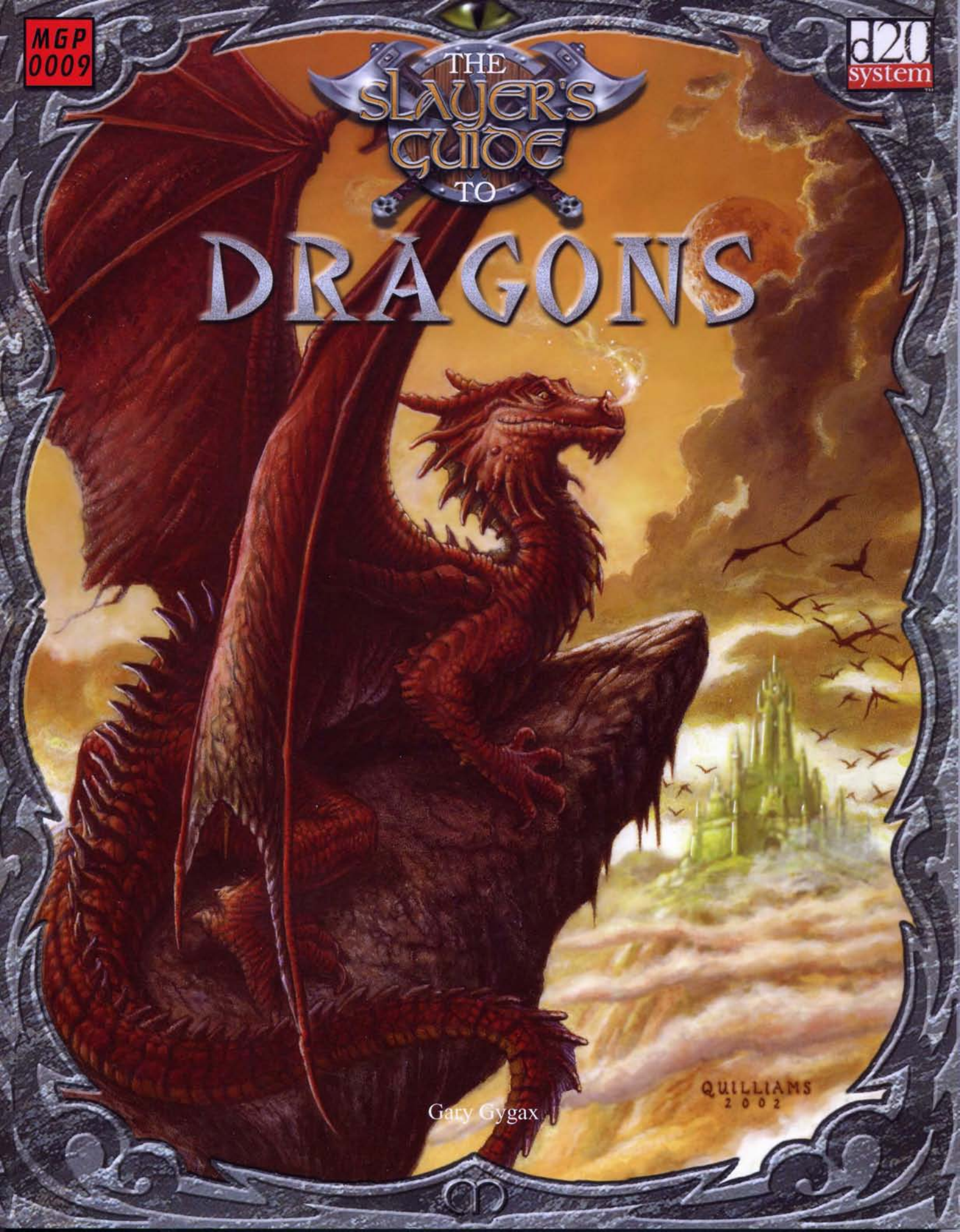


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THE
SLAYER'S
GUIDE
TO

DRAGONS



Gary Gygax

QUILLIAMS
2002

D RAGON
ANATOMICAL
STUDY



METALLIC/BRONZE

The Slayer's Guide To Dragons

By Gary Gygax & Jon Creffield

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PREFACE

Back in 1970 when I sat down to invent some new kinds of dragons, I never dreamed just where those innovations would lead in so relatively short a time, especially in terms of the lifespan of *dracos*. We had fought the dragon on the tabletop a number of times by then, and although the fiery breath was still feared, the presence of a dragon was a known quantity that could be planned for. To add a bit more excitement to things there needed to be some variety, something other than the stereotypical fire-breathing 'serpent'.

I had read about many dragons, and seen many depictions of them. The European illustrations of dragons usually showed a quadruped reptile with wings and a long tail and neck. As a matter of fact, what was probably the first dragon used on the table top was a converted dinosaur model. Taking a plastic model of a *stegosaurus* in a scale of around 25 mm to the foot, I made it into a fabulous monster. I cut the tail spikes off, and two became horns for the dragon's head while the tail proper was extended by wire and auto-body putty, and barbed too. The back plates of the dinosaur were left in place and, with the addition of cardboard wings, the general form of the fearsome red dragon was visible! With yellow, orange, red and indigo paint applied, a reasonable facsimile of the medieval illustrations of the dragon was ready for play for the next tabletop *Chainmail* fantasy miniatures game fought out in the name of the Lake Geneva Tactical Studies Rules Association on the 6' x 12' sand table in my basement. All well and good, but the thrill was waning.

Some 'historical' references spoke of dragons as 'serpents' with poisonous breath. There were mentions of dragons of green colour. Thus, it was a simple matter to add the green dragon that exhaled a cloud of poisonous gas, chlorine gas having a green colour. Oriental mythology included many colours of their particular form of dragons, and the *mahjongg* game has three sets of different tiles named dragons—green, red and white. Having played that game since I was a boy, how could I ignore the white dragon? So what form of breath weapon went with that colour? Snow and cold, of course. So another breed of dragonkind was created. After some contemplation, I added the blue colour, as that could well represent lightning, and there was a spell in the rules covering just such an electrical bolt. Acid breath seemed another reasonable form of attack, black represented that well, and thus the fifth kind of malign race of dragons was born. All five were based

on the most common European depiction of the 'fire drake', of course. This was because the base game they were devised for assumed a quasi-medieval environment, similar to that of the European fairy-tale paradigm.

That ended the near-complacency of would-be dragon slayers. No longer could a single set of defences and attacks apply when a dragon was known to be on the loose. Better still, one only glimpsed was still likely an enigma, for its colour, weapon and vulnerabilities could be any one of five different sorts.

To balance these evil drakes there soon came the noble gold dragon, based on the Oriental form of dragon. To bolster the benign ranks of dragons led by that creature, there followed the other 'Metallic' dragons—silver, bronze, copper and brass. Next came Tiamat the evil Chromatic queen, and Bahamut the good platinum king to command these two families of mighty creatures. Even all that was just the beginning. . .

Between the demands of players, and the fertile minds of those who answer their requirements, many new innovations came thereafter. Some remained for but a short time, others live on still to become part of the current lore. Today, dragons are greater and more potent than once they were, and who can say what the future holds in store? I can! All that will come to pass is unknown, but what is herein is no mystery to the perspicacious one who has purchased this work. While primarily expanding the current knowledge of these deadly monsters, this book brings valuable new lore to the savant, and brings to light details of heretofore unknown forms of the dreaded dragon. It is a dangerous world out there. You may find you need this tome of knowledge to survive.

Gary Gygax

Lake Geneva, Wisconsin
2002

The five adventurers were clearly visible against the broad, seemingly infinite horizon, yet they were in no hurry. Some things you did not rush. Ranged in a line atop a rolling dune, as one they stared upwards at the monolith of carmine rock. It rose majestically, and was still more than five leagues distant, yet its size was such that they felt they were already at its base.

'By the Great God's Beard! I've never seen the like of this, and I come from a land where every child is brought up on a cliff-face.'

The others looked across at Tostig, the lithe Northman. He wasn't the usual sort that came out of the snowy wastes looking for adventure-over-muscled brutes with horned helmets and a penchant for any liquid with a kick. No; Tostig was a *real* mountaineer, and for a second or so his awe unnerved the party.

'But you *can* climb it?' Marbeth enquired, her homely face belying a voracious appetite for treasure that put her companions to shame.

'Yes, witch. I can climb it,' the mountain man confirmed.

She bit back a retort. What Tostig did share with many of his breed was an inherent distrust of magic. This was no revelation, but being called a 'witch' still caused Marbeth a degree of discomfort. She could, of course, turn him into a ferret, but at this time it would be counter-productive.

'Then we go.' So spake Qaalid and, by virtue of this being his land, he had, at least temporarily, assumed the mantle of leadership.

'It really lives up there?' Asked Yessin, his nervous disposition clear in his tone. They all knew the answer, yet a few seconds extra delay did not seem a bad thing.

'The blue devil, when it bothers to awaken, demands a toll of all who pass down the Great Silk Road,' confirmed Qaalid, telling them nothing they did not know.

'Why is it that *every* desert land seems to have a Silk Road somewhere inside its borders?' The tone of self-perceived superiority in Lyssus, the elf's, voice, combined with the increased tension brought on by the mountain's vicinity, caused Qaalid to react more hastily than he might otherwise have done. Muttering a curse at the elf, he spurred on his rangy desert steed, kicking up sand as he headed for their goal. Looking about, the elf shrugged, receiving a couple of annoyed looks as, one by one, the party trailed off after the nomad.

The eyes that watched them from the flat roof of the plateau saw only passing trade. They had watched this road for a length of time inestimable to the minds of those upon whom it preyed, yet by the standards of dragons it was not that old. It watched the party follow the meandering tack of the trade route, yet it was clear that these were no merchants. They had no carts laden with plunder to be purloined, nor pack animals bearing riches to be seized. Perhaps they were just passing through.

The creature decided to wait and see. It had been many moons since any had tried to enter its lair, and in many ways the dragon had become complacent. True, its 'friends' still inhabited the lower chambers in plentiful numbers, and it was they who in most cases did the dragon's work for it.

Yes, watching would, as ever, be best.

Finally, the party arrived at the base of the cliff-face and the creature knew that they had come for him. Equipped with ropes and pitons, they left their horses and began the treacherous climb. If they were any good they would find the crease in the face which opened into the wide tunnel where the dragon's 'friends' lived. It was a considerable irony to the dragon that the more dangerous adversaries had the misfortune to encounter the greatest danger.

Not that the arrangement didn't work well...

INTRODUCTION

What creature has more magnificence, more savage ferocity and more sheer power than the dragon? The great wyrms stand tall as the ultimate challenge an adventurer may face. Rare is the player who does not dream of besting one of these terrible creatures, of plundering its hoard and basking in the glorious reputation enjoyed by a dragon slayer.

In our own world the dragon has two aspects: the western view of the vicious serpent, a symbol of all that is evil, hellish and bestial, ably represented by the Chromatic dragons. The other aspect is that of the east; here dragons are regarded as divine beings, wise and beneficial. The Metallic dragons echo this latter view.

It is conjectured by some that the mythical dragon reflects nature in all its beauty and savage power. By and large, they say, westerners view the natural forces of the world as inimical agencies that need to be bested – the world must be moulded to the will of man. In the east the natural order is respected and man tries to attune himself to it; a greater reverence is felt towards the forces of the world. Perhaps this does explain the opposing views of dragons, but are men from East and West really so different in their outlook?

All such speculations aside, we turn to the dragons of the countless fantasy worlds spinning in the multiverse. Here an explanation for man's differing attitudes towards dragons is easily found: some are wise, sagacious and good while others are bad; very, very, *very* bad!

THE SLAYER'S GUIDES

This series of supplements, designed for use in all fantasy-based d20 games systems, takes an exhaustive look at specific monster races, detailing their beliefs, society and methods of warfare. While other books in the series have dealt with races often all but ignored by Games Masters, this book concentrates on the best known monster of all - the dragon.

But familiarity can breed contempt; any seasoned player of fantasy role-playing games has faced numerous dragons. Sad to say some regard them as canon fodder despite all their ferocious power. There

are players who think of a dragon's hoard as money in the bank, who mentally spend the gold before the wyrm who guards it is even dead. With a well-practised combination of spells and attacks the players of some high level characters think they can best even the mightiest dragon. Well, such players are about to learn that their hubris is ill-founded. Dragons do not lie about all day waiting to be killed by greedy adventurers.

Recently someone asked about the need for this work. 'After all, hasn't everything that needs to be said about dragons already been said? How different are dragons from those first introduced to fantasy role-playing games nearly 30 years ago? Sure, they are a bit stronger now, but...' Just in case *you* are thinking along those lines, keep reading, because you are in for some surprises. The drakes are fierce, complex and varied monsters, and much of their nature is still unknown.

DRAGONS – THE ULTIMATE FOE

Whether you are a Games Master seeking to add more depth to the dragons of your campaign or a player hoping to learn the secrets of the dragon slayer, we invite you to join us on a journey into the hidden world of the wyrm. Along the way we will learn the secrets of these tremendous beasts, their arcane sorceries, their mating habits, methods of warfare and more. Within these pages new types of dragon are revealed for the first time and numerous lairs are described. All this is but a sample of the occult facts we will learn as we dig into this newly-discovered trove of dragon lore.



THE PHYSIOLOGY OF DRAGONKIND

Dragons, by their very nature, are supernatural beings. Any attempt to analyse their anatomy and life processes in a 'scientific' way is doomed to failure. In their attempts to rationalise the dragons, to 'explain' their development and powers, certain scholars have advanced ludicrous theories. The great red dragon, they claim, is swollen with volatile hydrogen gasses, stored in sacks along its mighty flanks; it is these gasses, they say, that give the beast the power of flight and allow it to let out streams of flames from its toothy maw. Surely such self-proclaimed savants have never seen a red dragon swoop down upon its prey; have not the broad and powerful wings of such creatures more than enough strength to fly? Have these scholars not seen the great muscles that bunch in corded knots beneath the wings? Indeed they have not! They make their assumptions based on ancient drawings in mouldering texts. And what explanation do they offer for the white dragons that breathe freezing frost, or the forest-dwelling green dragons and their poisonous fumes? None! Such creatures do not fit well into their theories.

So, let us admit at once that dragons are in every way beyond the ken of mortal science. Let us be cautious as we begin our study of them and advance as facts only those things that can be reasonably known.

There is a place in Arabia, situated very near the city of Buto, to which I went, on hearing of some winged serpents; and when I arrived there, I saw bones and spines of serpents, in such quantities as it would be impossible to describe. The form of the serpent is like that of a water snake; but he has wings without feathers, and as like as possible to the wings of a bat.

Herodotus, *Historiae* (500 BC)

FEARSOME FROM HEAD TO TAIL

Imagine if you will that you are deep below the ground in a lightless world exploring the caverns that riddle the deep places where humans seldom tread. As you move near to a huge shadowy passage, a form breaks from

the deeper dark and the features of a colossal reptilian head appear before you. This great head is so close that you feel the beast's breath against your cheek, hear all too clearly its deep intake of breath as it prepares to unleash flame, frost, lightning, acid or gas upon you. In the moments before you crisped, froze, were electrocuted, turned to bubbling ooze or poisoned, your attention would be drawn to the dragon's many-toothed mouth, the armour-like scales and horn which shielded its head, and its hate-filled malevolent eyes. You would have no more time to contemplate those eyes, for in a moment you would be dead, nor would you look long upon the snout, tongue or ears, so let us take the time to study them now, for the dragon's senses are its best defence, and as potent as its lethal breath.

A dragon's eye-sight is sharper than a man's. By the light of day a flying wyrm can note within a three-mile area moving creatures on the ground below it from a height of one mile! At night their vision is even better; a mage making use of a *fly* spell might be noted by a dragon some four miles away – of course the dragon would not know what it was that it saw flying, only that some potential intruder, or meal, was soaring through its domain.

By daylight a dragon would not only have seen movement but be able to determine whether the creature perceived was humanoid or animal from a range of half a mile, whilst by night such indications would be apparent at a range of one mile. Note that beings considerably larger than a man might be seen at double this range, while a group of halflings, or other small beings, might go unnoticed until the dragon had reduced the range by half. Poor weather, low lying cloud and dense ground cover will limit such vision of course but, in general, unless a party of adventurers is beneath a canopy of leaves or hidden by magic, a dragon will see them long before they see it.

Even in the unlit subterranean world the dragon's eyesight functions well; it has darkvision, and a newly hatched wyrmling sees clearly to a range of 100 feet while a great wyrm sees a staggering 400 yards without any light at all.

No less worthy of attention is the dragon's sharp sense of smell; it is a little-known fact that lingual receptors line a dragon's tongue allowing it to 'taste' the air in much the same way as a snake. Some species also have small palps in or around their mouths that further enhance this ability. It is no mere coincidence that a suspicious dragon is apt to swish its tail from side to side; receptors in the underside of that appendage are sensitive to vibration, even the faintest of steps. This





combination of smell, taste, and sensitivity to vibration combine to give the dragon a form of *telaesthesia*, a sixth sense if you will. Thus it is that even invisible adventurers are likely to become a tasty morsel for a dragon.

Having considered those finely attuned senses that make a dragon so hard to surprise, let us examine its next line of defence, the scaly hide and horn-like plates that so thoroughly shield it. Upon hatching, a wyrmling's scales are as tough as chain-mail armour; as it ages, those scales thicken and harden: In some species they grow in breadth too forming great plates

over vulnerable areas; while around the head layers of horn form, or large-head plates grow, so that long before adulthood they are better protected than a knight in full armour. Would-be dragon slayers should note that just as a human's armour is shaped and angled to deflect blows, so too is the natural armour of a dragon; many a warrior has seen his arrows bounce harmlessly from a dragon's scales or had the edge of his axe skate along them.

Adventurers with a knowledge of dragonlore can sometimes tell the age of a dragon by looking carefully at its scales, for not only does the protective value of a wyrm's scales change as it ages but so too does their hue. Coupled with a study of the beast's size, this can give the knowledgeable adventurer a good indication of the age, and thus the power, of the dragon they have encountered. Such identification cannot be made at a range beyond 200 yards; require that the player character succeed in a Knowledge (dragonlore) check against a DC of 30 if the beast is seen from a distance of 100 to 200 yards, a DC of 20 at 30 to 100 yards, and a DC of only 15 if the dragon is inspected from 30 yards or closer.

A dragon's fighting prowess is well known. As previously noted, they are supernatural creatures, so no explanation is offered here for the breath weapons that make them so widely feared. Pseudoscientific theories, however imaginative, detract from the truly magical and mysterious nature of the dragon. Let the inquisitive ask one of the great wyrms if they might look down their throat and make a full examination; I'm sure the dragon will be only too glad to oblige... indeed a full tour of the dragons innards will likely be in the offing!

The dragon's claws and bite make it deadly enough, as does its hefty tail. The chapter dealing with Methods of Warfare (p68) takes a close look at the tactics employed by dragons to bring their lethal combination of arms to bear.

The whole of India is girt with dragons of enormous size; for not only the marshes are full of them, but the mountains as well, and there is not a single ridge without one. Now the marsh kind are sluggish in their habits and are thirty cubits long, and they have no crest standing up on their heads, but in this respect resemble the she-dragons. Their backs however are very black, with fewer scales on them than the other kinds; and Homer has described them with deeper insight than have most poets, for he says that the dragon that lived hard by the spring in Aulis had a tawny back; but other poets declare that the congener of this one in the grove of Nemea also had a crest, a feature which we could not verify in regard to the marsh dragons.

Philostratus, The Life of Apollonius of Tyana (220 AD)

And the dragons along the foothills and the mountain crests make their way into the plains after their quarry, and prey upon all the creatures in the marshes; for indeed they reach an extreme length, and move faster than the swiftest rivers, so that nothing escapes them. These actually have a crest, of moderate extent and height when they are young; but as they reach their full size, it grows with them and extends to a considerable height, at which time also they turn red and get serrated backs. This kind also have beards, and lift their necks on high, while their scales glitter like silver; and the pupils of their eyes consist of a fiery stone, and they say that this has an uncanny power for many secret purposes.

Philostratus, *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana* (220 AD)

THE ORIGINS OF DRAGONKIND

Those who see some kinship between the 'terrible lizards', dinosaurs still found to this day in the remote parts of the world, and dragons are surely mistaken. Even in works otherwise noted for their sagacity, this incredible relationship has been put forward. Where, pray tell, are the herbivorous dragons? What of bipedal dragons then? Where are the dinosaurs that exhibit supernatural powers? Those that in some way suppose that dragons evolved from dinosaurs are ignorant of the incredibly long, plane-spanning history of the dragon. It is also often falsely claimed that dragons are a form of lizard (*lepidosaur*) or snake (*ophidian*). While it is obviously true that a dragon is reptilian in appearance it should be noted that dracos are not cold blooded creatures; how could they survive in the subterranean depths or the wastes of the frozen north if they were?

*When in the height heaven was not named,
And the earth beneath did not yet bear a name,
And the primeval Apsu, who begat them,
And chaos, Tiamat, the mother of them both
Their waters were mingled together,
And no field was formed, no marsh was to be seen;
When of the gods none had been called into being,
And none bore a name, and no destinies were
ordained;
Then were created the monster-serpents,
Sharp of tooth, and merciless of fang;
With poison, instead of blood, she filled their bodies.
Fierce monster-vipers she clothed with terror,
With splendour she decked them, she made them of lofty
stature.
Whoever beheld them, terror overcame him,
Their bodies reared up and none could withstand their
attack.*

(Condensed from the *Enuma Elish*, the Epic of Creation, as written on the Seven Tablets of Creation)

Can anyone seriously argue that the fiery red dragon is a cold-blooded creature? Some sages have put forward the theory that dragons are homoiothermic reptiles, warm-blooded lizards in other words, but this too is mistaken; despite superficial resemblance to the dinosaurs and the reptiles, the dragon has no evolutionary connection to either. The dragons stand alone, a breed apart.

It is to the myths and legends of infant mankind we must look to learn a little of the wyrm's origins:

Some readers might ask who is this Tiamat? Again let us allow the ancient myths to speak:

*The cities sighed,
Men uttered lamentation,
For their lamentation there was none to help,
For their grief there was none to take them by the hand.
Who was the dragon?
Tiamat was the dragon!*

(From archaic Assyro-Babylonian lore.)

Tiamat dwells on the ninth plane of hell. She spawned the Chromatic dragons because of her hatred of all things benign. Just as she is cruel and evil so are they. It is said by some that Tiamat once occupied a position high amongst the gods but objected to the act of creation. She had plans for the primordial chaos but saw in the coming of the infinite worlds, and particularly in the coming of man, an act that would decrease her power. She rebelled and sought to destroy the young gods, to impose her will upon the multiverse. Defeated, she was confined to hell and from that terrible place she plots to this day to undo the work of the gods, to return the multiverse to a state of disorder so that she might then reform and reorder the infinite worlds in her image.

But what of the good gold and silver dragons and the rest of the sagacious Metallic wyrms? It is said that a being called Bahamut is their king and that he dwells in a palatial fortress hidden on a secret plane beyond the

east wind. Did Bahamut create the Metallic dragons? Most likely this is so, he or a greater god who sought to check Tiamat's evil.

Now the dragons of the mountains have scales of a golden colour, and in length excel those of the plain, and they have bushy beards, which also are of a golden hue; and their eyebrows are more prominent than those of the plain, and their eye is sunk deep under the eyebrow, and emits a terrible and ruthless glance. And they give off a noise like the clashing of brass whenever they are burrowing under the earth, and from their crests, which are all fiery red there flashes a fire brighter than a torch.

Philostratus, The Life of Apollonius of Tyana (220 AD)

In truth, the origin of dragonkind is to be found in a time before man, a time of titanic struggles when the gods themselves were new-born. In this period of strife and discord, half hinted at in the writings of past eras, when elder things that called themselves gods contested with the progenitors of creation, dragons came into being. Indeed it is likely, at the time of their spawning, the material plane had still mixed with it parts of the matter of those other planes that are now separate from our own mundane one.

In texts discovered in long abandoned temples, where ghostly pictures of perverse *things* cling to crumbling walls, there are allusions to a time when saurian beings walked the earth in the company of creatures seemingly alien to the natural order of life. It is in that far off time when the elder elemental gods still ruled that dragons came into the world. Perhaps those ancient texts tell more, but it is not healthy to peruse them too long—the knowledge revealed therein is apt to unhinge the minds of all but the most wicked of men.

INTO THE MIND OF THE DRAGON

What thoughts lie behind the molten eyes of a red dragon? Upon what does a brass dragon ponder as it lies upon its heap of gold? These are difficult questions to answer; so far beyond the intellect of man are the great wyrms, whose intelligence and wisdom rival that of the gods, that it is vanity itself for a mortal to claim much knowledge of their thoughts.

Let us consider certain things that can be known.

One desire above all others motivates a dragon, greater than the need for food, shelter or the instinct for



reproduction. Beyond all these the dragon requires wealth.

Why are dragons so desirous of wealth? What drives them to covet the work of man, dwarf and elf? This mystery perplexed the ancient chroniclers as much as it does the sages of today. The Saxon poet telling of the dragon who killed Beowulf speaks truthfully when he says:

He must seek a hoard in the earth, where, old in winters, he will guard heathen gold, though he gains nothing from it.

The lust a dragon feels for wealth, the pride it takes in its hoard, and the beauty it sees in the gems and worked gold that surround it, are beyond understanding. One might compare them to a wealthy sultan sat on an emerald-encrusted cushion in a palace of ivory and gold who, although richer than any of his subjects, still craves for more.

Perhaps this yearning for treasure is a result of the dragon's heritage. Tiamat sought possession of all the multiverse to shape it as she willed and, when thwarted in this ambition she retired in bitterness to the hells where she seethes at being deprived of what was

'rightfully' hers and coveted the creation she wanted to prevent. Her progeny have inherited this unreasoning cupidity; it has become their *raison d'être*.

Even the noble Metallic dragons are prone to gold-lust. Indeed it is in the insatiable demand for riches that intellectual kinship between the Metallic and Chromatic wyrms shows clearly. If offered a sizeable quantity of treasure, at least 1,000 gp per age category, a Metallic dragon must succeed in a Will saving throw with a DC of 15 or agree to a reasonable request put to them, providing that request does not seriously endanger their life or possessions or cost them much time or effort. If the one offering them the gold is crafty and clever, and offers a sum equal to 1,000 gp per Hit Die of the wyrm, it is possible to persuade a Metallic dragon to act in a way otherwise contrary to their alignment. Of course the wily negotiator must beat the dragon's Sense Motive check with an opposed check using both his Bluff and Diplomacy skills for this to occur. Still, it can happen...

Note that the wise gold dragons are something of an exception; they will react aggressively if any offer of treasure appears to be a bribe; great caution, cunning and subtlety are required if one hopes to buy their favour.

Adventurers who join forces with a Metallic dragon on some quest against evil must be sure to give the lion's share of any wealth garnered to the good-natured wyrm else, should it fail a Will save as detailed above, it will be overcome by desire for the assembled treasure and will seek to claim it all, possibly at the risk of life to those who stand between dragon and treasure.

While much has been made herein of the dragon's ferocity and power, little has been said of its courage. It cannot be thought that the wyrms are timid milksops; they do not shy away from a fight, indeed they seek battle, but deep within their scaly breasts is a strong sense of self-preservation, a well hidden cowardly streak if you will, and it is this fact that allows them to be subdued (see p91). Even the most ancient of drakes

desires in its heart to live for yet more centuries, and so the thought comes to the beast's mind, *better a living subordinate than a dead monarch...*

Another weakness of the dragon is its great ego. Dracos is a vain creature. The less intelligent breeds, particularly young white and black wyrms, are often moved by their overweening pride to attack creatures beyond their measure if they perceive them as rivals. Even the otherwise intelligent red dragon is prone to making snap judgements over whether or not to attack a foe and generally believes itself to be superior to all save those that appear exceptionally strong.

It is well known that dragons love to be flattered. An adventurer skilled with words, with a honeyed tongue, can buy himself time if he is quick-witted enough. Praise must be heaped upon the dragon, reference made to its mighty deeds, its place in history, its noble aspect and the fear it inspires in its enemies must be relayed, as must the wonder and awe in which the world views it. Of course to make this effective, the one pretending to be so in awe of the beast must know its name, speak it often and with flowery phrases. More often than not the dragon knows these words to be mere smooth talk, an obsequiousness designed to spare the speaker from its wrath, but still the dragon adores to listen to such flattery, for in its heart it craves such adulation. In order to forestall a dragon's attack a player character must succeed in a Bluff or Diplomacy check at a DC of 15 plus the dragon's age category. If this roll also beats the dragon's Sense Motive roll, the wyrm will gladly listen to such talk for 4d10 minutes before tiring of it and devouring the speaker. The desperate adventurer has one more chance of avoiding death, but this time the Bluff or Diplomacy check is made at a DC of 30 plus the dragon's age category; if it succeeds the dragon will listen for a further 1d6 hours before sending the fortuitous player character on his way, possibly giving him a gift from its trove, if the Games Master rules that the situation was role-played well.

If the initial roll was less than the wyrm's Sense Motive check then the dragon listens for but 1d3

Scylla pounced down suddenly upon us and snatched up my six best men. I was looking at once after both ship and men, and in a moment I saw their hands and feet ever so high above me, struggling in the air as Scylla was carrying them off, and I heard them call out my name in one last despairing cry. As a fisherman, seated, spear in hand, upon some jutting rock throws bait into the water to deceive the poor little fishes, and spears them with the ox's horn with which his spear is shod, throwing them gasping on to the land as he catches them one by one- even so did Scylla land these panting creatures on her rock and munch them up at the mouth of her den, while they screamed and stretched out their hands to me in their mortal agony. This was the most sickening sight that I saw throughout all my voyages.

The Odyssey (Homer)

minutes before bringing the conversation to an untimely end. Naturally all such efforts at flattery are futile if the dragon detects cohorts of the speaker who are lurking nearby or sneaking up on it to assail its majesty or pilfer its wealth!

IN THE BELLY OF THE WYRM

Chromatic Dragons: Dragons eat many kinds of flesh, but their favourite food is people. Keep this in mind when parleying with a wurm; the Chromatic dragon regards you as a tasty treat, its mouth waters as it contemplates crunching your bones, drinking your blood and savouring your flesh.

When role-playing the part of a Chromatic dragon, Games Masters are urged to view the situation in that light. Reason thus: Are the party offering wealth and praise to the majestic beast? No? Then the dragon wants to eat them. Indeed, it wants to eat them even if they *are* offering it riches and flattery, it is merely that the prospect of treasure distracts it from that purpose for a while. Dismiss from your mind all images of

lofty knights, potent wizards, handsome rogues or resolute clerics. Think rather of roast chickens, succulent pork chops and chocolate cake—that is how the dragon looks upon a bold party of adventurers!

Eating sentient beings is a positive pleasure to an evil dragon. It prefers meals that plead, beg and scream; their anguish is a source of much delight. The dragon feels superior to the creatures it eats; when it devours a man, dwarf, halfling or elf, the very act confirms to the dragon that it is more powerful than they are. Furthermore, the dragon finds the flesh of men and their demi-human allies sweeter and more tender than the meat of any animal it might hunt. Perhaps Tiamat deliberately bred such appetites into her spawn so they would be driven to spread woe in the worlds of man. To consume something is to possess it utterly, and so in a perverse way Tiamat's children gain possession of creation by devouring it.

Metallic Dragons: That the Metallic dragons gain nourishment from curious sources is well known; morning dew, pearls and metal ore are said to be nutritious for some breeds of Metallic wurm. Likewise, the fact that the omnivorous brass dragons need consume but a small amount of food, that bronze dragons eat the flora of the sea, sharks and other fish, while copper dragons delight in the taste of giant scorpions and poisonous things, is firmly established. But it should not be thought that this is all that the Metallic dragons eat; all are hunters, and the copper dragons particularly enjoy such sport. Given the opportunity to seize a roving deer or devour some wild kine, they will do so. It may come as a shock to some readers to learn that these virtuous dragons, even the mighty gold wyrms, will also devour the bodies of their enemies. They do not eat fallen Chromatic dragons out of respect, nor do they consume the corpses of noisome humanoids, but if their foe was a man they will eat him once the battle is done. Silver dragons, which are fond of humankind's company and enjoy man's food, do not feast on fallen humans, but this is done out of politeness, not instinct.



Then there suddenly appeared to her in the corner of the prison a marvellous dragon: from his nostrils proceeded smoke and fire, and he uttered a strong, rough voice, and fire from his mouth gave light to all the prison. And the dragon came at her with his mouth wide open, and swallowed her. But the sign of the cross which she put upon her grew in the mouth of the dragon, and became greater and greater until it cleaved him into two pieces.

From the legend of St. Barbara

DRACOS INVICTUS

As a dragon ages and grows it spends more and more time resting on its hoard of treasure, its metabolism gradually slowing so it need rarely eat. This is a boon to the beast, for it hates to leave its precious hoard unguarded. At length, after centuries of a half wakeful slumber, the dragon slips into a state close to suspended animation, a form of hibernation if you will, and in this condition it can sleep for millennia. Unless something or someone disturbs it...

While the ages pass, and the dragon dreams, so too does it grow. While most scholars have considered the Great Wyrms to be the oldest and most powerful of dragonkind, this is merely because the Dracos Invicti have slept for so long that their caste is considered legendary. Beware! The waking of one of these beasts is an event that shakes kingdoms.

Hereafter we present a new age category for each of the Chromatic and Metallic wyrms. This information should be read in conjunction with the dragon descriptions found in *Core Rulebook III*.

A note regarding caster levels; some of the invicti dragons are able to cast spells at a level beyond 20. When calculating range, area of effect, etc. for spells these dragons cast, use this high level. If your group has developed, or purchased, rules that allow spell casters to progress beyond level 20 then allow a Dracos Invictus the same spell casting bonuses as accrue to such potent player characters.

Age Category	Age (Years)
13 Dracos Invictus	1,401+

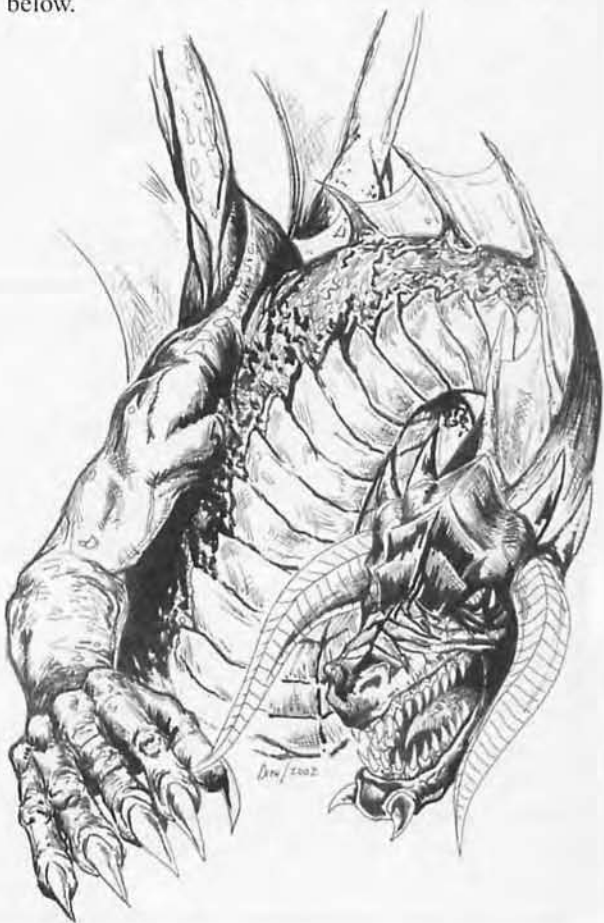
Command dragon (Ex): Lesser dragons of the same sub-species as the Dracos Invictus must, upon their first meeting, make Will saving throws (DC equal to the Dracos Invictus' frightful presence) or become willing servants of this mighty member of their group.

Summon Storm of Wrath (Su): Once per day, by roaring and beating its wings, the dragon can call up mighty gusts of wind in a 300-yard diameter circle centred upon itself—provided it is above ground at the time. The wind blast lasts for but a single round and causes no harm to the dragon but all other creatures of less than gargantuan size suffer the wind effects detailed in *Core Rulebook II* for a windstorm unless they make Fortitude saves (DC18). Ranged attacks are impossible on the round the wind blast strikes, torches

are extinguished (as may lanterns 75% of the time), and Listen checks are made at a -8 penalty. Other devastating effects occur at the coming of the mighty gust; these are detailed below in the description of each invictus dragon.

Swallow Whole (Ex): When making bite attacks the Dracos Invictus is considered to have the improved grab and swallow whole special attacks (see *Core Rulebook III*). It can swallow creatures of huge size or lower. Each round those swallowed take 3d6+6 points of crushing damage and furthermore must make Fortitude saves as if exposed to the dragon's breath weapon or suffer additional damage accordingly. The interior of the dracos has an armour class of 25; if 75 or more points of damage are dealt to its innards a reflex action causes all those trapped within to be coughed out, taking 4d10 points of buffeting and falling damage in the process.

Death Throes (Ex): If slain, the Dracos Invictus convulses and thrashes and its blood is harmful as specified in the individual descriptions below. All characters in a space threatened by the wyrm must make Reflex saving throws or take 10d6 crushing damage from the dragon's flailing tail, writhing neck and shuddering limbs. Fortitude saves are also required for other effects during the death throes, as detailed below.



DRACOS INVICTUS

Curse (Su): In the round following its death throes the invictus can pronounce a curse upon its slayers. The exact nature of the curse is left to the wicked ingenuity of each Games Master. Typical curses might be that the dragon's treasure will bring doom to its possessors, that a character will die at the hand of his son, that the

killers will be condemned to slay each other and so on. There is no saving throw against this curse and the Games Master is encouraged to bend the course of the campaign so that it comes near fulfillment. The party might mitigate their doom by the performance of a quest or by disposing of the treasure; once again this is left in the hands of the Games Master.

And yet again he said, 'Regin, my brother, has brought about my end, and it gladdens my heart that thine too he bringeth about; for thus will things be according to his will.'

And once again he spake, 'A countenance of terror I bore up before all folk, after that I brooded over the heritage of my brother, and on every side did I spout out poison, so that none durst come anigh me, and of no weapon was I adrad, nor ever had I so many men before me, as that I deemed myself not stronger than all; for all men were sore afeard of me.'

Sigurd answered and said, 'Few may have victory by means of that same countenance of terror, for whoso comes amongst many shall one day find that no one man is by so far the mightiest of all.'

Then says Fafnir, 'Such counsel I give thee, that thou take thy horse and ride away at thy speediest, for oftentimes it fails out so, that he who gets a death-wound avenges himself none the less.'

Sigurd answered, 'Such as thy redes are I will nowise do after them; nay, I will ride now to thy lair and take to me that great treasure of thy kin.'

'Ride there then,' said Fafnir, 'and thou shalt find gold enow to suffice thee for all thy life-days; yet shall that gold be thy bane, and the bane of every one soever who owns it.'

Then up stood Sigurd, and said, 'Home would I ride and lose all that wealth, if I deemed that by the losing thereof I should never die; but every brave and true man will fain have his hand on wealth till that last day that thou, Fafnir, wallow in the death-pain til Death and Hell have thee.'

And therewithal Fafnir died.

Volsunga Saga, Of the Slaying of the Worm Fafnir

BLACK DRACOS INVICTUS

Challenge Rating: 26

Advancement: 42+ HD

Age	Size	Hit Dice (hp)	AC	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Breath Weapon (DC)	Fear DC	SR
Dracos	C	41d12+410	42 (-8 size,	+48	+32	+22	+29	27d4 (40)	37	32
Invictus		(676 hp)	+40 natural)							
Age	Speed		Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha		
Dracos	60 ft., fly 250 ft. (clumsy),		41	10	31	24	25	24		
Invictus	swim 60 ft.									

Special Abilities: Damage reduction 25/+4, command dragon, storm of wrath, swallow whole, death throes, curse

Caster Level: 19th.

Summon Storm of Wrath (Su): No harm is caused to the dragon but all other creatures suffer 14d4 points of damage from acidic rain that pours down in the effected area, Fortitude saves for half damage (DC 44).

Death Throes (Ex): Acidic blood sprays into all threatened areas causing 10d4 points of damage to all that fail a Reflex save (DC 30).

BLUE DRACOS INVICTUS

Challenge Rating: 29

Advancement: 44+ HD

Age	Size	Hit Dice (hp)	AC	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Breath Weapon (DC)	Fear DC	SR
Dracos C		43d12+430	44 (-8 size,	+51	+33	+23	+31	28d8 (41)	39	35
Invictus		(709 hp)	+42 natural)							

Age	Speed	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
Dracos	40 ft., fly 250 ft. (clumsy),	43	10	31	26	27	26
Invictus	burrow 20 ft.						

Special Abilities: Damage reduction 25/+4, command dragon, storm of wrath, swallow whole, death throes, curse.
Caster Level: 21st.

Summon Storm of Wrath (Su): No harm is caused to the dragon but all other creatures failing a Reflex saving throw (DC 45) are struck by a lightning bolt causing 14d8 points of damage.

Death Throes (Ex): Venomous blood sprays into all threatened areas, those exposed must make a Reflex save (DC 30) or be splashed by it and take initially 3d6 points of Strength damage. Secondary damage is a further 2d6 points of Strength loss (Fortitude save at DC 30 to mitigate the venom's effect).

GREEN DRACOS INVICTUS

Challenge Rating: 28

Advancement: 43+ HD

Age	Size	Hit Dice (hp)	AC	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Breath Weapon (DC)	Fear DC	SR
Dracos C		42d12+420	43 (-8 size,	+50	+33	+23	+31	28d6 (41)	39	34
Invictus		(693 hp)	+41 natural)							

Age	Speed	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
Dracos	40 ft., fly 250 ft. (clumsy),	43	10	31	26	27	26
Invictus	swim 40 ft.						

Special Abilities: Damage reduction 25/+4, command dragon, storm of wrath, swallow whole, death throes, curse.
Caster Level: 21st.

Summon Storm of Wrath (Su): No harm is caused to the dragon but all other creatures are at risk as the area of effect is filled with wind-blown, billowing clouds of poisonous vapour causing 14d6 points of damage (Fortitude saving throw at DC 45 for half damage).

Death Throes (Ex): Venomous blood sprays and poisonous fumes erupt into all threatened areas; those exposed must make a Reflex save (DC 30) or be splashed by it and take 14d6 points of damage.

Leading the party, Tostig slowly made his way up what, to the untrained eye, was a sheer surface. Yet the Northman knew that in reality nothing was completely flat. There were always places to put a hand or foot. However, the delay was in making sure that his inexperienced companions remained with him.

For the last half-hour or so, he had imperceptibly been angling his climb to the right, his attention drawn time and again to a shadow on the rock face which, to a layman, looked no more than a discoloration. There was something about it though...

RED DRACOS INVICTUS

Challenge Rating: 30

Advancement: 45+ HD

Age	Size	Hit Dice (hp)	AC	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Breath Weapon (DC)	Fear DC	SR
Dracos	C	44d12+528	45 (-8 size,	+55	+36	+24	+34	29d10 (44)	42	36
Invictus		(814 hp)	+43 natural)							

Age	Speed	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
Dracos	40 ft., fly 250 ft. (clumsy),	49	10	35	30	31	30
Invictus							

Special Abilities: Damage reduction 25/+4, command dragon, storm of wrath, swallow whole, death throes, curse.
Caster Level: 23rd.

Summon Storm of Wrath (Su): The area of effect is filled with a firestorm causing 14d10 points of damage (Fortitude saving throw at DC 48 for half damage). Naturally no harm is caused to the dragon.

Death Throes (Ex): Phosphorescent fiery blood sprays into all threatened areas; those exposed must make a Reflex save (DC 30) or be splashed by it and take 14d10 points of damage.

WHITE DRACOS INVICTUS

Challenge Rating: 25

Advancement: 41+ HD

Age	Size	Hit Dice (hp)	AC	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Breath Weapon (DC)	Fear DC	SR
Dracos	C	40d12+528	41 (-8 size,	+47	+32	+22	+28	26d6 (40)	36	31
Invictus		(814 hp)	+39 natural)							

Age	Speed	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
Dracos	60 ft., fly 250 ft. (clumsy),	41	10	31	22	23	22
Invictus	swim 60 ft.						

Special Abilities: Damage reduction 25/+4, command dragon, storm of wrath, swallow whole, death throes, curse.
Caster Level: 17th.

Summon Storm of Wrath (Su): Snow and freezing frost fill the area of effect causing no harm to the dragon but delivering 8d6 points of cold damage (Fortitude saving throw at DC 44 for half damage) to all other creatures.

Death Throes (Ex): Sprays of icy blood spurt into all threatened areas; those exposed must make a Reflex save (DC 30) or be splashed by it and take 8d6 points of cold damage.

The sounds of ragged panting below him told the mountaineer that the rest of the party was beginning to suffer. He toyed with keeping the information to himself, letting the flat-landers endure a bit longer in ignorance, but he could not. He leaned out, unperturbed by the inherent danger of the act in the current circumstances. 'Not so long to go now,' he shouted, making sure his voice carried all the way down to Qaalid, who brought up the rear. They all looked up at the daredevil, seeing him point at nothing.

'What...is...it?' asked Marbeth, sweat dripping down her face. She wasn't designed for this sort of activity. The most climbing she normally encountered was negotiating the steps in a musty library.

'A fissure in the wall. It means that there's a passage behind it. That's how we get in, like a back door.'

'How...can...you...be...sure?'

BRASS DRACOS INVICTUS

Challenge Rating: 26

Advancement: 43+ HD

Age	Size	Hit Dice (hp)	AC	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Breath Weapon (DC)	Fear DC	SR
Dracos	C	42d12+420	42 (-8 size,	+49	+33	+23	+30	28d6 (41)	38	34
Invictus		(693)	+40 natural)							

Age	Speed	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
Dracos	60 ft., fly 250 ft. (clumsy),	41	10	31	24	25	24
Invictus	burrow 30 ft.						

Special Abilities: Damage reduction 25/+4, command dragon, storm of wrath, swallow whole, death throes, curse.

Caster Level: 23rd.

Summon Storm of Wrath (Su): A fire storm fill the area of effect causing no harm to the dragon but delivering 8d6 points of fire damage (Fortitude saving throw at DC 44 for half damage) to all other creatures.

Death Throes (Ex): The blood of the brass invictus spurts into all threatened areas, it is extremely hot, all those exposed must make a Reflex save (DC 30) or be splashed by it and take 8d6 points of fire damage.

BRONZE DRACOS INVICTUS

Challenge Rating: 28

Advancement: 44+ HD

Age	Size	Hit Dice (hp)	AC	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Breath Weapon (DC)	Fear DC	SR
Dracos	C	43d12+430	44 (-8 size,	+51	+33	+23	+33	28d6 (41)	41	35
Invictus		(709)	+42 natural)							

Age	Speed	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
Dracos	40 ft., fly 250 ft. (clumsy),	43	10	31	30	31	30
Invictus	swim 60 ft.						

Special Abilities: Damage reduction 25/+4, command dragon, storm of wrath, swallow whole, death throes, curse.

Caster Level: 23rd.

Summon Storm of Wrath (Su): All those in the area of effect are struck by lightning for 14d6 points of damage (Reflex saving throw at DC 45 for half damage); the dragon is unharmed.

Death Throes (Ex): The scaly hide of the brass invictus splits; from these rents flashes of lightning rip into all in the threatened area causing 14d6 points of damage, all those exposed must make a Reflex save (DC 30) to avoid harm.

Tostig allowed a smile. 'Because, witch, I know.'

It took another hour to safely angle across, and it was not before time, for Tostig would have been more than a touch embarrassed to have to admit to the party that he had underestimated the number of pitons that he had thought would be needed. Finally, the Northman pushed himself into the opening, squinting into the semi-darkness. He had thought that he had seen movement somewhere ahead, and paused whilst examining the passageway which spread out into the gloom. The floor was caked in sand, but there were no tracks to be seen. As Marbeth arrived at the entrance, he turned to haul her in before securing the rope to the floor with his last two pitons.

'Wait here. I'm going ahead to scout. Come ahead when the others are all safely here.'

COPPER DRACOS INVICTUS

Challenge Rating: 28

Advancement: 43+ HD

Age	Size	Hit Dice (hp)	AC	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Breath Weapon (DC)	Fear DC	SR
Dracos	C	42d12+420	42 (-8 size,	+49	+33	+23	+31	28d4 (41)	39	35
Invictus		(693)	+40 natural)							

Age	Speed	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
Dracos	40 ft., fly 250 ft. (clumsy),	41	10	31	26	27	26
Invictus	swim 60 ft.						

Special Abilities: Damage reduction 25/+4, command dragon, storm of wrath, swallow whole, death throes, curse.

Caster Level: 23rd.

Summon Storm of Wrath (Su): A storm fills the area of effect, acidic rain lashes down, causing no harm to the dragon but delivering 14d4 points of damage (Fortitude saving throw at DC 44 for half damage) to all other creatures.

Death Throes (Ex): The acidic blood of the copper invictus spurts into all threatened areas; all those exposed must make a Reflex save (DC 30) or be splashed by it and take 14d4 points of damage.

GOLD DRACOS INVICTUS

Challenge Rating: 30

Advancement: 46+ HD

Age	Size	Hit Dice (hp)	AC	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Breath Weapon (DC)	Fear DC	SR
Dracos	C	45d12+585	46 (-8 size,	+58	+37	+24	+37	30d10 (45)	44	37
Invictus		(877)	+44 natural)							

Age	Speed	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
Dracos	40 ft., fly 250 ft. (clumsy),	52	10	37	36	37	36
Invictus	swim 60 ft.						

Special Abilities: Damage reduction 25/+4, command dragon, storm of wrath, swallow whole, death throes, curse

Caster Level: 23rd.

Summon Storm of Wrath (Su): Billowing masses of golden flames fill the area of effect causing no harm to the dragon but delivering 14d10 points of fire damage (Fortitude saving throw at DC 49 for half damage) to all other creatures.

Death Throes (Ex): The golden-hued blood of the invictus spurts into all threatened areas, it is blisteringly hot, and all those exposed must make a Reflex save (DC 30) or be splashed by it and take 14d10 points of fire damage

The sorceress nodded nervously, watching Tostig disappear into the gloom. For a few minutes she was alone, and it was with some relief that she finally saw Lyssus appear through the fissure.

