand.

Aliend Druid:

Yes, and on the way we discovered the inscriptions on the walls. We have to see if these inscriptions will be relevant in the following Spinal Cord Scenes.

PLAYING A CONFLICT ORGAN¹⁸

— 02 —

Each of you had to leave your own universe behind when you entered the Guts of the Dragon. You're in an unknown setting and you're surrounded by strangers. Furthermore, in a Conflict Organ your character will go through a process of transformation or self-discovery. You might enter the Tumor, a dense organ in which the Giant Barbarian loses all his powers and abilities, or you might enter The Chamber of Dreams, a brain-like organ in which the Cyborg Warlock feels at home.

In your Conflict Organ, your character is the Center, and the protagonist of the narration. Your fellow players play their own characters and share the role of the Objector, your antagonist. In Conflict Organs there is no consensus and collectivity: it's "the war of *us* against *us*".¹⁹

Conflict

In *Draconis Lacrimæ*, the conflict is not a war against an enemy, it doesn't oppose two clear sides. The conflict puts on the tabletop the left-overs of our categories, that which remains of our species, races, genders, classes, and other classifications unbalanced by the history of domination. The conflict is the struggle to decide what is *We*.

In Conflict Organs the characters are not on the same level. Conflict Organs have a Center (protagonist) and Objectors (antagonist).

During the building of the Dragon, each of you created a Conflict Organ for your character. All of the Events and Scenes that happen within a Conflict Organ are related to one character, this is the character that will play the Center. The Center is the protagonist of every Scene within that Conflict Organ: and as such the Center has more creative power.

But in conflicts, you also need an antagonist, which is the Objecter. For each Scene in a Conflict Organ, the other players will, in turns, perform the Objecter. The Objecter's main task is to make it difficult for the Center to build the story in the way she wants. The objectors can: add conditions or unexpected consequences to the actions proposed by the Center, put the Center in difficult situations, compel the Center to make hard choices. The Objecter of a Scene continues to play their own character (like in any other Scene) but they will also play the antagonists of the story, including possible secondary characters, the environment and background of the Scene.

When playing a Conflict Organ, follow these steps:

First Step

The player who created the Conflict Organ reminds the group about it: How it looks like, its features, inhabitants, qualities, etc.

Second Step

The group looks at the Events and Scenes in the Organ. Remember that while creating the Conflict Organs, you should have made sure that in each Conflict Organ there is at least the same amount of Scenes as the number of players minus one. This way, every player who is not the Center will play the Objecter at least one time.

Also, as in Free-Play Organs, there might be Scenes with questions that are redundant or too similar. You can try to merge them into a single Scene (but again, make sure you keep a minimum amount of Scenes as the number of players minus one).

Third Step

Every player, except for the Center, chooses at least one Scene that they feel attracted to. In the Scene you choose, you will perform the Objecter. If it happens that there are more Scenes than players, the same person can play the Objecter for more than one Scene.

—Example—

The Alien Druid created the Eye as her Conflict Organ, meaning she will be the Center in each Scene. Each of the other players will, in turns, be the Objector of a Scene.

The first Event inside the Eye is “A memory bubble explodes, flooding the Eye”. Inside this Event there is a Scene called “What is the memory that reveals to the adventurers that one of them is lying?” The Vampire Bard really likes the question, so he chooses that Scene. This means that he will be the Objector in that Scene.

Fourth Step

As in Free-Play Organs, in Conflict Organs you begin the Scene with a round in which each player, in turn, says what their character is feeling or thinking. After which you begin the free-play, no more turns. You can contribute whenever you want, shape the world by describing what your character perceives, etc. Eventually, like in Free-Play Organs, the Scene finishes when the question is answered. As you see, most of the rules of Free-Play Organs also apply to Conflict Organs (review the chapter “Playing a Free-play Organ” if needed).

However, in a Conflict Organ, the players that perform the Center and the Objector have the power to reject or modify something that another player says. So, if in the course of free-play the Center or the Objector disagree with something that any other player has said, Conflict starts.

Remember, only the Center or the Objector can initiate Conflict. The other players cannot. Conflict is a negotiation between the Center and the Objector over the development of the Scene. When the conflict ends, you return to free-play the Scene, there can be several conflicts inside one scene.

