History of Argaia

What the world was like before the Phoenixborn, and shortly after.

Copied from the official source: https://www.plaidhatgames.com/board-games/ashes-rise-phoenixborn/the-world-of-ashes/.

The Children of Dragons

Argaia is a lush and beautiful world, primarily dominated by the Human species. It was not always so. Long before the current age of strife, Humans shared the planet with another intelligent, bipedal species. Some countries called them the Dragoons, some the Dragonkin, and others gave more colorful names such as the Umbrae or the Cono'cala. But universally this species was referred to as the children of dragons.

There is great debate over what they looked like, with some ancient texts describing them as lizardlike, and others as feathered angels. Some scholars claim the children of dragons changed their shape, others that their shape was only set in the eye of the beholder, and others still have postulated that each of them was unique.

No dragons dwelt upon Argaia, but the children of dragons spoke of them with reverence, and taught the Humans to worships those draconic celestials as gods. It was the children of dragons who first taught Humans how to wield magic, though Humans proved to be less able practitioners.

The Celestial Struggle

The gods of the children of dragons had long been embroiled in a struggle for supremacy. In the many Realms Beyond that lay past Argaia, past the Celestial Veil, there was ever conflict over control for the Gates of Heaven. Numerous entities had vied for supremacy, but none were as strong as the Nine Dragons who held the gates.

But in that struggle, an old foe of the Dragons tried a new stratagem. The Phoenix, worshipped only by cults scattered across Argaia, fractured itself, taking nine distinct forms, each designed to counter one of the Nine Dragons. The war the Phoenix launched ended in less than the blink of an eye, yet to these celestial entities, it raged for what felt like an eternity.

In the end, the Dragons were laid low and sealed away. But the Phoenix’s victory was bittersweet, for though it had defeated its ancient enemy, fractured, it now lacked the power to open the Gates.

Decline of the Old Gods, Ascent of the New

Time can strength a bond or cause it to rot. The war in the Realms Beyond caused a shift in power on Argaia, and humans began to resent the children of dragons who had nothing left to offer. The

cults of the Phoenix began to flourish, and with that came tension.

No one knows when the first blow was struck, but the earliest histories describe the city-state of Blackcloud as hosting a "Great Liberation" in which the three children of dragons residing there were executed and burned. Some decried the killing, but a precedent had been set for those who craved violence or nursed resentment. A sweeping genocide followed before the year was out. Despite their mystical nature, the children of dragons had never craved power or dominance, and were unprepared to fight for survival. If any of their kind hid away in safety during that time, it is unknown.

The First Red Rains

More than a century after the genocide of the children of dragons, a great horror fell upon the continent of Highriver. A terrible storm struck, only the rain that fell was crimson and thick, looking every bit like blood. Fear and panic spread among the populace, and this fear proved well founded. The rain was as unwholesome as it appeared, and everything that it touched was sickened. And those living things that were exposed overlong began to change. The Red Rains swept across the planet, and wherever they went, horror followed. Monsters, some as small as cows, others looming over the tallest castle spires, stalked the land, slaughtering as they went. These were the first Chimera, looking like terrible amalgamations of people, plants, and animals. When the Red Rains ended, they left behind a world filled with unspeakable horrors.

Humanity fought back as best they could, but everything began to fail. A capital city might hold out against the Chimera threat, only for the destruction of its neighboring farmlands to cause its people to starve. And so Humans fled from their homes and did their best to seek refuge in the largest cities. Tall walls were raised higher, stout gates made stouter, and the ranks of armies swelled. But more were caught outside sealed city gates and their stories were lost to time. And oftentimes those in the cities found themselves in such need, they envied those who had died.

The Vermillion Council Reveals Itself

Decades passed and Humanity dwindled, seemingly caught in a downward spiral to extinction. The cities that survived were cut off from each other and none could say how the rest of the world fared. But on Godstar, in the university-city of Sunhold, the powerful Vermillion Council hatched a plan. Long had they trained a private army with secret designs of global conquest, but now their scheming had presented them with a new option. The Council's army had not been trained for rank-and-file combat, but rather assassination, hit-and-run strikes, and magical craft. These elite warriors were dubbed the amurai, and in them, the Vermillion Council saw a chance to not only strike at the Chimera, but in doing so, cement the council's place as leaders in a world they might shape as their own.

When the amurai were first revealed, they were hailed as heroes, and the Vermillion Council was praised for their stewardship of Humanity. Towering Chimera were slain as teams of amurai scaled them, and took them apart with surgical precision. But many of these warriors were lost, and the Vermillion Council began to realize their ambitions might prove too great. Still, they did much good, relieving sieges, partially reestablishing communication between cities, and more importantly, enabling themselves to recruit more candidates for amurai training.

The Phoenix Rises

Long years passed by, with the amurai being Humanity's lone hope against the Chimera. But in cities all across the world, a curious thing began to happen. Children were born with unusual powers that seemed to surpass what Humankind was thought capable of. Some were identified at birth, but many did not exhibit their full abilities until they were fully grown. As their strange powers began to manifest, so too did their reputations. It was Coal Roarkwin who was widely believed to have killed the first Chimera single-handedly, but others soon rose to replicate the feat. Their powers were hailed as divine intervention, and they soon became known as the Phoenixborn.

The Great Cleansing

Humanity's future seemed brighter, and the Phoenixborn banded together. They formed teams and together scoured Argaia, seeking out Chimera and slaughtering them with impunity. Some Phoenixborn fell, but they were few, and thus the threat of the Chimera was ended, seemingly forever. The horrors of the past seemed just that, in the past, and Humanity began to reclaim the world as its own. But the prophet Alibrimbor, himself a Phoenixborn, delivered a fateful prophecy:

> “Not breeding, not morality, nor purity of spirit shall deliver the children of the Phoenix from madness and bloodshed. They shall rage against each other, consume one another, and their hunger will not be assuaged until but a single remaining survivor arises as a true Phoenix, and mounting the throne of God, rules over this world, the next, and all the realms that lie in-between.”

Few paid heed, for such was the tumultuous joy felt by the salvation given to the world by the Phoenixborn.

The Collection of Ashes

When the Great Cleansing ended, the participating Phoenixborn returned to their respective homes in triumph. They were celebrated, made lords and ladies, kings and queens, and in some instances, even worshipped. But it did not take long for things to sour. The heroes of Humankind began to grow troubled as the power within them began to strain. Their dreams turned dark, and deep within them grew a gnawing hunger for violence. Though they had been compatriots, saw each other as siblings, and indeed, many had become the closest of friends, there bubbled within them a desire to slay one another. The supernatural power that had fractured itself and gifted its supremacy to Humans, now sought to be reunited. Many resisted these new urges, but such nobility was not shared by all the Phoenixborn.

Some were driven mad, while others were only too keen to seize what power they could. Others still had kept their powers secret during the Great Cleansing, and felt no kinship to the others they now desired to kill. And so terrific duels began to break out across the planet, as Phoenixborn sought one another out, battled, and reduced their competitors to ashen husks. Thus began the Collection of Ashes.

Revision #2
Created 2025-04-07 18:18:08 UTC by DubiousArchivist

Updated 2025-12-13 17:15:08 UTC by DubiousArchivist