'Where's Tostig?' he asked, too tired to be arrogant.

'Gone on ahead.'

'Damn his eyes!' cursed the elf. 'I *told* him that we should stay together in here.'

SILVER DRACOS INVICTUS

Challenge Rating: 29

Advancement: 45+ HD

Age	Size	Hit Dice (hp)	AC	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Breath Weapon (DC)	Fear DC	SR
Dracos	C	44d12	45 (-8 size, +43 natural)	+54	+36	+24	+36	29d8 (44)	44	36
Invictus										

Age	Speed	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
Dracos	40 ft., fly 250 ft. (clumsy)	47	10	35	34	35	34
Invictus							

Special Abilities: Damage reduction 25/+4, command dragon, storm of wrath, swallow whole, death throes, curse.
Caster Level: 23rd.

Summon Storm of Wrath (Su): Windblown crystals of silver ice fill the area of effect causing no harm to the dragon but delivering 14d8 points of cold damage (Fortitude saving throw at DC 47 for half damage) to all other creatures.

Death Throes (Ex): Rents appear in the hide of the silver invictus, freezing vapours blast forth from these rips into all threatened areas; all those exposed must make a Reflex save (DC 30) or take 14d8 points of cold damage.

'It must be a source of constant irritation to you that we are not at your beck and call,' sneered Marbeth, drawing an angry scowl from the elf. He decided to adjust his armour.

Finally, when the others had arrived, they set off, Yessin, the desert gnome, leading, albeit tentatively. Sometimes having good eyesight was a bad thing, he reasoned.

They found Tostig around the second bend. He was done for. About him were close to a dozen giant scorpions, all dead. They were in a huge cavern that, bizarrely, had no ceiling. Instead a clear view of the desert sky presented itself. The Northman looked through glazed eyes at Marbeth. 'Help me,' he managed to whisper.

'Sadly, my friend, I'm not that much of a witch.'

The light in the chamber dimmed, as if a great black cloud had passed overhead, but it had been a cloudless sky. Looking up, they saw the dragon.

And it saw them.



NEW RACES OF DRAGONS

Herein we introduce you to the serpents, lesser-known species of dragons that are the result of selective breeding and magical manipulations.

Note that for the abyssal serpents and hell worms, rather than follow the formulae set down for calculating the frightful presence score the authors have assigned a value they believe properly represents these creatures. If a Games Master disapproves of this he may recalculate the frightful presence scores following the rules set out in *Core Rulebook III*; using that formula one adds the dragon's Charisma modifier and half the number of its Hit Dice to a base score of 10 to arrive at the frightful presence score.

ABYSSAL SERPENT

Dragon (Demon/Tanar'ri)

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground.

Organisation: Wyrmling, very young, and young: solitary or clutch (2-5); juvenile and young adult: solitary; adult, mature adult, old, very old, ancient, wyrm, great wyrm, or dracos invictus: solitary or, rarely, pair.

Challenge Ratings: Wyrmling 3; very young 4; young 5; juvenile 8; young adult 10; adult 12; mature adult 14; old 17; very old 20; ancient 22; wyrm 24; great wyrm 26; dracos invictus 30.

Treasure: Double standard.

Alignment: Always chaotic evil.

Advancement: Wyrmling 7-8 HD (Small); very young 10-11 HD (Medium-size); young 13-14 HD (Medium-size); juvenile 16-17 HD (Large); young adult 19-20 HD (Large); adult 22-23 HD (Large); mature adult 25-26 HD (Huge); old 28-29 HD (Huge); very old 31-32 HD (Huge); ancient 34-35 HD (Gargantuan); wyrm 37-38 HD

(Gargantuan); great wyrm 40-42 HD (Gargantuan); dracos invictus 43+ HD (Colossal).

Abyssal serpents, sometimes used as steeds by demon princes, are amongst the most malevolent of life forms and fortunately are rare here, on the prime material plane. The sheer murderous brutality of their kind is all too apparent; an abyssal serpent's soulless eyes are coal black and unnaturally large, seven horns adorn the head, ears are jagged and high-pointed, thick blubbery lips curl back from row upon row of yellowed fangs.

The scales of a wyrmling abyssal drake are a dull black; as the dragon ages a red hue becomes apparent on the underbelly and throat while the scales of the back, head, tail and wings take on a purplish sheen. The seven horns are each of a different colour; the first and shortest horn is white with a reddened point, the second horn is twisted and black, the third is yellow,

Abyssal Serpents by Age

Age	Size	Hit	
		Dice (hp)	AC
Wyrmling	S	6d12+12 (51)	13 (+1 size, +2 natural)
Very Young	M	9d12+18 (76)	15 (+5 natural)
Young	M	12d12+36 (114)	18 (+8 natural)
Juvenile	L	15d12+45 (142)	19 (-1 size, -1 dex, +11 natural)
Young Adult	L	18d12+72 (189)	22 (-1 size, -1 dex, +14 natural)
Adult	L	21d12+105 (241)	25 (-1 size, -1 dex, +17 natural)
Mature Adult	H	24d12+144 (300)	27 (-2 size, -1 dex, +20 natural)
Old	H	27d12+162 (337)	30 (-2 size, -1 dex, +23 natural)
Very Old	H	30d12+210 (405)	33 (-2 size, -1 dex, +26 natural)
Ancient	G	33d12+231 (445)	34 (-4 size, -1 dex, +29 natural)
Wyrm	G	36d12+288 (522)	37 (-4 size, -1 dex, +32 natural)
Great Wyrm	G	39d12+351 (604)	40 (-4 size, -1 dex, +35 natural)
Draco Invictus	C	45d12+495 (787)	42 (-8 size, -1 dex, +41 natural)

Abyssal Serpent Abilities by Age

Age	Speed	Str	Dex	Con
Wyrmling	40 ft, fly 100 ft (avg)	12	11	14
Very Young	40 ft, fly 150 ft (poor)	14	10	14
Young	40 ft, fly 150 ft (poor)	16	10	16
Juvenile	40 ft, fly 150 ft (poor)	18	9	16
Young Adult	40 ft, fly 150 ft (poor)	20	9	18
Adult	40 ft, fly 150 ft (poor)	24	8	20
Mature Adult	40 ft, fly 150 ft (poor)	28	8	22
Old	40 ft, fly 150 ft (poor)	30	8	22
Very Old	40 ft, fly 150 ft (poor)	32	8	24
Ancient	40 ft, fly 200 ft (clumsy)	34	8	24
Wyrm	40 ft, fly 200 ft (clumsy)	36	8	26
Great Wyrm	40 ft, fly 200 ft (clumsy)	38	8	28
Draco Invictus	40 ft, fly 200 ft (clumsy)	42	8	32

the fourth red, the fifth green, the sixth blue, while the seventh and tallest horn is a mottled mass of colours that changes with the dragon's mood: from a dull brown when the beast is placid to a livid and fiery orange when the dragon is enraged.

Abyssal serpents are perhaps the least attractive of the dragons; their bodies are bloated and fat, limbs seemingly cumbersome until the dragon attacks, and a noisome charnel odour surrounds them.

The thick hide and blubbery fat of the abyssal serpent shield it from even the most extreme climates; they are equally at home in intense cold or heat. Females of this dark species lay clutches of eggs on the material plane and then leave their offspring to fend for themselves. An abyssal serpent that survives to young adulthood usually migrates to the abyss, returning mainly at the behest of a demon prince or to indulge its own evil desires.

In the abyss they lair close to the palaces of their immortal masters while those few on the prime material plane favour remote and inhospitable places such as the craters of volcanoes or labyrinthine caves cut into glacial ice. Often these lairs contain or guard portals that lead into the abyss or provide access from one layer to another. To decorate their desolate dwellings these dragons indulge in unusual forms of artistic expression; ghastly images are daubed on walls in a mixture of dung and blood while corpses and odd body parts, arranged in ghoulish mounds, serve as statues. Abyssal drakes prefer rank and foetid meat; the carcasses of defeated foes are left to rot in their lairs. In the abyss these dragons devour manes at their leisure. In the world of men they are avid and sadistic hunters, preferring sentient prey that they can terrify through a drawn-out game of cat and mouse before finally bringing their victim, still living, to their lair, there to show that unfortunate the bodies of previous victims before slowly, and painfully, ending that one's life.

Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Breath Weapon (DC)	Fear DC	SR
+8	+7	+5	+4	2d8 (15)	—	—
+11	+8	+6	+5	4d8 (16)	—	—
+15	+11	+8	+7	6d8 (19)	—	—
+18	+12	+8	+8	8d8 (20)	—	—
+22	+15	+10	+10	10d8 (23)	20	20
+27	+17	+11	+11	12d8 (25)	21	22
+31	+20	+13	+14	14d8 (28)	24	24
+35	+21	+14	+15	16d8 (29)	25	26
+39	+24	+16	+18	18d8 (32)	28	28
+41	+25	+17	+19	20d8 (33)	29	30
+45	+28	+19	+21	22d8 (36)	32	32
+49	+30	+20	+24	24d8 (38)	33	34
+53	+35	+23	+29	28d8 (43)	38	38

COMBAT

Abyssal serpents are confident in their great strength, ferocious attacks and potent magical abilities; unless facing a foe they know to be exceptionally strong they will typically engage in conversation before attacking, gloating over their opponent's coming demise, delighting in the fear their words engender. A stronger foe will be targeted with a series of aerial assaults or a well-prepared ambush.

Int	Wis	Cha	Special Abilities	Caster Level
11	8	9	Tanar'ri qualities	—
11	8	9	Damage reduction 5/+1	—
13	8	11	Stunning roar	1st
13	8	11	Damage reduction 10/+1	3rd
15	8	13	Plane Shift	5th
15	8	13	Damage reduction 15/+2	7th
17	10	15	Lying Word	9th
17	10	15	Damage reduction 20/+2	11th
19	12	17	Summon Tanar'ri	13th
19	12	17	Damage reduction 25/+3	15th
21	12	19	Doom Gaze	17th
21	16	19	Damage reduction 30/+3	19th
25	20	23	Damage reduction 35/+4, command dragon, storm of wrath, swallow whole, death throes, curse	23rd

Breath Weapon (Su): An abyssal drake has a single breath weapon, a cone of black vapours that putrefies flesh on contact. Hit points lost to this attack form cannot be regained through rest, only magical healing; so potent are the fumes of an abyssal dracos invictus that only a *miracle* or *wish* spell can restore hit points lost to them.

Stunning Roar (Su): Once per hour the serpent can let out a deafening roar; those failing a Fortitude save (DC 17) are stunned for 1d4 rounds.

Lying Word (Sp): Once per day the serpent can speak vicious

Then he looked down to the bottom of the pit and espied below a dragon, breathing fire, fearful for eye to see, exceeding fierce and grim, with terrible wide jaws, all agape to swallow him. Again looking closely at the ledge whereon his feet rested, he discerned four heads of asps projecting from the wall whereon he was perched. Then he lifted up his eyes and saw that from the branches of the tree there dropped a little honey. And thereat he ceased to think of the troubles whereby he was surrounded; how, outside, the unicorn was madly raging to devour him: how, below, the fierce dragon was yawning to swallow him: how the tree, which he had clutched, was all but severed; and how his feet rested on slippery, treacherous ground. Yea, he forgot, without care, all those sights of awe and terror, and his whole mind hung on the sweetness of that tiny drop of honey.

Barlaam And Ioasaph by St. John of Damascus c. 676 - 749 AD

untruths about those in its presence, indicating by such lies that its hearers have been deceiving each other, are plotting against one another, and intend to betray or kill each other at the earliest opportunity. All party members hearing these lies must make Will saving throws (DC 27) or fall to attacking one another until the effect is dispelled, the dragon attacks, or all save one is dead.

Summon Tanar'ri (Sp): Once per day the abyssal serpent can try to summon a vroock or hezrous demon (equal probability of either appearing) with a 50% chance of success.

Doom Gaze (Su): Once each round, as a free action, the serpent can project a magical ray from either its left

or right eye as a ranged touch attack; that from the right is a beam of intense heat dealing 10d6 fire damage, that from the left a beam of frost dealing 10d6 cold damage. Each effect follows the rules for a ray (see *Core Rulebook III*) and has a DC of 33.

Summon Storm of Wrath (Su): The area of effect is filled with gusts of ice-cold wind, clouds of burning vapour, and insubstantial demonic forms that appear to rend and tear at flesh, the whole causing 14d8 points of damage (Fortitude saving throw at DC 47 for half damage). Naturally no harm is caused to the dragon.

Death Throes (Ex): Venomous blood sprays into all threatened areas; those exposed must make a Reflex save (DC 30) or be splashed by it and take 14d8 points of damage.



DRAGONKIN

Dragon (Varies)

Climate/Terrain: Any, as sub-type.

Organisation: Wyrmling, very young, young, juvenile and young adult: solitary or clutch (2-5); adult, mature adult, old, very old, ancient, wyrm, or great wyrm: solitary, pair or family, (1-2 and 2-5).

Challenge Ratings: as sub-type -2, to a minimum of 1.

Treasure: Standard; Alignment: as sub-type.

Dragonkin are weaker relatives of their better-known kindred, the true dragons. Unlike their relatives, dragonkin do not possess wings, and their breath weapons are weaker. However, these dragon-like creatures are quite adept at physical combat, and their forearms have developed so that they can effectively utilise melee weapons in combat. From where do they originate? Some scholars propose that they are the result of a half-dragon breeding with a true dragon, others that they are a separate race created long ago as soldiers in a multiverse-spanning war.

The dragonkin are generally smaller than normal dragons; their forearms are slighter but are capable of manipulating objects, as they possess opposable

thumbs; they frequently use two melee weapons in combat. The bodies of dragonkin are physically different from regular dragons; their torsos are more slender, and their rear legs are extremely muscular, allowing them to stand or walk upright in battle if they so desire.

The following adjustments are made to the standard dragon types detailed in *Core Rulebook III* in order to make one of the dragonkin:

Size: Dragonkin, regardless of age, never grow bigger than Large size.

Hit Dice (hp): Dragonkin have 2 less HD per age category. For example, a wyrmling red dragon has 7d12+14 hp. A red dragonkin wyrmling has 5d12+14 hp.

AC: Dragonkin, at the most, receive a -1 to their AC, even at the older age categories, as they only reach large size.

Attack Bonus: As dragon sub-type.

Saving Throws: As dragon sub-type.

Breath Weapon: All dragonkin possess breath weapons. These do one die-size of damage less than their winged counterparts. For example a wyrmling blue dragonkin would deal 2d6 damage from its breath weapon, rather than the normal 2d8 for a regular wyrmling blue dragon. The save DC for the dragonkin's breath weapon remains the same.

Fear DC: Dragonkin do not cause fear.

Spell Resistance: As dragon sub-type.

Tail Grapple: Dragonkin have very muscular tails. Instead of dealing normal damage with a tail sweep, dragonkin may opt to make a grapple attack with their tail as though they had the improved grab special attack. If the dragonkin successfully strikes it may lift a creature with its tail and hit it against a wall or other hard surface every round. This deals 1d6 + Strength modifier damage; if the creature is employed as a weapon against its comrades the dragonkin makes a normal attack roll, which if successful deals damage both to the creature grasped and the other creature that is struck. Note that the dragonkin can only grapple and lift creatures that are at least one size category smaller than itself.

Claws: Dragonkin have fairly weak fore claws which deal a maximum of 1d6 base damage regardless of the dragonkin's size. However, dragonkin often employ melee weapons in combat, as they have developed opposable thumbs on their fore limbs. They favour larger weapons, such as tridents, heavy flails, heavy maces, morning stars, longswords, bastard swords, two-handed swords, long spears, and sometimes longbows. Dragonkin frequently wield two weapons simultaneously, fighting as though they had the

Ambidexterity and Two-Weapon Fighting feats.

Other Abilities: Dragonkin have the same face and reach, damage for attacks, (except for their claws), and breath weapon (except as noted), as normal dragons. They never increase above large size, regardless of how old they are.

HELL WORM

Dragon (Devil/Baatezu)

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground.

Organisation: Wyrmling, very young, young, and juvenile: solitary or clutch (2-5); young adult, adult, mature adult, old, very old, ancient, wyrm, great wyrm, or dracos invictus: solitary, pair or family (1-2 and 2-5 offspring).

Challenge Ratings: Wyrmling 1; very young 3; young 5; juvenile 9; young adult 14; adult 16; mature adult 19; old 21; very old 22; ancient 24; wyrm 25; great wyrm 27; dracos invictus 31.

Treasure: Double standard.

Alignment: Always lawful evil.

Advancement: Wyrmling 4-6 HD (Tiny); very young 8-10 HD (Small); young 12-14 HD (Medium-size); juvenile 16-18 HD (Large); young adult 20-21 HD (Huge); adult 23-24 HD (Huge); mature adult 26-27 HD (Huge); old 29-30 HD (Gargantuan); very old 32-33 HD (Gargantuan); ancient 35-36 HD (Gargantuan); wyrm 38-39 HD (Gargantuan); great wyrm 41-43 HD (Colossal); dracos invictus 45+ HD (Colossal).

Hell worms are Tiamat's closest living relative, a form of dragon thought to be a degenerate offshoot of the very first race of dragonkind.

At birth these vile beasts have but one head, that being white; as it ages extra heads grow, first a black, then a green, followed by a blue and lastly a red head. The heads and necks resemble strongly those of the Chromatic dragons whose colour they share. The colours of the heads and necks run in stripes down the forepart of the body. At birth this body is a yellowed ivory in colour; as the worm ages and more heads grow, the stripes merge in the lower part of the body, forming three stripes of grey, blue-green, and purple over the back and hind quarters, eventually merging at the tail into a muddy brown colour. Thus the hell worm's coloration is identical to that of Tiamat's, a fact causing consternation to many adventuring bands that think they are facing that dread lady herself!

While spawned in hell, and favouring its planes above all others, these dragons will lair in the material plane too, where victims are plentiful and treasures easily

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won. Most often they seek out the deepest depths of caverns in which to make their den.

COMBAT

The hell worm is cautious in its attacks; often it will withdraw after its first clash with an enemy to consider the best plan to bring about its foe's defeat. Aerial hit and run tactics will be employed against powerful opponents and many protective dweomers and summon spells will be utilised. Note that in each round *every* head can either breathe, bite or cast a spell. Any combination of attacks is possible: thus the red head might breath fire, the blue head lightning, the green

head bite, while the black and white heads cast spells, all in the course of a single round.

The bulk of its foreparts and the preponderance of heads prevent the hell worm from making claw attacks unless it is airborne and the target beneath it, but then all four claws can strike.

Adventurers hoping to sever one of a hell worm's heads face a Herculean task; they must, in a single stroke, deliver damage equal to the worm's total hit points divided by five—the number of its heads—success indicating the severing of the head from the neck attacked.

Hell Worms by Age

Age	Size	Hit Dice (hp)	AC	Attack Bonus	Fort Save
Wyrmling	T	3d12+3 (22)	14 (+2 size, +2 natural)	+5	+4
Very Young	S	6d12+12 (51)	16 (+1 size, +5 natural)	+9	+7
Young	M	10d12+20 (85)	18 (+8 natural)	+14	+9
Juvenile	L	13d12+39 (123)	20 (-1 size, +11 natural)	+18	+11
Young Adult	H	16d12+64 (168)	22 (-2 size, +14 natural)	+21	+14
Adult	H	20d12+100 (230)	25 (-2 size, +17 natural)	+26	+17
Mature Adult	H	23d12+115 (264)	28 (-2 size, +20 natural)	+30	+18
Old	G	26d12+156 (325)	29 (-4 size, +23 natural)	+33	+21
Very Old	G	30d12+180 (375)	32 (-4 size, +26 natural)	+38	+23
Ancient	G	33d12+231 (445)	35 (-4 size, +29 natural)	+42	+25
Wyrm	G	36d12+324 (558)	38 (-4 size, +32 natural)	+46	+29
Great Wyrm	C	40d12+400 (660)	37 (-8 size, +35 natural)	+47	+32
Draco Invictus	C	46d12+552 (851)	43 (-8 size, +41 natural)	+55	+37

Hell Worm Abilities by Age

Age	Speed	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
Wyrmling	60 ft, fly 150 ft (avg), swim 60 ft., burrow 30 ft.	11	10	13	11	10	9
Very Young	60 ft, fly 150 ft (avg), swim 60 ft., burrow 30 ft.	15	10	15	13	12	11
Young	60 ft, fly 200 ft (poor), swim 60 ft., burrow 30 ft.	19	10	15	13	12	11
Juvenile	60 ft, fly 200 ft (poor), swim 60 ft., burrow 30 ft.	23	10	17	15	14	13
Young Adult	60 ft, fly 200 ft (poor), swim 60 ft., burrow 30 ft.	25	10	19	15	14	13
Adult	60 ft, fly 200 ft (poor), swim 60 ft., burrow 30 ft.	27	10	21	17	16	15
Mature Adult	60 ft, fly 200 ft (poor), swim 60 ft., burrow 30 ft.	29	10	21	19	16	15
Old	60 ft, fly 250 ft (clumsy), swim 60 ft., burrow 30 ft.	33	10	23	21	20	18
Very Old	60 ft, fly 250 ft (clumsy), swim 60 ft., burrow 30 ft.	35	10	23	23	22	21
Ancient	60 ft, fly 250 ft (clumsy), swim 60 ft., burrow 30 ft.	37	10	25	25	24	23
Wyrm	60 ft, fly 250 ft (clumsy), swim 60 ft., burrow 30 ft.	39	10	29	25	26	25
Great Wyrm	60 ft, fly 250 ft (clumsy), swim 60 ft., burrow 30 ft.	41	10	31	27	28	27
Draco Invictus	60 ft, fly 250 ft (clumsy), swim 60 ft., burrow 30 ft.	45	10	35	31	32	31

Breath Weapon (Su): Each head can use a breath weapon. In a single round all, some, or none of the breath weapons may be used as the worm desires; as normal, 1d4 rounds must elapse before a specific head can breathe again, with each head rolled for separately. The effect of each breath weapon is identical to that given for the Chromatic dragon of the corresponding colour.

Death Dance: By forfeiting all other actions for the round the worm can perform an unsettling eerie 'dance' with its multiple sinuous necks. All those seeing this must make Will saving throws (DC equal to the dragon's Fear DC) or stand entranced for as long as the dance continues and 1d6 rounds thereafter.

Summon Baatezu: Once per day the dragon can attempt to summon a gelugon devil with an 80% chance of success.

Call Dragon: As a full round action the hell worm can summon, once per day, a mature adult Chromatic dragon of any colour with a 50% chance of success; it will stay for one hour and then vanish, returning from whence it came.

Tiamat's Rage: By giving up all other actions for a round the hell worm can tap into Tiamat's store of power and her black hatred of creation. A nimbus of dark energy plays around the dragon's heads, and in the round following it can discharge all of its breath weapons as a free action, even if insufficient time has

Ref	Will Save	Breath Weapon (DC)	Fear DC	SR
+3	+3	White: 1d6 (dc 12)	—	12
+5	+6	White: 2d6, Black: 1d4 (dc 15)	—	13
+7	+8	White: 3d6, Black: 5d4, Green: 1d6 (dc 17)	—	14
+8	+10	White: 4d6, Black: 7d4, Green: 3d6, Blue: 1d8 (dc 19)	—	14
+10	+12	White: 5d6, Black: 9d4, Green: 5d6, Blue: 3d8, Red: 1d10 (dc 22)	19	15
+12	+15	White: 6d6, Black: 12d4, Green: 8d6, Blue: 6d8, Red: 4d10 (dc 25)	22	16
+13	+16	White: 7d6, Black: 14d4, Green: 10d6, Blue: 8d8, Red: 6d10 (dc 26)	23	17
+15	+20	White: 8d6, Black: 16d4, Green: 12d6, Blue: 10d8, Red: 8d10 (dc 29)	27	18
+17	+23	White: 10d6, Black: 19d4, Green: 15d6, Blue: 13d8, Red: 11d10 (dc 31)	30	19
+18	+25	White: 11d6, Black: 21d4, Green: 17d6, Blue: 15d8, Red: 13d10 (dc 33)	32	20
+20	+28	White: 12d6, Black: 23d4, Green: 19d6, Blue: 17d8, Red: 15d10 (dc 37)	35	21
+22	+31	White: 13d6, Black: 25d4, Green: 21d6, Blue: 19d8, Red: 17d10 (dc 40)	38	22
+25	+36	White: 15d6, Black: 29d4, Green: 25d6, Blue: 23d8, Red: 21d10 (dc 45)	43	23

Special Abilities	Caster Level
Baatezu qualities	—
Damage reduction 5/+1	—
Death Dance	1st
Damage reduction 10/+1	3rd
Plane Shift	5th
Damage reduction 15/+2	7th
Summon Baatezu	9th
Damage reduction 20/+2	11th
Call dragon	13th
Damage reduction 25/+3	15th
Tiamat's Rage	17th
Damage reduction 30/+3	19th
Damage reduction 35/+4, command dragon, storm of wrath, swallow whole, death throws, curse	23rd

elapsed for a particular 'breath' to be used.

Swallow Whole: Naturally the dragon can perform this action multiple times in a single round—possibly swallowing a whole party of adventurers if all heads bite and feast!

Summon Storm of Wrath (Su): The area of effect is filled with flashes of lightning, icy air blasts, a downpour of acid, clouds of chlorine gas and flashes of fire. The whole causes 20d6 points of damage (Fortitude saving throw at DC 44 for half damage). Naturally no harm is caused to the hell worm.

Death Throes (Ex): Each head explodes in a flash of violent energy while the body spews forth acidic blood and vile vapours into all threatened areas, those exposed must make a Reflex save (DC 30) or be injured, taking 20d6 points of damage.

MIRTH DRAKE

Fine Dragon

Hit Dice: 1d12-4 (2 hp).

Initiative: +5 (+5 Dex).

Speed: 5 ft., fly 40 ft. (perfect).

AC: 24 (+8 size, +5 Dex, +1 natural).

Attacks: Tail sting +5 melee.

Damage: Special (see below).

Face/Reach: 1/2 ft.

Special Attacks: Breath weapon.

Special Qualities: Camouflage, damage reduction 10/+2, spell resistance 22.

Saves: Fort -2, Ref +9, Will +2.

Abilities: Str 2, Dex 20, Con 2, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 12.

Skills: Hide +23, Intuit Direction +1, Spot +2,

Wilderness Lore +2.

Feats: Lightning Reflexes.

Climate/Terrain: Temperate land.

Organisation: Solitary, Pair, Family (2-5), or Swarm (5-20).

Challenge Rating: 2.

Treasure: None.

Alignment: Chaotic Neutral.

Advancement: 2 HD (Fine); 3 HD (Diminutive).

Mirth drakes are the smallest of dragons. Their multi-coloured scales and rainbow-hued wings lead many observers to mistake them for dragonflies; indeed small antennae above their tiny pointed ears lend these dragons a somewhat insectoid appearance. The world has that most eccentric of wizards, Zagyg Yragerne, to thank for these irksome pests. What motivated the capricious archmage to create them is a secret known only to him; perhaps it was a joke at the expense of dragon slayers.

Mirth drakes hunt insects and spiders and lair high in the branches of trees. They favour a warm climate and are often found haunting meadows thick with wild flowers. Although they are intelligent, their actions are unfathomable to all but themselves; they seek nothing from the world save opportunities to indulge their anarchic sense of humour.

COMBAT

The mirth drake's breath weapon is a puff of lime green vapour a foot in diameter; the little dragon must hover directly before a victim's face to employ it. Those failing a Will save (DC 16) suffer the effects of a *feeblemind* spell. This attack cannot be employed more often



than once per day and can be reversed by successful use of *dispel magic* (DC 21).

It is the drake's sting that is to be feared; any creature struck must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or suffer an effect similar to those engendered by a *rod of wonder*; roll d100 on the following table:

- 01-05 *Slowed* for 10 rounds
- 06-10 Surrounded by *faerie fire* for 15 rounds
- 11-15 Reverses the effect of the mirth drake's breath weapon
- 16-20 *Levitated* for 5 rounds
- 21-25 Struck by a need to recite bad poetry for 5-10 rounds
- 26-30 A bout of flatulence causes all dice rolls to be made at -2 for 12 rounds
- 31-33 Immunity granted to all further stings for one day
- 34-36 Victim polymorphed into mirth drake
- 37-46 Electric shock for 6d6 damage
- 47-49 Victim must instantly make a bad pun or be polymorphed into a frog
- 50-53 *Enlarged* by 50% for 1d3 hours
- 54-58 Blinded for 6d6 rounds
- 59-62 Recite a limerick or be polymorphed into a treat
- 63-65 Character is sent into the border of the ethereal plane
- 66-69 *Reduced* to 1/2 normal height
- 70-79 Spontaneous human combustion for 6d6 damage
- 80-84 Head made *invisible*
- 85-87 Hair turns into leaves and potatoes begin to sprout from ears
- 88-90 Gender changed
- 91-95 Victim forced to sing continually for 1 hour
- 96-99 *Petrification*
- 00 *Limited wish* granted

A lone mirth drake will surreptitiously follow a party of adventurers, making swift strikes whenever one of them is alone and then retreating to observe the 'fun' it has caused. A group might launch a mass assault, swarming about the unfortunate band and then retreating to some lofty vantage point to watch the party's attempts to recover from the attack; when all effects have been dispelled or run their course the mirth drakes will attack again...

Mirth drakes are immune to sleep and paralysis effects and have darkvision with a range of 60 feet.



SOCIETY

The mirth drakes collect spiders' webs and weave them into domes of leaves and twigs, nesting therein. They lay eggs smaller than the head of a needle, attaching them to the undersides of poisonous mushrooms deep within the forest. They recognise no lord, having no social structure as humans might understand it, and care not a jot for power or wealth. While usually the cause of irritation and dismay in the ranks of adventurers it is not unknown for mirth drakes to behave in a helpful way, or even to assist a band of heroes, for a short period – they do so for fun, of course, and if the joke gets tiresome they will turn upon their former allies and make 'jokes' at their expense.

ROCK DRAGON

Dragon (Earth)

Climate/Terrain: Any hills or mountains and underground.

Organization: Wyrmling, very young, young: clutch (2-5); juvenile: solitary or clutch (2-5); young adult: solitary; adult, mature adult, old, very old, ancient, wyrm, great wyrm, or dracos invictus: solitary, pair, or family (1-2 and 2-5 offspring).

Challenge Ratings: Wyrmling 2; very young 3; young 5; juvenile 7; young adult 9; adult 11; mature adult 13; old 16; very old 18; ancient 20; wyrm 22; great wyrm 24; dracos invictus 28.

Treasure: Double standard.

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Alignment: Neutral (d6: 1-4 true, 5 evil, 6 good).
Advancement: Wyrmling 4-5 HD (Tiny); very young 7-8 HD (Small); young 10-11 HD (Medium-size); juvenile 13-14 HD (Medium-size); young adult 16-17 HD (Large); adult 19-20 HD (Large); mature adult 22-23 HD (Huge); old 16 25-26 HD (Huge); very old 28-29 HD (Huge); ancient 31-32 HD (Huge); wyrm 34-35 HD (Gargantuan); great wyrm 37-39 HD (Gargantuan); dracos invictus 41+ HD.

Rock dragons are reclusive, avoiding contact with humans and demi-humans where possible. Their bodies are squat and barrel-like with lumpy protrusions across their granite-hard scales.

At birth, a rock dragon's scales are a dull earth-brown. As the dragon gets older the scales change in hue, becoming first a morass of many earth and stone colours, giving the creature's hide a gravel-like appearance; then, as the drake nears adulthood, this pattern becomes a striated one that varies from that of layered agate through cornelian-onyx and sard-onyx to jasper—lateral bands of colours from grey-blacks and deep browns through lighter and yellow browns, reds, slate-blues and greys, to white.

Their heads are lumpy, and their cheeks appear to be swollen; thus they appear to have a mouthful of jagged rocks. Unlike most dragons their teeth are blunt and they have no fangs, but their rock-shearing front teeth and grinding rear ones are sufficiently formidable to more than make up for a lack of canine-like ones.



A rock dragon is comfortable in any climate but always seeks out rough, mountainous terrain, preferably in a remote locale, where it will be undisturbed. Disputes with prospecting dwarves or gnomes are common and even the good-aligned rock dragon will kill those who persist in violating its territory.

Rock dragons draw nutrients from the stones they grind up in their immensely powerful jaws, although they are not only mineralivores, but carnivores too, and will eat animals and people if they so desire.

In temperate climes where the red dragon shares the rock dragon's favoured territory, the weaker rock wyrms will hide rather than fight, preferring to occupy the lower slopes of mountains rather than challenge the reds for the lofty peaks. Young members of this species remain in their clutch far longer than those of other

Rock Dragons by Age

Age	Size	Hit Dice (hp)	
Wyrmling	T	3d12+3 (22)	1
Very Young	S	6d12+12 (51)	2
Young	M	9d12+18 (76)	2
Juvenile	M	12d12+36 (114)	2
Young Adult	L	15d12+60 (157)	2
Adult	L	18d12+90 (207)	3
Mature Adult	H	21d12+105 (241)	3
Old	H	24d12+144 (300)	3
Very Old	H	27d12+162 (337)	3
Ancient	H	30d12+210 (405)	4
Wyrm	G	33d12+297 (511)	4
Great Wyrm	G	36d12+360 (594)	4
Draco Invictus	C	42d12+504 (777)	4

Rock Dragon Abilities by Age

Age	Speed
Wyrmling	60 ft, fly 150 ft (avg), burrow 30 ft
Very Young	60 ft, fly 150 ft (avg), burrow 30 ft
Young	60 ft, fly 200 ft (poor), burrow 30 ft
Juvenile	60 ft, fly 200 ft (poor), burrow 30 ft
Young Adult	60 ft, fly 200 ft (poor), burrow 30 ft
Adult	60 ft, fly 200 ft (poor), burrow 30 ft
Mature Adult	60 ft, fly 200 ft (poor), burrow 30 ft
Old	60 ft, fly 200 ft (poor), burrow 30 ft
Very Old	60 ft, fly 200 ft (poor), burrow 30 ft
Ancient	60 ft, fly 200 ft (poor), burrow 30 ft
Wyrm	60 ft, fly 250 ft (clumsy), burrow 30 ft
Great Wyrm	60 ft, fly 250 ft (clumsy), burrow 30 ft
Draco Invictus	60 ft, fly 250 ft (clumsy), burrow 30 ft

draconic races, wyrmlings, very young and young rock dragons are always encountered in groups of 2-5, unless some predator has destroyed some of the infant wyrms. Even juvenile rock dragons are only rarely met apart from a group of 1-3 siblings. A rock dragon is incapable of mating until it reaches adult stage and at young adulthood they separate from their clutches to strike out alone, making for themselves a lair by chewing an opening in some barren hillside and there living a solitary existence until the urge to reproduce strikes them later in life.

COMBAT

Rock dragons would rather ignore interlopers than fight them. They will usually observe those entering their territory for a while, giving them a chance to move on

of their own accord. If the dragon's actual lair is in danger of violation, or if the intruders appear bent on a long stay, the dragon will make warning passes, roaring and growling. If this does not dislodge the unwelcome visitors it will hide on rocky trails and dislodge rocks or cause landslides to crush them. Eventually an outright attack will be made, the dragon staying aloft and spraying its enemies with its flesh-shredding breath weapon and petrifying them with its dreadful glare or using its powers of camouflage to execute a devastating ambush.

Breath Weapon (Su): The rock dragon has one type of breath weapon, a cone of razor-sharp pebbles and stone particles projected from its gullet.

Petrifying Gaze (Su): Once per day for each of its age categories, i.e. from one to thirteen times, a rock

AC	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Breath Weapon (DC)	Fear DC	SR
18 (+2 size, +6 natural)	+5	+4	+3	+3	1d4 (12)	—	—
20 (+1 size, +9 natural)	+8	+7	+5	+5	2d4 (15)	—	—
22 (+12 natural)	+11	+8	+6	+6	3d4 (16)	—	—
25 (+15 natural)	+15	+11	+8	+8	4d4 (19)	—	—
27 (-1 size, +18 natural)	+19	+13	+9	+9	5d4 (21)	16	—
30 (-1 size, +21 natural)	+24	+16	+11	+11	6d4 (24)	19	—
32 (-2 size, +24 natural)	+27	+17	+12	+13	7d4 (25)	21	—
35 (-2 size, +27 natural)	+31	+20	+14	+15	8d4 (28)	23	14
38 (-2 size, +30 natural)	+35	+21	+15	+17	9d4 (29)	25	16
41 (-2 size, +33 natural)	+39	+24	+17	+19	10d4 (32)	27	18
42 (-4 size, +36 natural)	+42	+27	+18	+20	11d4 (35)	29	20
45 (-4 size, +39 natural)	+47	+30	+20	+24	12d4 (38)	32	22
47 (-8 size, +45 natural)	+51	+35	+23	+29	14d4 (43)	37	26

Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha	Special Abilities	Caster Level
10	10	13	7	11	6	Petrifying Gaze	—
12	10	15	7	11	6	Soften Stone	—
14	10	15	7	11	6	Rock Hard	—
16	10	17	9	11	8	Stone Shape	—
20	10	19	9	11	8	Crunch Shield	—
24	10	21	11	11	10	Spike Stones	1st
26	10	21	13	13	12	Damage reduction 5/+1	3rd
28	10	23	13	13	12	Crystal Form	5th
30	10	23	15	15	14	Damage reduction 10/+1	7th
32	10	25	15	15	14	Stone Growl	9th
36	10	29	15	15	16	Damage reduction 15/+2	11th
40	10	31	19	19	18	Earthquake	13th
44	10	35	23	23	22	Damage reduction 20/+3,	17th

command dragon, storm of wrath, swallow whole, curse, death throws

dragon can attempt to petrify an enemy within 50 feet meeting its gaze by failing a Reflex save with a DC equal to 10 plus the dragon's age category i.e. 11 for a wyrmling, 12 for a very young dragon, 13 for a young one, all the way up to DC 23 for a dracos invictus.

Rock Hard (Ex): So tough is the rock dragon's scaly hide that piercing and slashing weapons suffer a -2 penalty to attack rolls against it and furthermore cannot score critical hits. Bludgeoning weapons have normal to hit and critical chances.

Crunch Shield (Ex): The rock dragon's powerful grinding teeth can damage shields on an attack roll that exceeds the victim's armor class by four or more. Refer to *Core Rulebook I* for shield hit points and hardness.

Crystal Form (Su): At will, as a full round action, the rock dragon can drastically alter its substance,

becoming as transparent as a piece of crystal. While in this form the dragon is hard to see, unless it attacks, requiring a Spot check (DC 18) to locate it but piercing and slashing weapons will now affect it normally while bludgeoning weapons inflict double damage.

Stone Growl (Su): Once per day the rock dragon can emit a deep growl that sets up harmonic vibrations in stone causing it to crack and crumble. Natural features or buildings in a cone 50 ft. wide at its terminus and 10 ft. wide at the dragon's mouth are reduced to rubble. Stone golems and other 'beings' made of stone are entitled to a Fortitude saving throw (DC 18) to avoid destruction but suffer 3d10 damage even if the save is successful.

Summon Storm of Wrath (Su): Chunks of earth, rock and pebbles are caught up in the gusting winds causing no harm to the dragon but delivering 8d4 points of bludgeoning damage (Fortitude saving throw at DC 44 for half damage) to all other creatures.

Death Throes (Ex): The rock dragon's death triggers an *earthquake* in a 200 ft. radius; rock and stone explodes from

its stomach into all threatened areas; those exposed must make a Reflex save (DC 30) or be splashed by it and take 8d4 points of damage.

Other Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day - *soften stone*, *stone shape*; 2/day - *spike stones*; 1/day - *earthquake*.

SEA DRAGON

Dragon (Water)

Climate/Terrain: Temperate aquatic.

Organisation: Wyrmling, very young, young, juvenile, and young adult: solitary or clutch (2-5); adult, mature adult, old, very old, ancient, wyrm, or great wyrm: solitary, pair, or family (1-2 and 2-5 offspring), dracos invictus: solitary.

Challenge Rating: Wyrmling 2; very young 3; young 5.

Sea Dragons by Age

Age	Size	Hit Dice (hp)	AC
Wyrmling	T	4d12+4 (30)	17 (+2 size, +5 natural)
Very Young	S	7d12+7 (52)	19 (+1 size, +8 natural)
Young	M	10d12+20 (85)	21 (+11 natural)
Juvenile	M	13d12+26 (110)	24 (+14 natural)
Young Adult	L	16d12+48 (152)	26 (-1 size, +17 natural)
Adult	L	19d12+76 (199)	29 (-1 size, +20 natural)
Mature Adult	H	22d12+110 (253)	31 (-2 size, +23 natural)
Old	H	25d12+125 (287)	34 (-2 size, +26 natural)
Very Old	H	28d12+168 (350)	37 (-2 size, +29 natural)
Ancient	H	31d12+186 (387)	40 (-2 size, +32 natural)
Wyrm	G	34d12+238 (459)	41 (-4 size, +35 natural)
Great Wyrm	G	37d12+296 (536)	44 (-4 size, +38 natural)
Draco Invictus	C	43d12+430 (709)	46 (-8 size, +44 natural)

Sea Dragon Abilities by Age

Age	Speed	Str	Dex
Wyrmling	40 ft., fly 75 ft (poor), swim 40 ft	11	10
Very Young	40 ft., fly 75 ft (poor), swim 40 ft	13	10
Young	40 ft., fly 125 ft (clumsy), swim 60 ft	15	10
Juvenile	40 ft., fly 125 ft (clumsy), swim 60 ft	17	10
Young Adult	40 ft., fly 125 ft (clumsy), swim 60 ft	19	10
Adult	40 ft., fly 125 ft (clumsy), swim 60 ft	23	10
Mature Adult	40 ft., fly 125 ft (clumsy), swim 60 ft	27	10
Old	40 ft., fly 125 ft (clumsy), swim 60 ft	29	10
Very Old	40 ft., fly 125 ft (clumsy), swim 60 ft	31	10
Ancient	40 ft., fly 125 ft (clumsy), swim 60 ft	33	10
Wyrm	40 ft., fly 175 ft (clumsy), swim 80 ft	35	10
Great Wyrm	40 ft., fly 175 ft (clumsy), swim 80 ft	37	10
Draco Invictus	40 ft., fly 175 ft (clumsy), swim 80 ft	41	10

juvenile 7; young adult 9; adult 11; mature adult 14; old 16; very old 18; ancient 19; wyrm 20; great wyrm 22; dracos invictus 26.

Treasure: Double standard.

Alignment: Neutral (good 50%, evil 50%).

Advancement: Wyrmling 5-6 HD (Tiny); very young 8-9 HD (Small); young 11-12 HD (Medium-size); juvenile 14-15 HD (Medium size); young adult 17-18 HD (Large); adult 20-21 HD (Large); mature adult 23-24 HD (Huge); old 26-27 HD (Huge); very old 29-30 HD (Huge); ancient 32-33 HD (Huge); wyrm 35-36 HD (Gargantuan); great wyrm 38-41 HD (Gargantuan); dracos invictus 43+ HD (Colossal).

Sea dragons are amongst the most legendary and awe-inspiring creatures of the water. Most stories speak of them as marauding predators but there are also tales of them coming to the rescue of individuals lost and adrift

in the vast stretches of the oceans. Sea dragons normally avoid contact with non-aquatic, intelligent races. Exceptions are made when they are plundering or hunting, and on the rare occasions when a good-aligned dragon is helping a creature in need.

Sea dragon scales are rather small and exceptionally smooth. From a distance their skin seems to have an almost liquid quality about it. At birth their scales are a pale aqua. As they age the scales on their head and upper body slowly darken until they are a very dark blue-green. The physical characteristics of sea dragons are such that they easily glide through the water. They have narrow, pointed faces, and their heads are topped with two swept-back horns. Their bodies are much thinner than other dragons, giving them an almost serpent-like appearance. A short fin runs the length of the spine and broadens towards the end of the tail,

helping to propel them through the water. A sea dragon will use its wings to push itself slowly through the seas, but when it needs a burst of speed it tucks its wings in close to its body and has a swimming style similar to that of an eel or sea snake. Sea dragons do not have pupils; their eyes resemble two, deep black pools.

Sea dragons lair in vast underwater caverns in either salt or fresh water. They enjoy basking in the sun and will often lie for hours on an isolated rock or the sands of some remote beach. Frequently they will fly high above the water and use their keen eyesight to locate prey.

Like other dragons, a sea dragon can eat almost anything. They have a weakness for pearls and will hungrily seek out giant oysters looking for them, but their main source of food is large aquatic animals. Dragon turtles are deemed a delicacy by these watery wyrms, and they go to great lengths when hunting them, eager to crack the great shell and get at the juicy meat within.

Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Breath Weapon (DC)	Fear DC	SR
+6	+5	+4	+6	1d6 (13)	—	—
+9	+6	+5	+7	2d6 (14)	—	—
+12	+9	+7	+10	3d6 (17)	—	—
+16	+10	+8	+12	4d6 (18)	—	—
+19	+13	+10	+14	5d6 (21)	22	20
+24	+15	+11	+16	6d6 (23)	24	22
+28	+18	+13	+18	7d6 (26)	26	23
+32	+19	+14	+20	8d6 (27)	28	25
+36	+22	+16	+22	9d6 (30)	30	26
+40	+23	+17	+24	10d6 (31)	32	28
+42	+26	+19	+27	11d6 (34)	35	29
+46	+28	+20	+28	12d6 (36)	36	31
+50	+33	+23	+33	14d6 (41)	41	35

Con	Int	Wis	Cha	Special Abilities	Caster Level
13	14	15	14	Water breathing, water walk, speak with aquatic animals	—
13	14	15	14		—
15	16	17	16	Airy water	1st
15	18	19	18		3rd
17	18	19	18	Damage reduction 5/+1	5th
19	20	21	20	Fog Cloud	7th
21	20	21	20	Damage reduction 10/+1	9th
21	22	23	22	Transmute water to ice/ice to water	11th
23	22	23	22	Damage reduction 15/+2, control water	13th
23	24	25	24		15th
25	26	27	26	Damage reduction 20/+3	17th
27	26	27	26	Tsunami	19th
31	30	31	30	Damage reduction 25/+4, command dragon, storm of wrath, death throes, curse	23rd



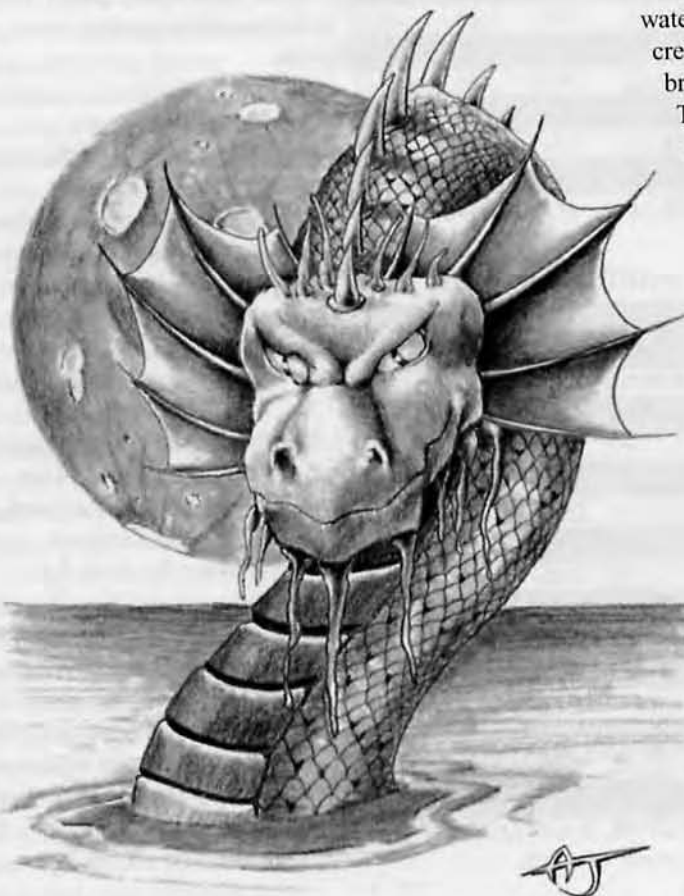
Because they often live in the same habitats, conflicts between sea dragons and bronze dragons arise. Several spectacular battles have been recorded by those fortunate enough to witness them and survive.

COMBAT

Sea dragons are highly territorial and will attack without hesitation any creature that gets too close to their lair. This is perhaps a mile for the mature sea dragon.

While engaged in underwater combat, a sea dragon will often attempt to use its *transmute water to ice* ability, with success encasing its opponent in a frozen globe. The oldest sea dragons will use their control water ability to create whirlpools that trap sea vessels they hope to plunder.

Breath Weapon (Su): A sea dragon can use either of two water-based breath weapons: a cone of glutinous sludge, or a line of slushy, icy water. The glutinous slush makes water in the area of effect congeal and those within it are trapped for 1 round per age category of the wyrm, creatures making their initial saving throw are trapped for half that time and are allowed a new saving throw each round to escape the area altogether.



If used above the surface this breath weapon coats the target area, and all within it, with a slippery slime. All creatures failing their saving throw slip and fall, effectively unable to move, and they drop whatever they had in hand at the time the breath was unleashed. Once again the duration is 1 round per age category, those making their saves must immediately leave the area of effect or risk slipping in each subsequent round (Reflex save vs. breath weapon DC). The icy water breath weapon will do the listed amount of cold damage. Additionally, it hits with such force that any creature two sizes or smaller than the sea dragon must make an additional Reflex save to avoid being knocked down. Any solid surface in the area of effect will remain ice-covered and difficult to walk on for 1d10 rounds per age category of the dragon. Any creature attempting to move across the surface must make a Dexterity check (DC 20) to avoid slipping and falling.

Water Breathing (Ex): A sea dragon can breathe underwater indefinitely and can freely use its breath weapons, spells, and other abilities while submerged.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*water walk*, *speak with aquatic animals*; 3/day—*airy water*, *fog cloud*, *transmute water to ice* or *ice to water*; 1/day—*control water*, *tsunami*.

Airy Water (Sp): A sea dragon can turn a 20-foot-diameter sphere, or a 40-foot-diameter hemisphere of water into a less dense, breathable substance. Any creature in the area of effect can move freely and breathe just as if they were in air rather than water. The sea dragon can move through the affected area at a speed equal to its own swimming speed.