The negotiation between the Center and the Objector is not free-form. It is performed through a series of specific Conflict Phrases. As part of this negotiation, the Center and the Objector have a total of six Conflict Tokens that they can use alongside the Phrases. Conflict Tokens refresh at the beginning of a new scene, for both the Center and the new Objector. You can use beans or small objects to keep count of the Conflict Tokens.

In total there are six Conflict Phrases but first, we we will explain the four main phrases: *“But only if...”*; *“Chill!”*; *“Deal!”* and *“No way!”*.

But only if...

When you start a sentence by saying “But only if...” followed by a statement, it means that you are willing to accept the opponent’s statement, if he or she accepts your statement as well. Conflict continues.

You must spend a Conflict Token in order to use this phrase.

Chill!

“Chill!” means that you don’t think that your opponent is asking something reasonable. Your opponent must offer up another suggestion which is either lesser in scope or dramatically different from their previous statement. The other players (who are not the two negotiating parties, Center and Objector) must agree that the offer is sufficiently smaller in scale or different in scope. You choose one of the two options, the original statement or the newly offered one, and continue the conflict.

You should not, under any circumstances, give your opponent suggestions on what to offer.

You must spend a Conflict Token in order to use this phrase.

Deal!

“Deal!” means that you accept your opponent’s statement, and don’t wish to ask for anything else. “Deal!” ends conflict and the Scene continues with free-play.

No way!

“No way!” means that you oppose the last statement and you are not willing to compromise at all. You prefer to take a risk. “No way!” is a dead-end for the conflict: the outcome will depend on a dice roll. If you get to this point, do the following:

—> First, the other players (who are neither the Center nor Objector) will have to decide together which one of the Center’s five ability stats (Strength, Dexterity, Intellect, Combat or Charisma) applies to the roll. Their decision should be based on what the situation requires and the kind of problem that is at stake in the conflict.

—> Once the ability is decided, the Center must roll 1d100 (a roll between 1 and 100). To do so, roll a d10 to get the tens digit; then roll a second d10 to get the ones digit. You’ll get a result between 1 and 100 (two zeros stands for 100).

—> Compare the result of the roll with the chosen stat. If the number of the roll is equal to or lower than the stat number, the Center succeeds. If it’s higher, the Center fails (that’s why, the higher the stat, the more chances the character has to succeed). In either case, the Center describes how failure or success is translated into the story, conflict ends and the Scene continues in free-play.

—Example—

The group is inside the Eye, the Alien Druid's Conflict Organ. The Eye is a fluid sphere full of bubbles containing all the memories of the Dragon. They're playing a scene called "Why did the Alien Druid want to become the Dragon?", which takes place inside the event "The Alien Druid and the Dragon become one".

For this Scene, the Center is the Alien Druid (like in every Scene of her Conflict Organ) and the Objector is the Pegasus Monk.

ÆAlien Druid:

I propose to the group that we reach the lacrimal gland. In order to do so we have to traverse the eye.

ÆAll the others:

Yes ok! We dive into the fluid of the Eye and swim towards the lacrimal gland.

ÆAlien Druid:

Ok! On the way to the lacrimal gland I shapeshift into an octopus. With my tentacles I touch as many memory bubbles as possible. By reading the memories of the Dragon I can better understand her. If I manage to empathize with the Dragon I will be able to become her. Because I'm an octopus I can swim very fast, so I touch the bubbles without anyone else noticing.

ÆPegasus Monk:

But **only if** at least one of us notices and finds out about your secret plan to become the Dragon, to be super powerful to destroy the whole of humanity! I spend a conflict token.

ÆAlien Druid:

OK, one of you know about my plan, **but only if** it is you, Pegasus. I don't think the others would understand, they're too human. I spend a conflict token.

ÆPegasus Monk:

Deal!

ÆAlien Druid:

So, while I'm touching the bubbles, the Alien realizes that she needs to have someone on her side, in case things go wrong. I connect telepathically with the Pegasus Monk, showing him images of how on planet Earth, where I come from, the animals suffer at the hands of humans. The Pegasus Monk comes

from another planet so he doesn't know that the Earth would be a much better place without humans. "Help me bring the rest of the team outside of the Eye, they mustn't find out about my plan because they wouldn't understand me", I tell the Pegasus.

Pegasus Monk:

I can't let you kill all humans! Leave some of them alive, at least the good ones so the human genome is not completely lost.

Ælien Druid:

Nah... humans are too selfish! The Alien continues with her plan. I continue touching all the memory bubbles. I'm understanding the Dragon in all her complexity, her pain, her suffering, her power... I start to become the Dragon, ready to kill humanity.

Pegasus Monk:

Chill! I spend a conflict token.

Ælien Druid:

OK, I reformulate... So, I change the Alien's plan. I don't intend to kill all humans. Instead, a little group of humans will be saved and, thanks to the power I'll have as a Multiverse Portal Dragon, I will be able to transport this small group of humans into different parallel Universes in which they're oppressed and dominated, they're at the bottom of the trophic pyramid. They will learn what it is to be eaten by other creatures. Even plants will eat them! Then I'll put these humans back on their Earth only then will they manage to empathize with other beings. Is that better?

Giant Barbarian,
Vampire Bard
& Cyborg Warlock:

Yes, that seems to be a more reasonable track.

Pegasus Monk:

Ok, **but only if** you feel extremely guilty for having such a plan, and the guilt makes you miserable. I spend another conflict token.

Alien Druid:

Ahahahah no! The Alien really hates humanity. She can not feel guilty, I won't let that happen... **no way!** Let's throw some dice.

Giant Barbarian:

Ok, we have to decide which ability stat applies. I think that if the Alien Druid wants to destroy almost the whole of humanity but doesn't feel guilty about it, it's because she's very self confident. I would go for the ability of Charisma. Do you agree?

Cyborg Warlock
& Vampire Bard:

Yes, that seems accurate.

Alien Druid:

Ok, my Charisma is 57, I have to roll less than that. I roll and... 42! I succeed. Sorry, I happily continue my plan, feeling no guilt at all! Hahaha.

The Scene continues until the question is answered. For the rest of this Scene, the Pegasus Monk will have 3 conflict tokens left (he has already spent 3), while the Alien Druid has 4 left. Once the question is answered, the Scene finishes. Then, the next Scene of the Conflict Organ starts, and:

- > The Conflict Tokens reset to 8,
- > The Alien Druid remains the Center,
- > The Objector will be the Vampire Bard because he chose the next Scene and question early on, when they began to play the Eye.

There are two remaining Conflict Phrases. They are:

THE EYE

A liquid-filled sphere with lots of bubbles contain the memories of the dragon

(conflict organ)
Alien Druid



EVENT

A memory bubble explodes, flooding the Eye

SCENE

What is the memory that reveals to the adventurers that one of them is lying



EVENT

The Alien Druid and the Dragon become one

SCENE

Why did the Alien Druid want to become the Dragon

SCENE

How did the Alien Druid manage to become the Dragon

SCENE

Will the Alien Druid let the adventurers get out of the Dragon alive

That didn't happen/

Yes, it happened

As mentioned before, only the Center or the Objector can initiate conflict. They can use the four Conflict Phrases explained earlier against each other. But if the Center or the Objector don't agree with something that the other players, those who are neither Center nor Objector, say they can use these two Conflict Phrases to negate or transform what has been said: “*that didn't happen*” and “*yes, it happened*”.

This is how they work:

During free-play, if a player says something that either the Center or the Objector wants to oppose they can say: *That didn't happen*. From which two outcomes are possible:

—> The other part (either the Center or the Objector, whoever did not say *That didn't happen*) can also say: *That didn't happen*, in which case the player's statement is completely dismissed.

—> The other part can say: *Yes, it happened*. By doing so, the statement becomes the object of a new conflict between Center and Objector. From then on, the conflict develops by using the four Conflict Phrases.

—Example—

The group is still inside the Eye, they're playing a scene called “How did the Alien Druid manage to become the Dragon?”, which takes place inside the event “The Alien Druid and the Dragon become one”.

The Center is the Alien Druid and in this Scene the Objector is the Vampire Bard.

Ælien Druid:

I see you all swimming towards the lacrimal gland while I stay behind to touch the last of the memory bubbles. Once I've touched them I will fully understand the Dragon and I will become her.