Speak With Aquatic Animals (Sp): This ability exactly duplicates the *speak with animals* spell, except the creatures to be conversed with must be aquatic animals.

Transmute Water to Ice/Ice to Water (Sp): This ability allows the sea dragon to transform a 30-foot-diameter sphere of either substance into the other. Creatures in the area of effect are allowed a Reflex save (DC 20) to avoid being caught in the sphere. Creatures trapped within the icy sphere take 1d6 points of cold damage per round and will begin to suffocate (*Core Rulebook*).

Tsunami (Sp): A sea dragon can cause a wave 20 feet high and 50 feet wide. It lurches suddenly from a body of water and races 100 feet up a relatively flat shore. Any creature in the wave's path takes 8d6 points of battering damage (Reflex save at DC 15 for half damage). The wave will collapse most small structures and those inside will take the listed damage. Those failing to save will be pulled into the water by the retreating wave.

Summon Storm of Wrath (Su): Gale force winds rip through the area of effect, possibly capsizing ships. This has a percentage chance equal to 100 (– ship length in feet) of capsizing any vessel. Land-dwelling creatures in the water must make Swim checks (DC 30) or drown. Lightning roars from the sky causing 8d6 damage to all in the area of effect (Fortitude saving throw at DC 44 for half damage). Naturally the sea dragon is unharmed by its own magic.

Death Throes (Ex): Jets of freezing blood spurt into all threatened areas; all those exposed must make a Reflex save (DC 30) or take 8d6 points of cold damage. If the dragon dies in the water a whirlpool is formed that has a chance equal to 100 (– the length of the vessel in feet) of drawing any ship or boat in a 100 yard radius to the bottom. Swimming creatures unable to breath in water must make a Fortitude save (DC 40) or drown.

THE CHROMATIC PRINCE, BAAL SHIRUAT

Gargantuan Dragon/Outsider (Evil, Lawful)

Hit Dice: 37d12 + 370 (611 HP).

Initiative: +4 (Improved Initiative).

Speed: 40 ft., fly 200 ft. (clumsy), burrow 20'

AC: 42 (–4 size, +36 natural).

Attacks: 2 Bites +49 melee, 2 claws +44 melee, 2 wings +43 melee, tail slap +43 melee.

Damage: Bite 4d6+15, claw 2d8+7, wing 2d6+7, tail slap 2d8+22.

Face/Reach: 20 ft. by 40 ft./15 ft.

Special Attacks: Crush, tail sweep, grappling, breath weapon.

Special Qualities: Frightful Presence, immunities, resistances, spell resistance, blindsight, keen senses, telepathy, regeneration.

Saves: Fort +30, Ref +20, Will +24.

Abilities: Str 41, Dex 10, Con 31, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 20.

Skills: Appraise +22, Bluff +27, Concentration +30, Innuendo +24, Intimidate +27, Jump +56, Knowledge (arcana) +22, Knowledge (draconic) +39, Listen +37, Search +39, Sense Motive +24, Spot +37.

Feats: Cleave (claw or tail slap attacks only), Great cleave (claw or tail slap only), Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bite), Weapon Focus (claw), Flyby Attack,

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground.

Organisation: Solitary.

Challenge Rating: 21.

Treasure: Double standard.

Alignment: Lawful evil.

Advancement: —

The Chromatic prince, Baal Shiruat, is a gargantuan, two-headed dragon. His physical characteristics are a combination of all of the Chromatic dragons; the heads and upper body are a dark grey with blue-green and purple highlights, underbelly and legs are a greenish-white that fades into the grey of the upper body.

The Chromatic prince is the creation of Tiamat, the queen of evil dragons, who fashioned him in hell's black pits to be her champion and heir. On rare occasions he will pass into the material plane, usually to aid the greatest of Hell's champions there.

The Chromatic prince is aggressive, sadistic and extremely avaricious. He requires frequent sacrifices of both treasure and blood, especially the blood of good-aligned creatures, if mortals of a wicked sort hope to win his favour.

While the prince does not have an age category it is rumoured that over time his powers will grow. Baal Shiruat came into existence fully developed with all of the powers and abilities listed here.

COMBAT

The Chromatic prince attacks all opponents fearlessly, supremely confident of his abilities. He enjoys terrorising and toying with opponents before killing them. Each head can sustain 20% of the prince's total hit points before being taken out of commission. If the body takes 60% of the total hit points the prince is sent back to hell, or slain permanently if fought there.

Breath Weapon (Su): Each of the prince's heads can breathe any of the breath weapons of the Chromatic dragons. In each round of melee roll 1d4. A result of 1 indicates that the head will use a breath weapon attack. If a breath attack is indicated roll a d10 to determine breath weapon type: 1, 2 = a cone of cold for 12d6 points of damage, 3, 4 = a line of acid which does 24d4 points of damage, 5, 6 = a cone of corrosive gas which does 23d6 points of damage, 7, 8 = a line of lightning which does 22d8 points of electrical damage, 9, 10 = a cone of fire which does 22d10 points of damage. Lines are 5 ft. high, 5 ft. wide, and 120 ft. long. Creatures within the area of effect of the breath weapon may make a Reflex save (DC38) to take half damage. Cones fan out from the mouth for 60 ft. at which point they are 60 ft. wide by 60 ft. high. Alternatively, the prince can breathe a cone of ebony-hued *hellfire* that does 22d10 points of magical energy damage. The



cone is 60 ft. long and 60 ft. high by 60 ft. wide at its terminus. Creatures within the area of effect of the breath weapon may make a Reflex save (DC38) to take half damage. Hellfire is an evil magical energy, not fire, so any sort of protection from fire will be useless. Creatures protected from evil or magic will take half damage, or no damage on a successful save.

Crush: If flying or jumping, the prince can use a crush attack. A crush attack is effective against medium-size or smaller opponents only, affecting as many creatures as can fit under the dragon's body (creatures in the dragon's 20-foot by 40-foot face). Creatures in the affected area must succeed at a Reflex save (DC 38) or be pinned, automatically taking 4d6+22 points of bludgeoning damage on the next round unless the prince moves off of them. If the wyrm chooses to maintain the pin, treat it as a normal grapple attack. Pinned opponents take crush damage each round if they do not escape.

Tail Sweep: The prince can sweep with his tail as a standard action. The sweep affects a half circle with a diameter of 30 feet, to the rear of the dragon. Small creatures within the swept area take 2d6+22 points of damage. Affected creatures can attempt a Reflex save (DC 38) to take half damage.

Grappling: Baal Shiruat will never initiate a grappling attack. If an opponent uses a grappling attack against it use the standard grappling rules listed under the dragon entry in *Core Rulebook III*.

Frightful Presence (Ex): This ability takes effect automatically whenever the prince attacks, charges, or flies overhead.

Creatures with fewer than 37 HD and within a 330-foot radius are subject to the effect. Potentially affected creatures that succeed at a Will save (DC 33) remain immune to Baal Shiruat's frightful presence for one day. Creatures with 4 or fewer HD become panicked for 4d6 rounds. Those with 5 or more HD become

shaken for 4d6 rounds. The infernal wyrm is immune to the frightful presence ability of all dragons and may not be commanded by any invictus.

Immunities (Ex): The prince is immune to sleep and paralysis and has the devilish immunities to poison and fire.

Resistances (Ex): The Chromatic prince has cold and acid resistance 20.

Spell Resistance (Ex): Baal Shiruat has spell resistance rating 30.

Blindsight (Ex): This dragon can sense the presence of other creatures within 330 ft. by non-visual means (mostly hearing and scent, but also by noticing vibrations and other environmental clues).

Keen Senses (Ex): As with other dragons, the prince sees four times as well as a human in low-light conditions and twice as well in normal light. He also has darkvision with a range of 1,100 ft.

Regeneration (Ex): The Chromatic prince regenerates

Web Dragons by Age

Age	Size	Hit	
		Dice (hp)	AC
Wyrmling	T	1d12+1 (7)	14 (+2 size, +2 natural)
Very Young	T	2d12+2 (15)	16 (+2 size, +4 natural)
Young	S	3d12+6 (25)	17 (+1 size, +6 natural)
Juvenile	S	4d12+8 (34)	19 (+1 size, +8 natural)
Young Adult	M	5d12+15 (47)	20 (+10 natural)
Adult	M	6d12+24 (63)	22 (+12 natural)
Mature Adult	M	7d12+35 (80)	24 (+14 natural)
Old	L	8d12+40 (92)	25 (-1 size, +16 natural)
Very Old	L	9d12+54 (112)	27 (-1 size, +18 natural)
Ancient	L	10d12+60 (125)	29 (-1 size, +20 natural)
Wyrmling	H	11d12+77 (148)	30 (-2 size, +22 natural)
Great Wyrmling	H	12d12+96 (174)	32 (-2 size, +24 natural)
Draco Invictus	G	14d12+140 (231)	32 (-4 size, +26 natural)

Web Dragon Abilities by Age

Age	Speed	Str	Dex
Wyrmling	40 ft., fly 75 ft (avg), swim 40 ft	11	10
Very Young	40 ft., fly 75 ft (avg), swim 40 ft	13	10
Young	40 ft., fly 125 ft (poor), swim 40 ft	15	10
Juvenile	40 ft., fly 125 ft (poor), swim 40 ft	17	10
Young Adult	40 ft., fly 125 ft (poor), swim 60 ft	19	10
Adult	40 ft., fly 125 ft (poor), swim 60 ft	23	10
Mature Adult	40 ft., fly 125 ft (poor), swim 60 ft	27	10
Old	40 ft., fly 125 ft (poor), swim 60 ft	29	10
Very Old	40 ft., fly 125 ft (poor), swim 60 ft	31	10
Ancient	40 ft., fly 125 ft (poor), swim 60 ft	33	10
Wyrmling	40 ft., fly 175 ft (clumsy), swim 60 ft	35	10
Great Wyrmling	40 ft., fly 175 ft (clumsy), swim 60 ft	37	10
Draco Invictus	40 ft., fly 175 ft (clumsy), swim 80 ft	41	10

up to 3 hit points per round, but no more than one hit point each to either head, or to the body.

Telepathy (Su): Baal Shiruat can communicate telepathically with any creature within 100 ft. that has a language.

WEB DRAGON

Dragon

Climate/Terrain: Temperate woodlands and underground.

Organization: Wyrmling, very young, young, juvenile: clutch (1-4); young adult, adult: solitary; mature adult, old, very old, ancient, wyrm, great wyrm, or dracos invictus: solitary, pair, or family (1-2 and 1-4 offspring).

Challenge Ratings: Wyrmling 1; very young 2; young 3; juvenile 4; young adult 5; adult 6; mature adult 7;

old 8; very old 9; ancient 10; wyrm 11; great wyrm 12; dracos invictus 14

Treasure: Double standard.

Alignment: Neutral (d6: 1-2 true neutral, 3-5 evil, 6 good).

Advancement: Great wyrm 13-15 HD (Huge); dracos invictus 17+ HD.

Web dragons are lithe and sinuous and although their flanks have a silver sheen, the predominate colour is black with an occasional swirling purple pattern across the scales, with those on the belly shading from charcoal to grey in the centre. Their necks are long, their limbs thin to the point of being spindly, and their exceptionally lengthy tails like a black leather whip. The web dragon's eyes are deep set and have a silver sheen which, when about to make a kill glow with an appalling grey-green luminosity.

When first emerging from its egg the web dragon finds itself in a web of sticky strands, for the mother dragon spins a blanket for the wyrmlings before they hatch. The tiny dragons are immune to the web's grasping but other creatures will become stuck fast should they walk into it.

Individually weak, the web dragons stay in small groupings of 1-4 infants until they reach the young adult stage. They do not mate until attaining the mature adult stage of life.

Web dragons are able climbers, their manner being more similar to that of spiders than monkeys. If the surface is sufficiently soft or rough to allow their claws to grip, they can literally walk on ceilings.

These wyrms prefer to spin their sticky traps between trees on forest paths or above frequently-travelled routes in the underdark. They are voracious hunters, happy to kill and eat all manner of things; of course the evil ones of this breed crave the flesh of men, elves and other sentient beings.

Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Breath Weapon (DC)	Fear DC	SR
+3	+3	+2	+2	1d6 (11)	—	—
+5	+4	+3	+3	2d6 (12)	—	—
+6	+5	+3	+3	3d6 (13)	—	—
+8	+6	+4	+4	3d6 (14)	—	—
+9	+7	+4	+4	4d6 (15)	12	—
+12	+9	+5	+5	5d6 (17)	13	—
+15	+10	+5	+6	5d6 (18)	14	—
+16	+11	+6	+7	6d6 (19)	15	—
+18	+12	+6	+8	7d6 (20)	16	10
+20	+13	+7	+9	7d6 (21)	17	12
+21	+14	+7	+9	8d6 (22)	18	14
+23	+16	+8	+12	9d6 (24)	19	16
+25	+19	+9	+15	10d6 (27)	22	35

Con	Int	Wis	Cha	Special Abilities	Caster Level
12	7	11	7	Web	—
12	7	11	7	Obscuring Mist	—
14	9	11	9	Breath Weapon	—
14	11	11	9	Darkness	—
16	11	11	11	Invisibility	1st
18	13	11	11	Nondetection	2nd
20	13	13	13	Confusion	3rd
20	15	13	13	Damage reduction 5/+1	4th
22	15	15	15	False Vision	5th
22	17	15	15	Damage Reduction 10/+1	6th
24	19	15	17	Mislead	7th
26	19	19	17	Damage reduction 15/+2	8th
30	23	23	21	Command Dragon, Storm of Wrath, Swallow Whole, Curse, Death Throes	10th

By instinct, these sinister dragons like the company of all manner of spiders and often their lairs will be full of loathsome arachnids. Driders sometimes associate with wicked web dragons.

COMBAT

Web dragons prefer trickery to outright assault; they are masters of the ambush and waylay their victims suddenly, cloaking their attack with darkness and invisibility. They seek to immobilize their prey as soon as possible so as to devour them at their leisure.

Efforts will be made to conceal their sheets of adhesive webbing so that foolish wanderers might walk haphazardly beneath or even into them. Camouflage includes strands of green hue and the inclusion of leaves so as to make the net seem natural, breaking up its outline.

Web (Ex): These dragons are web spinners, their silky nets are identical to those spun by monstrous spiders. They may cast a web once per day for each age category, i.e. from one to thirteen times. Attack range, resolution, escape DC, break DC and web hit points are all as indicated in *Core Rulebook III*.

Breath Weapon (Su): By the time it has reached the 'young' stage of growth the web dragon has developed a breath weapon, a cone of acidic webs that trap those failing their saving throw for as many rounds as points of damage were inflicted, those making their saves are struck by the webs for half damage but not trapped.

Summon Storm of Wrath (Su): Poison rain falls into all affected areas causing no harm to the dragon but delivering 5d6 points of damage (Fortitude saving throw at DC 27 for half damage) to all other creatures.

Death Throes (Ex): Poison blood spurts into all threatened areas; those exposed must make a Reflex save (DC 23) or be splashed by it and take 5d6 points of damage.

Other Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day – *darkness, invisibility*; 2/day – *nondetection, confusion*; 1/day – *false vision, mislead*.

CHALLENGE RATINGS

It should be noted that the dragons described in *Core Rulebook III* make fearsome opponents for parties with an average level equal to the dragon's challenge rating. Whereas other monsters have a CR that makes them relatively easy to defeat (too easy in the eyes of some), dragons will use up more than one-quarter of a party's hit points and spells, and might well kill a player character if their attack is unexpected. In general the CRs assigned to them are fair if the party has some forewarning that an encounter with a dragon of that type is on the cards, and thus have the opportunity to prepare defensive spells and conserve vital resources for the battle.

The dracos invictus dragons and new breeds of dragon described in this book follow *Core Rulebook III* in assigning challenge ratings that make the dragons tough to best. If their attack is to be a surprise, the Games Master may wish to use a dragon that has a CR one or two points lower than the party's average level. Conversely, if the party has ample time to prepare, and faces few other challenges before confronting the dragon, the Games Master may wish to use a dragon with a higher CR.



HABITAT

While each race of dragon has a favoured environment, it should be noted that, regardless of the climate and terrain of the surface world, any breed of dragon might be found living beneath the ground. The labyrinthine dungeons and catacombs that penetrate deep into the earth, and connect with each other by means of the endless passages of the underdark, provide a home suited to all dragonkind. In those murky depths, far from the sunlit realms, one might meet a great white wyrm even if the land above is a temperate one. However, in considering their lairs, the exterior habitat is featured as the most likely place for encountering a given type.

Dragons living permanently above ground tend to migrate to an area that suits them. We will consider each kind of wyrm, their lairs, and where they are most likely to be found.

Before we move on to that, though, there is one point worthy of consideration: reaching a dragon's lair is rarely easy. The wyrms seek out a place where they and their treasure will be secure. As the dragons can fly, more often than not this will be in a high place. Bold adventurers will need to make a risky climb or activate magic to reach it. Man is one of the few creatures able to best a dragon. Older specimens have usually learned this lesson the hard way, and their lairs might be very remote, so reaching them will be an adventure in itself!

THE BLACK DRAGON'S LAIR

It is in fen and bog that the black wyrm will be found. It seeks out a cave or burrow, often killing those already in residency, and makes the place its own. This breed favours a moist, clammy atmosphere and soggy mud. Whereas other dragons prefer an eyrie high above the world, black dragons are apt to search for a place hard by a river or pond, preferably with an entrance submerged beneath its waters, for this breed of dragon swims well. Within the confines of its lair will be many pools in which it bathes or stores its food and a large dry shelf upon which its treasures are piled and the monster sleeps.

Whether below the water or not, the lair will be hard to find. Dense vegetation, often thorny and/or poisonous, might screen the entrance and an older wyrm knows to fly to and from its lair thus leaving no tracks for would-be dragon slayers to follow.

Shambling mounds sometimes ward the area around a black dragon's den, as might vile, tendril-armed plants.

Within the lair, the air will be foul with a stench of decomposing vegetation, for the dragon exudes acid that poisons natural growing things within its demesne. As these wyrms like well-cured meat, they leave the corpses of those they have slain to rot a while so a charnel odour mixes with the vile vapours already described. The Games Master may wish to impose a Fortitude saving throw with a DC of 15 + 1 per age

Of these two rocks the one reaches heaven and its peak is lost in a dark cloud. This never leaves it, so that the top is never clear not even in summer and early autumn. No man though he had twenty hands and twenty feet could get a foothold on it and climb it, for it runs sheer up, as smooth as though it had been polished. In the middle of it there is a large cavern, looking west and turned towards Erebus; you must take your ship this way, but the cave is so high up that not even the stoutest archer could send an arrow into it.

Inside it Scylla sits and yelps with a voice that you might take to be that of a young hound, but in truth she is a dreadful monster and no one—not even a god—could face her without being terror-struck. She has twelve misshapen feet, and six necks of the most prodigious length; and at the end of each neck she has a frightful head with three rows of teeth in each, all set very close together, so that they would crunch any one to death in a moment, and she sits deep within her shady cell thrusting out her heads and peering all round the rock, fishing for dolphins or dogfish or any larger monster that she can catch, of the thousands with which Amphitrite teems.

No ship ever yet got past her without losing some men, for she shoots out all her heads at once, and carries off a man in each mouth.

The Odyssey (Homer)

HABITAT

category of the dragon upon player characters as they explore a black wyrm's lair, those failing it temporarily lose 1d6 strength points until they spend ten minutes or more in clear, fresh air.

Other hazards in the den will include slime-coated floors requiring a Reflex save to cross without slipping, flooded passageways and caverns, 'bottomless' pools of muck and/or water into which an incautious adventurer might step, acidic waters and patches of quicksand.

These dragons, as pets and guards, keep snakes large and small, as well as crocodiles and other vicious reptiles. Oozes, puddings and jellies might be found too. If lizardmen live in the surrounding fens, the dragon will subdue them and bend them to its will; sacrifices must be brought to their dragon overlord, so those tribes will become a menace to any nearby settlements of men even if the dragon itself does not strike them.

Black dragons have been known to make pacts with green hags on occasion, or to work in concert with a group of chuul, but the dragon's chaotic nature and prideful disposition tend to make such alliances short lived.

The Slimy Burrow of Vitch and Sitch

Goodwife Bant swears she saw something scaly in the millpond last week and all the village folk have remarked on how few ducks remain on the river: The fishing is bad too...

1. The burrow's entrance is 12 feet underwater; dire rats dug these muddy tunnels deep into the riverbank. Vitch and Sitch, a pair of wyrmlings, have taken them over after enjoying a tasty dinner of rat. The tunnels are three feet in diameter and very slippery. Only adventurers of small size can navigate them standing up, if they stoop. All others must squirm along on their bellies. Crawling characters can hold only small weapons and no shield larger than a buckler can be carried.

The tunnel is flooded for its first 15 feet. It slopes up steeply to the point marked (a) on the map and from that point on is clear of water. Characters in the flooded region can move only one-quarter of their normal rate, and a Strength check at DC of 10 is required each round to make any progress.

2. The tunnel leading down to area 2 has a steep downward slope. Any character starting

downwards must succeed in a Strength check (DC 12) or slide rapidly to the bottom. The end five feet of the tunnel is choked with slimy mud, characters slipping into it will become mired and will suffocate unless rescued (see *Core Rulebook II*). Rescuers run the risk of becoming mired themselves and Strength checks will be required to pull the victim free—the Games Master should assign a DC based on the weight of the character and the amount of gear he is carrying with an average difficulty of 14.

3. This is another steeply sloping tunnel, but at the bottom lurks a mass of green slime. As before, characters might slide rapidly downward but the presence of thick roots protruding through the tunnel's roof make arresting one's progress easier (DC 10). Characters slipping into the slime are in deep trouble (see *Core Rulebook II*).

4. Vitch waits here in a pool of muck; only his head is visible:

Vitch, Wyrmling Black Dragon

Tiny Dragon (Water)

Hit Dice: 4d12+4 (30 hp).



Initiative: +0

Speed: 60 ft, fly 100 ft (average), swim 60 ft.

AC: 15 (+2 size, +3 natural).

Attacks: Bite +6 melee, 2 claws +1 melee.

Damage: Bite 1d4, claw 1d3.

Face/Reach: 2½ ft. by 2½ ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: breath weapon: line of acid, 30 feet long, every 1d4 rounds; damage 2d4, Reflex save for half damage DC 13.

Special Qualities: blindsight, immunities, keen senses, water breathing.

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +4.

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills: Bluff +3, Hide +12, Listen +6, Search +3, Spot +6.

Feats: Alertness.

Challenge Rating: 2.

Alignment: Chaotic evil.

Vitch's Hide skill is augmented by a further +2 circumstance bonus as he is submerged. If the party does not see him he waits until they proceed down the tunnel leading to area 5 and then slides down after them to attack by surprise from the rear.

5. The passage leading to this area has the steepest slope of all these mucky tunnels. A Strength check at DC 16 is required to avoid sliding pell-mell to the bottom. Note that if one PC succeeds in this check he must roll again if a compatriot fails and slides into him. At the bottom waits Sitch, and if the party failed to spot him, Vitch will be sliding down *behind* them in but a few moments! Characters that arrived here via an uncontrollable slide can take no actions in the first round and only a partial action in the second.

Sitch, Wyrmling Black Dragon

Tiny Dragon (Water)

Hit Dice: 4d12+4 (33 hp).

Initiative: +0.

Speed: 60 ft, fly 100 ft (average), swim 60 ft.

AC: 15 (+2 size, +3 natural).

Attacks: Bite +6 melee, 2 claws +1 melee.

Damage: Bite 1d4, claw 1d3.

Face/Reach: 2½ ft. by 2½ ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: breath weapon: line of acid, 30 feet long, every 1d4 rounds; damage 2d4, Reflex save for half damage DC 13.

Special Qualities: blindsight, immunities, keen senses, water breathing.

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +6.

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 8

Skills: Bluff +3, Escape Artist +4, Listen +4, Search +3, Spot +4.

Feats: Iron Will.

Challenge Rating: 2.

Alignment: Chaotic evil.

Sitch can speak the common tongue and will plead and beg if bested, offering to serve the heroes who have captured him. He is quite adept at appearing innocent and contrite but will turn on merciful adventurers at the first opportunity.

This pair's 'hoard' can be found at the point marked (b) on the map; it consists of six shiny stones from the river bed and a variety of attractive duck feathers – wish the party better luck next time but if you are feeling generous have the local village folk rustle up a 700 gp reward for terminating the dragons' threat.

THE BLUE DRAGON'S LAIR

The deserts and arid barrens of the world are the haunt of the blue dragons. They dislike the cold, so cold places such as sub-arctic wastes will be shunned.

The blue dragons love open spaces; their homes will be large and airy. Often they locate a sizeable cave in a cliff side overlooking the dry plains below and use their skills in burrowing to enlarge the place. The networks of grottoes they fashion thus are often vast, sometimes leading to tunnels that exit in the plains below. The dragon blocks the entrance to these lesser means of ingress to its lair with tons of sand so no uninvited guest might stray in; it will tunnel part way out and lie with just its eyes exposed beneath the desert sun waiting for an unwary traveller to pass.

Sand lies inches deep throughout the blue dragon's den; if intruders are fought within the dragon flaps its mighty wings and, in the confines of the place, spacious though it is, the effect is much as if the wyrm had hovered above the party and made a debris cloud (see *Core Rulebook III*).

As a gifted digger, the blue wyrm sets up areas where, at the flick of its tail, tons of sand and rock collapse from wall and roof, crushing opponents and blocking exits.

Blue dragons are highly territorial and rarely share their caverns with other creatures. They may allow a gang of lamia to dwell nearby and act in concert with them. As 'pets' they might have giant ants or monstrous scorpions roaming freely in their lair. Dire bats are another possible hazard, these creatures clinging in large numbers to the cavern roofs, while vipers and giant lizards might rest on rocky shelves.

Kramak's Dusty Delve

Desert merchants are tiring of Kramak the blue dragon; it demands a toll from passing caravans; adventurers are advised that it has amassed quite a store of wealth from such intimidation.

Before we explore Kramak's lair it is best we take a close look at the map. All is not as it seems here. The area marked 1 is a vertical passage leading straight down to area 2 below. The section marked 3 is likewise above area 2. Keep this in mind when reading the following descriptions.

1. This 15-foot wide natural passage is vertical; its sides are rough and deeply scored by Kramak's claws. Kramak is a skilled climber; using its powerful limbs and wings it negotiates the passage with ease. An adventuring band must use ropes, pitons and make climbing checks to do the same. The tunnel descends downwards for 50 feet to area 2, exiting where a box marked (a) is shown on the map.

Desert windstorms have part-filled this entryway with sand; this is utterly to Kramak's liking. The bottom 15 feet of the entry passage is blocked. The party must use magic or dig their way through.

2. This cavern is roughly 30 feet in width and 40 feet in length north to south. The cavern roof is some 30 feet from the floor but as it is largely filled with sand the effective height is only 10 feet at the edges of the cave and decreases to nothing at the point of entry where the party must tunnel their way through by some means.

The party will initially wonder where the dragon is; they will soon, painfully, discover that he is above them.

3. This area is above area 2. Where the three dots are shown on the map, a natural plinth of rock rises up vertically through an opening in the cavern roof. Atop this plinth lie Kramak's treasures, and the dragon is hiding here too! Characters attempting to scale the plinth, which rises some 30 feet above the level of the

sand, will be exposed to two forms of attack. First, Kramak uses its breath weapon, and then it dislodges large boulders that it has placed atop its plinth. Kramak's attack bonus is +12 when dropping the rocks, each causes 3d6 points of damage if it hits; four rocks are available.

While atop the plinth Kramak has three-quarters cover, granting it a +7 AC bonus (AC 28) and a +3 bonus to Reflex saves.

Furthermore characters hoping to target it with a missile weapon or spell must stand directly beneath the plinth in order to see it—guess who is going to have a rock dropped on their head!

**Kramak, Young Blue Dragon
Medium-size Dragon (Earth)**

Hit Dice: 12d12+24 (99 hp).

Initiative: +0.

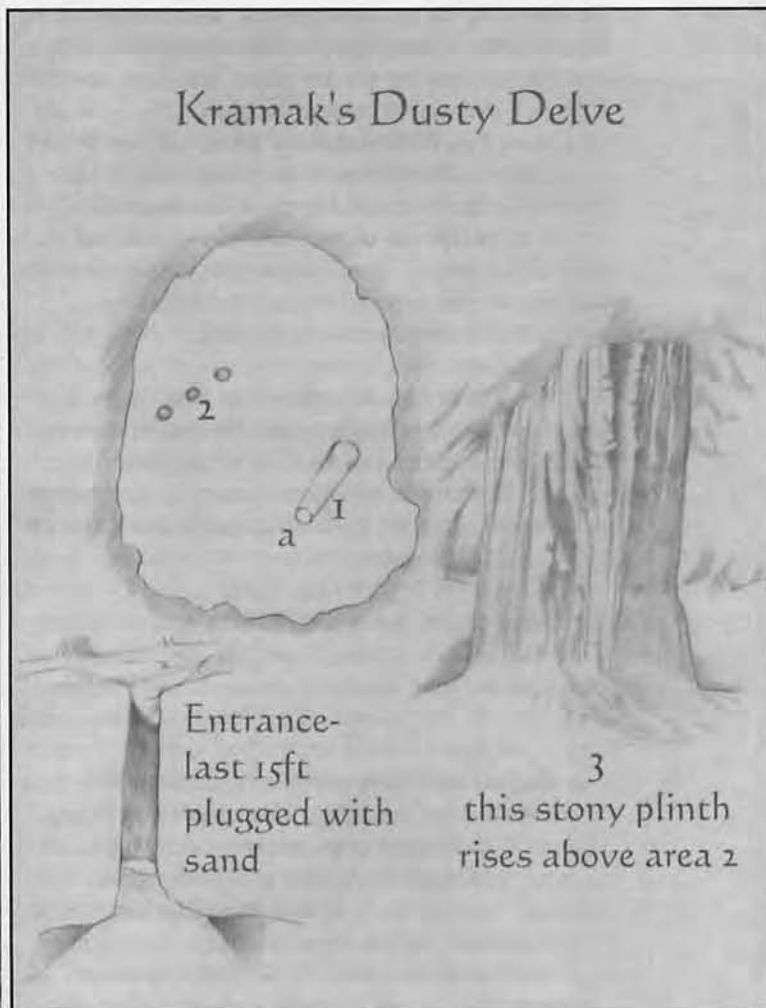
Speed: 40 ft, fly 150 ft (poor), burrow 20 ft.
AC: 21 (+11 natural).

Attacks: Bite +15 melee, 2 claws +10 melee, 2 wing slaps +10 melee.

Damage: Bite 1d8+3, claw 1d6+1, wing slap d4+1.

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: breath weapon: Line of lightning, 60 feet long, every 1d4 rounds; damage 6d8, Reflex save for half damage DC 18.



Special Qualities: blindsight, immunities, keen senses.

Saves: Fort +10, Ref +8, Will +9.

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 12.

Skills: Bluff +13, Climb +15, Diplomacy +15, Hide +12, Listen +13, Search +13, Spot +13.

Feats: Hover, Flyby Attack, Power Attack.

Challenge Rating: 5.

Alignment: Lawful evil.

Kramak's hit points are on the low side. Once he has dropped all his rocks, he will attempt to parlay with the party if he is injured—note that he speaks only the draconic tongue. He will offer items from his treasure hoard (detailed below) if the party will agree to leave his lair. Once they are gone he will lick his wounds awhile before cautiously exiting his cave. Flying high he will locate the party and make aerial assaults against them, making good use of his feats, until they abandon the loot.

Kramak's Treasure: Three fine rugs each worth 150 gp, six bolts of silk worth 50 gp each, a golden brooch studded with chips of red coral worth 250 gp, a dagger with jewelled pommel and sheath worth 800 gp, and 1000 gp in mixed coinage. Kramak carefully carried these items up the plinth in his jaws. If he barter them for a truce he will be swift to renege on the deal despite his lawful alignment; he *loves* his treasures.

THE GREEN DRAGON'S LAIR

The deep woods and forests of the world are made perilous by these aggressive beasts. The areas around these lairs, however, are notable by the withered nature of the trees and other vegetation; the poisonous chlorine fumes exhaled by these dragons bring death to all living things save for strange mutated plants that have adapted to the toxic gas.

Cliff and hillside caves are the favoured homes for a green wyrm, but if caves are not available the drake will fashion a fortified lair on ground level; trees pushed over by the dragon's might lie one against the other with huge patches of twisted briars filling the gaps between and creepers binding trunk to trunk. Within these dark and poisonous places these dragons lie and wait, dreaming of dead elves and ways to vent their spite.

Adventurers entering a green wyrm's lair will find that the poisonous fumes gathered therein will cause their eyes to water and sting; the Games Master might

require Fortitude saving throws each round with a DC of 15 + the dragon's age category. Those failing suffer 1d3 points of damage from the noxious atmosphere.

False entrances to the lair are usually constructed, and the dragon cultivates assassin vines and other dangerous flora above and within them. Shambling mounds and tendril-armed plants might serve as 'guards', much as they do with black dragons, and once again alliances with green hags, or annis, are a possibility.

Green dragons love to lord it over inferior beings; if, for example, a tribe of kobolds lives nearby, the dragon will mercilessly persecute them until those diminutive humanoids serve it as a god, dedicating their lives to it. Lycanthropes, dire animals and other wicked things will populate the area around the dragon's lair and worgs or giant serpents might serve as watchdogs to its entrance.

Nargleth's Nest

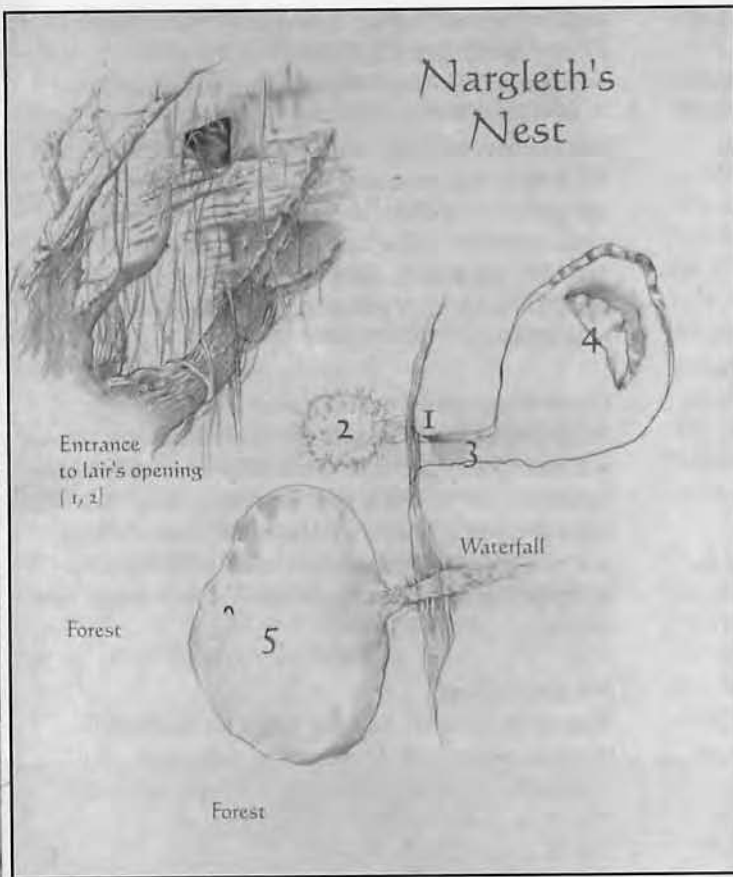
Four elven cavaliers recently met their death while trying to cleanse the woodlands of this wyrm. Will your party of adventurers brave a ferocious forest dragon in its lair?

1. Nargleth's lair is situated some 70 feet up a sheer rocky hillside. An observer notes a 10-foot wide square entrance partly covered by vines and creepers. Clearly this is artificial – dwarven prospectors enlarged the cave's entryway long ago.

At the point marked (1) a waterfall cascades down the hillside into a deep pool (area 5).

2. Characters seeking an easy way to reach the lair will be delighted to find this tall, withered, creeper-clad tree. Its upper branches reach right to the cave mouth; surely any competent climber could scale it and make an easy entrance? Not so! Nargleth has deliberately cultivated a pair of assassin vines that entwine around the tree (HP 39 and 32 - see *Core Rulebook III*).

3. This is Nargleth's usual resting place. From this vantage point she will have observed the party's approach. Once the assassin vines have struck, she will add to the party's dismay by poking out her neck and breathing her horrid vapours at them. Note that the vines have become immune to this breath weapon by long exposure. Preferring an airborne battle to a cave-bound one, Nargleth now takes to the skies and stays aloft until such time as a PC seems in danger of reaching her lair. At such a juncture Nargleth heads within to guard her hoard.



Nargleth, Young Adult Green Dragon

Large Dragon (Air)

Hit Dice: 17d12+68 (194 hp).

Initiative: +0.

Speed: 40 ft; fly 150 ft (poor), swim 40 ft.

AC: AC 25 (-1 size, +16 natural).

Attacks: Bite +22 melee, 2 claws +17 melee, wings +17 melee, tail slap +17 melee.

Damage: Bite 2d6+6, claw 1d8+3, wings 1d6+3, tail slap 1d8+6.

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 10 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: breath weapon: cone of corrosive gas, 40 ft. long, every 1d4 rounds; damage 10d6, Reflex save for half damage DC 22; Frightful Presence DC 20.

Special Qualities: blindsight, damage resistance 5/+1, immunities, keen senses, water breathing, SR 19.

Saves: Fort +14, Ref +10, Will +12.

Abilities: Str 23, Dex 10, Con 19, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 14.

Skills: Bluff +19, Concentration +21, Diplomacy +19, Escape Artist +17, Listen +19, Search +19, Sense Motive +19, Spellcraft +19, Spot +19.

Feats: Hover, Flyby Attack, Power Attack, Cleave, Snatch.

Challenge Rating: 10

Alignment: Lawful evil

Nargleth can cast six cantrips and six first level spells per day at caster level 3. She knows the following magic: (0-level) *resistance*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*, *open/close*, *detect magic*; (1st level) *grease*, *summon monster I*, *feather fall*.

4. This large outcrop of rock serves as Nargleth's shield; when behind it with only her head exposed, the dragon has three-quarters cover (+7 AC, +3 Reflex save bonus). She will breathe upon intruders, cast spells and then, if in risk of her life, attempt to overrun the party and dive from the cave mouth into the pool below. Out of spite she will attempt to *snatch* one adventurer as she goes, hoping to drown that one in the water.

Behind the outcrop is Nargleth's hoard: A fine cape sewn with gold thread worth 140 gp, a gold and ruby ring worth 3,500 gp, a gold platter worth 75 gp, a sphere of silver with gold inlay worth 30 gp, a fine painting by a noted elven artist worth 1,200 gp that is set in a wrought gold frame worth 850 gp, an ornamental silver skullcap inlaid with runes picked out with platinum worth 300 gp, an ornate silver elven war helm worth 500 gp, a small golden vase worth 50 gp, a mound of some 36,200 sp and

900 gp in which rest a *buckler* +1, three minor *potions*, a minor arcane *scroll* with three random spells, a medium *wand* with 42 charges remaining, and a *hat of disguise*.

5. Deep Pool: This is over 30 feet deep and very murky. The water exits via an underground stream but the outlet is too small for Nargleth. She will lurk here until the party departs. Once recovered from the rigors of battle she will certainly seek redress, either against the party or upon the forest-dwelling elves if the adventurers can't be found.

For the eastern side of Libya, where the wanderers dwell, is low and sandy, as far as the river Triton; but westward of that the land of the husbandmen is very hilly, and abounds with forests and wild beasts. For this is the tract in which the huge serpents are found, and the lions, the elephants, the bears, the aspicks, and the horned asses. Here too are the dog-faced creatures, and the creatures without heads, whom the Libyans declare to have their eyes in their breasts; also the wild men, and wild women, and many other less fabulous beasts.

Herodotus 440 BC

THE RED DRAGON'S LAIR

The great red wyrm is the epitome of the evil Chromatic breed; the greediest of a species renowned for covetousness, the most prideful of all that vain kind, full of hate and raging animosity.

Hills and mountainsides are their favoured terrain. Volcanic regions are particularly sought after, but the beasts plague the high places of all warm and temperate lands.

A large cavern, or a network of such, will be chosen as a home. This place is black and sulphurous, a dark maw from which the dragon emerges to spread destruction. Ideally, this home will be far above the ground, near the top of a lofty peak, and from this precipitous vantage the dragon glares at the surrounding land, daring any to enter its domain unbidden. Within the red dragon's lair there will be such perils as fumaroles, pits of boiling mud, vents from which flaming gas or steam spurt erratically, and even streams of flowing lava.

The heat of the dragon's body and the smoky breath it emits likewise serve to make the interior of the lair most unhealthy for adventurous intruders. The Games Master might require Fortitude saving throws each round with a DC of 15 + the dragon's age category. Those failing fall to noisy coughing, suffer a -2 circumstance penalty to attack rolls and must make Concentration checks at DC 20 to cast spells. In volcanic regions, pools and streams of lava will need to be crossed, vents will spew forth scalding steam or fire, and the player characters might take 1d3 points of environmental damage per round from the extremely high temperature.

Fire giants, ettins, or atach might be enslaved to act as guards, if the dragon is powerful enough. Hell hounds or dire animals sometimes serve as watchdogs and the most formidable of the red wyrms are known to consort with efreeti or to have fire elemental servitors.

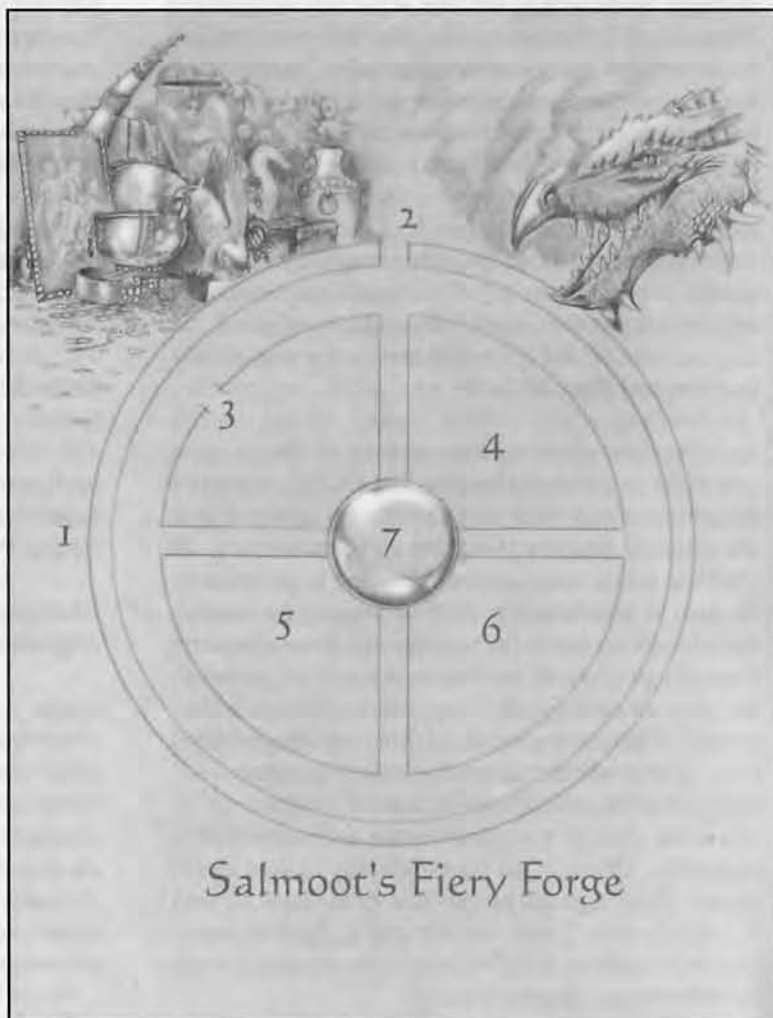
Salmoot's Fiery Forge

It is said that Ghenkin the Magician, an artificer of magical objects, created an enchanted forge before his sudden disappearance. Would your party care to visit his abandoned manse to make use of

this wondrous furnace? See what other marvels lie abandoned there?

1. This is a 30-foot-high wall made of some crystalline material, a stone-like substance normally found only on the elemental plane of earth. It is as hard as diamond, perfectly smooth, and seems to change colour as the viewer gazes at it, its hues shifting from a slate blue to sea green. The wall tapers as it rises, being some 10 feet thick at ground level and only two feet thick at its summit, which gives it a noticeable inward incline that makes climbing its glassy surface even more difficult. Its extra-dimensional substance resists spells designed to allow passage through it; no mortal magic can open a way into it. The wall penetrates the ground to a distance of 15 feet and then curves inwards, forming a solid foundation beneath Ghenkin's former abode.

Any attempt to fly over the wall triggers a long-dormant illusion. All airborne characters will 'feel' a strong wind blowing against them as the sky darkens and shadowy, wraith-like warriors arise above the wall. Only characters that state that they believe this to be an



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illusion are entitled to a Will save (DC 30) to disbelieve the effect, those failing it, and those not attempting it, are blown back to earth convinced that flying over the wall is impossible.

2. Ghenkin warded the entrance to his odd mansion with a variety of potent magicks but these have all long since been expended. What do remain are seven graven runes that any spell caster recognizes as triggers for summoning spells, one attuned to each of the elemental planes, one to the abyss, one to hell, and one to the seven heavens. A lingering magic of indeterminate sort can be detected here but, unbeknownst to the party, none of the runes function anymore and ingress can be made without risk.

3. Four curious structures are found within the wall. Each is constructed of a black igneous rock and, like the outer wall, are impervious to *any* kind of magic allowing an intruder to pass through. They are each some 15 feet high, the walls are 30 feet in length and devoid of either windows or doors, save for the segment marked '3' that has an open archway allowing entrance. Surmounting the four segments is a sphere of bronze some 20 feet in diameter that rests in a circular frame set upon the segments' inner points. An audible humming comes from the sphere and a heat haze can be noted above it. Should a character fly or climb up to it they will feel an intense heat; touching the sphere blisters and disables the member used until it is healed, and the touch causes 3d10 points of damage. Should any character be foolish enough to magically transport himself *into* the sphere he will be annihilated instantly unless he is proofed utterly and completely against magical heat, for the sphere contains a tiny portion of the elemental plane of fire.

More impotent runes ward the archway leading in to area 3; inside all has been ransacked. Judging by its furnishings it may once have served as a storage area and servants' quarters. An *alarm* spell wards this chamber, if abjuration magic is detected its radiation is likely to be intertwined with the faint auras surrounding the symbols carved in the archway and those emanating from a large circle on the floor in the central corner of the room; this is formed of copper hoop that enclose a number of glyphs and runes. Anyone standing in the circle is randomly transported to one of the other segments (4, 5, or 6). Note that even if several characters stand in it at once they are each rolled for separately. Ghenkin had passwords that allowed him to choose which segment he travelled to: *hammer* for area 4, *tongs* for area 5, and *anvil* for area 6. Each of those chambers contains a similar portal; the command word for returning to segment 3 is *soot*.

4. This ransacked chamber may once have been a library or workroom; all has been burned in some great conflagration. Once again the circular portal is set in the floor at the innermost corner, entering it causes a random transportation unless a command word is spoken.

5. Clearly this was a living room and bed chamber combined. It has been turned upside down by someone, all items of value have been removed and the place is in a state of chaos. The portal is in the innermost corner as before, and entering it causes the same results.

6. And now we come to the dragon!

Salmoor, Mature Adult Red Dragon Huge Dragon (Fire)

Hit Dice: 25d12+150 (313 hp).

Initiative: +4 (Improved Initiative).

Speed: 40 ft, fly 150 ft (poor).

AC: 32 (-2 size, +24 natural).

Attacks: Bite +34 melee, 2 claws +29 melee, 2 wings +29 melee, tail slap +29 melee, crush attack +29 mele

Damage: Bite 2d8+11, claw 2d6+5, wing 1d8+5, tail slap 2d6+16, crush 2d8+16.

Face/Reach: 10 ft. by 20 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: cone of fire, 50 feet long, every 1d4 rounds; damage 14d10, Reflex save for half damage (DC 28); Frightful Presence: (DC 26); locate object.

Special Qualities: blindsight, fire subtype, damage resistance 10/+1, immunities, keen senses, SR 23.

Saves: Fort +20, Ref +14, Will +18.

Abilities: Str 33, Dex 10, Con 23, Int 18, Wis 19, Cha 18.

Skills: Bluff +29, Concentration +31, Diplomacy +29, Escape Artist +25, Intimidate +30, Knowledge (history) +29, Listen +31, Search +30, Sense Motive +29, Spellcraft +29, Spot +31.

Feats: Cleave, Hover, Fear Focus, Flyby Attack, Great Cleave, Power Attack, Snatch, Improved Initiative.

Challenge Rating: 17.

Alignment: Chaotic evil.

Spells: Salmoor has knowledge of the following spells (0-level) *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*, *resistance*; (1st level) *alarm*, *endure elements*, *mage armour*, *protection from good*, *shield*; (2nd level) *darkness*, *fog cloud*, *protection from arrows*, *resist elements*; (3rd level) *dispel magic*, *summon monster I*, *major image*; (4th level) *minor globe of invulnerability*, *polymorph self*.

Salmoot can cast 6 cantrips, 7 first level spells, 7 second level spells, 7 third level spells, and 5 fourth level spells per day as a 9th level sorcerer.

If alerted by its alarm spell, Salmoot will have cast *polymorph self* and as many defensive spells as possible from its repertoire. He has taken the form of a man and armed himself with some of the magic items listed below as chosen by the Games Master.

The first character or characters to enter will see a room set up as a smithy, with heaps of treasure littered here and there, a man cowering on the floor, and a great red dragon looming over all. This latter is in fact a *major image*. The real Salmoot, disguised as a man, cries out for help. If the adventurers attack the image Salmoot waits until some of their potent magics have been expended and then uses his magic items to attack them! When other adventurers arrive in the room he uses *darkness* or *fog cloud* to befuddle the party and in the confusion enters the transporting circle. He will lead the party a merry dance from room to room, eventually Salmoot heads outside from area 3, resumes dragon form, and pokes his head through the archway awaiting the party's arrival. The dragon is hopeful they will mistake it for another *major image*. He will attempt to trap the party in area 3 for as long as possible. If Salmoot is driven back, he takes to the skies and launches aerial assaults until he is wounded sufficiently to discourage him from continuing the fight. At such point Salmoot gives up reluctantly and flies away, making a mental note to do the adventurers serious harm if ever the opportunity arises.