Cyborg Warlock:

At this moment, the fluid inside the Eye starts changing its color, becoming more and more red. The eye is bleeding. I think that the Dragon is suffering more and more...

Ælien Druid:

Sorry, but **that didn't happen.**

Vampire Bard:

Yeah, **that didn't happen.** Sorry Cyborg!

Cyborg Warlock:

Ok, ok!

Ælien Druid:

So as I touch the last memory bubble, I start becoming. I read the cells of the Dragon, one by one, and start the transmutation!

Giant Barbarian:

But at this moment you realize that in order to completely become the Dragon you need to establish some kind of contact with her soul first. Like a spiritual link, you need to look right at her soul's eyes.

Ælien Druid:

What? No! It's enough that I empathize in a psychological and cellular level. The Alien Druid is a very scientifically being, no need for spirituality. **That didn't happen.**

Vampire Bard:

Wait, that's kind of nice! I like it. So yes, **it happened.**

Ælien Druid:

Ok, so I realize that I need to establish a link with her soul **but only if it's possible to connect with her soul from where we are, here in the Eye.** I expend a conflict token.

Vampire Bard:

But only if this connection happens in the form of a dialogue between you and the Dragon's soul, and in this dialogue the Dragon is super mean to you! I spend a conflict token.

Ælien Druid:

Hahahaha! **Deal!** That's going to be fun. While I'm mutating into the Dragon, I see a very strong light flashing in front of me, and I ask "Is it you, mighty Dragon? I've been wanting to meet you for so long".

The scene continues until the question is answered.





THE
ALIENIGENUM
DRUID

BY SABINA
URRACA



I am not asking for you to not eat me. You can eat me. I ask only that you listen to me before you do. Listen to me. I am going to let you eat me; if you want, I can tell you this while I sit between your teeth, but do not bite down yet. This, the moment right before you eat me, is the most important moment of your life. It always is. Now you will eat me and I will become you. I know this because it has been this way forever. But first I want you to know my plan.

At first I was lamb, agnus, *Ovis orientalis aries*. I do not remember how I got to be the lamb or if I was anything before the lamb. My first memory is my mother's udder, and a warm breeze that came from the sky and the ground and that we call summer. I was a lamb until they cut me open here. Blood flowed out like a river. They took the meat but left the remains, which then rotted, turning me into a larva, Plural larvae. I was one among many. Roaming over the body that we had once been, I told myself that this was not the way it had to be done. That madness, our bodies stepping over each other to feed on the flesh, was horrifying to me. That is what I am trying to tell you. That it is difficult not to become attached to the body in which you live, even if that sorrow lasts only as long as a hunt, a slash, a sword. Are you afraid of the sword, dragon? That is how your kind dies. I do not fear your teeth, because it has happened too many times before, there have been too many sorrows before. I am tired. Listen, do not close your mouth yet. I have a plan.

I was a larva until a blackbird burrowed into the ground and caught me with its beak. Then I became the blackbird, *Turdus merula*. I was very happy as a blackbird. And as a blackbird—Listen to me dragon, do not bite down, listen to my plan—and like a blackbird I did not eat larvae, for I had not forgotten the sorrow over my previous body. And as a blackbird I flew, and I liked flying, but I was eaten by a wildcat and became a cat, *Felis silvestris*.

Seeing the body of the blackbird rot added more weight to my mountain of sorrows. I could not take it anymore. How many deaths can someone bear? I did not want to keep leaving

bodies behind. So I decided to remain a cat, not to transform myself again. I did not want to eat or be eaten again. I went into the forest and I ran and I ran and I ran until I was safe, cursing this world, cursing my own body, which, with its hunger, would force me to add more sorrows to the list. As a cat, I was suffering, fighting against the impulses of my breed.

There are many bodies that I do not remember, or only remember the smell of jaws closing around me or a bullet reaching me. I have been so many, dragon. Some of my bodies died of old age. Others did not have any time. I remember being in a cage, a newborn rabbit, *Oryctolagus cuniculus*. My siblings and I were only a few hours old and my mother, terrified but the presence of humans around the cage, began to rip off our legs and eat them. And it was —I remember this well, dragon, and it is important that you listen to me. Listen to me! Do not close your mouth yet!— and it was terrible, yet pleasant to be my mother after having been born from her, to return to her flesh once she had eaten me. I remember that break, sailing in a circle for a moment, having time to breathe in that straight line to a future animal. The only time I was eaten for love.