If the *alarm* spell in area 3 was neutralised, the party will take Salmoot off guard, lying in his true shape atop a pile of ill-gotten wealth.

Ghenkin captured Salmoot about a year ago. The wizard intended to use the dragon's essence to further empower his forge, but his *hold monster* spell failed at a crucial moment with disastrous, and terminal, consequences. Salmoot ate Ghenkin's guards and servants and thoroughly looted his demesne—what he gathered in his hoard is described below:

Belt studded with large and finely cut garnets worth 800 gp; two pendants (one a black sapphire, the other an opal) each hung on a gold chain and worth 1,500 gp apiece; silver mask set with numerous chips of crystal worth 80 gp; gold goblet set with agates worth 400 gp; electrum scroll case with a fire opal on its cap that is worth 1,000 gp; electrum ring worth 40 gp; platinum statuette of a griffin worth 3,000 gp; gold statuette of a dragon worth 1,000 gp; brooch in the form of an eye

fashioned of sapphire and moonstone worth 1,500 gp; huge fire opal on a platinum neck chain worth 2,000 gp; angelic statuette fashioned of silver and set with blue alexandrites and diamonds worth 5,000 gp; amber comb in the form of a gold dragon with red garnet eyes worth 1,000 gp; gold medallion set with a diamond worth 1,500 gp; gold bottle with a stopper fashioned from a moonstone worth 1,200 gp; ivory and silver stand for the statuettes worth 300 gp; circlet of platinum set with pearls worth 2,500 gp; copper unicorn statuette worth 80 gp; serpentine statuette of a naga with topaz eyes worth 800 gp; staff bound with gold and set with gems worth 1,000 gp and bearing a *Nystul's magical aura* enchantment; painting of fine artistic quality worth 800 gp; cloth of gold skullcap worth 80 gp; electrum picture frame worth 200 gp; gold and silver brooch with emeralds worth 2,500 gp; platinum brooch with large emerald worth 4,500 gp; silver brooch with sapphire worth 2,000 gp; silver vase shaped like a rearing dragon worth 1,500 gp; platinum cloak pin worth 500 gp; ivory music box worth 150 gp; valuable painting worth 500 gp in a silver frame worth 150 gp; gold statuette of a spider demoness worth 1,200 gp; silver statuette of a mounted knight in full armour worth 1,000 gp; engraved golden platter worth 600 gp; a heap of mixed coinage with a total value of 30,000 gp; two randomly determined *staves* of medium power, three *wands* of minor strength, and a *chain shirt* +5.

The Forge

Ghenkin's forge resembles a great kiln pulsating with magical power. Copper tubing connects it to the sphere set above the buildings. Numerous handles, levers and knobs adorn a panel set before the kiln-like construction. A character with a relevant item creation feat can use this forge to manufacture magical armour, rings, shields or weapons. However, the process is somewhat difficult and furthermore Salmoot has been tinkering with the controls in a fruitless effort to unlock the forge's secrets. In order to operate the kiln a character must succeed in a caster level check at a DC equal to 30 plus one for each special power, or plus, of the item he seeks to create. Any failure carries a 30% chance of the forge overloading. In such case there will be screeches and whistles from above, the buildings will shudder, the air temperature rise, and 5d10 rounds later the sphere will explode causing 3d100 points of damage to anyone still within the outer wall of Ghenkin's mansion.



'Sir kynge,' quod Merlin, 'understonde, and I shall telle thee. Under this erthe is a grete water, and under that water be two dragons that see no sight. So is that oon reade and that other white. And above them is two grete flat stones, and when thei fele that the werke peyseth hevy upon them, they turne hem, and the water maketh so grete bruyt that all that is made aboven it moste nede falle.'

Then yede the peple to oon of the stones and leften it up and founde the white dragon. When the peple saugh hym so grete and hidouse thei hadde grete drede. Than wente thei to the tother ston and drough it away; and than thei were more aferde than before, for it was moche greter and semed more feirce.

Tho spronge up the two dragons and foughten togeder with teeth and feet, and never herde ye of so stronge bataile betwene two bestes, ne so crewell fight. And so thei foughten to mydday, and the peple semed that the reade sholde overcome the white, till that the white threwe so moche fiere and flame that he brente up the reade, and so was he deed. Than the white leide hym down to reste for werynesse, and ne lived after but thre dayes. And thei that this seyde that never so grete merveile hadde be seyn befor.

From the Prose Merlin c. 1450 AD

THE WHITE DRAGON'S LAIR

In caves of silvery ice, on barren snowfields and in glacial rifts the frost dragons are found. Few of their kind have greater ambition than to hunt, kill and amass treasure. These creatures are wanting in intelligence, before adulthood they are much more dull-witted than man; a goblin has a superior intellectual capacity and a better chance to work out a detailed strategy. The habits of white dragons are animalistic and of all their kind they are the most motivated by base instinct.

In size too, these wyrms are poorer than their Chromatic cousins; a white dragon must be on its guard at all times, for there are things that prey on *it* in the snowy wastes.

Having considered such disadvantages, let us remind ourselves that the white wyrms are lacking only in relation to the *other* Chromatic dragons. In truth they are still a terrible opponent for any man to face. Their colouring gives them a great advantage when they erupt from a snowdrift, leap from icy waters, or strike out of a cloud-laden sky. Those white drakes that survive for seven or so centuries learn much, gaining intelligence greater than man's and a strength and ferocity to rival that of the other dragons.

White worms are able to swim; they can also burrow through snow and ice. A typical lair might be in a rocky cavern on a frozen hillside; but the more aged, and thus more shrewd, amongst their number will go to great lengths to conceal their homes. The entrance might be beneath the icy waters, a flooded passageway leading to dry glacial caverns, or a large rift will be chosen into which the dragon can fly but other creatures follow at their peril. Mariners have reported icebergs into which the white wyrms have tunneled, the whole being riddled with passages and caves carved

out of the ice, some below the water level. From such floating eeries the white dragons descend on passing ships to kill and plunder.

Just as white dragons admire the sparkling of diamonds, so too do they marvel at icicles, and they are careful not to break those that form in their lairs. When a young wyrm will simply launch itself in savage attack against those that invade its den, the wiser ones will break free the prized icicles with a flick of wing or tail so that they fall like a rain of spears upon their adversaries.

These frost-breathing drakes exude a numbing cold, their freezing breath further chilling an atmosphere already likely to be bitter. The Games Master might require Fortitude saving throws each round the party is in a white dragon's lair with a DC of 15 + the dragon's age category, those failing their rolls suffering 1d3 points of cold damage.

The icy floors of the wyrm's caverns are a challenge to themselves; to avoid slipping, a player character might need to make balance checks or Reflex saving throws. Pools of numbingly cold water or precipitous drops await those sliding too far! If the frost dragon is wise will rest on a ledge of ice high up in its cavern. As the party slips, skates and slides beneath, it will add to the predicament by letting out gusts of frozen breath. To reach the wyrm, the party must make a hazardous climb and the dragon will be sure to crouch low, showing only its head and sinuous neck, so missiles will often miss it. Once the party is sufficiently weakened the dragon will glide down to the cave floor to wreak bloody destruction with fang and claw.

Being both chaotic and dim-witted, the younger white dragons rarely co-operate with other beings. Older wyrms might have winter wolves as watchdogs and ettins as guards. Frost giants are hated and shunned.



lair. The two massive polar bears are adept at attacking from ambush.

Polar Bears (2)

Large Animal

Hit Dice: 12d8+48 (102 hp and 115 hp).

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex).

Speed: 40 ft, swim 30 ft.

AC: 15 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +5 natural).

Attacks: 2 claws +16 melee, bite +11 melee.

Damage: Claw 1d8+8, bite 2d8+4.

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: Improved grab.

Special Qualities: Scent.

Saves: Fort +12, Ref +9, Will +5.

Abilities: Str 27, Dex 13, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills: Hide -2, Listen +7, Spot +10.

Challenge Rating: 5

Alignment: Neutral

2. This iced-over pond is 30 ft. deep; at the bottom is an up-sloping passage that leads into Harfrast's lair. The water is extremely cold, so unless magically shielded against its chill, adventurers must make Fortitude saves at DC 20 each round they are submerged or take 1d10 points of damage.

In order to access the waters the ice must first be broken or melted. The ice here is about four inches thick. If heavy blows are struck against the ice, Harfrast will be alerted and will begin magical preparations.

3. Finding this icy entrance is difficult unless bright light is present. In darkness Spot checks at DC 25 are required.

The passage is 30 feet long, has a steep upward gradient and is flooded part of its length. The players do not clear the chill waters until the sharp south-west turn (see map).

Once clear of the water, adventurers must make Balance checks each round at DC 25 (30 if they hustle, 35 if they run or charge), as all is coated with a thick layer of ice; those that fail fall and must spend a round rising.

4. This 35-foot-diameter spherical chamber is the abode of a remorhaz (see *Core Rulebook III*). It has 95 hp and is 25% likely to be at the position marked (R)

either the dragon hides from them or, if strong enough, kills and devours them as soon as they are met. Too many of its cousins have been subdued into slavery or provided hide for the frost giants' shields and armour! Ice mephits and even hellish osyluth and gelugon devils have been reported in the ice castles of the greatest white wyrms.

Harfrast's Glacial Grotto

In the sagas of the Norsemen much is told of Harfrast and his hoard; would your party risk all to gain his riches and win a great reputation amongst the iron-hard northrons?

1. This is a large body of water that is thick with ice at its edges. A mated pair of very big polar bears (HD 12) hunt in this locale. Harfrast is wise enough to let them be; they are savage when protecting 'their' territory, so they are his 'pickets', the first line of defence for his

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on the map at the time the party enters the lair. Noise of combat here certainly alerts Harfrast.

5. This 30-foot by 30-foot square chamber is home to a frost worm (see *Core Rulebook III*). It has 175 hp and is 15% likely to be at the point marked (F) on the map when the party first enters the lair. Noise of combat here will also alert Harfrast.

Note that the remorhaz and frost worm are natural enemies over which Harfrast exerts control through training and coercion. Each spends most of its time on the surface hunting seals, walrus and other prey. Sounds of combat will draw either of these creatures to its source. If they are in striking range of each other the Games Master should roll randomly for their targets assigning an equal probability for *each* player character and the rival monster to be the subject of attack.

6. This is a steeply sloping shelf of ice with a 1 in 2 upward gradient. Harfrast navigates it easily using his *icewalking* ability, but a player hoping to do the same will find it most difficult (Climb check, DC 35). It extends laterally for 25 feet to area (7), the resting place of Harfrast the dragon.

7. This is a domed niche some 35 feet in breadth and 20 feet deep. It is laden with treasure and has a scaly, ice-cold occupant.

Harfrast, very old white dragon

Huge Dragon (Cold)

Hit Dice: 27d12+162 (337 hp).

Initiative: +4 (Improved Initiative).

Speed: 60 ft, fly 200 ft (poor), swim 60 ft, burrow 30 ft.

AC: 34 (-2 size, +26 natural).

Attacks: Bite +35 melee, 2 claws +30 melee, 2 wings +30 melee, tail slap +30 melee, crush attack +30 melee.

Damage: Bite 2d8+10, claw 2d6+5, wing 1d8+5, tail slap 2d6+15, crush attack 2d8+15.

Face/Reach: 10 ft. by 20 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: Breath weapon: cone of cold, 50 feet long, every 1d4 rounds, damage 9d6, Reflex half DC 29; frightful presence (DC 25); freezing fog; other spell-like abilities.

Special Qualities: Blindsight, cold subtype, DR 15/+2 immunities, keen senses, icewalking, SR 23.

Saves: Fort +21, Ref +17, Will +17.

Abilities: Str 31, Dex 10, Con 23, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 14.

Skills: Bluff +29, Concentration +33, Diplomacy +33, Escape Artist +27, Listen +31, Search +29, Sense Motive +29, Spellcraft +29, Spot +31.

Feats: Cleave, Hover, Flyby Attack, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Snatch, Improved Initiative, Maximise Breath Weapon.

Challenge Rating: 16.

Alignment: Chaotic evil.

Spells Known: (0-level) *daze, detect magic, disrupt undead, flare, mage hand, read magic, resistance*; (1st level) *colour spray, endure elements, feather fall, summon monster I, unseen servant*; (2nd level) *invisibility, scare, summon monster II*; (3rd level) *dispel magic, major image*.

Harfrast can cast 6 cantrips, 7 first level, 7 second level and 4 third level spells from the above list per day as a 7th level sorcerer.

If alerted by the shattering of the ice at area (2) or combat with either of its 'pets', Harfrast will have cast *endure elements, invisibility* and *major image* before the party enters area (6) below. Unless the adventurers are able to detect invisibility or see through illusions they will believe the white dragon to be at the base of the ice shelf for Harfrast has made an illusion of himself there. Harfrast will maintain concentration for such time as the party detects the ruse, doing so both to drain off some of the party's magic and also to assess the threat made by each member.

Eventually he releases his frosty breath and then attacks with offensive magic and summoning spells. As party members reach melee range he slides down the ice ramp, overrunning any before him. Thereafter he flees his lair, not to give up the battle but in preparation for continuing it on the wing once the party leaves and returns to the surface.

And here at the Cytaean mainland and from the Amarantine Mountains far away and the Circaean plain, eddying Phasis rolls his broad stream to the sea. Guide your ship to the mouth of that river and ye shall behold the towers of Cytaean Aetes and the shady grove of Ares, where a dragon, a monster terrible to behold, ever glares around, keeping watch over the fleece that is spread upon the top of an oak; neither by day nor by night does sweet sleep subdue his restless eyes.'

The Argonautica by Apollonius Rhodius c.3rd Century BC

Note that while the remorhaz or frost worm remain alive, they will be drawn to the sound of battle and the party might face three huge arctic horrors at once!

Harfrast's Treasure

Tortoise shell hairbrush decorated with pearls and garnets worth 1,700 gp; huge citrine worth 100 gp; ivory scroll case with platinum rune inlays worth 1,200 gp; silver dagger with sapphire in its pommel worth 1,300 gp; silver dagger with topaz in its pommel worth 300 gp; silver coffer worth 80 gp; silver crown (formerly the property of a northron prince) worth 1,300 gp; long-ship fashioned from carved crystal worth 1,200 gp; silver and platinum sceptre (formerly the property of a northron king) worth 4,000 gp; ceremonial shield, inlaid with gold and platinum, boss fashioned to resemble a boar's head, worth 2,000 gp; sapphire worth 1,000 gp; diamond worth 3,000 gp; silver and platinum-chased breast plate worth 1,500 gp; small silver hand worth 50 gp; ivory comb worth 20 gp; gold ring worth 25 gp; gold bracelet worth 60 gp; carved walrus tusk worth 200 gp; ivory and amber hairpin worth 20 gp; silver-bound walrus tusk drinking horn set with coral worth 600 gp; hunting knife with silver hilt worth 60 gp; large ivory box carved with whale hunting scene worth 650 gp; large ivory box carved with war scene worth 600 gp; platinum brooch worth 500 gp; platinum brooch, set with sapphire, worth 2,000 gp; platinum drinking flask worth 1,700 gp; platinum ring set with emerald worth 1,000 gp; gold necklace with sapphire pendant worth 1,700 gp; electrum bracelet worth 300 gp; ornamental gold vambraces worth 3,000 gp; silver earrings worth 30 gp; silver cup worth 20 gp; ivory chessboard inlaid with jade worth 1,700 gp; silver box worth 700 gp; gold cloak pin worth 300 gp; silver war helm worth 400 gp; gold ceremonial spear worth 4,000 gp; gold cup worth 180 gp; platinum torc worth 3,000 gp; mound of 27,000 gp in which are also buried three minor *potions*; one major *rod*; one medium *rod*; two medium *staves*; one minor *wand*; *bastard sword* +1; *hand axe* +3; *shortbow* +2.

THE ABYSSAL SERPENT'S LAIR

The depths of the Abyss and the remote regions of the world, such as the craters of active volcanoes or caves of glacial ice are home to abyssal serpents. Few of these dragons ever make lairs on the material plane, but those who do select areas that are extremely remote and hazardous to most other creatures.

The lair of an abyssal serpent on the material plane is usually difficult to find because of the unusual

locations that these wyrms call home, but the abyssal serpent will make no extra effort to disguise its lair. Often, large chunks of broken rock or ice may be found at the entrance of the lair, due to the fact that abyssal serpents have a great bulk, and frequently dislodge pieces of material surrounding their lairs when entering.

Abyssal serpents that reside in the Abyss usually select areas that are similar to their favoured locales on the material plane, such as fiery volcanoes and icy glaciers, to construct their lairs, which are usually located close to the palaces of their masters.

Regardless of the location of their home, the lairs of these wyrms are huge; twisted, convoluted passageways serve to confuse the rare interlopers who come across an abyssal serpent's home. Piles of bone periodically litter the floor and bloodstains coat the walls of the passages; these are grim reminders of the malicious nature of these dragons. Abyssal serpents delight in tormenting other creatures, and devise all sorts of clever and cruel traps to injure adventurers, ranging from spiked pits to deadfall traps.

Abyssal serpents are very innovative and use the decaying remains of past victims in order to both decorate passageways and chambers, as well as to instil fear into the hearts of any intruders. Rotting intestines are used as gruesome garlands to line the walls. Corpses, mangled and torn up, frequently torn apart and then 'reassembled' to suit the dragon's taste, function as grotesque statues. Blood, along with dung, is used to paint the walls of the abyssal serpent's lair. Impaled heads are placed upon stalagmites, whilst other organs from unfortunate victims lie in thick piles, so that they might decay further and provide the wyrm with a pungent meal at a later time.

The central portion of an abyssal serpent's lair is usually composed of several large caverns. The largest cavern is the sleeping area of the serpent; unlike most other dragons, abyssal serpents rarely sleep on piles of treasure, instead preferring to sleep in mounds of dung atop piles of festering corpses and bones. The stench of this area is overwhelming; at the Games Master's discretion, player characters may have to make Fortitude saves at DC 15 to avoid becoming violently sick to their stomach. Those who fail suffer a -2 circumstance penalty to all attacks and the loss of any dodge bonus. In addition, those affected must make Concentration checks (DC 20) to cast any spells. These effects persist until the character leaves the area for at least ten minutes.

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Other caverns are frequently used to imprison creatures that the abyssal serpent has captured in order to torment and torture. Such caverns rarely contain more than two or three creatures at any given time, since abyssal serpents usually unintentionally kill captured creatures quite quickly.

Of all the dragons, abyssal serpents are among the most terrible and cruel. They delight in discovering more heinous and brutal ways of slaying their victims, in order to satisfy their sadistic needs. Abyssal serpents will rip off various body parts of their captives and then let the victim go, leaving the creature to die from blood loss or by stumbling into one of the dragon's many traps. Victims are also frequently starved and then set free in the passages of the serpent's lair, enabling the abyssal serpent to indulge in a hunt. Perhaps the only fortunate thing for captured creatures is that they will only suffer for a relatively short length of time; abyssal serpents lack the patience to torture their victims slowly, instead preferring to violently slaughter their prey.

Balbezor's Dark Domain

In the depths of the Abyss lies the lair of Balbezor, scourge of demons. Legends whisper of the dragon's terrible power and awesome might; who save the most heroic and courageous would dare face it?

Balbezor's lair is hewn from the solid rock. A noxious green gas spews from the fissures and fractures that pock the walls, making breathing difficult. The floor is blanketed with a sickly layer of slime that clings to the boots of adventurers. An unnatural, perpetual, darkness fills Balbezor's domain; it is so dark that creatures with low light or darkvision are unable to see. *Light* spells, *continual flame* spells, lanterns and torches will function in the inky gloom but illuminate only half their normal area.

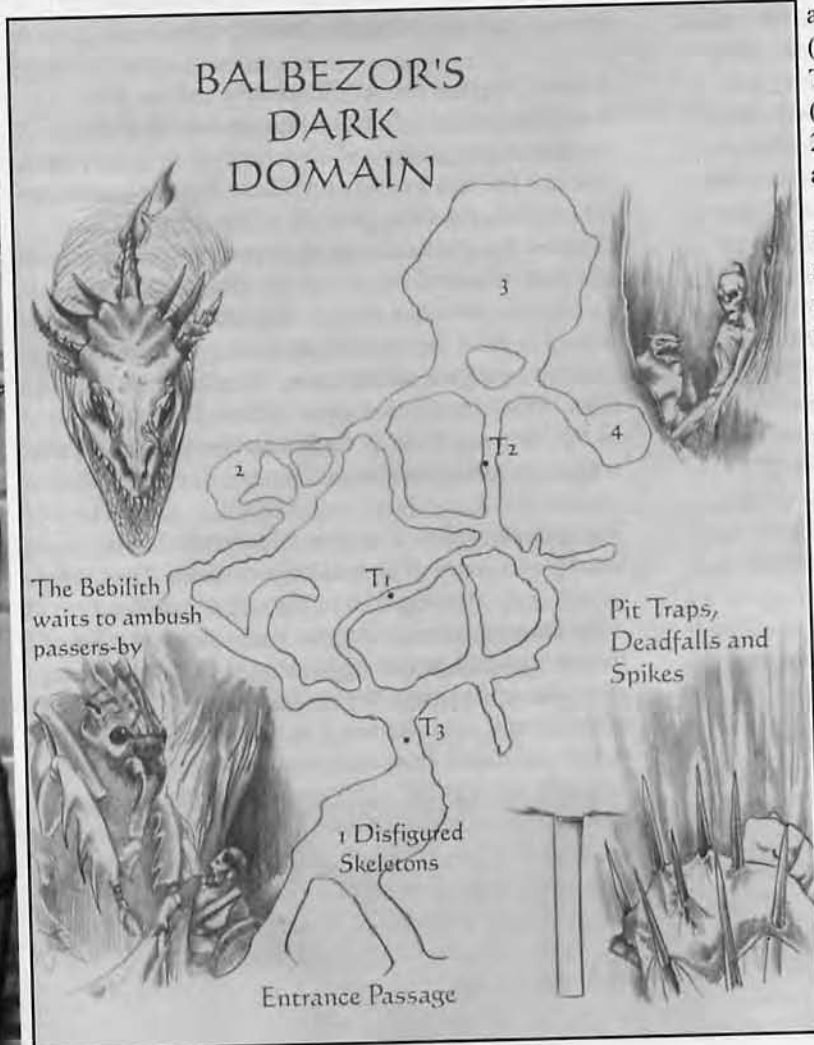
T1- Pit Trap 80 ft. Deep: CR 4; No attack roll necessary (8d6); Reflex Save (DC 20) avoids; Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20).

T2- Spiked Pit Trap 80 ft. Deep: CR 6, No attack roll necessary (8d6), +10 melee (2d4 spikes for 1d4+5 per successful hit); Reflex Save (DC 20) avoids; Search (DC 20), Disable Device (DC 20).

T3- Falling Block Trap: CR 5; +15 mele (6d6); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 25). Note: Can strike all characters in two adjacent specified squares.

1. Several bizarrely shaped figures can be seen here. Upon closer inspection the true nature of these figures becomes apparent: they are the skeletons of humanoid creatures. Whereas most skeletons are a semblance of their former selves, these skeletons are horribly disfigured. Bones have been wrenched free from their sockets and placed in a new location. The skeletons are ghastly, warped versions of humanoid creatures; femurs sit in the place of skulls, multiple humeruses attached at odd angles sit in the pelvic girdle where femurs are normally attached and skulls are placed inside the ribcage, or at the bottom of the tibia, where the metatarsals should connect to the leg. These grotesque 'statues' stand somewhat erect, listing at crazy angles.

This is the work of Balbezor, who slaughtered an adventuring party who attempted to slay the dragon years ago and then set up their skeletons as a warning to others who might dare entry to its domain.



In its arrogance Baalbezor has not placed any guards in its lair. Confidence in its terrible capabilities has made the serpent complacent.

2. This is the residence of a bebilith that has gone into hiding in Balbezor's passageways, having fallen out with a larger and nastier demon. Balbezor is unaware of the demon's presence; the beast does its best to avoid alerting the wyrm. Due to the rather limited food supply in the passageways the bebilith is starving and will ambush adventurers at the first opportunity.

Bebilith

Huge Outsider (Chaotic, evil)

Hit Dice: Hit Dice 12d8+48 (102 hp).

Initiative: +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative).

Speed: 40 ft., climb 20 ft.

AC: 25 (-2 size, +1 Dex, +16 natural).

Attacks: Bite +19 melee, 2 claws +14 melee.

Damage: Bite 2d6+9 and poison, claw 2d4+4 and armour damage.

Face/Reach: 15 ft. by 15ft/10 ft.

Special Attacks: Web, Poison, Armour damage.

Special Qualities: Damage reduction 30/+3, protective aura, plane shift, scent, telepathy.

Saves: Fort +12, Ref +9, Will +9.

Abilities: Str 28, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 13.

Skills: Climb +21, Hide +11, Jump +21, Listen +17, Move Silently +15, Search +14, Sense Motive +15, Spot +17.

Feats: Alertness, Cleave, Improved Initiative, Power Attack.

Challenge Rating: 9

Alignment: Chaotic evil

The bebilith will try to catch the rear member of the adventuring party in a web, allowing it to poison, and quickly slay, the character. If it attracts the attention of other adventurers it will use its webs to immobilise them. In melee it will utilise Power Attack and its ability to destroy armour, so as to quickly incapacitate enemy fighters and clerics.

3. Balbezor resides here, atop a stinking pile of carrion and dung. Most of the time the serpent drifts in and out of a fitful sleep, but its sharp ears will catch the slightest sounds the party makes while approaching its inner abode as it will have cast its *wakeful slumber* spell.

Balbezor, Ancient Abyssal Serpent

Gargantuan Dragon (Tanar'ri)

Hit Dice: 33d12+231 (445 hp).

Initiative: -1.

Speed: 40 ft; fly 200 ft (clumsy).

AC: 34 (-4 size, -1 Dex, +29 natural).

Attacks: Bite +41 melee, 2 claws +36 melee, 2 wings +36, tail slap +36, crush, tail sweep.

Damage: Bite 4d6+12, claws 2d8+6, wings 2d6+6, tail slap 2d8+18, crush 4d6+18, tail sweep 2d6+18.

Face/Reach: 20 ft. by 40 ft. / 15 ft.

Special Attacks: Stunning roar, breath weapon: cone of black vapour, 60ft long, every 1d4 rounds, 20d8 damage, Reflex save for half damage DC 33.

Special Qualities: Blindsight, immunities, keen senses, Tanar'ri qualities, plane shift, damage reduction +25/+3, lying word, summon Tanar'ri, SR 30, Fear DC 29.

Saves: Fort +25, Ref +17, Will +19.

Abilities: Str 34, Dex 8, Con 24, Int 19, Wis 12, Cha 17.

Skills: Appraise +37, Bluff +36, Concentration +39, Diplomacy +31, Intimidate +28, Knowledge (Abyss) +37, Listen +34, Search +37, Sense Motive +24, Spellcraft +37, Spot +34, Wilderness Lore +31.

Feats: Cleave, Flyby Attack, Great Cleave, Hover, Power Attack, Snatch, Sunder, Quicken Spell-like Ability, Wingover.

Challenge Rating: 22

Alignment: Chaotic evil

Balbezor can cast 6 cantrips, 7 1st-level, 7 2nd-level, 7 3rd-level, 6 4th-level, 6 5th-level, 6 6th-level, and 4 7th-level spells per day. Spell DC is 13 + spell level. It knows the following spells:

0-level: *Daze, Dancing Lights, Detect Magic, Flare, Ghost Sound, Light, Mage Hand, Read Magic, Scratch**.

1st-level: *Dragon Spit, Mage Armour, Protection From Good, Shield, Spider Climb.*

2nd-level: *Protection From Arrows, Resist Elements, Sheltering Egg, Summon Monster II, Web.*

3rd-level: *Dispel Magic, Displacement, Hold Person, Wakeful Slumber.*

4th-level: *Aerial Manoeuvrability, Dimension Door, Fire Shield, Summon Monster IV.*

5th-level: *Dismissal, Feeblemind, Nimble Drake, Summon Monster V.*

6th-level: *Circle of Death, Draconic Eye of Doom, Mass Suggestion.*

7th-level: *Adamantine Scales, Forcecage.*

Balbezor will immediately use its *lying word* in order to provide itself with some amusement as the PCs butcher one another. Once the adventurers have done a significant amount of damage to each other the serpent will wade into the melee, taking delight at rending

party members with its claws and ripping them apart with its jaws. If the party survives this initial assault it will use its breath weapon and stunning roar. Thereafter Balbezor will summon a demon to its aid. If sorely pressed, Balbezor will flee. The adventurers will have earned an enemy that will not rest while they still live.

Balbezor's Hoard

50,000 gold pieces; 10 gems, (rubies, sapphires, emeralds etc) valued at 5,000 gp each; Silver gauntlets valued at 500 gp/pair; engraved horn worth 700 gp; 5 brooches valued at 50-500 gp a piece; 7 sets of earrings worth 20-70 gp per pair; idol of a demon lord worth 7,000 gp; diamond necklace worth 2,000 gp; ruby necklace worth 2,500 gp; silver chain necklace valued at 50 gp; black sapphire holy symbol worth 350 gp; masterwork longsword made of high quality steel with an ivory-inlaid hilt, valued at 1,300 gp; 7 rings valued between 5-100 gp a piece; platinum goblet worth 80 gp; *horn of goodness*; *bracers of armour* +6; *helm of teleportation*; *iron bands of bilarro*; *rod of thunder and lightning*; *ring of counterspells*; *deck of many things*; *mace of blood*; *frostbrand* +3 *greatsword*; +2 *mace of disruption*; +3 *mithril chainmail*; +4 *dancing dagger*; +5 *studded leather of silent moves*; 3 scroll cases containing randomly determined spells.

4. Prisoners of Balbezor reside in this area. Currently there is just one prisoner - a dretch that Balbezor captured. It is starving and extremely weak but, if rescued will co-operate with the party until an opportunity to escape presents itself.

Dretch

Small Outsider (Chaotic, evil)

Hit Dice: 2d8 (9 hp).

Initiative: +0.

Speed: 20 ft.

AC: 16 (+1 Dex, +5 natural).

Attacks: 2 claws +3 melee, bite +1 melee.

Damage: 1d3 subdual (reduced due to weak state).

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5ft.

Special Attacks: Spell-like abilities, Summon Tanar'ri

Special Qualities: Damage Reduction 5/silver, SR 5, tanar'ri qualities.

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +3.

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 5, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Feats: Multiattack.

Challenge Rating: 2.

Alignment: Chaotic Evil.

THE HELL WORM'S LAIR

Far beneath the world in caverns dim and deep reside the young hell worms. Those born into our world might count their hell-born kindred fortunate, for the infant drake faces mighty challenges in the unfathomable, bottomless hollows in which matriarchal hell-worms lay their eggs when visiting the material plane.

Fearful and fearsome are the new-born hell worms, fearful of things stronger than they which might steal away their treasures or force them into servitude, whilst fearsome they are to all beings weaker than themselves, for they have an overwhelming desire to dominate and control other living things, destroying those that resist their will.

Thus the youngest and weakest of this breed – those with but one or two heads – seek out a nesting place in some dark crevice. This is usually far from those routes in the underdark that are commonly travelled, and hard to approach unless the would-be interloper has wings. They hide from the drow, mind flayers, kuo-toa and other horrors of the yawning underworld that would gladly slay or enslave them, biding their time until they themselves are strong enough to strike, to become killer and master rather than victim or slave.

As their third and fourth heads grow the hell worms become bolder, no longer hiding themselves but beginning to forge alliances by force and intimidation. Now a great cavern will be their lair, lit by luminous fungi, warded by the horrors of the dark, and containing the magicks and treasures they have plundered.

Once able to plane shift the dragon will establish contacts in Hell; while some permanently migrate there others prefer to remain in the material plane where opportunities for self-aggrandisement are plentiful.

The five-headed dragon will turn its snout towards the upper, sunlit realms and begin a long, dangerous journey upwards from the bowels of the earth towards the lands of men and elves. Woe to the unfortunate realm it reaches for now it will seek dominion over all other evil things, mustering a force of humanoids to do its will, and making alliances with wicked folk who might help it.

The dreadful Baal Shiruat marshals the endeavours of the hell worms, providing hellish assistance when required and collecting tribute from his mother's kin here in the worlds she so thoroughly despises.

Unless checked before its powers fully mature, the dragon will grow in ferocity and power, establishing a diabolical enclave that only the most daring of adventurers will risk.

Hell's Black Temple – Molkreth's Lair

Far from mankind's usual haunts, in mountains bleak and perilous, stands a weathered fane, a place of evil, where, in years long passed, wicked folk offered bloody sacrifices to the arch-devils of hell's nine planes. It is said that occult secrets are locked within, but that the place has guardians most horrid; will the adventurers of your campaign brave its terrors?

Special Notes: Each time a spell is cast inside the temple by a non-Lawful Evil spell caster there is a 1% chance per level of the spell that 1-3 osyluth devils (see *Core Rulebook III*) will appear to investigate. This chance increases to 10% per level of the spell if an attempt is made to pass through or otherwise breach the interior or exterior walls. Any character becoming ethereal is 50% likely to encounter 1d3 insane ghosts, victims of sacrifice (use ghost from *Core Rulebook III*). Lastly, good-aligned divine spell casters run a risk of spell failure in the temple confines. This is 10% at area 2, 20% at area 3 and so on up to a 60% chance at area 7.

1. A black block-like building, windowless and tall, looms over the party; each of its sheer outer walls measures 150 feet, its flat roof is some fifty feet above the party. The entrance is without warding portal or guardian and yet a palpable evil hangs over the place.

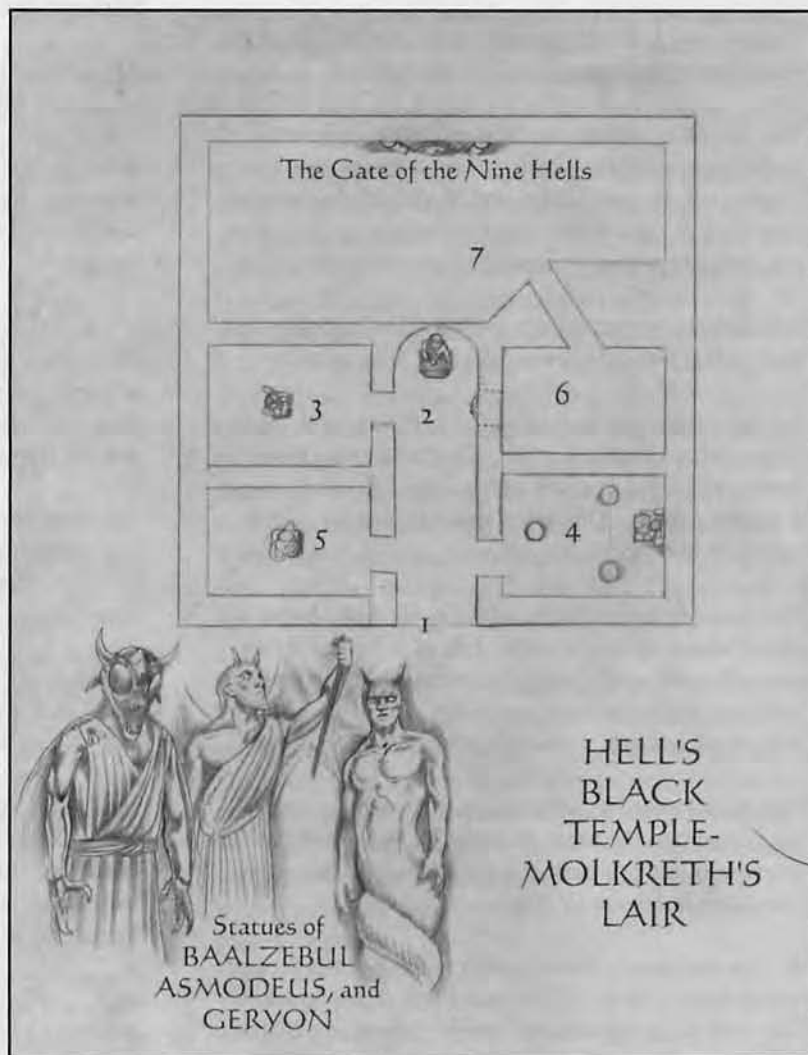
2. The entrance passage is 12 feet wide and 20 feet high (all passages have these dimensions while chambers have vaulted ceilings some 40 ft. high), it is flagged with crimson tiles engraved with images of writhing monsters and tormented souls. The walls are carved with devilish faces, the eyes of which seem to follow the party as they head within.

Some 30 feet in a niche to the north holds a statue of the arch-devil Asmodeus. He is shown as a handsome man, beauty radiating from every well-chiselled feature. Were it not for the two horns sprouting from his brow, he would seem more god than devil. In his right

hand he holds a rod seemingly fashioned from ruby but this is an illusion (DC 25 to disbelieve), any character attempting to remove it must make a Fortitude save (DC 27) or die – at that moment the statue's features change, the mask of beauty slipping to reveal a sinister countenance. The statue radiates both magic (illusion/necromancy) and evil.

If a lawful evil cleric character offers sacrifice to Asmodeus, an offering of blood, magic and gold, the wall to the north vanishes allowing direct passage to area 7.

3. This chamber is flagged with black stone, it is sacred to Baalzebul the lord of flies. He is depicted by a 12-foot tall statue in the room's centre as a horned monstrosity with fly-like eyes. One round after the party enters, a *stinking cloud* issues forth from the statue's mouth and fills the whole room (Fortitude save DC 22). One round after that a Gelugon devil appears in the room and attacks (*Core Rulebook III*).



4. The ceiling of this chamber is supported by three iron pillars. A statue and throne of the same metal rests against the eastern wall. Here the arch-devil Dispatier is depicted as a handsome man with small horns, and a cloven hoof in place of his left foot.

A powerful illusion is in effect here (DC 27 to disbelieve); the party sees six nubile young women clad in gossamer garments kneeling at the statue's base. They proffer the adventurers goblets of crimson wine and whisper of sensuous pleasures yet to come. All male adventurers believing in the illusion must make a Will save (DC 22) or sit themselves with these women and taste the wine – doing so requires a Fortitude save (DC 18) as it is poisoned with dark reaver powder (*Core Rulebook II*).

Once the wine is tasted, or if all party members refuse it, the illusion fades; the adventurers find themselves sat in the company of grotesque zombies with gaping mouths and rotting flesh that reach out with withered arms to embrace them.

Zombies (4) 3 HD/22 hp each - see *Core Rulebook III*. They cannot be turned here in hell's temple.

The two other women are erinyes devils; they retain their beauty once the illusion fades but now they can be seen as tall, winged beings with dark and sinister eyes (see *Core Rulebook III*). They try to stay out of melee, preferring to *charm* or *entangle* party members.

Adventurers inspecting the goblets after the battle find that each is a simple pewter affair of little value.

5. Here, foul Geryon is depicted in statue form; he is shown with a handsome, man-like head and a powerful human torso, but in place of his legs is a coiled, serpentine trunk. This latter appendage is set with a scorpion-like stinger.

The statue is in the middle of the room and, should a player character come within 5 ft. of it the tail lashes out with a +8 attack bonus; those hit take 2d4 damage and must make Fortitude saves (DC 22) or take an additional 1d6 initial and secondary Strength damage.

One round after the party enters, six minotaurs are teleported into the room and attack; during combat they attempt to drive or push characters close to the statue (see *Core Rulebook III* page).

6. The entrance to this chamber is a magically locked secret door, a 10 ft. x 15 ft. panel that slides upwards. The wall is carved with the representation of a diabolic

grinning face, a greenish radiance flows from its eyes while a reddish hue plays about the mouth; evil and magic can be detected. Good-aligned characters must make a Will save (DC 15) to approach the carving.

The door slides upwards if both eyes are pressed simultaneously (it opens automatically if Molkreth wants to pass through); if the mouth is touched it spits forth a fireball for 8d6 damage. The search DC for finding the door is 20. While a rogue cannot disarm the trap a successful Search check (DC 24) allows them to note charring around the mouth, and on the walls of the passage, that might give some forewarning.

The chamber beyond (area 6 itself) has mauve floor tiles and faded wall drapes of mottled brown. From here a passage slants to the north-west, leading to area 7, Molkreth's lair and the heart of this unholy place.

7. Here is the inner sanctum of this diabolical edifice; it is a nexus point from which a mortal can pass into any of hell's nine planes, and it is also the lair of Molkreth the hell worm.

An archway is set into the north wall, a nauseous swirl of colours fills it; any creature speaking the name of one of Hell's planes may walk through the arch and arrive in that diabolical place. Molkreth's task here is to protect the archway from unauthorised use and to charge a toll upon any of Hell's servants who wish to use it.

If a lawful evil cleric opens the magic passage at (2), Molkreth will accept as tribute those items and monies offered by the priest in tribute to Asmodeus. Providing these items have a value in excess of 2,000 gp the cleric and his companions will be allowed to use the archway.

The floor here is composed of blood-red tiles; the walls are covered in pentagrams and other diabolical symbols as well as the images of ravening devils and blasphemous revelries.

Molkreth will have heard the party's battles as they made their way through the temple and is thus ready and waiting for them.

**Molkreth, Young Adult Hell Worm
Huge Dragon**

Hit Dice: 16d12+64 (168 hp).

Initiative: +0.

Speed: 60 ft, fly 200 ft (poor), swim 60 ft, burrow 30 ft.

AC: 22 (-2 size, +14 natural).

Attacks: 5 bites +21 melee, 4 claws +16 melee (but

only if it is airborne and the target beneath it), 2 wings +16 melee, tail slap +16 melee, crush +16 melee
Damage: Bite 2d8+7, claw 2d6+3, wings 1d8+3, tail slap 2d6+10, crush 2d8+10.

Face/Reach: 10 ft by 20 ft / 10 ft.

Special Attacks: breath weapons (DC 22): white head 5d6, black head 9d4, green head 4d6, blue head 2d8, red head 1d10 every 1d4 rounds; frightful presence DC 19; death dance.

Special Qualities: Baatezu qualities, blindsight, damage reduction 10/+1, plane shift, keen senses, SR 15.

Saves: Fort +14, Ref +10, Will +12.

Abilities: Str 25, Dex 10, Con 19, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 13.

Skills: Appraise +21, Bluff +12, Diplomacy +24, Listen +21, Search +21, Sense Motive +21, Spellcraft +21, Spot +21.

Feats: Chew, Cleave, Hover, Power Attack.

Challenge Rating: 14.

Alignment: Lawful evil.

Molkreth can cast six cantrips, seven first level, and five second level spells per day at caster level 5. Spell DC is 11 + spell level. It knows the following magic: (0-level) *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *flare*, *read magic*, *slither*; (1st level) *charm person*, *colour spray*, *mage armour*, *ray of enfeeblement*; (2nd level) *blur*, *air brake*.

Molkreth will have cast his *mage armour* and *blur* spells before the party enters area 7. Molkreth hopes to drive the party out of the temple, as it would much prefer to be airborne in a battle. If Molkreth fails to ward the archway, Asmodeus will end its life, so the wyrm will neither retreat nor seek to surrender – combat here will be to the death.

The dragon will begin a *death dance* upon first sighting the party. Thereafter it uses its breath weapons and then enters melee. During the battle it will utilise a breath weapon in preference to any other attack but at least one head per round will cast a spell, probably *charm person*, or *colour spray* if enemies are in a tight group.

Heaped along the west wall are the treasures collected by Molkreth;

1,802 platinum pieces; 900 gold pieces; 2,200 silver pieces; silver statuette of Asmodeus worth 500 gp; black sapphire on a gold chain worth 1,500 gp; long ivory whistle worth 200 gp; heavy gold brooch worth 500 gp; fan set in a silver frame with the image of skull

on one side and a woman's face on the other worth 200 gp; marble statuette of Dispaten apparently worth 200 gp but fine workmanship adds an extra 1,000 gp if sold to an art collector (or evil temple...); three sets of silver manacles each worth 100 gp; 2,000 gp diamond hidden in a crack between floor tiles (search DC 15 to find.); medium scroll with six arcane spells; *longsword +1*; one major rod; one medium staff; one minor wand.

If, after defeating Molkreth, the party seeks to seal the archway and succeeds in preventing its further use (this could require a trip into Hell if the Games Master desires) a Solar (see *Core Rulebook III*) appears to them outside the temple and resurrects any good-aligned adventurers that have been slain. Furthermore, as a reward for cleansing this wicked place, it grants the party a *wish*.

THE SEA DRAGON'S LAIR

The ocean depths and the bottom of fresh water lakes are home to the sea dragons. Underwater caverns and submarine grottoes provide a place of refuge against roaring storms and roaring foes alike. These mighty caves are spacious and filled with aquatic life that serves as both décor and a potential food source.

Sea dragons prefer temperate waters for building their lairs. They enjoy caves in shallower waters; here there is a greater abundance of food and the distances to beaches where the dragon might bask are not as great. It is therefore likely that sea dragons will den near warm ocean currents that are thick with marine life.

The entrance to a sea dragon's lair is usually very well hidden. Coral, boulders and aquatic vegetation are all utilised in an effort to conceal their homes from aquatic intruders. As sea dragons are highly territorial they avoid leaving their lairs for extended periods of time. When circumstances force them to do so, they depend upon such servants as sea lions to protect their dens from intrusion.

The sea dragon sleeps in a large, central cavern deep within its lair. Here it will carve out portions of the walls, creating shelves that are used to store treasures plundered from sunken ships. Crustaceans, molluscs, marine vegetation and other forms of water-breathing life reside in a sea dragon's habitat. It is said that these wyrms deliberately transplant oysters or great fresh water clams into their lairs so as to have a continual supply of pearls.

Serastyn's Aquatic Paradise

Local sailors report sighting an unusual beast of the deep; some claim that the beast is a dragon that dwells in sunken ships. Fishermen are fearful and coastal traders greatly concerned, so a reward is offered for the head of the beast. Will the heroes of your campaign explore the shallows of the sea to find the home of Serastyn the sea dragon? And if they do find it, will they kill the gentle young creature they find?

Serastyn lives in an underwater cavern in a shallow bay. Nearby fisher-folk can point out the areas she usually frequents. The Games Master can prolong the adventure as much as is desired by inserting numerous underwater encounters while the party searches for the dragon.

The floor of the cavern is filled with a rich abundance of sea life; crabs, coral, clams, oysters, sea snails, sea urchins, barnacles, star fish, kelp and all sorts of other creatures inhabit the home of the dragon. Adventurers require spells or magical items to breathe as Serastyn's lair is completely submerged.

1. The entrance to Serastyn's den is concealed by a thick bed of kelp (Spot DC 20 to notice the passage). A pair of sea lions will attack intruders entering the passageway. The lions are willing servants of Serastyn; she provides them with food and shelter and in return they guard the entrance to her domain.

Sea Lions (2)

Large Beasts

Hit Dice: 6d10+18 (48 and 53 hp).

Initiative: +1 (Dex).

Speed: 40 ft.

AC: 18 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +8 Natural)

Attacks: 2 claws +7 melee, bite +2 melee.

Damage: Claw 1d6+4, bite 1d8+2.

Face/Reach: 5ft by 10ft/5 ft .

Special Attacks: Rend 2d6+6.

Special Qualities: Scent.

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +3

Abilities: Str 19, Dex 12, Con 17, Int 4, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Skills: Listen +7, Spot +7

Challenge Rating: 4

Alignment: Neutral

The sea lions attack the intruders upon sight and fight to the death. Both target the same player hoping for a quick kill.

2. Serastyn stays here most of the time. She rests on a bed of treasure but awakens at the sound of combat. Intruders entering her inner sanctum are attacked immediately, the assault continuing until they flee. However, a cautious party that attempts a parlay, perhaps bringing a rich gift of food or treasure, can forestall her attack. If her sea lions are dead, Serastyn will be grief-stricken and only a substantial gift of precious things will appease her.

A party that befriends the sea dragon might be shown the location of sunken wrecks, brimming with treasures and



evil foes, or be lead to the kingdoms of the merfolk in the far away depths.

Serastyn, Very Young Sea Dragon

Small Dragon (water)

Hit Dice: 7d12+7 (52 hp).

Initiative: +0.

Speed: 40 ft, fly 75ft (poor), swim 40ft.

AC: 19 (+1 size, +8 natural).

Attacks: Bite +9 melee, 2 claws +4 melee.

Damage: Bite 1d6+1, claw 1d4.

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft. / 5 ft.

Special Attacks: breath weapon: cone of steam, 20 ft long, every 1d4 rounds, 2d6 damage, Reflex save for half damage DC 14, or line of slushy ice, 40 ft long, every 1d4 rounds, 2d6 damage, Reflex save for half damage DC 14.

Special Qualities: Blindsight, immunities, keen senses, water breathing, water walk, speak with aquatic animals.

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +7.

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 14.

Skills: Bluff +12, Diplomacy +16, Listen +11, Search +11, Sense Motive +8, Spot +11.

Feats: Cleave, Power Attack.

Challenge Rating: 3.

Alignment: Neutral.

Serastyn's Treasure

300 sp; A shell box with 20 pearls worth 21-30 gp each; 100 small pieces of corral worth 1-10 gp each; +1 cutlass; Masterwork hand axe; *potion of cure light wounds*; *ring of jumping*.

THE BRASS DRAGON'S LAIR

Travellers braving the merchant routes passing through the hot deserts and plains of the world have mixed feelings about the capricious brass dragons which lair in such arid places. Many caravans have been saved from bandits, or the depredations of a blue wyrm, by the timely intervention of a brass dragon. However, the brass dragons are not above plundering passing merchants themselves, first subduing their guards with clouds of sleep gas. Others demand 'tolls' from passing travellers, first engaging them in lengthy conversation, for this breed is renowned for its talkative nature. All in all though, the brass dragons are a blessing to travellers in the sandy wastes; they abhor evil and will do much to help those in true distress.

The lairs of these dragons will be high up a cliff face or hillside, in a cavern positioned so that as much sunlight as possible shines into its cool depths. The brass dragon will be found here in the mouth of its cave basking in the sun, or it will be on a rocky shelf nearby catching the waning afternoon rays.