Sometimes I sleep all day, or I hibernate in a cave, or I stand motionless in abyssal waters and have flashes of the past: many of the bodies I left are rotting, my flesh in another's mouth, the screams in the slaughterhouse, my body trampled by the rest of the herd, human hands breaking my neck in one single motion, my crab shell cracking as it hits the rocks as a seagull, *Laurus*, threw me down from above.

On one occasion, being a squirrel, *Sciurus vulgaris*, a kestrel, *Falco tinnunculus*, caught me in its claws and rose with me dangling, and it was so beautiful, dragon, that despite having already lived it, for I had already been a blackbird, it was so beautiful —dragon, do not close your mouth yet, I have yet to finish— to see the world from so high, just before dying, that I wished to remain in my body. I bit into the claws of

the kestrel, which opened and, to my surprise, instead of falling, I flew. I had become a flying squirrel. I was grateful for the blackbird that I had been, for every animal that I had been had left a mark on me.

I hear your roar, dragon, and your belly begging for my flesh, but listen to me, listen to my plan: Sharing the suffering is the promise of revelation. Sharing suffering is the promise of conversion. I can be a squirrel and fly; I can be a cat and eat grass. I can be a mother and a killer, a cub and the mother's flesh. I am a druid.

I am a Druid and I will live even if you close your jaws, dragon, even if your gastric juices dissolve my body. And my plan will continue: the end of death at the hands of others, that those who kill others disappear from the face of the earth. A new order, an earth only inhabited by herbivores, frugivores, decomposers, scavengers eating what the world offers them without using the force of domination.

And now close your jaws, dragon. I am ready. When you swallow me, I will be you and you will be me.