As these dragons love light and warmth, and have no reason to concern themselves with the rainfall that is so rare in their environment, they oft times fashion 'chimneys' through the roofs of their caves so that the sunlight might be let in.

As an attack by a more powerful blue wyrm is a very real threat to these dragons, they must always be on guard. Younger wyrms might block the entrance to their lair each nightfall with tons of sand. Older wyrms use their skill in burrowing to fashion false entrances to their den, a viable escape route, and areas of weakened rock that they can cause to fall upon an intruder by a mere flick of their tail.

Friendly bands of nomads might win a brass dragon as a protector, if they can endure its long-winded conversations and give it many gifts. Nomad clans might regularly set up camp in the vicinity of a brass dragon's den. Of course desert wanderers of a larcenous nature, who might think of robbing the dragon's hoard, will get a very different welcome, a fiery and bloody one at that!

If copper dragons live nearby the brass dragon will be on cordial, yet guarded, terms with them. The copper dragon's penchant for jokes, stories and riddles is pleasing to the brass dragon, even if it is often the butt of humorous pranks, but the brass wyrm must be wary of the copper dragon's covetous instincts; if the brass has more wealth than the copper dragon the latter beast may become far less good-natured, letting envy get the better of it and attempting to drive off the brass dragon so it might plunder its hoard.

Dragonnes are highly regarded, and a pride of such dangerous magical creatures are often found near the lairs of brass dragons; rarely, a single dragonne will share the brass wyrm's den.

Some brass dragons have a sweet tooth; those that do might have a hive of giant bees either in, or near, their lair. Androsphixes are well liked, and occasionally pay visits to brass dragons, or assist them in some venture.

THE BRONZE DRAGON'S LAIR

Where the waters of cool deep lakes lap against a rocky shore, or near the beaches of sea and ocean, the bronze dragon is found. It favours a warm, clement climate, mild winters and gentle summers. The entrances to its den will be found below the water, a flooded tunnel or cave leading to a dry, sandy dwelling place where the creature sleeps and stores its wealth.

Though its lair is well hidden down beneath the waves, screened with water plants and weeds, the dragon will often be found on the surface, for it is an inquisitive beast and likes to watch the ways of man and elf. Shy, it will transform itself into some innocuous form, most probably that of a waterfowl, and stray near to travellers to hear their tales. If it senses that these are good folk it might reveal its true self; it likes to learn of adventures and martial endeavours, for it is fascinated by warfare and soldiering; and one might briefly join forces with a respectable band of adventurers if it stands to profit from the enterprise.

If caught off guard it might be found frolicking in the shallower waters, enjoying the spray of surf if near the sea. It is a hunter of the depths, seeking out sunken treasures or great fish that it can eat; a bronze dragon rarely kills other animals, save those it intends to dine on, preferring to guide them out of its territory, with force if necessary, if they pose some kind of threat. Mariners have little reason to fear the bronze wyrm, but pirate ships will be destroyed where possible, their crews eaten and ill-gotten treasures spirited away to the bronze dragon's lair. Other intruders will be inspected magically to learn their intent. As a rule the dragons drive off, rather than kill, those they distrust.

The bronze dragon is very likely the linchpin in an underwater alliance of good-aligned creatures. Its Lawful nature and instincts for battle lead it to organise such coalitions where possible.

Tritons are highly regarded, and these dragons often visit their castles of coral in the ocean depths. When tritons launch a crusade against the vile sahuagin, bronze dragons leap at the chance to involve themselves in the war. While finding the chaotic sea-elves harder to understand, the bronze dragons are fond of them and will assist them when able. If storm giants share the same stretch of coast the dragon is likely to be on good terms with them.

In its lair the dragon might have one or more trained sea lions to defend its hoard, although other aquatic

beasts might be found in a similar role. It is conceivable that adventurers attempting to raid a bronze wyrm's trove will find a number of guests in its caverns: merfolk emissaries, sea-elf sorcerers seeking new powers, and triton warriors serving as guards are all possibilities.

THE COPPER DRAGON'S LAIR

In dry uplands, bluffs overlooking deserts and warm mountain ranges the copper dragon is found. These cunning tricksters can be a veritable plague to passing travellers with their practical jokes; sometimes they will descend from the sky roaring and spouting acid at nearby trees, only to pull up short to laugh at the terror they have engendered. Thereafter the unlucky wayfarers might need to answer a riddle before the dragon lets them pass, or instead it might demand a 'toll' of fresh stories and jokes; woe betide the foolish traveller who takes umbrage at such treatment—these dragons have a spiteful streak and play can turn to punishment with devastating swiftness.

Being somewhat capricious by nature these wyrms are wont to employ the most unusual of guards. If the dragon has magical abilities of suitable strength these will often be used on creatures of contrary alignment or constructs to force them into servitude in such a role.

Fearing the red dragons that so often share their terrain, copper dragons prefer to hide their caves well. The entrance will be as narrow as the wyrm's bulk allows, trees and other vegetation will screen it from prying eyes and the interior will be labyrinthine, with twists, turns and dead-ends enough to confuse the most confident mapper. It is known that these dragons sometimes fashion mazes in their lairs; partially this is for defensive purposes, but such warrens also serve to amuse the dragon. It likes to observe the blunderings of intruders as they try to negotiate the network of passages, tunnels, areas open to the sky, false exits, traps and other obstacles. These dragons have the power to shape stone to their will, so the number of hazards is limited only by the beast's ingenuity. Indeed, it has been known for these dragons to create 'dungeons' populated with captured monsters. Thereafter the wyrm makes it known that its hoard is available to one brave enough to navigate the perilous route to it.

Adventurers who accept this challenge and make it to the dragon's inner sanctum will be rewarded with gifts, but only a small fraction of its true wealth; those that demand it fulfil its word will have a fight on their hands.

of course, but those who accept the treasures given will have won an admirer and possibly an ally in the anarchic dragon whose puzzles they overcame.

THE GOLD DRAGON'S LAIR

Wise is the great gold dragon, most glorious of its kind. In caves high on mountain peaks or lofty castles in far-off valleys it reigns supreme.

Sages seek its knowledge, for the greatest of these wyrms know of things that were long ago, and of things that one day shall be; kings call for its council, or its aid in battle, for mighty are these beasts in warcraft; wizards and sorcerers pay homage to its magical skills and crave to learn an occult secret or two from its hoard of arcane insights.

Virtuous by nature, the gold dragon is apt to grant such requests if the petitioner is himself upright and honest, but gems of great value must be offered in recognition of the dragon's splendour for as with all dragons, the honourable gold wyrm is both covetous and prideful. Precious stones are deemed by such dragons a measure of their own worth, prized as much for that symbolism as for beauty and value.

Younger gold dragons will seek alliances with principled beings who share their hatred of evil and wrongdoing. Indeed, an immature member of this species might become a vassal of some powerful and good individual and have its lair in that one's demesne. As they grow in power, though, they seek a fief of their own, a place where justice will rule and where the dragon's hoard can grow.

Often adopting the form of man, these dragons will then employ giants of good will to construct beautiful and imposing fortresses for them. Such castles will be full of magnificence – floors and walls of polished ornamental stone, mosaics and frescos on floors and walls, fine statues and costly tapestries, tinkling water flowing into basins and fountains jetting silvery streams, shady gardens, opulent libraries and workrooms. Lesser dragons, trained animals, storm giants, cloud giants, and other powerful benign creatures will ward the place.

Those gold dragons preferring to lair in caverns will have no less beautiful a home, for the interior will sport outgrowths of crystals, colourful rock formations, and dwarf-wrought sculptures that makes the place a grotto of delights.

More so than other dragons, the gold will mate for life, and the couple are likely to keep their offspring with them for many centuries, if their offspring so wish to remain. A mated pair of gold dragons may have shared millennia of trials and turmoil. Their loyalty to each other is beyond question and each will fight savagely to protect the other's life.



THE SILVER DRAGON'S LAIR

The silver dragon is a merry creature. Of all dracos, it is the least motivated by greed and is far less prideful than the rest of its kin. It will willingly help mortals in distress, asking nothing in return save friendship.

Young silver dragons quite often wander the world in the guise of man. They have been known to join with bands of adventurers on some worthy quest, adopting the part of sorcerer or fighter and never revealing their true form unless the party is under such duress that not to do so would bring disaster.

On rare occasions these dragons will find a home in one of mankind's cities, dwelling there for long years with the human friends it has made, perhaps even taking a human wife or husband and living so long as a human being that they almost forget their true nature. Yet in time the call of the high places, of the lofty clouds and azure skies will summon them back to the lands of their true kin. Of course by then, these long-lived dracos will have seen all of their human companions pass away.

High atop mountain peaks, in lands pleasant and calm, airy caverns provide a home for the silver dragon that has sated its curiosity in the world far below. Yet caves and caverns are not the favoured dwelling place of these dragons; much more do they prefer a home among the clouds themselves. Here, in a misty white wonderland, they fashion areas of cloud made solid by magic whereon they lie and store up wealth. Above them is the open expanse of the sky, with its stars glimmering by night like ten thousand diamonds.

Celestial beings, human warriors, wizards and priests, as well as all manner of good-aligned monsters, might serve the silver wyrm as guards. Some employ gold and silver dragonkin and unlike most dragons the silver wyrms are sympathetic towards Metallic crossbreeds, possibly allowing one or more of lesser sort to dwell with them if they are not of evil bent.

Other creatures, if they are of a benign nature, are welcome at the silver dragon's home, be it cavern or cloudy platform. Old adventuring friends might be visiting, half-dragon children may be in residence, and a young gold wyrm might serve as a guard and stout ally. To accommodate its many human visitors, the dragon will appoint areas of its lair for their comfort; small side chambers elegantly furnished in a subterranean home, or a house or castle in the clouds.

THE DRAGON'S HOARD

Running through myths and tales of modern fiction are stories of the fabulous wealth accumulated by dragons. Heaps of gold as tall as a man and covering square yards of space provide a bed upon which a dragon might lie, gem-stones larger than a man's head litter the floors of caverns, gold-chased breast plates, enchanted swords, works of art, and sundry other precious goods make up a treasure that would spoil even the jaded emperors of the wealthy east.

Well has it been noted in gaming works of days gone by how ill-advised a Games Master would be to base the treasures included in his scenarios upon those depicted in novels or legends; a huge hoard of wealth can be the ruination of a campaign.

When designing a dragon's hoard, the Games Master can add further challenge to his game by making it hard to identify the most valuable items and impossible to transport the whole pile.

Knowledge skills as well as *Appraising* can be tested. Items of seemingly little value might have historic or religious significance and thus be of great worth; consider the following examples:

A soiled and tattered banner bearing the arms of a now-defunct noble house might be worth much to a wealthy collector of curios or a museum.

An ordinary suit of armour could be sold to the relatives of the knight who once wore it, they being keen to have some small memento of their kinsman.

A simple icon in a plain wooden frame painted in times past by a renowned saint might be worth more to his church than any magical scroll or mace.

The flask containing a potion might itself be an antique of some value; how often do adventurers appraise such vessels? More often it is the fluid within that excites their attention.

Rusty and tarnished items will only be revealed as items of worth if closely inspected; if the dragon's hoard contains items that are genuinely valueless but amidst them are precious items disguised by such means then the band must spend much precious time in appraising the lot in order to gain the choicest treasures.

If the dragon's hoard is a heap of copper and silver coins in which other items are buried, then the party has its work cut out; assume that it takes 10 minutes to

carefully sift through each 1,000 coins, larger items will be found easily but small gem-stones and the like might require Search or Spot checks to locate. What of a diamond hidden amongst 5,000 low-value crystals, or a magic ring in a coffer full of costume jewellery? In all there is no reason why a Games Master should reel out the contents of a trove to his players, their characters must search carefully amidst the dross to find the true treasures.

Nearby creatures will soon learn of the dragon's demise and turn greedy eyes towards its hoard. The party must act swiftly for soon rival dragons, giants and other things will come to confiscate their prize. Indeed the kin of the slain dragon might show up at any time, and if the lair is in some dungeon complex inhabited by other beings then wandering monster checks should be made as usual.

The sheer quantity of low-value coins, the bulk of the armour and other goods, should serve to prevent a party carrying the lot away. Perhaps the party will think to return at a later date with bearers and a baggage train to carry off their spoils – those carrying out such a plan will likely find all their treasures plundered when they make their return; the other denizens of the dark will strip the place in their absence.

Henchmen and retainers will be loathe to stand guard whilst the party goes in search of help for fear of what else might lurk in the dark; if their player character masters insist that they fulfil such tasks loyalty checks should be made – might not a simple hireling, even a trusted henchman, succumb to temptation, fill his pack with wealth, and set out for pastures new? The party could split, some remaining as watchmen over the hoard while others return to civilisation, but a split party is a weak party and covetous monsters seeking the wealth might annihilate either group.

King Harald told a warlock to hie to Iceland in some altered shape, and to try what he could learn there to tell him: and he set out in the shape of a whale. And when he came near to the land he went to the west side of Iceland, north around the island, where he saw all the mountains and hills full of guardian-spirits, some great, some small. When he came to Vapnaffjord he went in towards the land, intending to go on shore; but a huge dragon rushed down the dale against him with a train of serpents, paddocks, and toads, that blew poison towards him. Then he turned to go westward around the land as far as Eyjafford, and he went into the fjord. Then a bird flew against him, which was so great that its wings stretched over the mountains on either side of the fjord, and many birds, great and small, with it. Then he swam farther west, and then south into Breidafjord. When he came into the fjord a large grey bull ran against him, wading into the sea, and bellowing fearfully, and a crowd of land-spirits followed him. From thence he went round by Reykjanes, and wanted to land at Vikarsskeid, but there came down a hill-giant against him with an iron staff in his hands. He was a head higher than the mountains, and many other giants followed him. He then swam eastward along the land, and there was nothing to see, he said, but sand and vast deserts, and, without the skerries, high-breaking surf; and the ocean between the countries was so wide that a long-ship could not cross it.

From the *Heimskringla* or *The Chronicle of the Kings of Norway*

When all is said and done the party has little choice but to swiftly settle upon which items they will take, bear their burden as best they can, and scuttle back to safer lands. Even then their trials are not at an end; what think the lords of the territory once haunted by the dragon? Were not their people victimised by it? Aren't its treasures naught but goods plundered from their subjects? Rulers rarely have enough wealth to support every project they plan; a swift tax on the dragon's treasure might be in order, or even outright confiscation of the hoard!

But enough of the difficulties to be surmounted in appraising and removing a hoard; let us consider other problems would-be plunderers might encounter; after all a dragon *loves* its treasure and might well have taken steps to protect it...

In amidst the glittering piles of coins, nasty pests might be found: small carnivorous beetles that bite those sifting it, scorpions with nasty stings and little spiders with deadly venom. The odd coffer could contain a poisonous serpent, contact poison could be smeared on armour and shields while choice treasures might be warded with magical protections (*explosive runes, glyphs of warding, fire traps, sepia snake sigils* and so on).

Lastly, consider the magical conflagrations, mighty blows, charges, tail sweeps, and other events that take place as a dragon fights its last battle. Fragile items in the hoard have little chance of surviving them unscathed. Place easily breakable items where the party will see them and describe how they become broken in the melee. *'You cast a lightning bolt? Oh dear, there goes the full length crystal mirror in its platinum frame!'*

DRAGON SOCIETY

SCALE TO SCALE, THE MATING HABITS OF A DRAGON

Herodotus, the father of history, when describing the dragons of Arabia, remarked that: *'When the male and female come together, at the very moment of impregnation, the female seizes the male by the neck, and having once fastened, cannot be brought to leave go till she has bit the neck entirely through. And so the male perishes; but after a while he is revenged upon the female by means of the young, which, while still unborn, gnaw a passage through the womb, and then through the belly of their mother, and so make their entrance into the world.'*



Small wonder that there are no more dragons in Arabia to slay! Doubtless the 'winged serpents' Herodotus described in 440 BC were the agents of their own extinction. The Chromatic and Metallic dragons are not of such a self-destructive bent however, although their breeding habits are unusual all the same.

Amongst the Chromatic dragons the approach a male must make to the female of the species is fraught with danger. No female wyrm wishes a weakling for a mate and before any tryst the male must best her in a savage combat. Should the male prove too puny to overcome the female he had best flee, for his intended mate will think nothing of killing her suitor! But if he can triumph, the male will find the female's battle rage giving way to lusts of a more pleasing kind.

At times the Chromatic dragons engage in a spectacular mating ritual known as the *dragons' dance*. Scores of young male wyrms gather together and fight in a dazzling display of pyrotechnics and aerial combat, the losers crashing to the ground and crawling away to lick their wounds, while the victors instantly win the amorous attentions of the female wyrms assembled to watch the melee.

Amongst the Metallic dragons courtship is less savage but once again proof of the male's strength must be given before copulation occurs. Male and female might engage in races, mock battles and other competitions. Just as a noble lady asks her knightly beau to perform an heroic quest to win her love, so too might the female Metallic wyrm set some task for her suitor.

In both orders, the wyrms might view their union as but a passing event, designed to sate carnal desires as much as it is to procreate. Alternatively they might remain together for months, years or centuries. The gold dragon aside, it is rare for such bonds to last beyond 300 years or so, for the dragons have an independent spirit, a need to follow their own ambition, and a dislike of sharing their hoarded wealth with even a beloved spouse.

As is well known, dragons often lay eggs in far off places and then forsake all responsibility for them. As has been noted in certain sagacious tomes, this should not be viewed as fickleness, rather a tactic designed to maximise the chances of the offspring's survival; some wyrmlings will be hatched and reared in the dragon's lair, but should that lair fall to ravaging adventurers or other terrors, the mother dragon can be sure that

at least one of the clutches she laid in the wilds will hatch.

Should adventurers seek to assault a family of dragons, they will find the beasts even more ferocious than usual. To defend their eggs and wyrmlings, and to protect each other, the adult dragons will enter a battle frenzy gaining a +3 circumstance bonus to all attack rolls and inflicting +2 points of damage to claw attacks and +4 points of damage when biting. Likewise all saving throws are made at a bonus of plus one, their frightful presence is increased by four and if a wyrmling, or either parent, is slain, the adult dragon or dragons become insane with grief and will attack without remorse surviving beyond 0 hit points to a negative total equal to 1/10 of their total hit point score, only dying once that figure is reached or at such time as the battle ends.

CHROMATIC DRAGON INTERACTIONS

The malign nature of Chromatic dragons is certainly well-known, so no explanation as to why the various species neither dwell in proximity to one another nor congregate together need be given. In fact, greed, animosity and mutual distrust work to separate Chromatic dragons of even the same species despite mutual danger. This is fortunate for all other life forms, for were even a single species, let alone all Chromatic dragons, to co-operate rather than fight each other, surely they would rule much of the world.

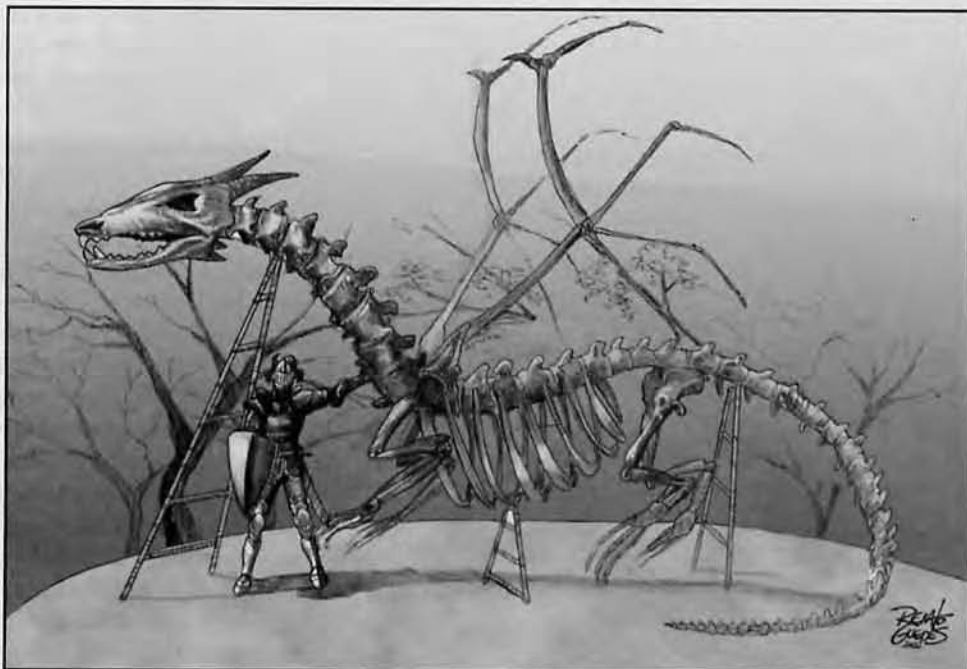
Within a single species there is some interaction, although one could by no stretch of the imagination call it congenial relations. There is a hierarchy in each species of Chromatic dragon, the oldest and largest commanding the fear the respect of those younger and weaker. Thus at times it has been known that a mighty drake will contact and force one or more lesser members of its kind to perform services for it. Indeed, in a time of great peril, the greatest of dragons in a region might convoke an assembly of

their entire breed therein. Such gatherings are rare indeed, for more often than not, the largest fall to quarrelling and fight, while the smaller ones scatter and return to their own demesnes. Rather than helping to resolve the management of some impending danger, a gathering of this sort will often exacerbate the threat.

METALLIC DRAGON INTERACTIONS

Being of a generally better nature than their Chromatic cousins, Metallic dragons of mature age can manage a congress of all the mature and older members of their diverse number. Even Metallic dragons can be independent and prideful, so such meetings are often fractious. Short of brute force, brass, bronze and copper dragons will not accept the counsel of, let alone be ruled by, either silver or gold dragons. It is most unlikely that not so much as a general course of action will be agreed upon at such a gathering. Knowing that, the greatest of Metallic dragons seldom attempt to convene a meeting of their fellows.

There are hierarchies within a species, but none are recognised between different species. As would be expected, the oldest and largest command the respect and obedience of those of lesser stature – but only to a limited extent. Even among the generally wise and clever silver and gold dragons, independent nature, self-esteem, pride and honour work to separate these mighty creatures from each other. Overall, the Metallic dragons as a group are nearly as separate and individually oriented as are the Chromatic. That



established, it is not unusual to find a few Metallic dragons of the same, or different, species working cooperatively in time of need.

CROSSBREEDS

Barring the silver and gold dragons, who often work in concert, most wyrms avoid others of different species, preferring the company of their own kind. With that said it has been known, albeit rarely, for dragons of different species to mate, producing offspring of remarkable versatility. Indeed, even Chromatic and Metallic dragons have produced young; in all such cases the female was Metallic and the impregnation the result of magical manipulation or violent rape.

Creating a Crossbreed Wym:

Have your players become lax when dealing with dragons? Have they a strategy designed to combat them, one that hinges on the activation of certain protective spells? Would you, oh malevolent Games Master, like to cause them consternation, distress and dismay? Then read on, for the crossbreed dragon serves ably in this respect.

Let us introduce you to dragons of uncertain heritage - they are as follows:

- † The maroon dragon, crossbreed of black and red wym.
- † The indigo dragon, crossbreed of black and blue wym.
- † The verdigris dragon crossbreed of black and green wym.
- † The grey dragon, crossbreed of black and white wym.
- † The purple dragon, crossbreed of red and blue wym.
- † The russet dragon, crossbreed of red and green wym.
- † The pink dragon, crossbreed of red and white wym.
- † The aquamarine dragon, crossbreed of blue and green wym.

- † The azure dragon, crossbreed of blue and white wym.

Stage 1: Choose two different kinds of dragon as parents for your crossbreed.

Stage 2: Choose or roll randomly from the two following options:

- † Offspring is degenerate. Size, hit dice, AC, attack bonus, save bonuses, breath weapon DC, fear DC, speed, and ability scores are based on the weakest of the parents (optionally at -10%).
- † Offspring is superlative. Size, hit dice, AC, attack bonus, save bonuses, breath weapon DC, fear DC, speed, and ability scores are based on the strongest of the parents (optionally at +10%).

Stage 3: breath weapon, choose or roll randomly from the following options:

- † Father's breath weapon or weapons.
- † Mother's breath weapon or weapons.
- † The crossbreed can use *all* breath weapon attacks possessed by its parents.
- † Amalgamated breath weapon. This is the most deadly option, for it is hard to protect magically against such an arm. In one single breath the crossbreed unleashes the effect of two different breath weapons. See below for examples.

Acid/fire breath weapon: A cone-shaped droplet spray of flaming acid inflicting 1d4 acid damage and 1d10 fire damage per age category of the dragon. Dragons with such a combination are likely *maroon*.

Acid/lightning breath weapon: A line of searing acid through which a blue lightning bolt hurtles causing 1d4 acid damage and 1d8 lightning damage per age category of the dragon. Dragons with such a combination are likely *indigo*.

Acid/corrosive gas breath weapon: A cone of acidic vapour inundated with acid droplets causing 1d4 acid damage and 1d6 gas damage per age category of the dragon. Dragons with such a combination are likely *verdigris*.

Acid/frost breath weapon: A cone of acid ice particles causing 1d4 acid damage per age category of the dragon and 1d6 cold damage *every other* age category.

of the dragon beyond the first, with a minimum of 1d4 acid/1d6 cold. Dragons with such a combination are likely *grey*.

Fire/lightning breath weapon: A line of flame through which a lightning bolt streaks causing 1d10 fire damage and 1d8 lightning damage per age category of the dragon. Dragons with such a combination are likely *purple*.

Fire/corrosive gas breath weapon: A flaming, cone-shaped inferno of burning gasses causing 1d10 fire damage and 1d6 gas damage per age category of the dragon. Dragons with such a combination are likely *russet*.

Fire/frost breath weapon: A seemingly self contradictory cone of black ice particles that explode into flame upon contact causing 1d10 fire damage per age category of the dragon and 1d6 cold damage every other age category of the dragon beyond the first, with a minimum of 1d10 fire/1d6 cold. Dragons with such a combination are likely *pink*.

Lightning/corrosive gas breath weapon: A cone of flesh-dissolving vapours carrying a high electrical charge causing 1d8 lightning damage and 1d6 gas damage per age category of the dragon. Dragons with such a combination are likely *aquamarine*.

Lightning/frost breath weapon: A line of highly charged ice particles causing 1d8 lightning damage per age category of the dragon and 1d6 cold damage every other age category of the dragon beyond the first, with a minimum of 1d8 lightning/1d6 cold. Dragons with such a combination are likely *azure*.

A single saving throw is made against the breath weapon attack, success noting that each kind of damage is halved, but spells which ward out one kind of elemental damage will have no effect on the portion of damage coming from a different elemental force. Furthermore,

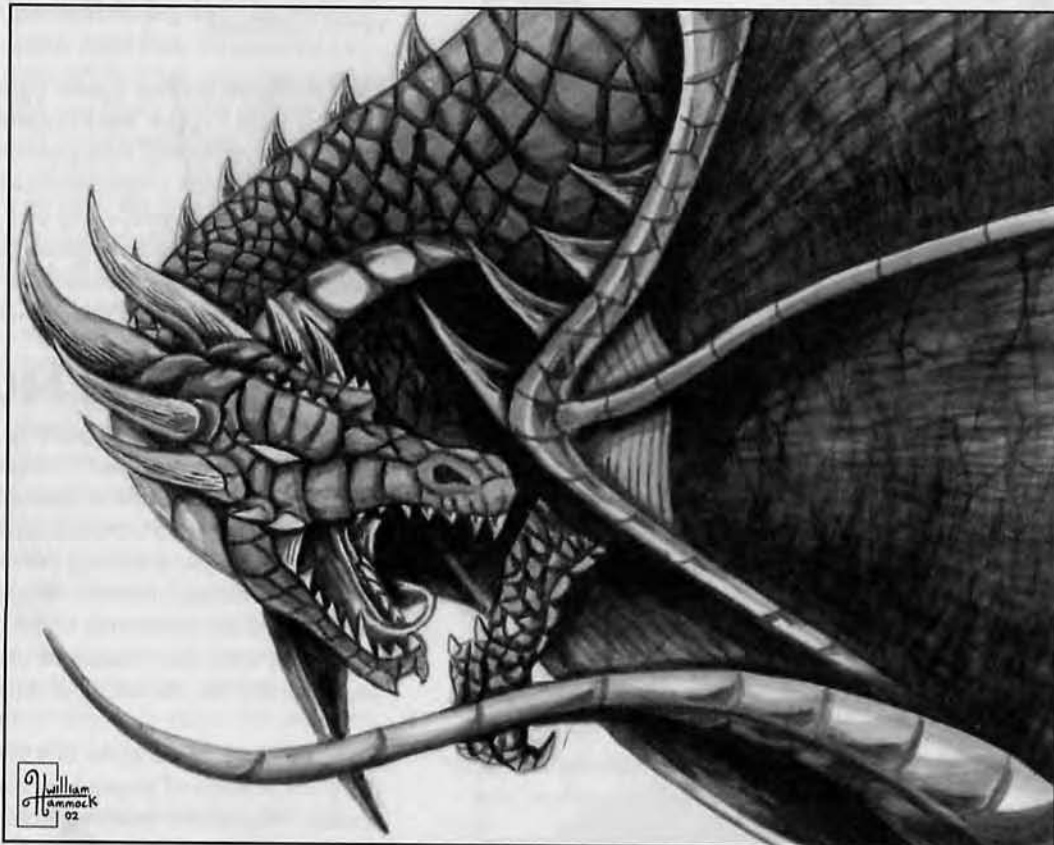
spells and items that grant an addition to a saving throw versus one kind of damage have *no* benefit against another. When dealing with such a bonus, take note of the result rolled before that addition. If the unmodified result is a failure, then the warded damage is mitigated by the successful save while the other energy type causes full damage. Obviously a result that indicates success without the addition halves damage from both sources.

For example, a red-black (maroon) crossbreed dragon with a breath weapon of acid fire attacks a character with a magic item that gives +3 versus fire damage. A saving throw is made, and with the +3 the fire damage from the dragon is halved, but the score without adding the 3 bonus indicates failure to save against the acid portion of damage.

It is possible for the Metallic wyrm's gas weapons to have an amalgamated effect too: vapours that both slow and weaken or repulse an intruder, gasses that induce both paralysis and sleep, etc.

Stage 4: Determine special abilities. Choose or roll randomly from amongst the following:

- † Crossbreed has mother's special abilities.



- † Crossbreed has father's special abilities.
- † Crossbreed has a combination of abilities: Games Master's choice - 'pick and mix' to make a truly fearsome opponent or a softer challenge as you wish.
- † Crossbreed has *all* special abilities possessed by its parents.

Stage 5: Determine spell resistance and caster level. Choose or determine randomly which parent the crossbreed follows in these areas. Note that it might have one's SR and the other's caster level.

Stage 6: Determine colour. Here is where we get nasty. Not all crossbreeds will follow the guideline noted for their breath-weapon combination. The dragon may follow one parent in all physical and magical respects but have the scale coloration of the other parent. One skilled in Knowledge (dragonlore) might recognise the anomaly from the head shape and other bodily differences. Such identification cannot be made at a range beyond 100 yards; require that the player character succeed in a dragonlore check against a DC of 35 if the beast is seen from that distance, a DC of 25 at 50 to 100 yards, and a DC of 20 if the dragon is inspected from 50 yards or less. Choose or roll randomly from the following options:

- † The dragon has the scale coloration of its dominant parent.
- † The dragon has the coloration of the *non*-dominant parent.
- † The dragon has a mixed coloration: for example a red/white crossbreed might have a snow-white underbelly and fore limbs but a blood red head, neck and upper body, ending in a white tail speckled with scarlet splashes. A gold/silver crossbreed might be referred to as an *electrum* dragon and have the colouring of that metal.
- † The dragon conforms to the coloration noted for its breath-weapon combination.

Stage 7: Set the challenge rating. The base challenge rating score is equal to that of the dominant parent. If the crossbreed bears both parents' breath weapons, or has an amalgamated breath weapon, increase the CR by one-half. Each additional special quality *beyond that*

possessed by the dominant parent warrants a CR increase of from one-quarter to one-half, depending on the nature of that quality.

Stage 8: decide on alignment. Choose or roll randomly from the following list:

- † Dragon has dominant parent's alignment
- † Dragon has alignment of *non*-dominant parent.
- † Alignment is influenced by heritage. If a LG dragon and a CE dragon produce a child it may be *true neutral*. The offspring of a CE and CG dragon might be *chaotic neutral*.

The Psychology of a Crossbreed

The crossbreed wyrm knows itself to be different from the rest of its kind. This cruel lesson will have been learnt from other dragons that tend to despise such hybrids. It is common for pureblood dragons to regard crossbreeds as abominations to be driven off or killed.

As mates are thus hard to find, the crossbreed is more likely than most dragons to sire half-dragon progeny, or, by an act of forced sexual congress, to create yet more crossbreeds, these typically having the traits of the crossbreed's dominant parent and the pure-blooded victim combined.

Their maligned heritage causes crossbreeds to take the draconic vices of pride and arrogance to a degree surpassing even that of their pure-blooded kin; they will brook no insult or insubordination from beings they judge their inferiors—and they believe even the pure-blooded dragons to be lesser beings, lacking the legacy of superior qualities inherited by many crossbreeds as a result of their peculiar birth.

THE DRAGON MOOT

We have discussed the problems inherent in the meetings between dragons of the same species, how their prideful natures and independent personalities make such congresses both rare and unproductive. Consider then what a meeting between all dragons, both Chromatic and Metallic, would be like. Once in each millennium the wyrms of the many worlds come together to settle their numerous disputes and to elect single speaker for the whole of dragon-kind.

In the far south of the globe in wastes of snow and ice there is a volcano of stupendous size and legendary ferocity. The smoke belching from its crater colours

black the glaciers crowding its lower slopes while the heat generated by its fiery heart leaves its upper slopes free of frost. Here in this place of raw elemental power where the sky meets earth, fire and water, the dragons gather.

In the language of the dragons this place is R'saknakus, the red hill, named for the lava that periodically flows down its sides sending great goutts of steam skyward when it meets the ice. Its snow- and glacier-clad lower slopes are pocked with cave mouths leading into broad sinuous tunnels wending their way up towards the summit. Explorers should be cautious as red-hot lava often flows down these passages. It is said shafts lead down to the hollow spaces of the world, the endless underdark; some dragons come through these hidden byways of the earth when the moot of R'saknakus nears. Enormous caverns protected from the volcano's fury by primeval spells provide a resting place for the great invictus dragons when they come. These grottoes are fabulous in their beauty – extrusions of coloured rock, fantastically shaped stalagmites, stalactites and columns, pools reflecting the crystal-encrusted roofs and other natural wonders make each a palace for its lordly occupant.

The time of the moot is set by methods nigh on incomprehensible to man; tradition holds that alignments of planets and stars, the movements of the infinite planes, conjunctions of disparate dimensions and the swirl of the astral wind must all come into a fixed pattern before the call to R'saknakus can go out. The dragon-priests of Lung Wang in the remote fastness of a legendary world sound a set of pipes whose vibrations spread across the ether and out into the astral void to awake even the longest sleeping invictus. Every dragon, young and old, hears the call and knows that the time of R'saknakus draws nigh.

Many of the wyrms would rather not heed the call, being loath to leave their long-hoarded treasures. Yet the pull of the pipes is strong – irresistible to some. Its urgency is hard to ignore, and so from caverns deep they stir and take to the wing. Their journey will be long and arduous for they must traverse not just the mundane world but the planes too if they are to reach their goal. Those unable to activate the necessary magic must seek out more potent drakes or even mortals capable of casting the spells required. Gates and portals known to the dragons will be used, and magical items of eldritch power, dug out from the heaps of coins in which they have rested for centuries, will finally come into play.

The younger wyrms will never arrive; they lack the power and the knowledge required to make the journey.

They are beaten back or they die in the attempt but still they try, so forceful is the driving of the pipes.

The more potent dragons make the journey, each bringing one item of great value from their mass of wealth to lay before the clawed feet of their overlord, for Bahamut and Tiamat will be at R'saknakus and every dragon must placate them.

Powerful beings seek to waylay the dragons, before the red hill is ever sighted, to steal the treasures they bear. Demons, devils and other netherbeings lie in wait, as do formidable monsters and even powerful mortals. As if that were not enough, the gathering of R'saknakus is a time when scores are settled, vengeance is gained, and advantages sought – murder is on the mind of not a few drakes, and they will ambush their enemies en route to the gathering. Packs of red dragons slither near the gates through which lone gold or silver wyrms might come, great blue wyrms hover in the clouds hoping to espy a young bronze or copper that they might swoop down upon and destroy. The way to R'saknakus is paved with the corpses of dragons, their bones act as signposts to the rest.

A dragon eventually arriving at the moot sees from a distance ten thousand of its kin hovering like so many flies above R'saknakus' vast crater. Two large shelves



of rock project out over the boiling lava and sat upon these granite thrones are the two principals of the draconic race, Tiamat and Bahamut. They glare at each other across the fire and fumes, unspeaking, unmoving, involved in a titanic battle of wills that sends ripples of psychic energy out across the crater to sparkle in motes of eldritch power and flashes of divine fury.

On the rocks surrounding Tiamat crouch hell worms of the largest size, in their midst sits Baal Shiruat the Chromatic prince ready to do his mother's will. Bahamut's draconic paladins sit in serried rows above their lord on platforms fashioned from magically solidified cloud; they are the greatest of the silver and gold kind.

Clustered around the crater's eastern rim are the Chromatic dragons, the reds, blacks, whites, blues and greens predominate but there are others of their evil kindred; abyssal serpents and lesser horrors crawl here and there.

To the west the Metallic drakes crowd the crater's inner slope, with them are other dragons of good heart including those sea dragons that have a benign nature.

Neutral dragons, crossbreeds and what dragonkin have managed the journey occupy the gaps between the two rival camps, making a 'buffer zone', if you will. The crossbreeds are despised by many of the pureblood Chromatic and Metallic dragons who snarl and snap at (and even attack) them and yet the crossbreeds hold a vital position of influence as will be seen.

The first order of duty at the moot is the proffering of gifts to Tiamat and Bahamut. This is more than a matter of tribute to a sovereign, for by the act of giving the individual dragons display their allegiance to one or other of the divine dragons. As a matter of course the Chromatic wyrms honour Tiamat while the Metallic drakes give their gifts to Bahamut but this need not be so: In millennia past there were times when out of spite, envy or fear, individual Chromatic wyrms turned their backs on the evil queen of dragons and threw in their lot with Bahamut. The eventual fate of such turncoats was not pleasant. Of key importance at this stage is the announced loyalty of the neutral dragons and the crossbreeds. All dragons in the assemblage watch keenly as the maroon, indigo, verdigris, grey, purple, russet, pink, aquamarine, electrum, azure and many-coloured wyrms divide to present their gifts to a chosen monarch. To win the loyalty of the neutral and crossbreed drakes, Baal Shiruat goes amongst them threatening, bullying, cajoling or bribing those whose favour can be won. For the Metallic camp certain of

the silver dracos invicti do the same, using honeyed words rather than outright threats. Promises are made here that can prove irksome later in the moot; what of a brutish maroon wyrm in dispute with a fiery red dragon? Will Baal Shiruat promise his mother's aid to the crossbreed in return for its allegiance? Will doing so not alienate the otherwise loyal red? Swiftly such problems must be resolved for the time available for debate is short.

Tiamat and Bahamut accept the gifts without comment but woe betide the evil wyrm who offers his queen a gift she believes ignoble – one head will let off its vigilant watch of Bahamut and teach the wretched dragon a lesson. It is usual for the dragons of both camps to vie with each other in the richness of their gifts, as if by the splendour of their material wealth they could prove which breed is the stronger.

All dragons must choose between Bahamut and Tiamat; there can be no dissenters, no wyrm may opt for a middle way and they must choose or face the wrath of the whole assembly.

With this done all can see the lie of the land, the allegiance of every dragon has been clearly displayed. The next event of the moot is the election of a speaker. The speaker holds a pivotal role in the running of the moot and in the enforcement afterwards of whatever decrees and treaties the assembly has made. By long tradition the speaker must have the support of both Tiamat and Bahamut. Whichever camp has the largest number of dragons can propose candidates for the speaker's platform, but unless the sovereign of the rival camp will acquiesce to the choice no progress can be made. The reader is invited to imagine a conference of knights from England and France at the height of the Hundred Years' War trying to elect one of their number to some coveted position to gain an impression of the difficulties the dragons' assembly must face when making this choice. Challenges are roared across the crater, dragons fly at each other or discharge their breath weapons, combats erupt, aerial duels are fought and spells are cast. Only the iron wills of the two draconic monarchs keep the situation from deteriorating into outright, full-scale warfare. Both the rulers are lawful and see the prospect of advantage for their assembled kindred in the activities of the moot.

At length a compromise will be reached. Because of the hatred borne to them by their pure-blooded cousins a crossbreed is never elected speaker, although the *prospect* of one mounting the platform is sometimes used as a gambit in the bargaining and bickering of the assembly. If the evil dragons have the advantage of

numbers then Bahamut can do little but eventually agree to one of their number becoming speaker, but the platinum dragon will be sure it is one of lawful evil alignment at least, and furthermore, that the drake is known for honouring its word. Just so for Tiamat when the good dragons hold sway; no self-righteous exemplar of goodness will come to the speaker's platform then, rather a dragon known for its pragmatism will take the position.

Once elected, the speaker flies to an extrusion of rock at the northern lip of the crater and sits itself there. With all due reverence for the Chromatic and Metallic dragons it will now oversee proceedings; no dragon can voice its concerns lest the speaker gives it leave. It is the speaker who calls for and counts the votes cast, and the speaker who has the casting vote in the very rare case of a tie. Proceedings are not egalitarian. When the speaker is elected each dragon present casts one vote, but when the actual business of the moot is underway the voices of the invictus dragons carry more weight than those of their younger brethren, just as those of a great wyrm outweigh those of a wyrm and so on. The process of counting votes is convoluted so the speaker must be old, wise and well-versed in the standings of all dragons assembled.



The business of the moot will take many days to discuss. Demands for redress will be made from dragons that feel themselves wronged, treaties will be established, conflicts settled, territories redrawn, ancient treacheries endlessly discussed, challenges made, duels announced and fought before the throng, and all manner of other arguments brought forth and settled or resolved by single combat.

Eventually hunger and anxiety for their waiting treasures drive the dragons to abandon the debates even though it is rare for any of the greater disputes to have been resolved. Tiamat and Bahamut do not speak openly during the deliberations thinking it below their dignity, but they advise their many captains by telepathic word so their command can be known. At times the moot becomes so heated that combats bring about its premature end despite the monarchs' collective will. Tiamat and Bahamut then depart for they have no wish to settle their differences in front of their subjects and supporters – the day for that will come.

It is worth noting that twice in past moots the Chromatic drakes have come close to total accord. In both cases the reason for such near-unanimity was proposals for united dragonkind to wipe out humans and their kin! Although a few of the Metallic drakes were swayed, it is Bahamut that humans must thank for not having to face vast armies of Chromatic dragons ravaging their cities and lands.

The return from R'saknakus is as fraught with danger as the journey there; doubly so, for enemies will have been freshly made. A swift departure in the company of allies is the wisest course for every dragon to follow. It need not be stressed how difficult it is for dragons to compact with one another. The new Speaker of R'saknakus will hold the office for 1,000 years. Whether of Metallic or Chromatic sort, the speaker has an unenviable task, for the dragons care little for the speaker's decrees once the moot is past even though that one has the task of seeing all treaties and bargains honoured. Only those dragons following the code of chivalry (see p91) feel bound to obey the speaker and thus it is to them the speaker must turn if the resolutions of R'saknakus are to be enforced. This is a mixed blessing with regard to humans. If the speaker for dragonkind is benign, depredations by Chromatic dragons will go unchecked; on the other hand, a malign speaker will have little power to bring dragons forth to assail mankind effectively.

METHODS OF WARFARE

Then Beowulf made his last boast:

*'I ventured many battles
in my youth; now, old,
I will seek another,
try again for glorious
deeds, if that avenger
will come out.'*

*He spoke to each
of his brave companions
for the last time:*

*'I would not use a sword
against this monster
if I might otherwise fight,
as I did with Grendel.
But how else fight fire?
a breath of poison?
Therefore I wear shield and mail.*

*I will not back
a step away
from that hoard-guardian.*

*We two shall end
as fate decrees.
I am brave in mind,
so I go against the war-flyer
in no need
of further boasting.*

*You men wait on the hill,
protect the war-gear
and see which will,
after the death rush,
come away unwounded.*

*This is not your duty,
nor in the power of man.
No one but myself
can fight this monster.
Your lord shall either
win the treasure
or lose his life.'*

*The brave in battle arose then,
bore his shield and mail,
trusting his strength
under the stone cliffs.*

(This is not the coward's way).

To battle a dragon is to risk the fate of Beowulf. A dragon is a killing machine, a beast of ferocious temperament equipped by nature with all it needs to slay its foes. And yet how many

dragons have fallen at the hands of carefree adventuring bands without bringing half of their armaments to bear? If a dragon's assault consists of a single blast from its breathe weapon followed by an immediate charge into a claw versus sword melee then the mighty wyrm will soon be reduced to a scaly pile of carrion. This should not be! As Games Masters we must strive to bring our creations to 'life', to make them as real in the imaginations of our players as we possibly can. Winning a victory over a dragon should be a spine-chilling event, a battle of unprecedented rage in which each player's character is tested to the limit.

The dragons are beasts that live long; the ages pass as they hunt, mate, fight and plunder. Just as their hoard of treasure grows, so too does their hoard of hard-won battle tactics. The dragon may have had *centuries* in which to plan its strategies for attack and defence.

Often a Games Master is placed in a difficult situation when determining a dragon's actions; so many are the beast's powers that the Games Master can be overwhelmed. In his haste to keep the combat running smoothly he might neglect one or more capabilities that would turn the battle in the wyrm's favour. Taking the time to read up and prepare prior to the session is essential if a dragon is to be role-played, and fought properly.



Before running a session in which a dragon is likely to be encountered the Game Master should sit down and plan out a *unique* set of tactics for the beast to employ. Let the details contained in this work and in *Core Rulebook III* serve as inspiration, but the Games Master should feel free to modify what is written both here and there to create a truly unique opponent.

To aid the ever-harried Games Master, several useful tactics are outlined below.

A MAGICAL DEFENSE

The older wyrms are sorcerers of some ability. Generally speaking, a dragon's breath weapon and natural attacks are more deadly than any offensive magic available to it; therefore the Games Master should consider the many defensive spells available to the dragon. Judge fairly whether the wyrm is likely to have received reports of your party of adventurers; if it has, then it will choose spells specifically designed to counter the party's magical attacks.

The following directly defensive magicks from *Core Rulebook I* should be taken into account:

0 level spells: *Resistance*; while granting only a +1 to saving throws this translates into a 5% greater chance for the dragon to survive an adventurer's spell attack.

1st level spells: *Endure Elements*; already proofed against one or two types of energy, let the dragon guard itself against one more type; it is likely that adventurers will prepare spells dealing damage they believe the dragon to be vulnerable to – surprise them! *Mage*

armour; the dragon's AC may already be impressive but making it better yet is a good option. *Protection from chaos/evil/good/law*; if the dragon knows something of the party it might well predict with some accuracy which of these protection spells will best serve its needs. The party is very likely to summon creatures to their aid, be sure the dragon can protect itself from such allies. *Shield*; as *magic missile* is a spell of choice for many a dweomercrafter, be sure to ward against it! The AC improvement and Reflex bonus are, of course, invaluable.

2nd level spells: *Blur*; 1/5th of all successful weapon attacks will actually miss the dragon – hooray! *Cat's grace*, this spell is likely to improve both the AC and Reflex save of the dragon. As a dragon usually has a Dex no greater than 10, its Reflex saves are poorer than its Fortitude and Will saves. Magically upping its Dexterity is a wise option but the other defensive spells of this level will probably serve it better. *Endurance*; given the number of HD a dragon has this spell can boost their HP total considerably. Be sure the wyrm has recourse to some potent healing magic, for if it suffers a huge amount of harm it may die when the spell expires. *Mirror image*; this delightful illusion not only protects a dragon but also might convince the party that they face multiple wyrms if cast before the encounter begins. *Protection from arrows*; the benefits a dragon receives from this spell cannot be overstated; as detailed below the dragon should fight at range in the first rounds of combat whenever possible: This spell severely limits the party's response. *Resist elements*; use this spell for the same reasons given above for *endure elements*.

By the death of Amund, Fridleif was freed from a most bitter foe, and obtained a deep and tranquil peace; whereupon he forced his savage temper to the service of delight; and, transferring his ardour to love, equipped a fleet in order to seek the marriage which had once been denied him. At last he set forth on his voyage; and his fleet being becalmed, he invaded some villages to look for food; where, being received hospitably by a certain Grubb, and at last winning his daughter in marriage, he begat a son named Olaf. After some time had passed he also won Frogertha; but, while going back to his own country, he had a bad voyage, and was driven on the shores of an unknown island. A certain man appeared to him in a vision, and instructed him to dig up a treasure that was buried in the ground, and also to attack the dragon that guarded it, covering himself in an ox-hide to escape the poison; teaching him also to meet the envenomed fangs with a hide stretched over his shield. Therefore, to test the vision, he attacked the snake as it rose out of the waves, and for a long time cast spears against its scaly side; in vain, for its hard and shelly body foiled the darts flung at it. But the snake, shaking its mass of coils, uprooted the trees that it brushed past by winding its tail about them. Moreover, by constantly dragging its body, it hollowed the ground down to the solid rock, and had made a sheer bank on either hand, just as in some places we see hills parted by an intervening valley. So Fridleif, seeing that the upper part of the creature was proof against attack, assailed the lower side with his sword, and piercing the groin, drew blood from the quivering beast. When it was dead, he unearthed the money from the underground chamber and had it taken off in his ships.

From books I-IX of *The Danish History*, 12th century

3rd level spells: *Blink* is a superb spell for a dragon to cast before entering melee, use it! *Displacement*; 1/2 of all successful weapon attacks will actually miss the dragon - hip-hip-hooray! *Haste*, in addition to its obvious combat benefits this spell adds +4 to the dragon's AC so we mention it here. The uses of this spell are such that we will return to it hereafter. *Magic circle against chaos/evil/good/law*, while the increased duration makes these spells more useful to the dragon than *Protection from chaos/evil/good/law*, their 10 ft. radius is unlikely to be of any benefit to the highly mobile wyrm's underlings (if any); in most circumstances dragons should use the simpler 1st-level variant and reserve 3rd-level slots for more beneficial powers. *Protection from elements*; if the dragon's caster level is sufficiently high to use this spell it should do so in preference to using *endure elements* or *resist elements*. Alternatively the wyrm might use such spells in conjunction, warding against one energy type with each spell and thus gaining a degree of all round protection.