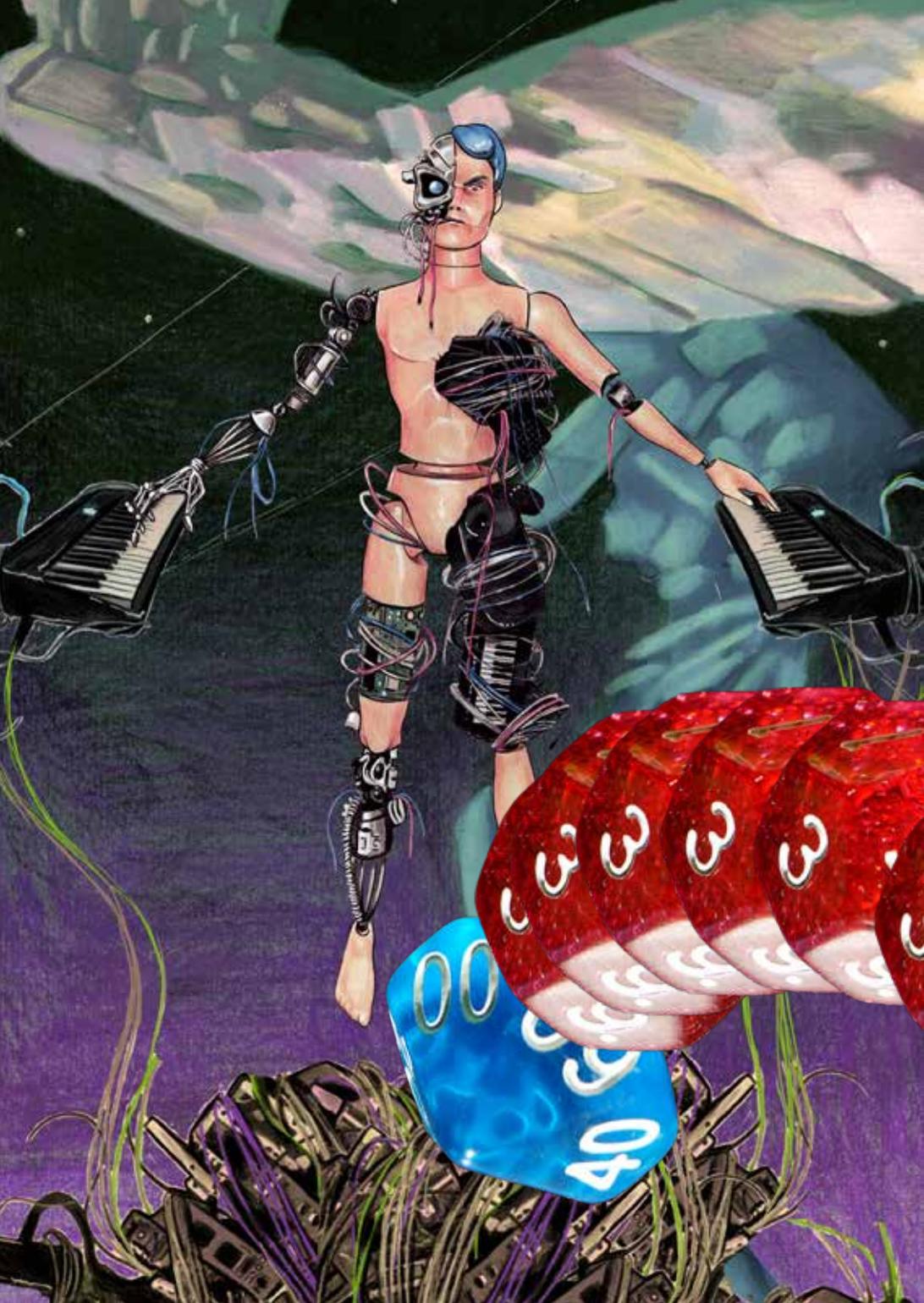












ENDNOTES

- 01 Paul B. Preciado wrote a beautiful article, ‘Learning from the virus’, that deepens this idea. It’s been published on several sites and in multiple languages; ex. ArtForum (English), and El Pais (Spanish).
- 02 **The Virus** is the protagonist of the first piece we created together, Introducing *The Star* (2015).
- 03 **The Adventurer** is one of the protagonists of *Songs of Hain* (2017), the second piece we did together.
- 04 El Polvo Dragón is very hard to translate into English. “Polvo” means “dust” but the phrasal verb “echar un polvo” can also mean “to fuck” or “to shag”. So, El Polvo Dragón could mean “The Dragon Dust” but also “The Dragon Fuck” or “The Dragon Shag”.
- 05 Thinking of Donna Haraway and how she often writes “from the belly of the monster”, as in *The Promises of Monsters: A Regenerative Politics for Inappropriate/d Others*.
- 06 Dungeons & Dragons is one of the most popular fantasy tabletop RPGs of all time. It was originally designed by Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson in 1974.
- 07 “Identity can often be vital in dealing with a situation of oppression, but it would be a mistake to use it to avoid dealing with complexity. Life cannot be saturated with identity”. Judith Butler in conversation with Beatriz Preciado, by Ursula Del Aguila (Têtu n°138, 11/2008).
- 08 This definition of trope is taken from tvtropes.org (<https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/Tropes>)
- 09 This definition of class and the twelve archetypes are taken from the D&D Player’s Handbook 5th Edition, 2014.
- 10 The World Building in *Draconis Lacrimæ* is inspired by Microscope, a role-playing game designed by Ben Robbins and published by Lame Mage Productions. We totally recommend it.
- 11 <https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/OurDragonsAreDifferent>