4th level spells: *Fire shield*; use this potent evocation to further shield the dragon from some energy type to



which it is susceptible. The damage dealing aspects of this spell are likely to be of the same type as the dragon using it. For example a white dragon will opt for a chill shield to protect itself from fire, this deals cold damage like the wyrm's frosty breath. Regrettably adventurers with any sense will have already activated magic designed to counter cold attacks and the same applies if the dragon was a fire breathing one activating a warm shield. Because of this *probable* limitation, *stoneskin* might better suit younger dragons. *Minor globe of invulnerability*; the dragon's mobility is its best defence and thus this static spell is, in many circumstances, of little benefit. If, however, the confrontation occurs in a place where the dragon cannot fly it will certainly be an advantage. Note that the dragon is fully shielded despite its size. *Stoneskin*; far too many parties have used this spell to wreak havoc against their enemies - it's time to put the boot on the other foot. Protected thus the dragon can concentrate its attacks against party spell casters: When they have been destroyed it will turn upon the warriors! Note that for the older dragons natural damage reduction is so good that activating this spell would be of little benefit.

5th level spells: *Bigby's interposing hand* is a good spell choice for the dragon as it can neutralise the party's hardest hitting fighter, freeing the dragon to concentrate its attacks against spell casters.

6th level spells: *Antimagic field*, this potent magic can be a great boon to the wyrm mighty enough to cast it, however the point at which the spell is employed must be carefully timed. The dragon will neither be able to cast spells or breathe out its terrible vapours once this magic is active, and its quality of damage reduction will be suppressed for those body parts in the area of effect; furthermore so large is a dragon that the spell will not shield all parts of it. Before activating this magic the dragon should bring its breath weapon to bear multiple times, also it should have employed its other spells to weaken the party and hopefully divide them (see below). Ideally all opponent spell casters will be decommissioned before the wyrm uses this power, for its main benefit will come in a head to head fight with the party's strongest swordsman; such a fighter will be denied all benefits from his many magic items - no enhanced Strength, no pluses to weapons or armour; the fight will then be a straight battle betwixt the warrior and the dragon's teeth and claws; let the mightiest prevail! Of course there *is* a sneaky option open to devious Games Masters here; if your players are rules lawyers prone to exploiting design loopholes to their advantage, then get your own back by ruling that this spell emanates from the dragon's mid-portion

and that the beast's neck is long enough for its head to be brought clear of the field to release its breath weapon or cast a spell, but sinuous enough to coil up and thus bring the head back into the area of protection. If your players object, claiming that the dire breath is manufactured in the dragon's chest, simply rule against this, state that the exhalation is formed in the throat. All told this is a somewhat unfair interpretation of this spell though and Games Masters should use it sparingly if at all. *Bigby's forceful hand*; is an enemy archer or spellbinder foiling your dragon's plans? The forceful hand will serve the dragon most ably. *Globe of invulnerability*; as with *minor globe of invulnerability* the static nature of this abjuration make it a poor choice unless the dragon is to do battle in a confined space. *Repulsion*; a good spell to keep powerful melee artists at bay. Try to have the dragon manoeuvre itself between affected party members; it can then turn on some and destroy them while their cohorts are unable to approach.

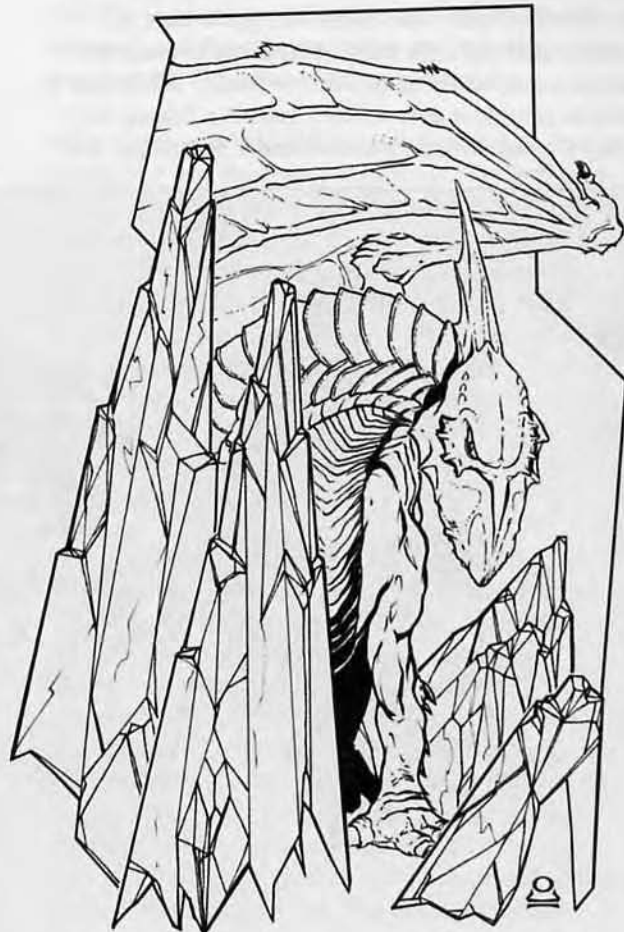
7th level spells: *Bigby's grasping hand*; as with the other 'Bigby's Hand' spells, this is one well suited to a dragon's repertoire of magic. None of these spells grant a saving throw to their victim; given that the dragon's assailants are likely to be both of high level and equipped with the most potent of magic items, those spells which can be saved against more often than not *will* be saved against – try not to give the party the luxury of a saving throw. *Spell turning*; some spell casters will prefer *not* to target their magic against an enemy dragon because of its innate spell resistance; they will use their powers to aid their compatriots or to neutralise the dragon's attacks. However it is very likely that offensive, targeted, magic will be used against the wyrm – shock the party by turning their own spells against them. *Statue*; in most circumstances this spell is not recommended for a dragon. However, as part of an ambush it is very effective. Consider a party that comes across a number of dragon statues; illusions cause these sculptures to apparently 'come to life'. Initially the party will discharge potent spells or use up precious resources from magic items; however after each statue is encountered the party will become ever warier, adopting a 'wait and see' attitude – then let the dragon under the benefit of this spell 'come to life' and watch with merriment as the adventurers try to 'disbelieve' its initial attacks!

8th level spells: *Bigby's clenched fist*; as implied in this section, and fully examined below, a dragon's survival depends very much on its ability to engage the party members singly or at least in pairs; once again the Archmage Bigby provides a saving-throw-free way of occupying, and in this case harming, one pesky

adventurer. *Iron body*; while the benefits of this spell are manifold it is not one recommended for use by a dragon. *Mind blank*; this spell will positively thwart all magical forms of 'dragon control', even those of the fabled *orbs of the dragon*. Indeed the holder of an orb cannot even detect the presence of the wyrm at a distance. Likewise all other forms of divination are prevented so the dragon's attack, when it comes, is sure to be a most unpleasant surprise. *Protection from spells*; given that any dragon old and powerful enough to cast this spell already has excellent saving throw bonuses and a very high degree of *spell resistance*, selecting this power is generally not recommended unless the dragon knows that it faces a spell caster of truly exceptional might.

9th level spells: *Bigby's crushing hand*; as with all these spells this one provides sure defence against one foe, allowing the dragon to pick off the rest and weakening the victim in the meanwhile. A dragon capable of casting all the 'Bigby's Hand' spells will be a true terror in melee.

Consider the following example that was used in actual play by the author: A juvenile red dragon was alerted to



predatory human adventurers. Thus forewarned, the clever drake set a *magic mouth* spell at the entrance to its lair to send forth a roaring sound as might come from an angry bear when its cave was threatened. When that sound came, the dragon cast its *invisibility* and *spider climb* spells so as to climb to the ceiling of its cave and await the marauders there. When the band of would-be plunderers came inside and gathered around the pile of treasure at the back of the chamber, the dragon struck. A fiery breath, then release, a roll in mid-air, another breath exhalation, and splat! Down upon the puny humans so taken by surprise that they scarce knew what happened before they were expunged, and the dearly gained horde of wealth was safe...

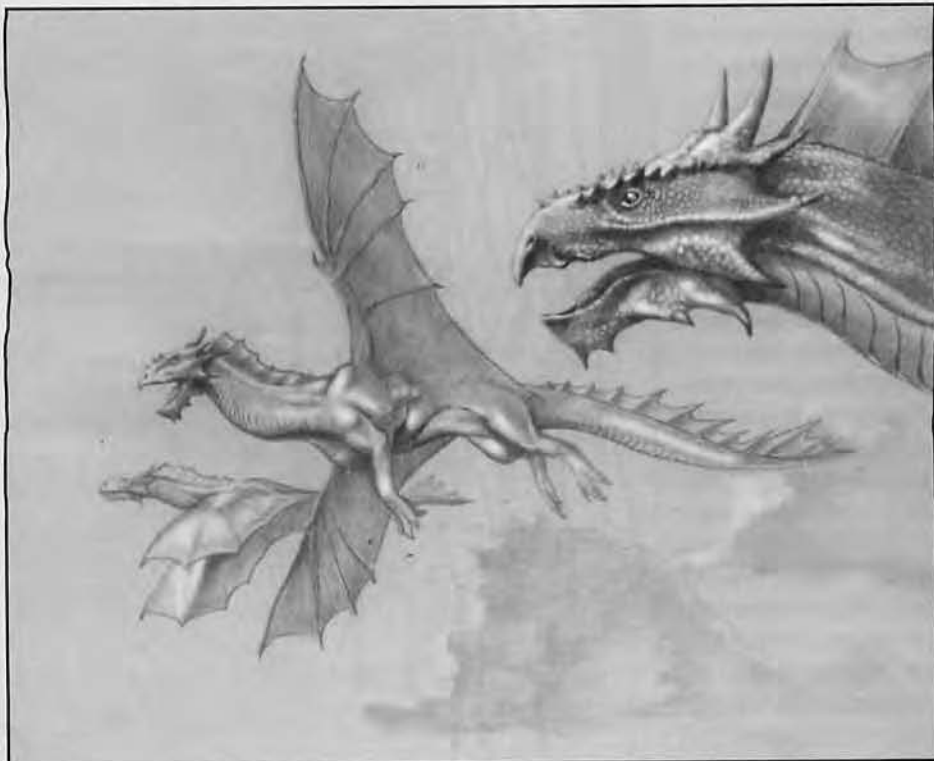
TAKE TO THE SKIES

No dragon should ever fight on the ground if it has the space to take wing. The advantages a flying dragon enjoys are manifold; the Games Master wishing to bring his draconic creations to life should exploit each and every one.

A tired and harassed Games Master trying to improvise an exciting session from the notes he has prepared in his precious spare time might well opt to have his dragon land and fight early in the battle to avoid the added complexities of an airborne battle. While such is understandable it does severely restrict a dragon and deny it a sure defensive and offensive advantage. Let

us refresh our memories in regards to the rules for flying creatures in *Core Rulebook II*, once we have digested a look at the Flyby Attack feat in *Core Rulebook III* and the dragon feats on page XX of this book. To as great an extent as possible, the Games Master should keep the tactical aerial movement rules in mind when designing his dragon and select feats that maximise his dragon's potential. Once combat has begun, set aside the rulebooks with all their dry numbers and visualise the battle; have the dragon act fairly within the parameters for movement laid down but do not turn the encounter into a nightmare of calculation and book keeping – your imagination and innate sense of fair play will serve to keep the battle even-handed, exciting and vivid.

Exploit the opportunity for the dragon to hit the party and then run. Between breath weapon discharges the dragon should put as much distance as possible between it and the party's archers and spell casters, using defensive spells to boost its protections before making another pass. If one or more party members takes to the skies then the dragon has achieved what must be considered its prime objective in the early part of battle—it has divided the party! While offensive magical attacks are considered below it, it is worth noting here that the dragon can cause great harm with *dispel magic* spells targeted against a flyer's items or spells. In any case the dragon should immediately fly away from the party so it can, in due course, turn about and attack its aerial pursuers without intervention from their land-bound colleagues.



If the whole party is airborne, and the dragon fails to bring them down with *dispel magic*, then have the wyrm fly high into a cloudbank where the adventurers' vision will be limited; the dragon's own senses will allow it to detect the party and launch a surprise attack!

In combat against an earth-bound party the dragon has other offensive options—snatching individual adventurers or dropping rocks upon them being two obvious choices. Spell attacks are considered hereafter.

In the parish of Deerhurst, near Tewkesbury, a serpent of a prodigious bigness was a great grievance to all the country, by poisoning the inhabitants, and killing their cattle. The inhabitants petitioned the king and a proclamation was issued out, that whosoever should kill the serpent should enjoy an estate in the parish, which then belonged to the crown. One John Smith, a labourer, engaged in the enterprise. He put a quantity of milk in a place to which the serpent resorted, who gorged the whole, agreeable to expectation, and lay down to sleep in the sun, with his scales ruffled up. Seeing him in that situation, Smith advanced, and striking between the scales with his axe, took off his head.

Samuel Rudder, *A new history of Gloucestershire* (1799)

DEALING WITH WEAKNESSES

To be fair, the Games Master must admit that dragons have weaknesses. Not even the greatest of these creatures is all-powerful and invulnerable. There are four primary areas of weakness in all dragonkind. They are compulsions to avarice, greed and hubris, plus the wyrms need to sleep for extended periods of time. The Chromatic dragons have stronger compulsion in regards avarice and greed, balanced by a greater desire for self-preservation. Let us examine each area of weakness.

Avarice: The cupidity of dragons is legendary. Their excessive desire to have and retain hoards of treasure is known to all. They are thus vulnerable because they cannot separate themselves from their accumulations of wealth. So the location of a dragon will be fixed by the choice of that creature to remain so. This means that adventurers bent on finding one will certainly be able to do so.

Greed: Similar to avarice, the greed of dragonkind means that acquisitiveness is foremost in their minds, and that no amount of treasure is ever enough. Their greed drives them to acquire ever more wealth, even at the risk of their lives. A dragon is thus subject to being lured forth by riches, and away from its lair one is certainly more vulnerable. Clever characters will use this weakness to fight the battle on ground of their own choosing.

Hubris: Dragonkind believes itself the species that is stronger, more intelligent, and suited to rule all others – and each tends to believe itself the apex of that pre-eminence. Not only does this mean dragons will be prone to foolhardiness, but that they will not be cooperative, save during periods of cohabitation for mating and the subsequent care of their wyrmlings. So dragons will be prone to under-estimate their foes, take unnecessary risks based on their own self-confidence, and not seek the aid of a fellow dragon.

Sleep: There are no published studies, but it seems likely that the time of activity for dragons declines with age. Let us assume the following: A wyrmling is awake and active 40% (10 hours a day) of the time, a very young one is active 35% (8 hours a day) of the time, one of young sort will be awake 30% (7 hours a day) of the time, the juvenile dragon active 25% (6 hours) of an average day. When a dragon becomes a young adult its period of activity is about 20% (5 hours a day), an adult one will be awake only 15% (3.5 hours) of the time at best, while a mature adult is active and alert only 10% (2.5 hours) of an average day. Then, the old sort will be active perhaps 7.5% (2 hours) of the time, a very old dragon 5% (1.5 hours), the ancient ones no more than 3% (1 hour), a wyrm less than 2% (1 hour), the incredible great wyrm 1% (30 minutes), and the ultimate dracos invictus will be alert less than 1% (15 minutes) of an average day.

Where time of wakefulness is less than one-quarter (6 hours) of a day, the dragon will tend to sleep through entire days, being active for a period of about four days to hunt, then sleeping for 16 or more days so that the period for sleep is equal in its ratio to the days of activity. That means a dracos invictus will sleep for 96 days for each day it was active. If its active period was eight days long, the creature would slumber thereafter for a bit over two years! Thus, despite the special senses of dragons, the very capable and cautious party will have progressively greater chances for attacking one while it is slumbering and unaware.

Of course dragons are highly intelligent, and they recognise their weakness in regard to their need for extended periods of rest and slumber. So as the need for sleep grows greater, the dragon will take precautions to avoid being discovered thus by its enemies. All sorts of devices will be employed to give an alarm so as to awaken the dragon if foes come near. Various guard creatures (that are not interested in the dragon's hoard, of course) will be used to this end, especially those whose attack involves loud noise. Likewise, magical and mechanical means will be used to sound the alarm. Regardless of this, the dragon

awakening from deep slumber will need some period of time to go from unconsciousness to full alertness. The time lag is one second per age category. After hearing that which will alert the sleeping dragon, a variable time that depends upon the nature of what it is that awakens the creature, something that might occur in a single second, or might require a round or more, complete wakefulness will come only after a brief period of time has elapsed, and this translates to:

Wyrmling: 1 second
 Very young: 2 seconds
 Young: one-half round
 Juvenile: 4 seconds
 Young adult: 5 seconds
 Adult: one round
 Mature adult: 7 seconds
 Old: 8 seconds
 Very old: one and one-half rounds
 Ancient: 10 seconds
 Wyrm: 11 seconds
 Great wyrm: two rounds
 Dracos invictus: 13 seconds

DIVIDE AND CONQUER

No matter how many underlings might serve a dragon, sooner or later it will find itself confronted by the party. A dragon has many attacks and potent defences but when faced by a pair of sword-swingers, a skilled archer, and a mighty weaver of spells it is in trouble. High-level fighters equipped with magical weapons deal dreadful damage when making full attacks, a spell caster might shield them from the dragon's breath weapon and otherwise boost their defences, enhance their attacks or, if he overcomes the dragon's spell resistance, use some magic that lays the dragon low. In short when outnumbered by characters of a level equal to the dragon's challenge rating the beast will fall.

To truly test the party, and to maximise the dragon's destructive potential, the Games Master should devise tactics designed to separate party members from each other.

A wise dragon might well devise its lair in such a fashion that a party entering it swiftly becomes divided

– slimy or icy chutes, pits, rock falls, walls of force, monster attacks, one-way doors, teleporting chambers, descending floors, sliding walls and a host of other ruses and devices might be employed in a dragon's lair. Naturally the younger wyrms will have fewer protections, as their resources are limited.

If such schemes fail, or if the wyrm's lair contains no such protections, then the dragon must attempt such a division of its foes at the time it battles them. Obviously, if there are two or more dragons or if half-dragons, dragonkin, or other monsters are present, then the dragon need not concern itself with any clever stratagems. The use of the spell *repulsion* has already been commented on, as has the way a flying wyrm might separate its enemies.

Even in a relatively confined space the dragon can exploit its manoeuvrability. High ledges to which the dragon can easily climb allow it to retreat and pick off those adventurers trying to reach it. Rocky shelves provide a good perch and, if the cavern is large enough the wyrm might glide from one to another. Should some of the party reach such a ledge or shelf the dragon can simply descend to the cave floor and tackle those that stayed behind!

With mundane forms of party separation considered let us look at magical ways, other than *repulsion*, that a wyrm might split its adversaries one from the other:

0 level spells: *Dancing lights*; a party in a confrontation with a dragon that utilises this handy cantrip might split, sending one or more members to investigate the 'group with torches' that approaches. *Ghost sound*; will the party ignore the slithering, rasping sound of what might be another dragon approaching?

1st level spells: *Animate rope*; have the dragon place a few coils of rope in its lair and tie an enemy to a handy stalagmite for a few rounds. *Cause fear*; if the party's best swordsman flees, who will shield their archers and spell casters? *Charm person*; little needs to be said – if the dragon's Charisma check succeeds it gains an ally and the party must fight one of their own. *Colour spray*; with some party members blind or unconscious

The Indians capture dragons in the following manner. They embroider golden runes on a scarlet cloak, which they lay in front of the animal's burrow after charming it to sleep with the runes; for this is the only way to overcome the eyes of the dragon, which are otherwise inflexible, and much mysterious lore is sung by them to overcome it. These runes induce the dragon to stretch his neck out of his burrow and fall asleep over them: then the Indians fall upon him as he lies there, and dispatch it with blows of their axes, and having cut off the head they despoil it of its gems.

Philostratus, The Life of Apollonius of Tyana (220 AD)

St George travelled into Egypt, which was infested by a huge fiery dragon, whose breath tainted the air so dreadfully that a pestilence raged throughout the land; in consequence of which the king proclaimed that any valiant knight who should slay it should receive the hand of the Princess Royal. St George had no sooner reached the dragon's cave than it set upon him, his spear was shivered to pieces, and he was unhorsed; when drawing his sword, he quickly felled the monster and having dispatched it went in triumph to the palace and was most graciously received by the Princess Sabra who gave him a ring as a token of her admiration and affection.

Richard Johnson, The Seven Champions of Christendom (1608)

the dragon can pick off the rest. *Hold portal*; a small wrym might trap one section of the party with it, leaving the other section impotent beyond a door. *Hypnotism*; can the dragon persuade some of the party to leave for a while? Meantime it falls upon the rest! *Silent image*; two dragons? Which one shall the party fight? *Sleep*; while some party members slumber the rest die! *Ventriloquism*; hark! Something wicked this way comes, best send a rearguard to block this new foe...

2nd level spells: *Arcane lock*; as with *hold portal*, a handy way to keep party members apart. *Ghoul touch*; handily removes one foe from the fray and hampers the rest. *Hypnotic pattern*; those entranced will do nothing as the dragon attacks their unaffected companions. *Minor image*; a slightly more convincing way to persuade the party to divide their attacks. *Scare*; a

single foe might well save verses *cause fear*, but will all the targets of this dweomer be so lucky? *Tasha's hideous laughter*; who will laugh hardest, the victim of this enchantment or the dragon as it rips into the rest of the party? *Web*; those entrapped can only watch helplessly while their companions are devoured.

3rd level spells: *Hold person*; neutralise the toughest fighter in melee or a pesky archer interfering with the dragon's aerial assault. *Major image*; an airborne dragon might have its image 'fight' for a few rounds and thus drain the party's resources. If one or more characters take to the air to attack the 'other' dragon all the better! *Sleet storm*; those that fall will be delayed in coming to their brethren's aid. *Slow*; while not separating the party completely, the reduced rate of action suffered by victims of this spell has the desired effect; the dragon is free to concentrate its attacks



against the unaffected members of the band. *Stinking cloud*; those affected will be out of the battle for a few rounds at least, meanwhile the dragon can destroy the rest of the party. *Suggestion*; dragons being notoriously wily creatures, think up some truly reasonable *suggestion* it might make and have the target save at -1 or -2. If the dragon knows something of the party all the better, it will use such knowledge to its advantage. Where possible have the spell cast before combat begins and let the *suggestion* be one that separates the target from the rest of the party.

4th level spells: *Confusion*; the affected party members may attack each other or wander away, or at least stand and do nothing; the dragon is free to pick off those who resisted its enchantment. *Emotion*; yet another way to engender *fear* in some members of the party. *Evard's black tentacles*; a suitably sinister way to immobilise and harm some party members. *Fear*; those driven off will be out of the battle for a while. The dragon can then bring forth a *wall* or other magical effect to further separate one part of the party from the rest. *Otiluke's resilient sphere*; have the dragon trap one enemy and then, when the rest are destroyed, push the sphere off of a nearby cliff, into a crevasse, the sea, a molten mass of lava... *Rainbow pattern*; adversaries captivated by the colours can be left alone while the dragon deals destruction to their unaffected allies. *Solid fog*; cast between two already separated groups of adventurers, the dragon can then choose which faction to assail. *Wall of fire*; a circle of flame around spell casters and archers should occupy them while the dragon deals with their sword-swinging compatriots. *Wall of ice*; a hemisphere to trap one or more adversaries or better still a wall that divides a party into two groups serves the dragon well. Consider choosing an ice spell for a fire breathing wyrm and a fire spell for a frost breathing one, as the party is less likely to be prepared for dealing with such contrary magicks.

5th level spells: *Dominate person*; take control of a spell caster and turn him loose on his former friends. *Feeblemind*; remove a spell caster from the fray. *Hold monster*; as *hold person* but with the added benefit of potentially affecting the party's summoned allies. *Transmute mud to rock*; a handy way to immobilise some of the dragon's adversaries. *Wall of force*; trap the party's spell casters in a hemisphere of force. *Wall of iron*; separate warriors from spell casters or crush one faction beneath the wall's weight. *Wall of stone*; try to trap the most able frontline fighters in the party.

6th level spells: *Acid fog*; if fighters advance while spell casters and archers stay to the rear, separate the two groups with this spell and then let the dragon fly

over the fog to engage the rear guard in melee. *Contingency*; set *dimension door* to activate if a melee weapon strikes the dragon; the dragon can then spirit itself away from frontline fighters and appear next to their spell-casting comrades. *Eyebite*; the gaze attack is a free action. Use it to drive off or better still *charm* party members. *Guards and wards*; while not a combat spell, a dragon that has warded its caverns with this *dweomer* will find it a relatively easy matter to separate intruders into its domain. *Mass suggestion*; see *suggestion* above. *Mislead*; have the figment retreat, hopefully the party's fighters will follow; then let the dragon assault the rear guard of spell casters and archers.

7th level spells: *Banishment*; send those pesky allies the party has summoned back to where they belong. *Forcecage*; trap the party's fighters. *Power word, stun*; there is no save against this spell, use it to remove a spell casting character rather than a fighter type as they are likely to have fewer hit points.

8th level spells: *Power word, blind*; there is no save against this spell and a blind enemy is far easier to defeat. *Prismatic wall*; of all the various *wall* spells this is the best for a dragon to use. *Mass charm*; turn the party against itself. *Maze*; fighters are not known for having a high intelligence, thus this is an excellent way to remove one from combat.

9th level spells: *Dominate monster*; turn the adventurer's most fearsome ally against them. *Imprisonment*; there is no save to avoid this touch attack spell; with its high attack bonus a dragon is unlikely to miss its target... *Power word, kill*; death permanently separates a party and as this spell grants no saving throw success is nearly guaranteed; have the dragon target a wizard as they are unlikely to have enough hit points to avoid death.

A MAGICAL ARMOURY

The spells in the above list cover a variety of situations; the Games Master is urged to favour those that can be targeted at multiple adversaries. As previously discussed, a potent player nearly always makes his saving throws; a one-target spell will often be avoided by such a character.

Illusions that might cause the party to waste their most powerful offensive magic or otherwise deplete their resources are also of great use to a dragon.

Let us consider other magic spells. No mention has been made of divine spells. As most dragons do not

have access to them, a comprehensive treatment has not been given. For those wyrms that can call on the gods the Games Master should give careful consideration to the powers they might employ.

Arcane spells that allow a surprise attack or offer a swift retreat are of great importance to a dragon's armoury of magic. All forms of *invisibility* should be considered as well as magic that allows for ethereal travel. To tackle every arcane spell as has been done for directly defensive magic and magic designed to separate the party would consume too much space; the Games Master is urged to peruse the sorcerer spell lists and spell descriptions from *Core Rulebook I* very carefully, looking out for those magicks that will allow his dragon to escape. Even low-level spells like *expeditious retreat*, can be put to great use in this regard. The spell *feather fall* will save a flying dragon suddenly prevented from using its wings and you can be sure that the party's spell casters will endeavour to accomplish such a feat.

Another good magical combat action for a dragon is to *summon* allies. At the least these will distract the party and occupy one or more members for a few rounds, at best they might tip the battle fully in the dragon's favour.

Do not neglect such *divinations* that will reveal much to the dragon about the party before combat begins; you may then legitimately exploit what weaknesses they have and allow the dragon to prepare itself accordingly. Likewise if the wyrm can shield itself from what scrying the party might attempt it should do so.

To finish off our study of magic let us consider the spells *haste* and *dispel magic*. A dragon fighting single-handed against a party of four or more player characters will be subject to so many attacks each round that some are bound to get through its impressive defences, even when such have been augmented by magic. *Haste* goes some distance to evening up the odds, the extra partial action allows the dragon its breath weapon attack in addition to a normal attack or the casting of a spell. The flying dragon benefiting from *haste* can put enough distance between itself and the party after a flyby attack to shield itself somewhat from their arrows and spells.

Dispel magic is essential to a dragon; the wisest and most powerful will combine it with the meta magic feat *quicken spell* and use it immediately prior to breath weapon discharge. If the party's defences against the wyrm's breath weapon can be eroded they are in

serious trouble. The dragon should make area dispels first and follow up with targeted dispels against those unharmed by its attack. *Greater dispelling* will be employed by older wyrms, and if the dragon is potent enough to utter a *disjunction*, all the better!

TOOTH AND CLAW

Eventually the dragon will fight with its natural weapons against the party. Ideally it will have weakened and scattered them first. Do not shy away from keeping the dragon aloft until the party is forced to hide in bushes, beneath trees and the like; spot checks will find at least some.

Once the dragon descends and fights in melee it will be prepared to retreat upwards at any time and repeat its former tactics or flee to its lair.

Remember that the dragon is large and very strong. Some might push trees over on foes, cause rock falls, or land heavily atop the party.

NEW FEATS FOR DRAGONS

Aerial Sweep

Prerequisites: Hover

The hovering dragon is able to make a tail sweep attack in addition to bite and claw attacks.

Chew

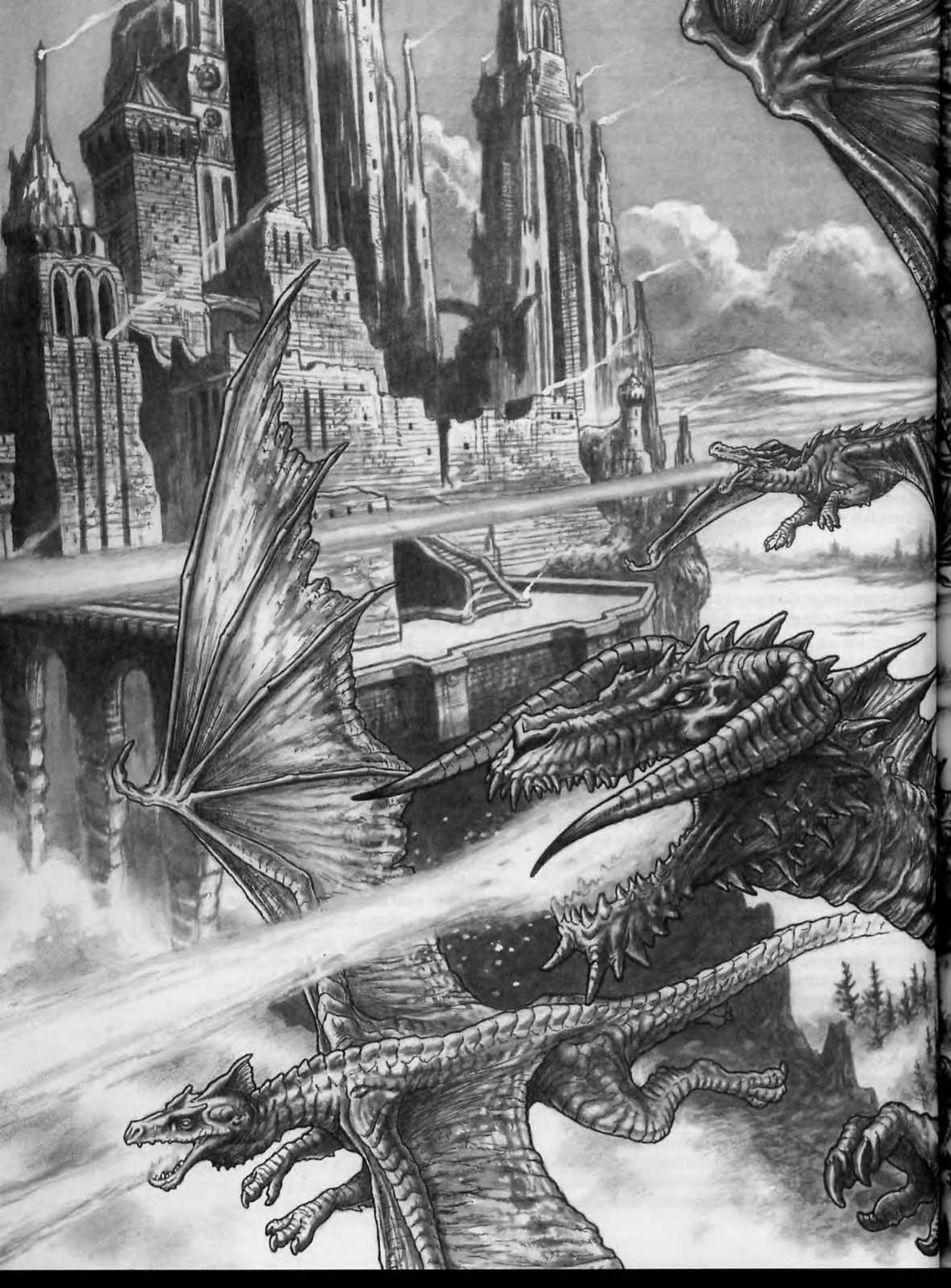
Prerequisites: Snatch

By succeeding in a bite attack the dragon can catch any adversary four or more sizes smaller than itself in its mouth. While in the dragon's maw the creature automatically suffers triple bite damage each round regardless of what other actions the dragon might take. A character can escape by succeeding in an opposed Strength check; obviously the dragon must drop the character before making a bite attack on another creature.

Crash Landing

Prerequisites: Hover, Wingover

An experienced dragon can take desperate measures to arrest its decent if damage suffered, or spell attacks, prevent it from flying. The dragon takes half damage from any fall.





Fear Focus

By fixing its gaze on a specific target a dragon may focus the effect of its Frightful Presence ability. Any creature drawing the dragon's attention in this manner must add one per age category of the dragon to the DC required to resist the effect. Fear Focus is a standard action.

Improved Snatch

Prerequisite: Snatch

As Snatch, except the dragon can move before and after the attack, provided that its total distance moved is not greater than its listed speed.

Maximize Breath Weapon

Once per day a dragon can choose to unleash a breath weapon attack of maximum potency. The dragon must not have used a breath weapon attack in any of the four previous rounds, and the energy expended in the attack will prevent the dragon from being able to use another breathe attack for at least another eight rounds, at which time the standard d4 method is used to determine how many additional rounds the dragon must wait before it is able to use its breath weapon attack. Note: dragons with more than one breath weapon are unable to use any of their breath weapon attacks in the four rounds before, or the eight rounds following the maximised attack.

Specific Targeting Breath Attack

A dragon may opt to choose specific targets instead of blanketing the usual area of effect with its breath attack. The dragon may select up to four individual creatures to target in a 90° arc as long as they are within the normal maximum range of the attack and belch forth small bursts of its breath weapon. Each target may add one to the Reflex save for each creature targeted. Example: If the dragon selected four targets in a round, each would get a bonus of four on his save roll. If the save is successful, no damage is taken. Specific targeting breath attack is a full round action.

Stomp

Prerequisites: Snatch

By succeeding in a claw attack the dragon can tread upon and automatically pin a creature four or more sizes smaller than itself. The creature is pinned until the dragon moves or uses the pinning claw to make another attack. While pinned the creature automatically suffers claw damage plus three times the dragon's Strength bonus each round. A pinned

character can escape by succeeding in an opposed Strength check; the dragon's size modifier is added to its roll.

THE SPELLS OF DRACOS

Some sages hold that it was from the dragons that man first learned the occult arts of magic. If such an assertion is true – and the elves dispute it claiming that honour for themselves – then the dragons held some secrets back; hereafter we examine just a few of the unique spells known by dragons. A sorcerer or wizard might learn these spells too, if a dragon cared to teach him, but most are of little use to a mortal.

Fear Falter

Necromancy [Fear, Mind-Affecting]

Level: Dragon 0

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One creature

Duration: 1 minute

Saving Throw: Will Negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

A target failing its saving throw is less able to resist the dragon's *frightful presence* and makes its saving throw against it at –2.

Scratch

Conjuration

Level: Dragon 0

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One creature

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes

A magical shimmering force shaped vaguely like a claw materialises before the dragon. By making a clawing motion towards a foe the dragon directs this energy towards a target; if the wyrm succeeds in a ranged touch attack the victim suffers 1d6 damage.

Slither

Illusion (Phantasm)

Level: Dragon 0

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Duration: 1 round

Saving Throw: Will Negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

The dragon causes a single subject to 'hear' the slithering approach of some monstrous serpent or dragon coming up behind. For the one-round duration of the cantrip's effect the victim will turn around to face this new foe.

Dragon Spit*Evocation***Level:** Dragon 1**Components:** V, S**Casting Time:** 1 action**Range:** Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./ level)**Target:** One creature**Duration:** Instantaneous**Saving Throw:** None**Spell Resistance:** Yes

The dragon activating this spell is empowered to spit forth a globule of matter of the same substance as its breath weapon: A red dragon spits out a fire ball, a green dragon a sphere of gas and so on. The dragon must succeed in a ranged touch attack for the globule to have effect. It delivers a base of 1d8 damage to which a further d8 of damage is added for every two caster levels beyond the first caster level of the dragon to a maximum of 5d8 points of damage at caster level nine or above.

Harden Scale*Conjuration (Creation)**[Force]***Level:** Dragon 1**Components:** V, S**Casting Time:** 1 action**Range:** Touch**Duration:** 1 round/level**Saving Throw:** Will Negates (harmless)**Spell Resistance:** Yes

(harmless)

An invisible force forms beneath the dragon, protecting it from attacks from below while it is airborne, providing +8 armour protection. As this is a force rather than physical armour the dragon suffers neither a speed penalty nor a chance for arcane spell failure. Note that the attacks of incorporeal creatures do not bypass this protection.

Air Brake*Transmutation***Level:** Dragon 2**Components:** V**Casting Time:** see text**Range:** Personal**Duration:** 1 round**Saving Throw:** None**Spell Resistance:** No

A flying dragon casting this spell is brought to an immediate halt and is empowered to levitate for one round during which time it can make a 180° turn, cast a spell or attack. Note that if an enemy is pursuing the dragon its momentum might take it past the now stationary wyrm thus reversing their roles. Perhaps the dragon is now 'on the tail' of its opponent.

This spell can be cast with a single word: activating it is a free action.

Sheltering Egg*Transmutation***Level:** Dragon 2**Components:** V, S**Casting Time:** 1 action**Range:** Personal**Duration:** 1 hour/level**Saving Throw:** None**Spell Resistance:** No

Upon casting this spell a shimmering egg of purple energy encases the dragon and then vanishes, removing the dragon to an extra-dimensional pocket space where it is safe from all forms of attack.

The dragon cannot see into the material world nor can it cast spells or make attacks into the area it vacated, it can, however, activate spells or use magic items that affect only itself.

When the spell's duration is at an end the dragon reappears in exactly the same place it vanished from. The dragon cannot choose to leave the pocket space prior to this time but beings still in the material plane can cause its reappearance by targeting a *dispel magic* spell on the location it formerly occupied.

Wakeful Slumber

Abjuration

Level: Dragon 3

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Duration: one day/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This spell automatically wakens a sleeping dragon should any being, even astral or ethereal ones, come within 60 feet (+5 feet per caster level) of its place of repose.

Wings of the Dragon King

Transmutation

Level: Dragon 3

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Duration: 5 minutes/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

This spell increases a dragon's flying speed by an additional 30 feet per round and improves its aerial manoeuvrability by a factor of one (i.e. poor manoeuvrability becomes average manoeuvrability, while average manoeuvrability would become good manoeuvrability, and so on).

Aerial Manoeuvrability

Transmutation

Level: Dragon 4

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Duration: 1 minute/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

This spell grants the dragon perfect manoeuvrability in flight (see *Core Rulebook II*).

Treasure Ward

Abjuration

Level: Dragon 4

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 10 minutes

Range: Touch

Target Area: 10 sq. ft./level

Duration: 1 hour/level

Saving Throw: Fortitude Negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell affects all items in a continuous pile of treasure in an area up to 10 square feet per caster level of the dragon. Any item removed from the pile causes its bearer to suffer from nausea and vomiting unless a Fortitude save is made. Nauseous beings must drop the item in question or be doubled up and unable to move. Separate saves are required for each item; note that each 1,000 coins are counted as 'one item'.

Nimble Drake

Transmutation

Level: Dragon 5

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Will Negates (harmless)

Spell Resistance: Yes

The creature benefiting from this spell gains 4d6 points of Dexterity, to a maximum Dexterity score of 30 for its duration, with consummate additions to Armour Class, Reflex saves, Dexterity-based skills and ranged attacks.

Sack of Air

Evocation [Force]

Level: Dragon 5

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)

Duration: 3 hours/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This spell creates an invisible sack-like field of energy that trails behind a flying dragon enabling it to transport large quantities of matter: up to 300 lb per caster level. Weight is the only limit as the bag

expands to whatever size is desired. The items within the sack become weightless allowing the dragon its full normal flying speed.

Tiamat's Fearful Vision

Illusion (Phantasm)

Level: Dragon 6

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: medium (100 ft. + 10ft./level)

Targets: 1d3 living creatures, none of which are further apart than 10 feet

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Will (disbelief) and see text

Spell Resistance: Yes

The target creatures see an illusion of Tiamat, queen of dragons, and unless they succeed in a Will saving throw, believe the vision to be real and consider themselves to be the subjects of her multiple breath weapon attacks.

Those believing in the illusion see flames, ice, acid, lightning and poisonous gas streaming from 'Tiamat's' mouths towards them and must make Fortitude saving throws at -2 or die of fright upon the spot; so fearsome is the illusion that those making the save still suffer 3d6 damage.

Draconic Eye of Dom

Divination

Level: Dragon 6

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 minute

Range: Unlimited

Duration: 2-minutes/level and see text

Saving Throw: See below

Spell Resistance: No

A disembodied, floating, three-foot diameter eye appears before the dragon and moves as it wills at up to 40 feet per round. The dragon can see through this eye just as it would were it looking through its own eyes. The eye has the same Armour Class as the dragon that made it and can take as many points of damage as the dragon has hit points.

If the dragon chooses it may discharge its breath weapon through the eye, affecting targets in just the same way as if they were subject to its normal mode of breath weapon attack. Doing so causes the eye to vanish.

Abundant Breath

Transmutation

Level: Dragon 7

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

For the duration of the spell's effect the dragon can use its breath weapon every other round.

Adamantine Scales

Transmutation

Level: Dragon 7

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

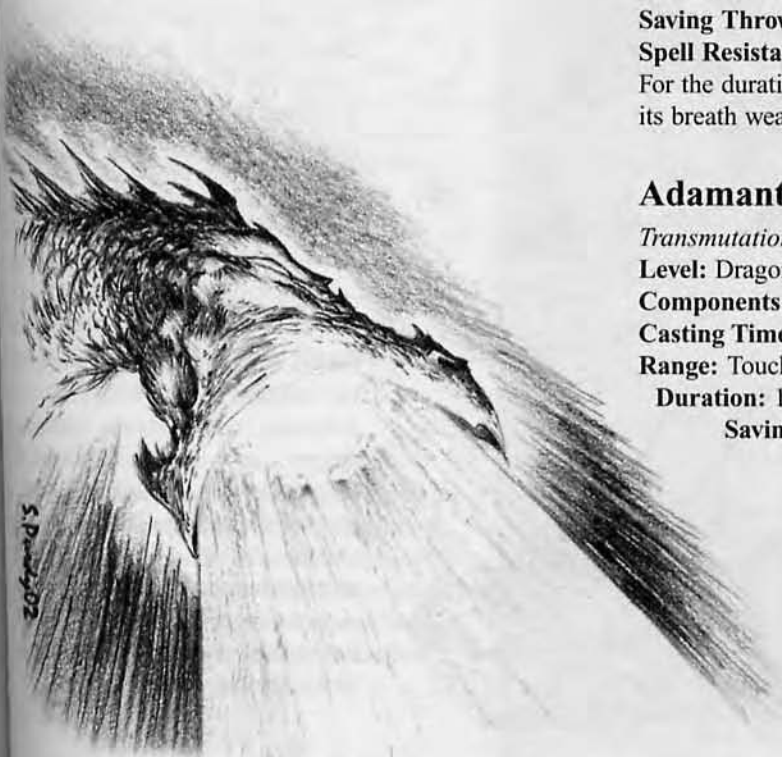
Range: Touch

Duration: 1 minute/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

This spell transforms a dragon's scales into adamantine, preventing flight but increasing its Armour Class by +8, preventing critical hits, and adding an extra d6 of damage to claw, tail and wing attacks.



Magic Blight

Conjuration

Level: Dragon 8

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Effect: Ray

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Will Negates (object)

Spell Resistance: Yes

A ray of anti-magical energy issues forth from one raised claw; the dragon must make a ranged touch attack against one target creature and, if successful, the magic of the ray instantly dispels all spell, spell-like, or magic item-created effects operating on the target creature: Furthermore magical items borne by the target are made permanently non-magical unless they succeed in a Will save – for details refer to *Mordenkainen's disjunction* in *Core Rulebook I*.

Disintegrating Breath

Transmutation

Level: Dragon 9

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Special

Duration: 1 round/level or until discharged

Saving Throw: Special

Spell Resistance: Yes

This dreadful magic empowers the next breath weapon discharge made by the dragon with the power of disintegration; creatures failing their save against the dragon's breath attack are reduced to a trace of fine dust.

DRACONIC SORCERY

Fearsome in battle with their terrible teeth and claws, the dragons are no less to be respected for the magic they can wield. Hereafter we take a look at some recently unearthed lore concerning the dragons' arcane secrets.

MAGIC ITEMS

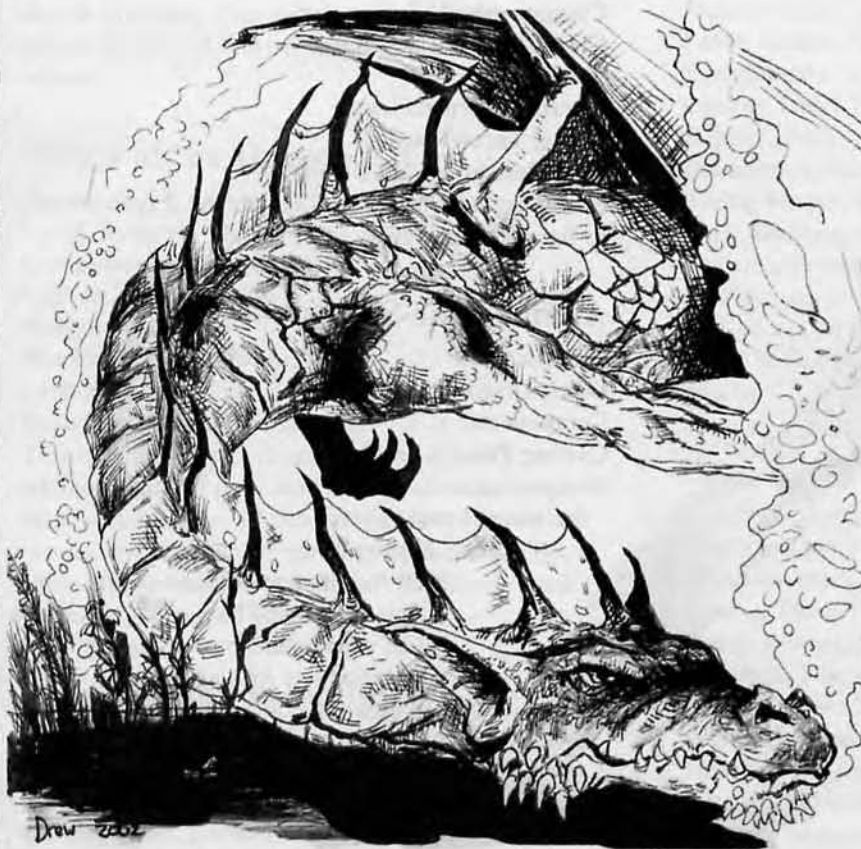
There are sorcerers and wizards amongst all races who, from time to time, have found it prudent to fashion magical items for their draconic servitors, allies, or overlords. So too do dragons themselves make enchanted devices to better protect themselves or to fulfil sundry necessary functions.

In all cases the same feats and processes are required of a dragon to manufacture an item as are required of other beings.

The Games Master is encouraged to choose items for the dragons he creates but if random determination is desired then assume that any given magical item in a dragon's hoard has a 5% chance to be one deliberately fashioned for a wyrm to use.

ARMOUR

Follow the same guidelines as given for standard armour with the following modifications; usually a dragon's armour covers its head, long neck, forequarters and back, leaving the belly, tail and rear limbs unprotected. In all cases the weight and restrictions imposed by donning such defences reduces speed by 1/3; furthermore a dragon in medium or heavy armour cannot fly.



By far and away the most common type of draconic armours is a form of light chain mail that grants a base AC bonus of +4 to which magic armour enhancements are added as normal, however their armour runs the whole gamut of materials and might also have special qualities as do other magical armours (see *Core Rulebook II*).

A dragon needs allies or servitors to help it into its armour – very strong servitors for the biggest dragons – and suffers spell failure chances as normal (see *Core Rulebook I*).

WEAPONS

While dragonkin might wield any enchanted weapon, clearly a dragon is unable to manipulate such things. However, three forms of magical weapon are known to have been devised for dragons: the claw spur, iron jaw, and tail spikes. The enchanted nature of each causes them to adjust to the size of the dragon that uses them. Note that both ordinary and masterwork examples of such devices exist, but that each must be fashioned for the appropriate size of dragon.

Claw Spur

This is a long, barbed appendage that is secured around the ankle joint of a dragon's fore claw (much in the way cockerels are armed for cock fights); it adds one extra die of damage to a dragon's claw attack. Refer to the Dragon Attacks table in *Core Rulebook III* and add one die of the type indicated to the dragon's claw attack damage (i.e. a tiny dragon will now deliver 2d3 damage with its claw, a large one 2d8, and a gargantuan one 3d8). To this damage the dragon adds the appropriate degree of magical damage. With regard to bonuses and special abilities the Games Master should consult the weapon ability tables in *Core Rulebook II*. If a specific weapon is indicated, the Games Master should choose one of the items described below.