- 12 Francesca Ferrando on the term “Multiverse”, published in the ‘Posthuman Glossary’ by Rosi Braidoti and Maria Hlavajova, ed. Bloomsbury Academy 2018.
- 13 In ‘RPG theorizing by designers and players’, the author Evan Torner explains how Mark Kuhner coined the term Threefold Model, articulating three dimensions of play styles: Gameism (playing to win by overcoming challenges), dramatism (playing to tell and experience stories) and simulationism (playing to model a coherent world following its internal logic). ‘RPG theorizing by designers and players’ is an essay within the publication ‘Role-Playing Game Studies. A transmedia approach’, ed. By Jose P. Zagal and Sebastian Deterding (2018, Taylor & Francis).
- 14 In ‘Players and Their Characters in Role-Playing Games’, Sarah Lynne Bowman defines nine types of Player-Characters: the Doppelgänger Self, the Devoid Self, the Augmented Self, the Fragmented Self, the Repressed Self, the Idealized Self, the Oppositional Self, the Experimental Self, and the Taboo Self. The whole article ‘Players and Their Characters in Role-Playing Games’ is included in ‘Role-Playing Game Studies. A transmedia approach’, ed. By Jose P. Zagal and Sebastian Deterding (2018, Taylor & Francis).
- 15 Bleed is the name given to the crossover between player and character. It happens in two ways: your life experience bleeds into the game and what happens in the game bleeds out into your real life. Elvia Wilk wrote about bleeding, role-playing and unrecognition in a great article, ‘Ask Before you Bite’ (2019). <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/103/292645/ask-before-you-bite/>
- 16 Donna Haraway, ‘When Species Meet’, University of Minnesota Press, 2008, pp. 4–5
- 17 The free-play of a Scene was also inspired by ‘Microscope’ (RPG designed by Ben Robbins, ed. Lame Mage Productions, 2011)
- 18 The conflict game mechanics are inspired by ‘Polaris: Chivalric Tragedy at Utmost North’ (RPG written by Ben Lehman and published by These Are Our Games, 2005)
- 19 In his book *Nous*, philosopher Tristan Garcia replaces Hobbes’ famous quote “the war of all against all” with “the war of us against us” (*Nous*, Grasset, 2016)













AND WITHIN THE MOSH, THE DRAGON APPEARS

Like viruses in a host body, you and your fellow adventurers have come all this way traversing the Dragon's anatomy.

Your everyday-life has bled into the game, and what has happened in the game likewise has bled back into your everyday-life.

You can now recognize the Dragon as the others within, because you are the others within.

Now that you're reaching the end of your adventure, you will manage to see the Dragon appear. The Dragon is the figure that extends the couple, that expands the kin, that narrates the community. The Dragon is the shared collective fiction that appears within the mosh.

You must roll the dice one last time. You might have noticed that some datamoshed images in this book are numbered. Each player must roll 1d10 (one ten-sided die), obtaining a number between 1 and 10. Find the datamoshed image that corresponds to the number.

Within that mosh, see the Dragon appear, even if it is just a glimpse. Tell the other players what you see, three times: as character, as player and as performer.

Draconis Lacrimae
The Player's Handbook

A piece by
Federico Vladimir Strate Pezdiric
and Pablo Esbert Lilienfeld

Book Design
P.G Howlin'

Illustrations
Heidi Smith, Nacho G Riaza,
Federico Protto, Roi Pardo
and Florence Shaw

Translation
Jara Lindsay

Proofreading
Chloe Chignell

Sound Talismans
Silvia Weidenbach

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The game system is inspired by the following RPGs: *“Dungeons & Dragons 5th Edition”* by Mike Mearls and Jeremy Crawford, *“Microscope”* by Ben Robbins, and *“Polaris”* by Ben Lehman

The game was first tested by a team of five performers: Federico Vladimir Strate Pezdiric as the Giant Barbarian, Joshua Serafin as the Pegasus Monk, Camilo Mejía Cortés as the Vampire Bard, Pablo Esbert Lilienfeld as the Cyborg Warlock and Anaël Snoek as the Alien Druid

With the characters and stories that came out of those first game sessions we created a performance piece called *Draconis Lacrimae* which premiered in the festival Me gustas pixelad_ (March 2021, La Casa Encendida, Madrid). The performance was produced by Comunidad y Ayuntamiento de Madrid, supported by wpZimmer, AC/E Acción Cultural Española, Spanish Embassy in Belgium, workspacebrussels, kunstencentrum BUDA and CC Jacques Franck.

The monologue of The Alienigenum Druid was written by Sabina Urraca in conversation with Anaël Snoek. It is performed by Anaël in the piece of *Draconis Lacrimae*.

Gracias de corazón to the whole a.pass community, Lilia Mestre, Kristien Van den Brande, Olivier Stein, Vladimir Miller, Flavio Rodrigo, Andrea Zavala, Rui Calvo, Adriano Jensen, Krōöt Juurak, Elke van Campenhout, Myriam Van Imschoot, Tom Engels, Sara Manente, Nathaniel Moore and Julia Rubies.

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