Iron Jaw

The dreadful iron jaw looks something like a great muzzle wrapped around a dragon's snout; it has huge rows of serrated iron teeth that augment the drake's already fearsome fangs and is hinged as is the dragon's jaw. It adds one die of the type indicated to the

dragon's bite attack damage; thus a tiny dragon's bite will deliver 2d4 damage, a large dragon's 3d6, and a gargantuan dragon's 5d6. To this damage the dragon adds the appropriate degree of magical damage.

Tail Spikes

This is a cylindrical item studded with long spikes and barbs that slots over a dragon's tail. It adds one extra die of damage to a wyrm's tail slap or tail sweep (i.e. a tail slap from a large dragon would deliver 2d8 damage, that from a colossal wyrm 5d6.) As with claw spurs and iron jaws, the appropriate degree of magical damage is added to this base.

The Games Master will note that such weapons are of more benefit to the younger wyrms than they are to the older dragons. This is partly a factor of each dragon's size – the older wyrm's attacks are so potent that the addition of metal enhancements makes little difference.

With regard to bonuses and special abilities for these weapons, the Games Master should roll on the tables in *Core Rulebook II*. If a specific weapon is indicated, the Games Master should modify the item as necessary or re-roll for a more appropriate item. For example, a *rapier of puncturing* could become a *claw spur of*

But near by was a sweet flowing spring, and there with his strong bow the lord, the son of Zeus, killed the bloated, great she-dragon, a fierce monster wont to do great mischief to men upon earth, to men themselves and to their thin-shanked sheep; for she was a very bloody plague. Whosoever met the dragoness, the day of doom would sweep him away, until the lord Apollo, who deals death from afar, shot a strong arrow at her. Then she, rent with bitter pangs, lay drawing great gasps for breath and rolling about that place. An awful noise swelled up unspeakable as she writhed continually this way and that amid the wood: and so she left her life, breathing it forth in blood. Then Phoebus Apollo boasted over her:

'Now rot here upon the soil that feeds man! You at least shall live no more to be a fell bane to men who eat the fruit of the all-nourishing earth, and who will bring hither perfect hecatombs. Against cruel death neither Typhoeus shall avail you nor ill-famed Chimera, but here shall the Earth and shining Hyperion make you rot.'

Thus said Phoebus, exulting over her: and darkness covered her eyes. And the holy strength of Helios made her rot away there; wherefore the place is now called Pytho, and men call the lord Apollo by another name, Pythian; because on that spot the power of piercing Helios made the monster rot away.

Homer's hymn to Pythian Apollo

puncturing, while a *mace of smiting* might become *tail spikes of smiting* and so on.

POTIONS

While a dragon can drink any potion and benefit from it, such small vials are easily broken and very difficult for a dragon to manipulate. When making such philtres for themselves the dragons brew them into a large, egg-shaped ovoid, the outer membrane of which is solid. Each ovoid is at least one foot across and often larger still, maybe as wide as three or more feet. The dragon breaks the membrane with its teeth and then swallows the magical fluids released.

In this form such potions can be mistaken by inexperienced adventurers for a dragon egg. They vary in colour from a bright blue, a pulsating green, pink, brown, black, indeed all the colours of the rainbow and all imaginable shades. Some are opaque; others radiate light or have shimmering motes of energy visible within.

A player character hoping to drink one of these potions must first break the outer membrane. This is 50% likely to cause such a large split that the contents will immediately drain out of it. If a smaller hole is made the potion can be siphoned off into another container or drunk at once. Note that the entire contents must be drunk in order to receive the benefits – quite a task when a large ovoid is considered.

RINGS

When specifically fashioned for a dragon, a ring is made in the form of a neck collar: Note, however, that a dragon can gain the benefits of a magical ring of normal design by slipping it over a claw or a head-horn.

RODS

Magical rods are hard for a dragon to manipulate and, when making such, a dragon compensates by increasing their size; a rod designed for a dragon will often be five or more feet long and have a bracket through which the dragon can poke its claws in much the same way as a human being might don a knuckleduster.

SCROLLS

While a dragon might use a *mage hand* cantrip to lift, unfurl and hold a scroll before its eyes, doing so is something of a rigmarole. When scribing their own scrolls dragons do so on a large, soft scale, shed from

their underbelly, or a disc of copper the size of a shield. In either case they inscribe the words with their sharp claws, deeply etching the copper or scoring the scale. Player characters could activate such items but transporting them would be most problematic.

STAVES

As with rods, these items can be hard for a dragon to wield, therefore they fashion their own as extensions to be slotted over a head-horn or to be grasped firmly between two claws. In the latter case they are sometimes fitted with brackets much like those found on draconic rods.

WANDS

Delicate wands are snapped like dry twigs in a dragon's clumsy grasp. Their own wands are claw-sheathes fashioned from bone or metal that slip over one claw; otherwise they are wielded in much the same way as any other wand. They are sturdy and sharp enough that a dragon can still make claw attacks while wearing one. Usually they are deeply etched with runes and glyphs.

WONDROUS ITEMS

Many of the wondrous items described in *Core Rulebook II* can be used by a dragon without modification. Take note of the following suggestions:

Amulets, bracelets, brooches, circlets, medallions, necklaces, periapts and scarabs: these will be of a size suitable for the dragon and therefore of little use to a player character that finds one.

Bags: while having the properties described in *Core Rulebook II*, the outer size of these items will be greater. They may also be equipped with a very long thong by which a dragon can suspend the bag from its neck.

Belts: a 'belt' made for or by a dragon will be in the form of a great harness that straps over the beast's back and is secured under its belly.

Boots, gauntlets, gloves and slippers: dragons need no footwear but leather items somewhat like greaves or bracers are sometimes enchanted to have the same effect as the various magical boots and straps that wrap about their forelimbs, and function much as a magical gauntlet or glove.

Bracers: once again these will be of large size suitable only for a dragon.

Capes, cloaks, mantles, robes, vests and vestments: these items are much like the caparisons worn by horses.

Eyes and goggles: these will be over-sized cusps designed for a dragon's eye and not a mortal's.

Hats, headbands, helms and masks: when fashioned for a dragon, these items cover the whole of its head with slits or circles over the eyes, a gap over the nostrils, and a hinge so the wyrm's mouth can open.

Manuals and tomes: if a dragon creates one of these items it will be a circular book eight or more feet across made up of thick leaves of beaten copper and held together with massive iron loops.

A FAIR FIGHT

It is not the author's intent to encourage the Games Master to create undefeatable dragons; such would serve his campaign and the game as a whole most poorly.

Dragons as described in *Core Rulebook III* are deadly creatures; the tactics suggested above compliment them, serving to prevent a swift or unlucky defeat. In employing such tactics the Games Master should consider carefully the age and type of dragon featured in the encounter; refer to the Challenge Ratings section on p34 of this book and be sure the creature is not too potent for the characters it will face.

If players genuinely fear the dragons of the campaign, then fighting one is a momentous occasion that gives even the highest level character pause for thought. If victory over them is won only by the skins of the characters' teeth, then the Games Master can pat himself on the back and feel sure the dragons of his world are 'real' in the imaginations of his players.



ROLEPLAYING WITH DRAGONS

The intent of players with regard to dragonkind is virtually assured to be self-serving or murderous. That is, when seeking and finding Metallic dragons, the team of players is usually looking for help, occasionally bent on slaying and looting it. With regard to Chromatic dragons, the reverse is the rule. The vast majority of the time the heroes are bent on dracocide. Considering that, it is absolutely incumbent on the Games Master to roleplay any sort of dragon accordingly. After all, these mighty creatures are intelligent, and even those with minds less keen than others of their kind are cunning. Natural selection and parental warnings, when combined with years of bitter experience, will surely make all drakes wary of humans and their ilk. Tasty they might be, but they are food that fights back, prey that too often becomes the predator.

With that in mind, how should the Games Master enact the part of a dragon? This is to be done with cunning, intellect, suspicion, and hardness of heart. As the Chromatic species of dragons are the most frequent targets of player malice, let us consider them first.

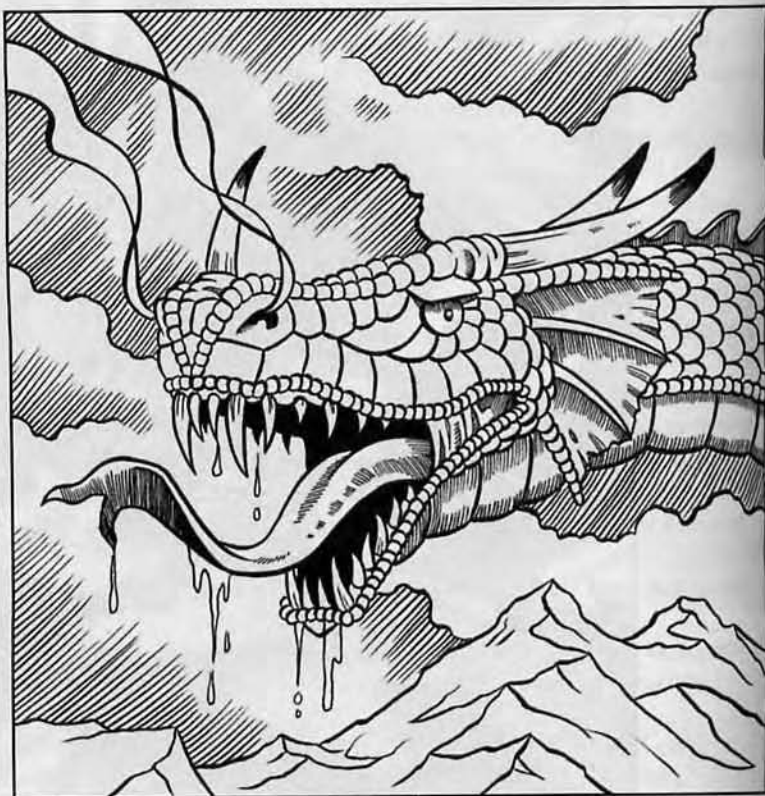
While not generally as clever and wise as their Metallic kin, the Chromatic dragons are sly and crafty. Age is a factor, of course. The younger the dragon the less able it is to deal deceitfully with humans and others who come to seek it for any reason. Thus, when taking the role of a Chromatic dragon of juvenile or younger age category, you must carefully consider skills such as Bluff and Diplomacy when used by the players to enable the party to 'negotiate' before being attacked. You, of course, know that they are dissembling and have bad intentions - to enslave the dragon or slay it. The wyrm, on the other hand, only suspects this.

When the subject is of young adult age category or older, it is right that you roleplay the dragon with a considerable degree of guile. The older the subject, the

more deceitful you can be. The alert dragon that is aware of the approach of the players before they confront it will plan, making the most intelligent choices available. Will ignominious flight serve best? If so, then it must be considered as a first choice. If immediate attack offers the most likely chance for survival, then the dragon will take that course. If lurking in ambush offers a better prospect of defeating the approaching party, then that will be the option the drake is likely to take. Put yourself in the role of the dragon, and remember, it is a life-and-death situation. Balance that against the creature's hubris, greed and covetousness. The older the wyrm, the more those character flaws will come into play.

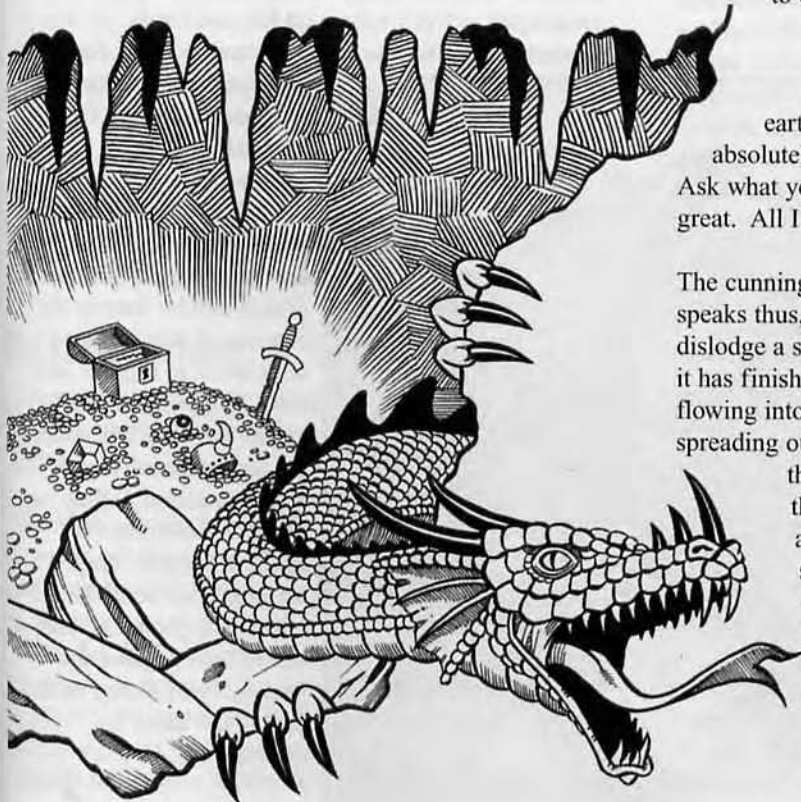
In the middle categories of age, the dragon might well desire the valuable things the players bring with them. So parleying with the party, turning the tables and duping them, might be a valid option. In such case the duplicity used by the dragon must be such that when slaying the would-be captors or assassins, their possessions survive relatively unharmed. We will return to this later on.

Any dragon of very old or greater age category will dismiss fleeing and player valuables. Such a dragon is above flight, and its hoard is far too precious to abandon, except in extremis. What the approaching party possess is a trifle. A drake with decades upon decades of experience is all too well aware of the



intentions of the players. Knowing its own abilities, wise to the ways of humans, the dragon will plan to use all the advantages it has to the utmost effect, minimising the capability of the attackers. Their strength is in numbers and the use of magic and magical weapons. What will it do? Have minions to keep the multiple attackers busy, concentrate on eliminating the spellcasters confronting it, then deal with the others so as to ensure none survive to tell the tale of their discomfiture.

This all changes if the players come upon the dragon when it is relatively unawares. In this case the wyrm must 'think on its feet' and use sly words and deception to the utmost so as to conceal from the party confronting it that it has lost the initiative and must now act within a more limited scope. Will a dragon in such circumstances be willing to speak with the players? If that will allow it a better opportunity to survive, yes. Will the creature be influenced by use of Bluff and Diplomacy skills? Not in the least in the case of an adult dragon. Even younger drakes will be affected only partially. In the role of the dragon you will dissemble and play for time so as to gain the advantage; but ever must you remember that the draconic mindset is one of arrogance and avarice. All drakes consider themselves superior to humans. None of the race is willing to yield a coin from their horde.



So the flaws of hubris and greed mitigate absolute genius used with regard to fighting for survival.

In roleplaying the dragon caught unawares, assume that over-confidence is likely. Thus the creature will be sure it can keep the players engaged in conversation and negotiations until it is ready to act, rather than vice versa. Rather than retreating to save its life at the first opportunity, the wyrm will be torn between risk of losing its life and the unthinkable – losing its hoarded treasure! That aside, the dragon remains clever and sly. What minions might it call forth suddenly? What form of attack might it be able to unleash that the players will not be specially warded against? Any mature drake will know that even the inferior minds of humankind are sufficiently able to devise defences against the potent breath weapon it possesses. So let us assume a party has managed to come in and confront an old blue dragon in its lair...

No need to stress the self-disgust the wyrm feels when it realises that a group of puny ape-like creatures has managed to enter not only its territory but its very den before being discovered. The dragon sees the players spread out before it, well-armed and ready to attack. What do they want? Why, to slay it with as little loss to themselves as possible, taking trophies from its corpse and the treasure from its horde. Raging inside at being taken unawares, at the temerity of these little creatures to dare such outrageous behaviour, it speaks with honeyed words in response to the demands of the party: 'You are surely the most clever humans ever to walk the earth,' the great blue drake says. 'I am absolutely at your mercy, of this I have no doubt. Ask what you will, for no demand you make is too great. All I ask is that you spare my life.'

The cunning creature is lying, of course. Even as it speaks thus, its tail has moved surreptitiously to dislodge a stone at the edge of its drinking pool. When it has finished its response, water is soundlessly flowing into the sand that covers the floor of its cave, spreading out to dampen the whole area upon which the intruders stand. To play for more time, the blue dragon then asks: 'If I give you now a coffer of cornflower blue sapphires the size of birds' eggs, will you tell me how it came to pass that you caught me unprepared? As much as it pains me to admit it, I am in awe of your ability to have done that...' Then, as if to prove it is subdued and compliant, it will assure: 'I have no intention of trickery. I will move slowly, for the king's ransom in precious

gems is here, under my fore claws, and I fell asleep admiring their beauty.' With that the creature does just as it promised, advancing its foreleg slowly, revealing in the process the silver chest beneath it, the open lid of the coffer revealing the sparkling azure of its contents.

Allowing the players to respond at such length as they choose, encouraging such talk, the wily drake will flatter, marvel, be as unctuous and servile as necessary for the water to do its work. Soon the wet will cause the scorpions that hide in the sand to come forth to avoid the water. As they emerge they will crawl up the nearby feet, continue on higher still, and sting in capricious manner anytime. At the first sign of distraction the drake will seize the initiative and attack.

The wet sand will conduct the electrical bolt the blue dragon emits from its mouth. No longer a relatively useless line-attack weapon, the lightning will play through the now-conductive sand so as to affect the whole of the group. By selecting the player least likely to have some magical resistance to this attack, and angling the bolt to thereafter strike the wet sand, the drake is confident that one would-be assailant will be blasted thus, all the rest suffer damage as the water conducts the electricity to them. Even as the bolt strikes, the wyrm is in motion, attacking with claws, bite, and tail slap to eliminate the most threatening of the intruders. When only a few wounded humans remain begging for their lives, the beast will take time to enjoy their slow demise, but now it seeks to slaughter with utmost alacrity.

Should this happy result not eventuate, the drake's plans not work as hoped, by no means should the Games Master assume the party has triumphed. The dragon will be keeping a most careful watch, and as soon as there is a hint of forthcoming attack, the cunning monster will strike so as to gain tempo, denying the initiative to the players. At worst the dragon can use that advantage to beat a hasty retreat, recover and return for revenge on ground of its own choosing.

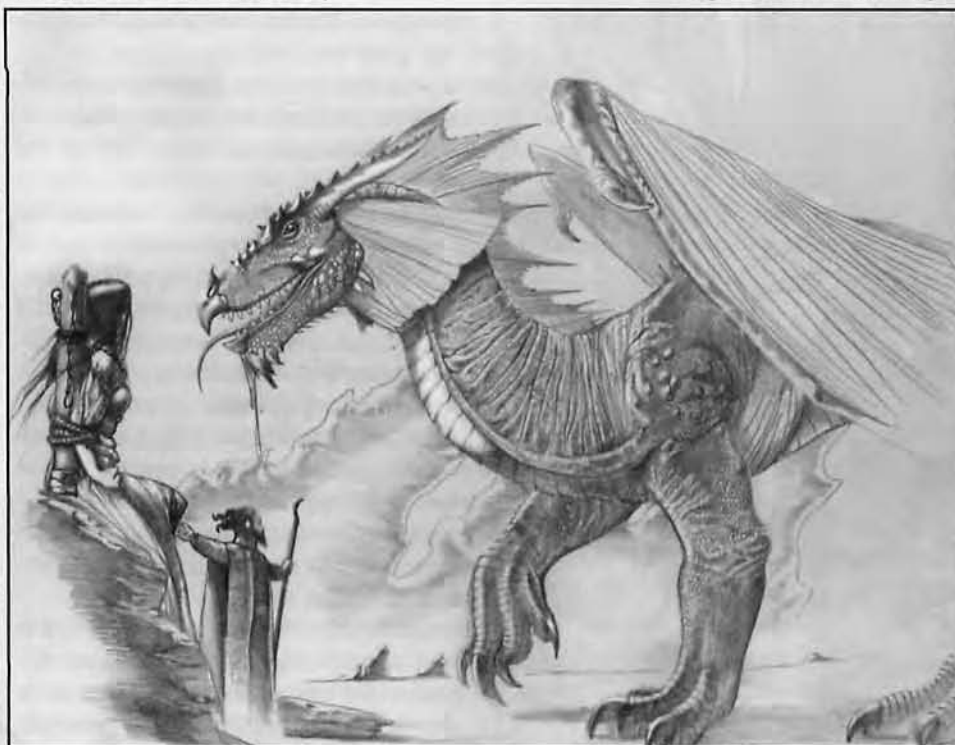
This brings us to the Metallic species of dragonkind. They are even more clever and fearsome opponents than are their Chromatic cousins. Although parties are not as prone to seek out and destroy drakes of Metallic sort, there will be times that even non-Evil players will do so. In such case the Games Master need shift mental gears only a little to manage the situation.

First, while the Metallic dragon is not as deceitful as its Chromatic relations, cunning and intellect are if anything superior to those traits in the latter sort of drake. Thus while not inherently as suspicious of the motives of humans and demi-humans, Metallic dragons are wise to their ways, know that avarice is as great in such species as in any of dragonkind, and so be on their guard against all humankind – evil and otherwise.

Second, having this understanding, the Metallic dragon will be even better prepared than its Chromatic counterpart to foil attempts on life and horde. In this respect that means that you, as Games Master, can use

every trick in the book to prevent the players from succeeding in their schemes.

Finally, even the most lawful and good of these drakes will be irate in the extreme at being hunted with intent to murder and loot. This justifiable ire means that they can exact the utmost penalty on aggressors, and will do so without hesitation. To attack a Metallic dragon demonstrates something other than goodness, and that in turn negates any possibility of mercy on the part of the drake so assailed.



A few words about the Games Master's tactics in roleplaying the dragon are in order.

The oldest dragons are massive creatures, fearsome to look upon. How might the Games Master convey this to his players? A careful description given initially will set the tone; stress the size of the dragon relative to the adventurers confronting it, perhaps showing the Creature Size Categories illustration in *Core Rulebook I*. As the scene between the party and the dragon plays out, be sure to mention time and again the thickness of its scales, the circumference of its terrible eyes, the dagger-like size of its teeth and the sword-like aspect of its claws. When speaking in anger the dragon's voice will be loud enough to make the floor tremble, even in a muted parley the beast's words are vibrant, deep and menacing.

Sat around a well-lit table laden with soft drinks and snacks, happy in the company of their friends, your players may not fully visualise the situation. If you and your group are of a theatrical bent you might have the players sit themselves on the floor while you stand upon a chair, looming over them. Some players might giggle at such dramatics but all would benefit from studying a picture – see if you can locate suitable artwork to illustrate the encounter. Other tricks are possible; you might find recordings of animals with deep roars, or play suitable music when the dragon's cave is entered.

The author, when describing the size of a formidable green dragon, succeeded in making a player so nervous that he had a nosebleed. Try to frighten the players; after all, the characters would be very scared in the circumstances. If you have the players' full attention, and all chattering and playing with dice has stopped, then you can be sure that they are getting a glimmer of what being face-to-face with a dragon is like.

SUBDUING A DRAGON

Attempting to capture a dragon is a most perilous endeavour and not something that should be taken lightly.

When an attempt to subdue, and thus capture, a dragon is made, all hit points of damage inflicted as subdual damage are considered non-fatal battering/bruising damage as per the rules in *Core Rulebook I*. However, when the total number of subdual points exceeds a dragon's hit point total it does not fall unconscious, neither is it staggered. Rather, the accumulation of subdual points of damage merely indicates that a dragon might give up the fight and seek to surrender.



For every point of subdual damage beyond the dragon's hit point total there is a 1% cumulative chance that it will be forced to make a Will saving throw with a failure indicating that it surrenders. Roll at the end of each round and if the d100 check indicates that a save must be made the DC is 1 per 5 points of subdual damage taken beyond the dragon's total hit points e.g. a dragon with 330 hp that takes 400 points of subdual damage must make a Will save with a DC of 14.

A captured dragon will point out the most valuable items in its hoard, help to transport them back to the adventurers' stronghold or base, and can then be sold for up to 100 gp per hit point it has. Of course the party could opt to keep the dragon, using it as a flying mount and powerful servant. Dragons resent such enforced servitude and unless richly rewarded and stringently disciplined they will rebel at the first opportunity.

DRAGONS AND THE CODE OF CHIVALRY

Certain individuals amongst the lawfully-aligned dragons like to consider themselves chivalric champions; of course such dragons deny the code of

chivalry was devised by man, claiming it to be a draconic institution that mankind chose to follow. As perceived by dragons, the code of chivalry demands the following:

- † Defence of their lair even unto death
- † Courage at all times
- † Respect for all dragons of their own race
- † Honour to all older dragons
- † Obedience and respect must be demanded from younger dragons and members of all other races
- † Scorn for the lowly and ignoble, i.e. all other beings save dragons of the same race
- † War is the flowering of draconic chivalry
- † Battle is the true test of a dragon
- † Combat is glory
- † Personal glory above all in battle
- † Death before dishonour

A dragon that follows this code, and not all lawful dragons do, cannot be subdued but if challenged to single combat is likely to accept.

DRAGONS AND CLASSES

As the players in your campaign become more powerful, there may come a time when you will want to include classed dragons in encounters. Doing so is not difficult. For those who choose not to, remember there are many parallel worlds, and in some dragons may not have the capacity to learn humanoid abilities and skills. Here though, we deal with those places where drakes can become fighters, assassins, rogues, sorcerers and much more!

Dragons are ever hungry for power, but searching out the skills of humankind does not come naturally to them. They are prideful and exhibit disdain of non-draconic learning, and generally loathe acquiring the abilities of 'inferior' species. With that established there are some dragons whose desire for dominance

overrides this prejudice. As the skills and abilities of various classes are suited for humanoids only, those dragons able to utilise *polymorph self* spells are able to gain knowledge of them. An exception to this is the sorcerer class - dragons can naturally employ spells in a way similar to the sorcerer, although they do so with different somatic and verbal components.

The following table indicates at which age category a dragon gains the capacity to cast the *polymorph self* spell, either as a natural ability or as a sorcerer's spell. Those capable of doing so as a special ability can gain class levels from the very young age category onwards. As noted previously, and discussed at length below, a dragon of any age can gain levels in the sorcerer class. As usual, the Chromatic dragons will be detailed first, followed by Chromatic half-breeds, new breeds, and finally the Metallic dragons.

Breed of Dragon Age Category at which Classes Become Available

Black	Very old
Blue	Old
Green	Old
Red	Mature adult
White	Ancient
Maroon	Very old if black parent dominant, mature adult if red parent dominant.
Indigo	Very old if black parent dominant, old if blue parent dominant
Verdigris	Very old if black parent dominant, old if green parent dominant
Gray	Very old if black parent dominant, ancient if white parent dominant
Purple	Mature adult if red parent dominant, old if blue parent dominant
Russet	Mature adult if red parent dominant, old if green parent dominant
Pink	Mature adult if red parent dominant, ancient if white parent dominant
Aquamarine	Old
Azure	Old if blue parent dominant, ancient if white parent dominant
Abyssal Serpent	Mature adult
Hell Worm	Old
Rock	Great wurm
Sea	Mature adult
Web	Wurm
Brass	Mature adult
Bronze	Young
Copper	Mature adult
Gold	Very young
Silver	Very young

Note that silver and gold dragons are able to *polymorph self* as wyrmlings, but it is unlikely they would gain knowledge of any class before reaching the very young stage of growth. Indeed, even first level in a class is improbable before reaching young adulthood.

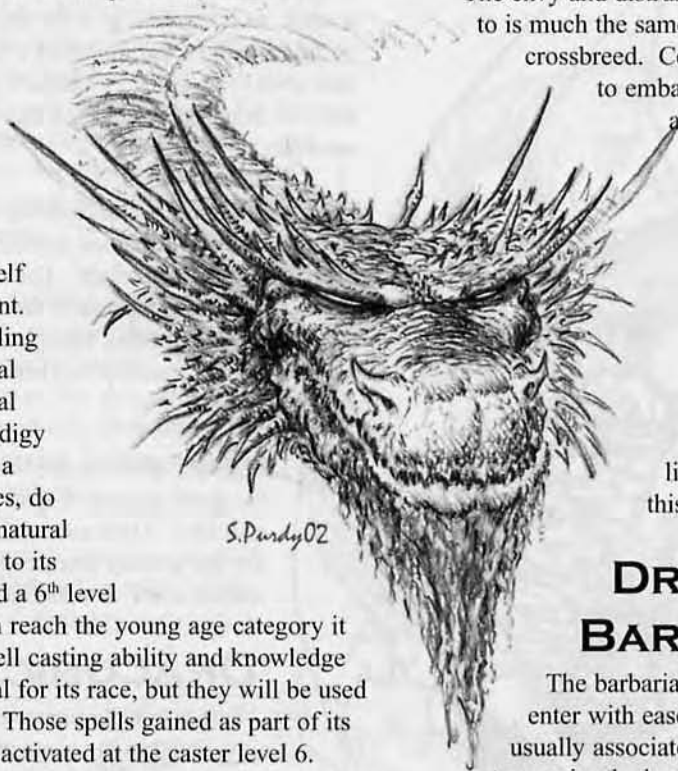
All dragons of young adult age or older can become clerics of Tiamat or Bahamut, regardless of their capacity, or lack thereof, to assume a humanoid form.

Dragonkin, because of their faculty in using humanoid weapons, can be members of the barbarian or fighter class at young adult age. Like other dragons, they must be able to assume humanoid form if they hope to learn the skills of the bard, druid, monk, paladin, ranger, rogue or wizard. Once acquired, however, these abilities may be used by all dragons in their natural form.

DRACONIC SORCERERS

A dragon of any age, even a wyrmling, can have levels in the sorcerer class. Why is this? Dragons are intensely magical creatures and this innate mastery of the supernatural manifests itself in a number of ways, not the least of which is the capacity to cast sorcerer spells. While other character classes tend to be humanoid archetypes, it is widely thought that sorcerers inherit their powers from dragonkind, perhaps from a union many generations past. So it is that the sorcerer class is highly suited to and, indeed, may derive directly from the draconic races.

The sorcerer class is one that manifests itself rather than being learnt. Occasionally a wyrmling will display an unusual amount of raw magical power and such a prodigy should be considered a sorcerer. In such cases, do not add the dragon's natural spell casting capacity to its sorcerer level. Should a 6th level sorcerer-silver dragon reach the young age category it will gain the extra spell casting ability and knowledge of extra spells as usual for its race, but they will be used at a caster level of 1. Those spells gained as part of its sorcerer class will be activated at the caster level 6.



Chaotic species of dragon are far more likely to throw up true sorcerers amongst their wyrmlings than those of lawful or neutral creeds. The sudden materialisation of magical powers from a hatchling may be a cause for some dismay for draconic parents. Rather than pleasure or pride, these early spontaneous cantrips tend to cause unease in the parent dragons - what will become of this potent progeny, they wonder? Many of the older wyrms distrust younglings with greater magical power than they, viewing the precocious dragon sorcerer as a potential rival and threat. Evil dragons will seek to destroy them before the power grows too great, while amongst the good breeds the possibility of banishment is high.

Often sorcerer-dragons are driven by an added desire beyond that for wealth and power. They seek to master themselves and the magic brewing within them. They will subject themselves to perilous quests for arcane, dangerous knowledge, acquainting themselves with things perhaps best left undisturbed. A sorcerer-dragon's lair will be atypical, a place much unlike those of its kin. As such dwellings vary greatly from dragon to dragon and are truly unique, no firm guide can be given, but the Games Master should consider all manner of potential guardian beings and magicks, exotic and outlandish locales, and peculiar defences when creating a manse for one of these creatures.

The envy and distrust a sorcerer-dragon is subjected to is much the same as that experienced by a crossbreed. Certain sorcerer wyrms are driven to embark upon grand conspiracies aimed at bringing themselves power while smiting their own kindred. Such wicked dragons are no lovers of man and any evil scheme they plot will likely bring woe upon humans too. As a final note, sorcerer-dragons prize magic higher than gems or gold and their abodes are likely to contain true prizes of this kind as well as great perils.

DRACONIC BARBARIANS

The barbarian class is one dragonkin can enter with ease though other dragons must usually associate with man-like savage cultures to acquire the barbarian class skills. However, it

has been known for a group of dragons to gather that are barbarous by nature, having a culture and life-view much like those of humanoid barbarian societies. Exposure to such a group is likely to be most challenging for a party of adventurers!

Barbarian-dragons are never lawful and most are spawned from chaotic breeds. Crossbreeds, isolated from all kin and dwelling in the further reaches of the world often have the potential to become raging barbarians - driven to seek out company of any kind, they find in primitive humanoid societies those that admire gargantuan strength. Of course, the dragon must be careful to maintain the guise of a humanoid, lest the barbarian tribe rise up against it in superstitious awe and dread.

DRACONIC BARDS

Few lawful dragons adopt the skills of the bard, for they tend to lack the spontaneity and whimsical wit required. While any non-lawful dragon might gain the bard's abilities, it is often the neutral wyrms that choose to do so. They are sufficiently detached from the world to view its events as fuel for their poems and



songs, and are equally in touch with the natural order, seeing its true and hidden beauty, and attempt to convey such in their songs. Hard-bitten dwarves have found tears in their eyes when listening to the distant, soulful song of a rock dragon bard, the low penetrating tones and earth-like ruggedness reminding them of their own deep homes. Sea dragons that have heard the mournful songs of the whale in the ocean's depths hope to emulate the leviathans by learning the ways of the bard and lucky is the sailor who hears their music. Even the sinister web dragon perched in its horrid nets can be moved to sing of hidden things in melodies sweet but perilous.

Of the Metallic dragons it is the copper breed that contains the most bards, a class well suited to their capricious sense of humour. Not a few wandering crossbreeds have learned the minstrel's art too, once they have learned to meld into man's form and found an instructor.

DRACONIC CLERICS

A dragon need not be transformed into a humanoid to follow the path of a cleric, for Tiamat and Bahamut are glad to have their children worship them thus. Draconic clerics of Tiamat are evil and draw their power from hell itself. The mother of monsters grants her priests access to the malign domains of Destruction, Evil, Law and Trickery. Follow the normal rules for domain selection and give the dragon granted powers as described in *Core Rulebook I* or feel free to create new ones of your own - Tiamat's priesthood is select and few in number, and each has her very personal attention.

Bahamut's clerics are exclusively of good alignment with lawful good dragons predominating, particularly the gold and silver kinds. The platinum dragon gives his favored sons access to the Air, Good, Luck and Protection domains, though a tiny number may instead have access to Healing, Knowledge and Sun.

High and glorious are the celestial vaults where the good-aligned dragon clerics gather in holy conclave. Dark and terrible, noisome and vile are the gloomy pits in which the evil dragon clerics contrive mankind's doom.

DRACONIC DRUIDS

Neither the Chromatic nor Metallic wyrms are found in the brotherhood of druids; wittingly or not they are part of a struggle of multiversal proportions, too much so to ever

understand balance, whether it is tipped towards good or evil, which druids seek to both spread and maintain. Indeed, it is the very activities of the Chromatic and Metallic dragons that are likely to threaten the balance.

However, rock dragons have rarely been drawn to the druidic faith, as have sea dragons and some crossbred wyrms. Web dragons of druidic bent tend to be dark and malevolent, committed to neutral evil, and driving both men and elves away from the wilderness.

DRACONIC FIGHTERS

The dragon is a combat machine but those prone to adopting humanoid forms have found it not merely beneficial but mandatory to learn combat techniques more fitting to a small bipedal build. While dragonkin come naturally to the fighter class, all other dragons must seek out humanoid blade masters to learn the necessary combat techniques.

It is suggested that the Games Master apply any Weapon Focus and Weapon Specialisation feats gained as a fighter to weapons adopted by the dragon when in humanoid form rather than to natural attacks – after all, what use a humanoid instructor to a dragon if what is learned is not man-like battle techniques?

DRACONIC MONKS

The reflective life and meditation techniques of the monk attract certain lawfully-aligned dragons to the monasteries of men. In the lands of the east, dragons are thrice welcome at such establishments, for they are viewed as near godlike beings. Gold dragons, with their deep-seated desire for knowledge and enlightenment are the most frequent kind to enter such monastic establishments.

Naturally, the monk's fighting techniques are not applicable to tooth and claw, for dragons fight as dragons, not martial artists. When in humanoid guise, however, the dragon-monk's great strength, combined with its mastery of the kick, punch and esoteric fighting law make it a deadly adversary indeed.

In time, the dragon-monk's loyalties may shift to its monastery, brotherhood or order rather than to its own kin or the mighty dragon-gods, Tiamat and Bahamut. Such a dragon will be an unknown quantity at the time of the great moot.

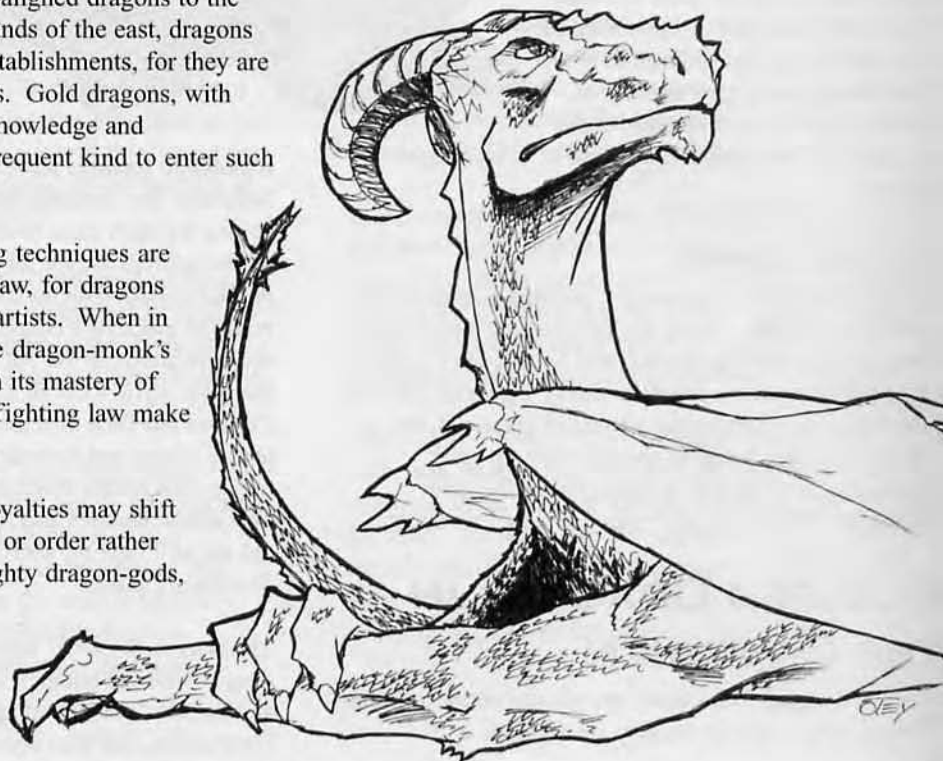
DRACONIC PALADINS

Certain lawful good dragons, most notably the silver breed, choose to dedicate themselves to shielding mankind from the wrath of their evil Chromatic kin. After swearing an oath to Bahamut, they seek out a place in the lands far below in the kingdoms of man, where they may learn to fight in mankind's form so as to move about unnoticed in the countries they hope to protect. Such noble dragons are paladins, mighty in battle, generous of heart, good of spirit, loving in nature but deadly, vicious foes to all that is evil, wicked and bad.

DRACONIC RANGERS

While most humanoid rangers are good, the same cannot be said of the ranger-dragons amongst whom there is a preponderance of green drakes and abyssal serpents. The green dragon adopts the class so as to better master its dim woodland environment and gather intelligence on its human and elven foes, while the sadistic abyssal serpent finds hunting in the form of a humanoid cruelly pleasing and the tracking techniques of great use in its games of cat and mouse.

The ranger's fighting techniques and abilities serve the dragon best when it is polymorphed, although tracking can be done in any form.



DRACONIC ROGUES

Is there a better class for the ever-greedy dragon? While a great-scaled, fire breathing wyrm will be shot down by a hundred ballistae bolts should it attempt to storm the king's palace, the polymorphed dragon-thief can sneak in and have the crown jewels away before anyone is aware they are gone. Should some alert and officious guard interrupt the process, the unfortunate will be in for a great surprise if the wyrm chooses to reveal its true self. . .

Many of a dragon-thief's skills will be useless to it in dragon-form. Lock and pocket picking are impossible, size modifiers penalise attempts at stealth and can one really imagine a dragon tumbling, or bluffing its way past a city's gate guards? With that said, most skills can be utilised in any form and the rogue class should be considered for any dishonest dragon that frequently mixes with humanoids.

DRACONIC WIZARDS

Some dragons choose to take their knowledge of the arcane further still and enter into the guilds and academies of humanoid wizards to study yet more magical power. Gold dragons, with their studious and disciplined nature, make for fine wizards and some go on to establish academies of their own where young gold dragons can learn from their own kind. Regrettably, the vile hell worms also attempt to learn man's magic, doing so secretly of course, for their own stock of spells is limited when compared to those of other dragon breeds.

Prestige Classes

If the Games Master so desires, prestige classes can be added to the mix, making for truly unique and potent dragon. Perhaps the players need to seek out a gold dragon-loremaster, a potent wizardly sage who can tell them how to destroy some artifact of great evil, but on their trail is a red-dragon assassin bent on either preventing their arrival or disposing of the gold loremaster before the party can gain any knowledge. . .

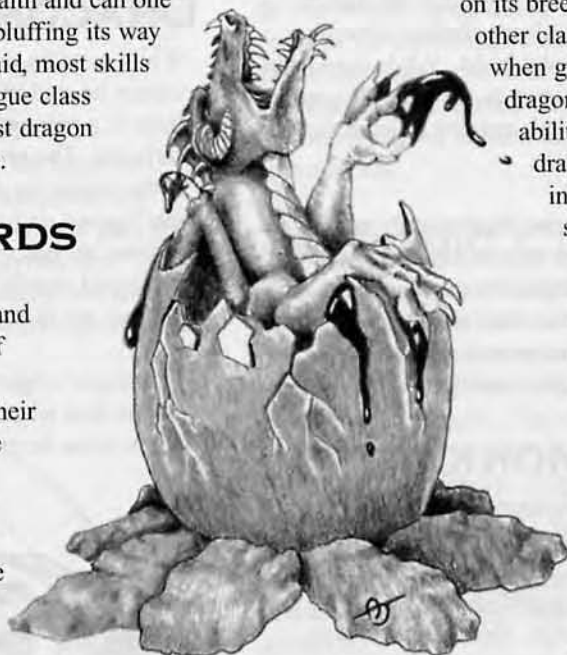
CLASSED DRAGONS IN THE CAMPAIGN

Clearly dragons with classes are not the norm, for most drakes do not care for lengthy associations with

humanoids. Those that do should be granted an important long-term role in the Games Master's campaign. Consider the party's reaction when they discover that the blackguard ruler of an oppressive realm and the terrible hell worm they have often faced are one and the same, or the difficulty a player character rogue might face should it come to light that his guild master is actually the awful man-eating abyssal serpent that haunts the forests surrounding the city.

Applying Class Benefits to Dragons

All bonuses to base attack bonuses, hit points and saving throws are added to the dragon's total as based on its breed and age, as with any other classed monster. Decide when generating a particular dragon which of its class-based abilities can be used in draconic form. As no two individuals are ever the same, this can vary from dragon to dragon – you could perhaps rule that some dragons cannot cast wizard spells unless polymorphed into a humanoid form, or that mighty dragon-sized swords can be used in conjunction with Weapon Focus and Weapon Specialisation feats. The choice is, as always, yours.



Challenge Ratings for Classed Dragons

Normally the challenge rating of a monster is increased by one for each class level it gains. However, this may not be appropriate for all classed dragons. Consider an old red dragon with six levels in the rogue class. Is it really as much of a challenge as a great red wyrm? If six were added to the old red's CR of 19 it would equal the great wyrm's CR of 25, and yet a great wyrm has 12 more Hit Dice than an old red dragon and far higher ability scores and Armour Class. Six levels of the rogue class hardly matches up to that, for even with the new attack bonuses and saving throws added on, the old red still falls far short of the great wyrm's devastating power.

The Games Master is urged to compare his classed dragon with the potency of older, un-classed wyrms and then to 'eyeball' an appropriate CR based on this comparison, and also upon the extent to which the dragon's class abilities influence specific encounters.

SCENARIO HOOKS AND IDEAS

Dragons present the Games Master with a wealth of opportunities for truly memorable play sessions. Their varying age categories and the relative ease with which crossbreeds can be designed allow the Games Master to match a party of any level with a suitable draconic adversary.

Hereafter are a number of ideas that a Games Master may wish to develop; each would serve as the basis for a memorable adventure and bring the party into contact with dragons of many kinds, some friendly and some exceptionally hostile.

One mile from Berytus is the place where St. George, by virtue of the holy cross, slew the dragon, and rescued a virgin from a shameful death, and restored her safe and well to her father, the king of that country.

Guidebook To Palestine (Circ. A. D. 1350)

MINING FOR GOLD?

The dwarves of Kir Kalam mine need help; they recently broke into a large cavern occupied by a dragon of immense size, seemingly limitless magical power, and unmatched ferocity. The vile creature has killed dozens of their number and threatens extinction to the whole clan. Adventurers killing it will be allowed half its hoard as a reward, the rest going to the dwarves to compensate them for their losses.

A party coming to the aid of the hard-pressed dwarves will be told that the dragon is a crossbreed of 'yellow' colour. The dwarves urge an immediate attack and even proffer the assistance of a dozen stalwarts armed with arbalests.

Things are not quite what they seem here. The dwarves' tunnelling awoke a gold dracos invictus from its slumber. The startled demi-humans loosed crossbow quarrels as the great dragon yawned and roared in front of them and, in the confusion that ensued the wyrm killed the offending dwarves, believing itself attacked by robbers or assassins.

A state of subdued warfare now exists. The dragon is troubled, for it wishes to sleep but cannot for fear of attack. It is no longer certain that the dwarves dwelling nearby are evil and has thus held off making an all out assault against them. Meanwhile the dwarves, aggrieved by their losses and inflamed by desire for the wealth atop which the wyrm rests, have sought out the player characters to kill the dragon for them.

Some amongst the dwarves have deluded themselves into believing the gold dragon to be some crossbreed of malign sort; others simply do not care whether it is good or evil. If the party is cautious and strikes up a good relationship with the dwarven clan, one or more of a truthful bent will inform the party that the dragon is not one of evil nature and that the fault lies as much with them as it does with the wyrm.

The party might be able to negotiate a truce; the dwarves will demand compensation initially, as will the dragon, but some compromise might be reached. A party that brings about an accord should receive a handsome experience point award.

If the party fails to deduce the true nature of the situation they will find themselves in battle with the mightiest of dragonkind. If the wyrm is not bested it will now attack the clan, convinced that the dwarves are wretched villains.

A WALK IN THE WOODS

King Yadvax needs to lead his troops through the mighty Diswood, for the fenlords of the marshes beyond have become troublesome of late. The party is sent to the ever-unreliable duke of the wood elves to make a treaty allowing the king's men free passage.

The elves are agreeable only if the three dread dragons that dwell in the depths of the forest are first dispatched; some among the king's advisors are all for making war on the elves and forcing them to swear fealty, others want the dragons bribed to attack the villages of the rebellious fenlords beyond the forest.

The king is a good-hearted man and would rather not make war on the elves and certainly does not want evil draconic allies. Who would go and slay the dragons for the king? He will not order anyone to face such a terrible foe. Will the player characters volunteer? Or would they rather make war on the elves? Perhaps some are even in favour of bribing the drakes...

BLOOD OF THE DRAGONS

Moonsay the wizard needs the blood and body parts of many different species of dragon for his researches. Each player character entering his service receives a regular supply of handy scrolls and potions, as well as a handsome stipend in gold, but are they willing to kill even the good-aligned dragons to receive such benisons? And what is it that Moonsay is making? Perhaps it is a device that will enable him to control the great wyrms, and maybe Moonsay won't be such a gentle master once the dragons answer to his call.

A CHIVALROUS QUEST

Sir Mirrant, noble sire of a land-poor house, has inherited a map showing the lair of the fearsome dragon Gromoriant in the far off Queledon Forest. He needs good companions to travel there with him and help slay the beast; all will be richly rewarded.

Sir Mirrant has insufficient funds to charter a ship for the first leg of the journey, so the party must be willing to invest in the undertaking, but his noble status is such that aristocratic families met en route to the forest will provide shelter for him and 'his men'.



Problems arise early in the quest; thieves determined to steal the map are hot on the party's trail, as are the representatives of certain powerful magical factions each of which hope to secure the map for their respective lords. Furthermore Sir Mirrant insists on taking the lead at all times, yet it becomes increasingly clear that leadership is a task unsuited to his temperament; he calls for a charge when retreat is necessary, offers quarter to devious foes, has no tactical ability, is unrealistic and very romantic.

The nearer the party comes to Gromoriant's domain the more fearsome are the tales told of this fabulous, near legendary, beast. Sir Mirrant intends to fight the creature in chivalrous, face-to-fang combat. He will approach its lair on horseback, lance at the ready, and call it forth with a loud challenge. Will the player characters allow their irksome 'lord' to throw away his life in such a fashion? If the dragon is slain, what of the thieves and spies so keen to take hold of its loot?

THE SILVER KING

A red dracos invictus has awoken in the mountains, so that all in the lowlands are now at risk. A wise and well-read wizard urges that the silver invictus Argentius be roused, but none know where he now dwells.

The party must undertake a long journey to the abode of a gold dragon lord and persuade it to reveal the resting place of the most potent of silver dragon kind. Along the way dragonkin of the red wurm's retinue seek to stop them, as do other dark and malign things summoned for that purpose.

When and if the party find Argentius' domain they must enter his well-defended lair, avoid the traps and pitfalls placed to deter intruders, and best the many monster guardians and magical constructs that ward the place.

How will they rouse the dragon without provoking its wrath, and what manner of diplomacy will they employ to persuade him to lend his aid against the fiery invictus?

A COUNCIL OF WYRMS

Something or someone has been raiding the lairs of many Metallic dragons. Wyrmlings have been killed and eggs stolen. Who is responsible? The dragons' divinations have revealed human adventurers to be the source of this infamy. A great draconic conclave is to be held, and some of the aggrieved dragons are urging an attack on the cities of man to punish their rulers for

In this year (1344) a Saracen doctor came to Earl Warren and asked permission to take captive a serpent, which he said was in a place called Brunfeld, on the Earl's land somewhere in Wales. When this doctor had worked his charm and captured the serpent, he said there was a cave in the area where it had had its lair, and that this cave contained a great treasure. Some Hereford men heard about this. On the instigation of a Lombard called Peter the Picard they went out there, began digging, and found out that the Saracen had been right. So they gathered together there for several nights, until the Earl's retainers got wind of the matter; then the Hereford men were arrested and committed to prison. The Earl acquired a considerable treasure from this business.

Thomas of Walsingham's History (c. 1385)

allowing such activities to be planned and plotted in their domains.

The player characters are sent as envoys to this great meeting; there they must plead for peace. The best they can achieve is a promise from the dragons to hold off any assault for the space of one month; in that time the party must locate those responsible for the raids, kill or capture them, and then return the missing eggs and stolen treasures. Will the Metallic dragons reward these heroes? Will the states be appropriately grateful to them for their role in saving their cities? Or will this be a 'thankless' mission in all such respects?

They tell us that the city under the mountain is of great size and is called Parax, and that in the centre of it are stored up a great many heads of dragons, for the Indians who inhabit it are trained from their boyhood in this form of sport. And they are also said to acquire an understanding of the language and ideas of animals by feeding either on the heart or the liver of the dragon.

Philostratus, *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana*
(220 AD)

GRAVEYARD OF DRAGONS

Beyond mountains, oceans and jungles there is a forbidding plateau warded by wild tribesmen, thunder lizards, and all manner of reptiles. At the centre of this upland legends tell of a great depression, a cleft miles deep, at the bottom of which a vast network of caverns holds the mouldering remains of countless dragons.

According to myth, when a dragon comes near death it flies laboriously to this far off place, taking with it the choicest of

its treasures, descends into the cleft and finds a place to die. If such tales are true, a veritable myriad of king's ransoms must rest down in that labyrinth.

Most scholars laugh at this tale, calling it crass folklore; are not the great dragons eternal, they ask? And if one truly were near the end of its vast lifetime why not leave the world altogether rather than head off for some remote necropolis of dragon kind?

But perhaps there is some truth to the story. Would your characters care to find out?

CAT AND MOUSE

For thirteen days the blue dragon Bisimach has besieged the city; anyone daring to leave is set upon and soon destroyed. Gold and cattle have been offered as ransom but to no avail; Bisimach takes perverse delight in confining the citizens within their walls and has not yet tired of its game.



Knights, soldiers, wizards and priests have gone to their deaths in ill-fated attempts to best the dragon. A small group must reach the sanctuary of the surrounding woods, make their way to the capital and inform the monarch of the city's plight.

Of course the dragon will pursue, attack when clearings must be crossed, destroy bridges, and generally harass those attempting such a brave undertaking.

HELL HATH NO FURY...

A female red dragon has been driven from her lair by her erstwhile spouse. Unable to best the fiery brute, she takes human form and travels to a nearby city, talks freely of a 'dreadful dragon' that slew 'her husband', makes amorous advances to one player hero, and attempts to persuade the party to kill the wyrm that so cruelly betrayed it.

If the party rises to the challenge she will accompany them, taking the part of a sorceress. Of course once the male dragon is dispatched, the female has no intention of allowing the party to carry off the hoard—by rights half of that treasure belongs to her, and as soon as those pesky adventurers are dead, all of it will...

HOSTAGES OF THE SEA

Ayeyave the brass dragon has been sinking ships that sail past its isle. As that island lies on a main trade route, this is a matter of urgent concern to the wealthy trading cartels that own the vessels plying that waterway. None know why the dragon acts so; perhaps its desire for booty has driven it to such murderous acts.

A party that takes the time to question Ayeyave before attacking learns that sahuagin raiders took its offspring; they are threatened with death unless the dragon sinks ships for the vile sea-dwellers to plunder. Will the party take pity and help the wyrm? It would be a dangerous undertaking, but the dragon would surely assist.

THE MUSEUM

Gnome traders from the outlands report that the shifting desert sands have parted beneath the force of a storm revealing a building most strange; its green slate roof is high-peaked and supported by many serpentine pillars, whilst the shaded interior's tiled floor is made up of alternating rows of white, black, green, blue and red. In the depths of the place are five statues; each depicts a rearing Chromatic dragon. Inscribed on each statue's pedestal, in an archaic script, is an enigmatic challenge: *'Wake us and receive our portion.'*

TO HATCH A PLAN

While walking in the mountains the party is surprised when a large egg bounces and bumps down a cliff face and cracks open at their feet; within is a tiny copper dragon that immediately regards one of the adventurers as its mother (choose a brawny male fighter type for this role and have the dragon call him 'mummy').

Search as they might, the party finds no sign of the infant wyrm's true parents – either they must abandon the little dragon or take it with them. Soon they discover that others seek out their ward – monsters assault the band, strange voices speak in their nightmares demanding that the dragon be abandoned.

The copper dragon grows at an alarming rate; each day that passes ages it by a year (or each week if the Games Master prefers.)

For fun, give the dragon an amusing speech impediment, have it shy away from using its potent attacks as it 'doesn't want to hurt anyone', and make sure its insatiable appetite and curiosity are constant causes for concern.

What is the dragon? Perhaps it is a reincarnated invictus that will eventually remember the enemies that slew it, or maybe it is the offspring of some truly godlike drake that even now seeks it out.

What about its hunters? Who are they and why are they so desperate to get the dragon in their clutches?



THE REVENGE OF GHORKAI

This scenario is suitable for 4 to 6 characters of 8th to 10th level, with at least 40 total combined levels.

BACKGROUND FOR THE GAMES MASTER

Ghorkai is an indigo crossbreed dragon, the result of a magically-contrived union between a male dracos invictus of the black species and a female blue great wyrm. This unnatural parentage was brought about at the behest of she who is called *The Mother of Witches*, an evil demigoddess with many names. It was she who uttered dark magic spells over the egg that was produced in due course. When The Mother's domain fell, the hybrid dragon Ghorkai was but a young wyrm. It had been the witch's intent that the dragon serve as a steed for her daughter, Rezelna, but that was not to be. In the debacle following the fall of her realm, The Mother of Witches was forced to flee, and her former henchmen and slaves plundered her treasures. At that time the dragon was too weak to intervene. Because The Eldest Witch and Rezelna, her beautiful but most evil daughter, were the only family the dragon knew, he stayed loyal to them even though they had abandoned him. Soon thereafter, with The Eldest Witch lost in the Abyss and Rezelna entombed alive, the wyrm set out on his own.

Ghorkai sought the company of his ilk, only to find himself rejected by both blue and black dragonkind. At length, full of bitterness, the dragon came to a great, dark crevasse, far to the south of his former home. In this shadowy and inhospitable place he made his lair and waited for his powers to grow. In time other refugees from the fallen dominion of The Great Witch came to the chasm, the dragon allowing them to stay in return for pledges of fealty to him.

As he approached his fiftieth year, Ghorkai felt strong enough to strike. First local humanoid bands were attacked, their chieftains forced to swear loyalty to the dragon; then, with the forces he had acquired, the settlements of mountain men in the wooded valley south-west of his ravine were struck swiftly and mercilessly.

These unfortunate people became slaves of the humanoids. Now all that remains of the society and culture of the mountain folk is a single 'town' inhabited by mongrelised hybrids – half-giants, half-orcs and worse...

Ghorkai then attempted to subdue the dwarf clan that dwelled in the mountains around what was then known as Highvale. The doughty dwarves checked his ambitions. The sturdy folk were more than a match for the young adult dragon and his motley humanoid force, even with some of The Eldest Witch's former 'troops' acting as auxiliaries. The battles were fierce, but always the dwarves prevailed and drove off the attackers with sharp losses.

For 90, years sporadic fighting marred this portion of the mountains, but ever did the dwarves manage to keep the upper hand. What word of this ongoing struggle that reached the nearest human city caused little alarm. Between the great city and what they thought of as the ravaging black dragon lay a portion of the Zastvel Mountains – vast, rugged and infested with monsters of all sorts. It seemed as though those



THE REVENGE OF GHORKAI

mountains would serve as a barrier, and surely the dwarves had proven themselves more than capable of containing the threat. Dusty reports in the city's records office and library hardly mention Ghorkai at all, even with the relative proximity of his lair, and all identify him as a 'mere' black dragon of no great size.

At length the dragon conceived another plan, for he greatly desired more power and wealth. Long had he known that the lands to the south were rich and bountiful, but Ghorkai had always avoided provoking the wrath of their lords, for the dragon knew himself weaker than they. Yet the cunning wyrm had a new plan, and with its hatching he hoped to enrich himself without great personal risk. The dragon would progress towards this end in carefully calculated increments, each one bringing him nearer to the goal.

As an initial step, the dragon gathered the vilest of his humanoid warriors and personally instructed them on how to assail the dwarves of Highvale. Turncoat spies of human and dwarven race were sent to discover the strengths and weaknesses of the cavern-dwelling foes. Intelligence thus gained, the depraved bands of humanoids conducted bloody forays that slew many a dwarf. This stung the demi-human lord of Highvale, Olgar Obsidian, into sending out punitive troops, but these companies were ambushed. A few survivors were allowed to carry the news back to the dwarf chieftain. The effect was as the dragon had hoped: the whole of the dwarven army marched forth. There awaited

Ghorkai with his whole force lying hidden in wait to ambush the enraged dwarves. In a pitched battle, Olgar Obsidian and his army were defeated. The dwarven king was slain and his troops slaughtered or made captive. Before a year had passed, Highvale became known as 'The Vale of Mongrels', for Ghorkai filled it with his followers—humanoids, renegades, outlaws—the dregs of all to be found in the region.

As the next step, the dragon fell in great fury upon the lizardmen dwelling to the south of the newly-conquered vale. These otherwise formidable humanoids lived in the marshland between the two branches of the Sals River, their habitat being called the Northfens, a place of some 50 square miles extent. Long had these lizardmen been on amicable terms with their human neighbours beyond the river, but the dragon was successful in his aims and enslaved them. He ordered that sacrifices of men, women and gold be brought by these hapless folk. Of course when such tribute was not forthcoming, Ghorkai devoured lizardmen instead! With no choice but obey or be eaten, the formerly friendly lizardmen became relentless raiders of the human settlements everywhere nearby.

To cement his rule over the unlucky reptilians, the dragon then installed one of his offspring, his son Kruhesh, as 'king.' Kruhesh is a vile, two-headed half-breed whose mother was a hapless lizardman female. The new ruler of the tribe is a bloodthirsty tyrant, cruel and remorseless. Under his iron rule the reptilians have recently begun a campaign of devastating, full-scale raids on the human settlements to the south-east. Villages and hamlets have been destroyed, slaves taken and the atrocities committed are ineffable. In this process, the ranks of the lizardmen have been decimated, for the humans of the march have fought stoutly, if ineffectively, to repel the attackers.

Thus word has now come to the king of the nearby human realm that his state is in dire threat. The minions of the dragon first slaughtered the dwarves of Highvale to claim that place, then subjugated the lizardmen of Northfens. They have now



overcome his frontier guards, and so might menace everything to the south – his lands and even his capital city. Mindful of his duty to his people, and conscious that the area of these assaults is but a mere 60 miles from his city, the king has decreed that an adventuring band composed of heroes is to be dispatched against the marauders.

They are to gain information, slay the leaders of the invaders, and thus throw the attackers into confusion. This delay will enable the king to send for his nobles, gather a strong force, and march north. This will require time, of course: at least a month, more likely two. The wise ruler knows nothing of the dragon's true nature, or of his horrid son, yet his court magicians' divinations have revealed a darker presence behind these attacks. This is the only warning adventurers will get of the terrors to come, as you will now see.

HOW TO USE THIS SCENARIO

It should be quite possible to fit this adventure into any kingdom with mountainous wilderlands to the north (or in another direction, if you are willing to alter the maps a little). You may wish to set it in the Player Characters' home kingdom, in which case they may well be forced into it as a punishment for their crimes, or hired by a noble they have already had contact with. Alternatively they could be travelling in a distant land, hear rumours of the impending invasion by the humanoids, and volunteer their services – or be persuaded by the local king. Bear in mind that, as 8th to 10th level characters, the party will be making a big impression wherever they go – not just adventurers, but successful, experienced adventurers, exactly the kind of people to handle whatever crisis looms...



GETTING STARTED

This adventure is, perforce, rather linear. Because the attack is from the north, the band of heroes must travel in that direction, and in so doing they will have the encounters noted, moving 'naturally' along the route. Of course, the party may deviate from the obvious way, continue upriver along the eastern branch of the Sals River, and then try trekking over the Zastvel Mountains to discover the place where the dragon Ghorkai lairs. Although this is unlikely, it is possible, especially if the characters are thorough and search for clues in the capital city before departing for the marches.

However they decide to travel, the team will be supplied with such conveyance means as they require – horses if they take the Gladespoint Road, a pair of barges if they decide to go up the Sals River to Gladespoint (or beyond). Along with the means of travel, they will be given supplies for two weeks, and the king will send with them the following force:

2 Rangers (4th Level) as guides and scouts, and 4 Fighters (3rd Level) as couriers to carry information back to the human kingdom.

Grymwold

Male Human, 4th level Ranger

Medium-size Human

Hit Dice: 4d10+8 (36 hp)

Initiative: +2

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 16 (Dex +2, Studded Leather +3, small wooden shield +1)

Attacks: Battleaxe +9 melee; or shortbow +6 ranged

Damage: Battleaxe 1d8+4; or shortbow 1d6

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Favoured enemy (giants: +1 on Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Wilderness Lore checks, +1 to damage rolls), spells

Special Qualities: none

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +2

Abilities: Str 16 Dex 14 Con 15 Int 10 Wis 12 Cha 8

Skills: Heal +5, Hide +5, Knowledge (Nature) +7, Listen +5, Move Silently +5, Ride +6, Spot +8, Wilderness Lore +8

Feats: Alertness, Ambidexterity, Point Blank Shot, Track, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (Battleaxe)

Challenge Rating: 4

Alignment: Neutral good

Ranger Spells Per Day: DC 11+spell level; 1st level: *Entangle*

Possessions: Standard adventuring gear, studded leather, small wooden shield, short bow, arrows (20), *battleaxe +1, potion of vision, potion of delay poison*

Sareson

Female Half-Elf, 4th level Ranger

Medium-size Humanoid (Elf)

Hit Dice: 4d10 (27 hp)

Initiative: +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 18 (Dex +3, Studded Leather +3, Small Steel Shield +2)

Attacks: Longsword +6 melee; or longbow +9 (+10 with magic arrows) ranged

Damage: Longsword 1d8+2; or longbow 1d8 (+1 with magic arrows)

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Favoured Enemy (Beasts: +1 on Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Wilderness Lore checks, +1 to damage rolls), Spells (Memorised: 1st: *Speak With Animals*, DC 13)

Special Qualities: none

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +3

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 12

Skills: Animal Empathy +8, Handle Animal +8, Knowledge (Nature): +8, Spot +11, Wilderness Lore +9

Feats: Ambidexterity, Improved Initiative, Track, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (Longbow)

Challenge Rating: 4

Alignment: Chaotic good

Possessions: Standard adventuring gear, studded leather, *small steel shield +1*, 10 arrows +1, 10 normal arrows, potions of *blur* and *cure moderate wounds*.

Morgan, Demarn, Korinsk, and Temluk

Male humans, 3rd level Fighters

Medium-size Humanoid (Human)

Hit Dice: 3D10+3 (25, 22, 28, 24 hp)

Initiative: +0

Speed: 20 ft

AC: 16 (Chain mail +5, Small steel shield +1)

Attacks: Longsword +6 melee; or light crossbow +3 ranged

Damage: Longsword 1d8+2; or light crossbow 1d8

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: none

Special Qualities: none

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +0

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 11

Skills: Diplomacy +1, Handle Animal +3, Ride +5, Spot +0

Feats: Endurance, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Run, Weapon Focus (longsword)



Challenge Rating: 3

Alignment: Neutral

Possessions: Standard gear, chain mail, small steel shield, long sword, light crossbow, 10 bolts

SEARCHING FOR INFORMATION

If the characters inquire about places where they might discover information about the northern marches of the realm, or what lies beyond the borders of the kingdom to the north, one of the king's officials will inform them there are two places to look—the Archive of State Records in the palace, and the City Library not far distant. As mentioned in the introduction: 'Dusty reports in the kingdom's records office and library hardly mention Ghorkai at all, even with the relative proximity of his lair, and all identify him as a 'mere' black dragon of no great size,' so:

In the archives of the palace the following information can be gained, providing those searching for it have the indicated skill and make the check against it:

Gather Information (DC 12): *'A black dragon has been seen in the Zastvel Mountains north of the main branch of the Sals River. It is of no great size, and likely the other fell monsters that inhabit the region will deal with the wyrm.'*

Knowledge (arcana) (DC 20): *'The black dragon's description does not completely match other descriptions of this sort of wyrm. Furthermore, the reports from separate accounts seem to indicate that this dragon is surviving well, and growing rather rapidly.'*

Decipher Script (DC 18): *'A desperate message dispatched from the dwarf king, Olgar Obsidian, in his own hand evidently, tells of his force being defeated by 'companies of the most despicable humanoids and their hybrid offspring', and these grim ravagers were harrying him and his folk even in their caverns, 'all led by a strange drake, not astonishing in its size, but with unusual powers.'*

From the rare works section of the library the following information can be gained, again providing those searching for it have the indicated skill and make the check against it:

Decipher Script (DC15): *'There is mention in an old account of the of 'The Mother of Witches' breeding a*



special dragon for her daughter to use as a steed, and in the battle waged against this eldest witch the young dragon was not slain, but managed to escape and fly away southwards.'

Gather Information (DC15): *'A journal from an explorer who wrote the account about 100 years ago relates that in a gloomy chasm of the Zastvel Mountains 'some 20 leagues north of Gladespoint,' he saw, 'flying into a cavernous opening a small drake whose colour was that of the sky when the face of the sun is black.' There is a note in another hand that asks what colour that might be.'*

Gather Information (DC 10): *'In all, there seems to be a lack of information regarding the whole of the area beyond the Sals River, other than a map with a few places named.'* If this clue is discovered, give the players a copy of the map of the northern march and the border area beyond it shown below.

THE WAY NORTH

The adventurers are advised to head directly to Gladespoint, the border post close to the scene of the attacks.

The Land: Describe the surrounding terrain as you see fit. It is generally weedy and with copses of trees growing close to the river banks and small areas of marsh at the places where stream tributaries flow into the main water. Along the road, between small woods and some areas of rough terrain where smaller streams make their way to the Sals, there are open, rolling fields and meadows. Plant life is abundant, and the wildlife to be seen is typical of the region – small birds, hawks, and large wading birds as well as waterfowl in the river proper. Likewise, small mammals and perhaps some larger ones – deer or even a black bear – might be spotted.

Upon departing Mitersee, the party may travel by barge up the Sals River or follow the road that meanders along the riverbank. In either case two green hags and their ‘pet’ snake (a giant constrictor) waylay them en route, somewhere near the half-way point of their journey. The hags have been killing refugees fleeing down the river and have set up a ruse designed to lure good folk to their deaths. The hags (after using their *changed self* power) have appropriated a raft and deliberately run it aground near the bank. As adventurers pass – they use *dancing lights* at night to draw attention either by road or on the river – read aloud the following to the players:

You note two women, one an old maid, the other young and comely, hailing you from a raft that's gone aground on the river bank. They have seen you too, and wave and call for aid: 'Please, kind sirs, help us free our raft so we can escape from the marauders who are not far behind!'

If the party helps, the ‘women’ use their *weakness* attack as soon as characters are in proximity, change to true form, and tear into the nearest to them. Note it is most probable that those assisting will have laid down shield and weapon to do so. The snake attacks the unengaged party members. If bested, the hags flee, using *invisibility* and *water breathing* to reach the far bank and then *pass without trace* to their nearby lair, a muddy hole; here the hags have body parts, clothing and petty belongings looted from those fleeing downstream. They also have a gold-framed mirror worth 400 gp, a moonstone necklace worth 800 gp, and a gold inlaid ivory box worth 1,000 gp. Of course they offer these items in return for their lives if pursued to the lair.

Green Hag: 2

See *Core Rulebook III*

Giant Constrictor Snake: 1

See *Core Rulebook III*

AT GLADESPOINT

When within a few miles of Gladespoint, tell the party they see black smoke ahead of them. Upon arriving at this place, the party finds the castle in flames, its soldiers slaughtered in a sudden surprise raid. The score or so of small buildings that were near the military outpost are likewise destroyed, what remains of them smouldering ruins. There are hundreds of dead lizardmen, the defenders having accounted for five times their own number before falling.

The smoke you saw from afar is what you feared. What a sight greets your eyes! The castle here was a large stone structure with four towers and a boggy moat. Flames are burning briskly in the interior, which was full of various wooden buildings. There are breaches where the stones of the walls were smashed apart and piled to either side. All around the castle are the corpses of lizardmen. You can't tell how many without a careful inspection, but there are surely many hundreds dead.

Assuming the party make at least a cursory search of the castle, they will find a great many human corpses too – not so many as the lizard-folk, and most bearing many wounds, as though they sold their lives dearly.

A more thorough search (Search check, DC 20) will reveal one human and three lizardmen who are just barely alive. The lizardmen attackers were fairly careful to finish off injured defenders, and many of the dead have their throats cut. The sole survivor, Olten (see below for statistics) has a serious slash in his side that brought him down, and a minor cut on his throat that was a botched attempt at a coup de grace. He stabilised naturally very close to death, and will need healing before he can regain consciousness.

If healed, Olten will beg the party to set off *immediately* after the band that attacked the fort. They have taken many captives and lizardfolk are known to eat human flesh!

The unconscious lizardmen should be treated as average members of their race, and are reduced to –3, –5 and –8 hp (usually 11, 14 and 8 hp respectively). These three have all stabilised naturally, like Olten, and will need healing if they are to be of any assistance.

If any of the lizardmen are healed and interrogated, they might tell of their new king, if asked, who rules them, or gives orders. Also, if asked if there are any mighty ones they will say that, ‘*A dragon is the friend of our new king.*’ If asked the dragon’s colour, they will say: ‘*It is the colour of the sky seen as night comes.*’ It

is most fearsome, and devours us if we disobey.' If pressed on the point of its colour, one will say: 'Well, it ain't soot black, there's a steely undertone to its scales, you see.'

The marauders can be tracked if the scouts survive or one or more of the players have this skill. Otherwise, captive lizardmen might be used as guides. Olten too can track, since he is a ranger.

Olten

Male human, 2nd level Ranger

Medium-size Humanoid (Human)

Hit Dice: 2d10-2 (-7 hp, usually 15 hp)

Initiative: +0

Speed: 30 ft

AC: 10

Attacks: +2 melee, or +2 ranged

Damage: Unarmed 1d3 subdual

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: none

Special Qualities: none

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +1

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 11, Con 9, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 8

Skills: Animal Empathy +4, Diplomacy +1, Heal +4,

Search +3, Spot +5

Feats: Ambidexterity, Combat Reflexes, Iron Will,

Track, Two-Weapon Fighting

Challenge Rating: 2

Alignment: Neutral good

Possessions: Olten's weapons, armour and other gear have been lost in the sack of the castle; the party must arm him themselves or locate suitable items from amongst those plundered by the lizardmen.

INTO THE NORTHFENS (AREA 1)

Crossing the Sals River: If the party came by road they can fashion rafts from the timbers of the ruined buildings, but this will take time making it harder to follow the lizardmen and their captives. They can also make reed bundles on which to float their equipment, pushing these before them as they swim. Characters without much heavy equipment can tie their gear to their saddles and swim beside the horses, holding onto them. The easiest way of crossing to the north shore of the river is by barge, of course.

What they See: The Northfens is a large area of typical marsh. Bordering the river there are brush willows and similar foliage, and even a few trees that thrive in wetlands of this sort. Inside the marsh there are bog areas that are cut across by sluggish streams, pools, and ponds. Each bog is from 100 to 300 yards across, with a few clumps of bushes scattered about in it. Breaking each such area are stands of trees from 40 to 70 yards long, about 10 to 30 yards deep. Some clumps of these trees grow right in the water, such as tamarack pines and the like. Others are rooted in the relatively dry soil of low rises: small and large willows and slender aspens. Thus after entering the place and travelling for half a mile, all sight of the land outside the marsh will be lost. The party will have to walk, leading any mounts, with a maximum speed of one mile per hour at best.

Once in the marsh there are other hazards. See the encounter table below listing the natural hazards and creatures, and check once every half hour of game time while in this place for some occurrence when the party is negotiating the area of the Northfens.



ENCOUNTER TABLE

- 1 Deep mud; one character has stepped into it, and unless a Reflex saving throw (DC 15) succeeds, the unfortunate individual will be sucked under and be lost in 3 rounds.
- 2 'Bottomless pool': one character has stepped into it, and unless a Reflex saving throw (DC 12) succeeds, the unfortunate individual will sink under the water unless he can swim wearing what he does. Depth of pool 50' with soft mud bottom.
- 3 Quicksand area: all party members are at risk of becoming mired unless Reflex saves (DC 10) can be made to avoid the muck; unlucky characters will sink in 2d6 rounds unless rescued by their comrades.
- 4 Small poisonous spider: see *Core Rulebook III*.
5. Poisonous snake: see *Core Rulebook III* page.
- 6 Monster: giant preying mantis, see *Core Rulebook III*.
- 7 Monster: black pudding, see *Core Rulebook III*.
- 8 Monster: shocker lizards (2d4), see *Core Rulebook III*.
- 9-10 No encounter.

NEAR THE HEART OF THE MARSH

Another rearguard waits in ambush along the trail. The main group noted disturbed flocks of waterfowl flying up from where the party is travelling and saw that the birds were being disturbed progressively in a line leading towards their home. Six lizardmen have been dispatched to attack and kill whoever follows the war party. The six are hidden among trees to either side of the party's position. Each lizardman is a 2nd level barbarian. They attempt to make a surprise attack, casting javelins and then nets. The lizardmen have also set a half-dozen snare traps in the trees to either hand. Any character entering the trees must succeed in a Reflex saving throw (DC14) or else be caught. A snared character is

brought to hang head down about six feet above the ground, unless the failed saving throw is a 1, in which case the snare has caught the victim around the neck. Such a character will strangle to death in 6 rounds unless released before then.

Vwar, Gurn, Grabzk, Yagul, Zalix, Grahl

Male lizardfolk, 2nd level barbarians

Medium-size Humanoid (Aquatic, Reptilian)

Hit Dice: 2d8+2d12+4 (21, 22, 24, 25, 27, and 29 hp)

Initiative: +0

Speed: 40 ft

AC: 15 (+5 Natural)

Attacks: 2 claws +7 melee, bite +5 melee; or javelin +3 ranged; or net +3 ranged

Damage: Claw 1d4+4, bite 1d4+2; or javelin 1d4+4; or net (entangles; see *Core Rulebook I*, pg 102)

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: none

Special Qualities: Barbarian Rage 1x/day (HPs increase to 29, 30, 32, 33, 35, 37; additional +2 to hit; additional +2 to damage; Fort +6; Will +0)

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +3, Will -2

Abilities: Str 19, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 6, Cha 13

Skills: Balance +4, Intuit direction +0, Jump +10, Listen +0, Swim +12, Wilderness lore +2

Feats: Multiattack, Run

Challenge Rating: 3

Alignment: Neutral evil

Each lizardman barbarian has two javelins and a net. Initially they throw javelins, then close and cast their nets. After that they charge into melee, attacking with fangs and claws.



AT THE 'COURT' OF THE LIZARDMAN KING

When the adventurers get to the middle area of the Northfens, read the following aloud to the players:

As you slog into what must be the very heart of this marshland you see signs of habitation, what must be the village of the lizardmen who dwell here. There is a rough stockade built atop a mud embankment, the latter on a rise that is about a foot above the marsh around. Around its western and southern verges there is a stream of dark water perhaps 10 feet wide. Several pools to the north and east make approach to the place difficult save through the boggy areas between them. Even though you are in the open, no one in the place seems to have noticed you yet.

The tribe has been bled white by internecine warfare, the depredations of the dragon, and the fighting across the river, so the odds are not too bad for the party. Because of the shortage of warriors in their camp, the lizardmen will not detect the party until they actually enter the stockaded area, or until a full 20 minutes have passed with the party lingering outside.

Three lizardmen inside the stockade guard the entrance, a flooded passage leading through the embankment. One is a competent spell caster (5th level druid), and the others are 5th level barbarians:

Y'bla

Male lizardfolk, 5th level druid

Medium-size Humanoid (Aquatic, Reptilian)

Hit Dice: HD 2d8+5d8 (35 hp)

Initiative: Init +3 (+3 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft

AC: 18 (+3 Dex, +5 Natural)

Attacks: 2 claws +6 melee, bite +4 melee; or javelin +7 ranged

Damage: Claw 1d4+2, bite 1d4+1, or javelin 1d6+2

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: None

Special Qualities: Spells (see below)

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +6

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 12

Skills: Balance +7, Concentration +7, Diplomacy +5, Heal +5, Jump +8, Swim +13, Wilderness Lore +5

Feats: Extend Spell, Multiattack, Track

Challenge Rating: 6

Alignment: Neutral evil

Druid Spells Per Day: DC 12+spell level; 0-level: *flare* x2, *goodberry*, *guidance* x2; 1st level: *cure light wounds* x3, *entangle*; 2nd level: *chill metal*, *flame blade*, *summon swarm*; 3rd level: *protection from elements*

Y'bla has two javelins and wears a minor *circlet of blasting*. Note that there is sufficient weed in the flooded passage for Y'bla to use his *entangle* spell therein should he so choose.

Kaal, Xarl

Male lizardfolk, 5th level barbarians

Medium-size Humanoid (Aquatic, Reptilian)

Hit Dice: 2d8+2 + 5d12+5 (63 and 51 hp)

Initiative: +3 (+3 Dex)

Speed: 40 ft

AC: 18 (+3 Dex, +5 Natural)

Attacks: 2 claws +10 melee, bite +8 melee; or javelin +9/+4 ranged

Damage: Claws 1d4+4, bite 1d4+2; or javelin 1d6+4

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: None

Special Qualities: Barbarian Rage 2x/day (HPs increase to 77 and 65; additional +2 to hit; additional +2 to damage; Fort +7; Will +6)

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +4

Abilities: Str 19, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 6, Wis 16, Cha 9

Skills: Balance +7, Climb +9, Jump +10, Listen +8, Spot +3, Swim +12

Feats: Cleave, Multiattack, Power Attack

Challenge Rating: 6

Alignment: Neutral evil

Kaal and Xarl each have four javelins.

As you get a chance to give the interior of the place a hasty survey, you see several things that make you sure this is the place you sought:

The first thing that catches your attention is the large wooden cage near its centre. There are many humans penned inside of it, but you are startled to note that with these unfortunates are some dozen sturdy lizardmen as well, likewise held captive!

Around this crude prison there is a ritual in progress, with several fur and feather-bedecked lizardmen dancing around, shaking rattles and beating on small drums, as an audience composed mainly of females and young of their kind look on with rapt attention.

Your gaze next fixes on a loathsome-looking humanoid of some unknown sort who is seated, watching the savage ceremony. The chair – obviously the thing is

meant to be a throne – is crudely made, fashioned of wood, bones, and skulls. The male sitting on it is large, at least nine feet tall, and appears to be some strange variety of lizardman. His scaly skin is a deep blue-green and his eyes are very large, lambent red – all four of them, as this monster has two heads! There are a pair of horns upon each crested cranium, and the twin mouths are huge, filled with fangs that would make a young dragon proud. The creature's thick fingers and toes are tipped with wicked-looking talons of azure hue.

As noted, within the tribal compound the captives taken from Gladespoint have been imprisoned in a big cage of wood. The ritual in process is that of homage, as the dragon will soon come to feast! Kruhesh, son of Ghorkai, the king of this miserable band of lizardmen, sits on the throne he had built to his specifications, grandly awaiting the arrival of his much-feared sire.

Kruhesh, the Half-Dragon, Half-Lizardman 'King'
Half-Dragon (Red, Blue)/Half-Lizardman, 6th level fighter



Medium-Size Dragon

Hit Dice: 2d10+6d12+40 (80 hp)
Initiative: +8 (+4 Dex, Improved Initiative)
Speed: 30 ft
AC: 23 (+4 Dex, +9 Natural)
Attacks: 2 claws +17 melee, 2 bites +15 melee; javelin +12/+7 ranged
Damage: Claws 1d4+9, bite 1d6+4; or javelin 1d6+9
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Once per day right head breathes a 5'high, 5' wide, 60' long line of acid for 6d4 damage (save DC 17), once per day left head breathes a 5'high, 5' wide, 60' long line lightning for 6d8 damage (save DC 18)
Special Qualities: low light vision, darkvision 60', immune to sleep and paralysis effects, acid immunity, electricity immunity
Saves: Fort +13 Ref +9 Will +9
Abilities: Str 28, Dex 19, Con 20, Int 18, Wis 14, Cha 14
Skills: Balance +8, Bluff +9, Climb +18, Diplomacy +4, Intimidate +4, Jump +23, Listen +7, Move Silently +6, Search +7, Spot +8, Swim +24
Feats: Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Expertise, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Leadership, Power Attack

Challenge Rating: 10

Alignment: Lawful evil

Kruhesh does his best to impose his father's will upon the lizardfolk, as he is cruel and sadistic by temperament. Kruhesh speaks these languages: Bugbear, Draconic, Giant, Goblin.

There are the following combatants surrounding Kruhesh:

Zorat

Female lizardfolk, 3rd level cleric, 2nd level sorcerer
Medium-size Humanoid (Aquatic, Reptilian)
Hit Dice: 2d8+3d8+2d4+21 (54 hp)
Initiative: +4 (Improved Initiative)
Speed: 30 ft
AC: 15 (+5 Natural)
Attacks: 2 claws +6 melee and bite +2 melee, or javelin +4 ranged
Damage: Claw 1d4+2, bite 1d4+1, or javelin (2 carried) 1d6+2
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: None
Special Qualities: Spells (see below)
Saves: Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +8
Abilities: Str 14, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 15

Skills: Balance +4, Diplomacy +6, Heal +4, Jump +8, Spellcraft +2, Swim +10, Wilderness lore +3
Feats: Improved Initiative, Lightning reflexes, Multiattack

Challenge Rating: 6

Alignment: Neutral evil

Cleric Domains: Trickery, War.

Cleric Spells Per Day: DC 12+spell level; 0-level: *guidance* x3, *resistance*; 1st level: *cause fear*, *doom*, *obscuring mist*, *change self*; 2nd level: *hold person*, *shield other*, *invisibility*

Sorcerer Spells Per Day: DC 12+spell level; 0-level (6 per day): *Dancing Lights*, *Flare*, *Ghost Sound*, *Mending*, *Prestidigitation*; 1st level (5 per day): *Magic Missile*, *Silent Image*.

Zorat is the lover of Kruhesh, and will protect him with her *shield other* spell.

Rahk, Orzak, and W'zak.

2 male, 1 female lizardfolk, 2nd level clerics/1st level sorcerers

Medium-size Humanoid (Aquatic, Reptilian)

Hit Dice: 2d8+2d8+1d4+8 (hp 28, 32, 35)

Initiative: -1 (-1 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft

AC: 14 (-1 Dex, +5 Natural)

Attacks: 2 claws +5 melee, bite +3 melee; or javelin (2 carried) +1 ranged

Damage: Claw 1d4+3, bite 1d4+1; or javelin 1d6+3

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: none

Special Qualities: Spells (see below)

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +8

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 9, Con 13, Int 9, Wis 16, Cha 12

Skills: Balance +3, Concentration +4, Jump +9, Swim +11

Feats: Multiattack, Toughness

Challenge Rating: 4

Alignment: Neutral evil

Cleric Spells Per Day: DC 13+spell level; 0-level: *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *guidance*, *resistance*; 1st level: *endure elements*, *entropic shield* x2, *summon monster I*

Sorcerer Spells per day: DC 11+spell level; 0-level (5 per day): *Dancing Lights*, *Ghost Sound*, *Light*, *Ray of Frost*; 1st level (4 per day): *Protection from Good*, *Burning Hands*

Vokaz and Zarl

Male lizardfolk, 5th level barbarians

Medium-size Humanoid (Aquatic, Reptilian)

Hit Dice: 2d8+5d12+28 (81 and 77 hp)

Initiative: +4 (+4 Dex)

Speed: 40 ft

AC: 19 (+4 Dex, +5 Natural)

Attacks: 2 claws +11 melee and bite +9 melee, or javelin (4 carried) +10/+5 ranged

Damage: Claw 1d4+5, bite 1d4+2, or javelin 1d6+5

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: None

Special Qualities: Barbarian Rage 2x/day (HPs increase to 95 and 91; additional +2 to hit; additional +2 to damage; Fort +10; Will +4)

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +2

Abilities: Str 21, Dex 18, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 12

Skills: Balance +8, Climb +9, Handle animal +6, Intimidate +5, Intuit direction +4, Jump +11, Ride +10, Swim +13

Feats: Endurance, Multiattack, Power Attack

Challenge Rating: 6

Alignment: Neutral evil

Challenge Rating: 6

Alignment: Neutral evil

Lizardmen: 12

See *Core Rulebook III*

Giant Lizard: 2

See *Core Rulebook III*

If the cage is broken open the 11 lizardmen warriors and their leader, all of whom are opposed to the new king's rule, will rush forth to fight alongside the party. Their leader is the old chief shaman of the tribe who loathes the dragon and his hybrid offspring:

Caarg, former chief shaman

Male lizardfolk, 5th level cleric/3rd level sorcerer

Medium-size Humanoid (Aquatic, Reptilian)

Hit Dice: 2d8+5d8+3d4+20 (54 hp)

Initiative: +5 (+1 Dex, Improved Initiative)

Speed: 30 ft

AC: 16 (+1 Dex, +5 Natural)

Attacks: 2 claws +7 melee, bite +5 melee; or +6 ranged if given weapon

Damage: Claw 1d4+4, bite 1d4+2

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: None

Special Qualities: Spells

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +11

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 19, Cha 18

Skills: Balance +5, Concentration +5, Craft +4, Jump +8, Knowledge (arcana) +4, Knowledge (religion) +4, Spellcraft +1, Spot +4, Swim +10

Feats: Brew potion, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack

Challenge Rating: 9

Alignment: Neutral

Cleric Spells Per Day: DC 14+spell level; 0-level: *cure minor wounds x2, guidance, resistance x2*; 1st level: *Cause fear, command, cure light wounds x2, doom*; 2nd level: *cure moderate wounds x2, hold person, silence*; 3rd level: *dispel magic, summon monster III, dominate animal*

Sorcerer Spells per day: DC 14+spell level; 0-level (6 per day): *Dancing Lights, Daze, Mage Hand, Mending, Ray of Frost*; 1st level (6 per day): *Burning Hands, Ray of Enfeeblement, Shocking Grasp*.

Friendly Lizardmen: 11

See *Core Rulebook III*

Unless there is some commotion caused by the team as they enter the place, the characters should get an initial action with surprise on their side. If the party acts quickly they can fight and kill the 'king' and his retinue before the dragon comes, and then set up an ambush for the scaly fiend. Otherwise Ghorkai might arrive during any battle. In this case it stays aloft, uses defensive spells and breath weapon attacks, and then departs, as it won't risk its life. If ambushed it flees for its nearby lair immediately.

Loot from recent raiding is assembled as tribute to the dragon: 2,000 gp in coins, 1,500 to 1,800 (d4 + 1,300) gp in gems, and pair of *gauntlets of swimming and climbing*. There is also a holy icon of non-magical sort, but richly made, that was formerly held by the clergy at Gladespoint Temple. The latter is worth a lot of money, around 7,000 gp. Should the party keep it rather than return it to the temple they will be frowned upon and gain no further recognition for their deeds, even if they slay Ghorkai later in the adventure.

When the fighting is done, any friendly lizardmen surviving offer to lead the party: 'We (or I) can take you to the place the dragon goes when it comes here, and even on to the Vale of Mongrels if you seek to kill that stinking thing.'

Freed human prisoners want the lizardfolk wiped out and will be adamant in their demand that the party punish them. Much diplomacy is required if humans and lizardmen are to coexist again in this region.

Tactful play on the party's part might persuade the surviving lizardmen to pack up altogether and head for the Rushmarsh, another fen that is far to the south and can be reached by travelling down the Sals River and making an overland journey as shown on the map.

GHORKAI'S MARSH LAIR

The entrance to this place, a slimy, muddy burrow underground, is beneath the waters of a large pond near the lizardman compound. However grateful to the party the surviving friendly lizardmen are, not one of them will enter the place, as they have experienced its dreadful presence and have a superstitious dread of Ghorkai.

Underwater Ambush: The underwater passage leading into the lair is 12 feet in diameter and runs some 60 feet to a place under a knoll where a cave has been dug out of the earth. This place is not dry, but it is above water level. On the way to it, though there lurks a chuul, hidden in mid-passage by the muck. It attacks the first person to pass close to it. The passage leads to the cave, detailed below.

Chuul: 1

See *Core Rulebook III*

Slime Cave: The 'visiting lair' of Ghorkai here is a den of about 35 feet diameter, 15 feet high at its centre. Wet mud on the floor makes the footing uncertain. There is grey ooze there in the centre of the earthen cave; it appears to be a puddle. Above it to the right is a patch of green slime depending from the root-festooned ceiling; it is ready to drop upon any intruders. As soon as the party is within this foetid lair, an ochre jelly attacks them, and if any character becomes distracted they might walk into the grey ooze or move beneath the green slime. Once the party has battled past these creatures they may continue to Ghorkai's grotto.

Ochre Jelly: 1

See *Core Rulebook III*

Grey Ooze: 1

See *Core Rulebook III*

Green Slime: 1

See *Core Rulebook II*

Ghorkai's Muddy Grotto: If the dragon has fled to this place, Ghorkai will fight for only d4+1 rounds before fleeing. He is not interested in protecting the small treasure he has here, and is most anxious to get away to where he has more guards and better conditions for using his weapons – see p124 for Ghorkai's

characteristics. There is a hidden second tunnel out of the lair, and Ghorkai will dive into it and escape thus. (Of course he will appear later on, at the conclusion of the adventure, if he survives.)

Better Discoveries: Confined in a small cage of woven branches is a captured officer of the Deselenian army. He has been tortured, has been kept immersed in acidic water, cut by talons, and is now near death. If he is healed, the fellow will identify himself and inform the party that the dragon comes from nearby mountains, and that Ghorkai has another lair where it stores its true hoard. If asked, this man will serve with the party until the dragon is slain, so long as he is treated well. The party must provide him with armour and weapons for his own are lost.

Lieutenant Robart de Blake

Male human, 6th level Fighter/4th level Paladin

Medium-size Humanoid (Human)

Hit Dice: 6d10+4d10+40 (usually 110 hp, currently 5 hp)

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)

Speed: 30 ft

AC: 11 (+1 Dex)

Attacks: +13/+8 melee, or +11/+6 ranged if armed

Damage: Unarmed strike 1d3 subdual

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: none

Special Qualities: none

Saves: Fort +17, Ref +8, Will +8

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 18

Skills: Climb +11, Craft +8, Handle animal +6, Heal +6, Jump +11, Listen +4, Profession +6, Ride +10, Search +6, Sense motive +2, Spot +3, Swim +12

Feats: Alertness, Blindfighting, Combat Reflexes, Expertise, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Trample, Weapon Focus (lance, heavy), Weapon Focus (longsword)

Challenge Rating: 10

Alignment: Lawful good

Paladin Spells Per Day: DC 12+spell level; 1st-level: 1 spell (if his holy symbol is recovered)

There is also an iron chest almost totally sunken into the muck of the burrow's floor, its top hidden by mud. It will require a Search skill success (DC20) to discover it unless Lt. de Blake is healed and able to direct the party in their efforts. He knows the location of the chest and will point it out. The chest is not locked and holds the following:

4,100 gp in coins, only 400 of which are gold; a sapphire-studded bracelet worth 1,500 gp; a masterwork short sword with gem pommel that is worth 700 gp; a +1 *falchion-glaive*, usable as a sword or, upon speaking a word, its grip extends to a length of six-plus feet so as to become a nine-foot-long glaive; a scroll with three 1st level spells – *mage armour*, *change self*, and *spider climb*)

After Defeating Kruhesh and his Lizardmen: If the party has actually managed to confront and defeat Ghorkai (unlikely), there is no compelling reason to go further. So if they return to the kingdom, the adventurers will receive a hero's welcome and be feted and rewarded – but the assembled nobles will shake their heads in surprise that the party did not press on to find the dragon's hoard and came back with so little treasure. Otherwise, if the adventurers go back to the capital city, they will be requested to go north again, past the Northfens into the Vale of Mongrels and beyond. The King has had divinations performed that, at last, have proven useful. He informs them that the dragon must be slain, or it will send forth its minions again, and this time it will probably succeed in its plan of conquest!

Note that if the team of adventurers decides to have lizardmen guide them northwards, they will have no problem negotiating the marsh and will travel at a full two miles per hour through it. Without lizardman assistance, the Northfens encounter table above must



be checked for each hour the party moves through the place.

THE VALE OF MONGRELS (AREA 2)

Relate the following to the players:

This place was once a large and beautiful vale, a near-idyllic place of small woods and open meadows sheltered on three sides by the surrounding mountains. Much of the natural beauty of the place has been destroyed by the humanoid and mongrel scum serving the dragon. The great trees have been cut down or ringed so as to die, become stark skeletons upon which poisonous vines climb. Fields are ill-tended, and the once lush meadows are rank with thorny shrubs, thistles and weeds. At least the heavy underbrush in the woodlands offers considerable cover, though it impedes movement.

Progress through this area is at a maximum of 3 miles per hour with many rests required, whether the party is mounted or afoot. Also, the land has many small hills and valleys, so the track is winding at best. It will take at least two days of hard travel to get to the village that lies to the north-northwest in the valley's edge there. While travelling in the vale, use the following encounter table, checking three times in daylight, and three in the night.

ENCOUNTER TABLE

- 1 Dead tree falls, with one character in its direct path, so unless a Reflex saving throw (DC 16) succeeds, the unfortunate individual will be struck and suffer 6d10 damage – treat this result as no encounter at night.
- 2 Sinkhole or humanoid pit trap: one character has stepped into it, and unless a Reflex saving throw (DC17) succeeds, the unfortunate individual falls and take 4d6 damage – treat this result as no encounter at night.
- 3 Bugbears: see *Core Rulebook III* – treat this result as no encounter in the day.
- 4 Gnolls: see *Core Rulebook III* – treat this result as no encounter in the day.
- 5 Bear, dire: see *Core Rulebook III*.
- 6 Lion, dire: see *Core Rulebook III*.
- 7 Boar, dire: see *Core Rulebook III*.
- 8 Wild game: deer, elk, wild cattle.
- 9-10 No encounter.

After progressing about 18 miles in this manner, at the close of the first day (at the earliest) the party will see

the rays of the westering sun glint off something Metallic atop a bald hill towards the centre of the valley between the long ridges of the Zastvel Mountains to either hand. If they investigate, the party will thus come upon the Town of Triumph overland, not on the track that leads there. By so doing, they avoid the sentries that watch the way from the Vale of Mongrels.

TRACK CHECKPOINT

Following the track will lead the party in a hook-like manner so as to arrive at the east side of the bald hill. Before they have gone far from the spot they glimpsed metal glistening atop, the guard post will be encountered. A rock shoulder to the left of the path and piled logs to the right make it difficult if not impossible, to leave the open way. There is an unexpected watcher atop the 30-foot-high outcrop of rock that will enter the fray within 4 rounds if the gnoll sentries are attacked by the party. Note that the four gnoll archers have longbows.

Gnoll Boss

Male gnoll, 5th level ranger

Medium-size Humanoid (Gnoll)

Hit Dice: 2d8+5d10+14 (58 hp)

Initiative: +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved initiative)

Speed: 20 ft

AC: 18 (+2 Dex, +1 Natural, +5 chainmail)

Attacks: Longsword +10/+5 melee, or long bow +9/+4 ranged

Damage: Longsword 1d8+4, or long bow 1d8

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Favoured enemy (dwarves: +2 on Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Wilderness Lore checks, +2 to damage rolls), Favoured enemy (humans: +1 on Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Wilderness Lore checks, +1 to damage rolls)

Special Qualities: Spells

Saves: Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +3

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 4

Skills: Climb +3, Hide +2, Listen +5, Move silently +0, Spot +9, Swim -5, Use rope +5, Wilderness Lore +6

Feats: Ambidexterity, Dodge, Improved initiative, Power attack, Track, Two-Weapon Fighting

Challenge Rating: 6

Alignment: Neutral evil

Ranger Spells Per Day: DC 12+spell level; 1st level: Entangle

Gnoll Archers: 4

See *Core Rulebook III*

Gnolls: 6

See *Core Rulebook III*

As noted, four rounds after combat with the gnolls commences, their 'guardian' will come bounding down from the outcropping and head directly along the track to melee with the adventurers:

Grey Render

See *Core Rulebook III*

If seven of their number are slain, or immediately upon the death of the grey render, all of the surviving gnolls will turn and flee at their fastest speed, shouting the alarm at the top of their voices. If all such fugitives are killed in two rounds, their cries will not be heard.

Otherwise, the whole town will be alerted, coming out armed and ready to fight. See below for the specifics of the combatant inhabitants of Triumph.

When these foes are defeated, the party can proceed on to the place where they can view the Town of Triumph.

THE TERRIBLE TOWN OF TRIUMPH

The various 'wild' humanoids and former servants of The Mother of Witches that became Ghorkai's minions were ordered by the dragon to build a town here. They did so, but in their own fashion, of course. The whole of the bald hill is honeycombed with dens and caves, and there are also crude stone houses constructed round it. The great knob is some 100 yards in circumference. The exterior buildings climb to about 30 feet above its base and for another 30 feet there are the openings where small caves have been dug or enlarged. Two very steep and winding footpaths lead to the summit of the hill which is about 90 feet above the surrounding terrain. Its top is relatively flat and approximately 75 feet in diameter. Upon this summit is built a stone and log hall in which dwells the master of the town, Molu-kol, a half-giant (stone)/half-athach. Of course Molu-kol is a hideous creature, with the coloration of a stone giant mottled by patches of skin the hue of an athach. It also has that monster's extra arm and corpulent build.

The 'palace' is a rough square of 60 feet per side, 20 feet tall, and on its log roof is an ogre-sized metal cage in which Molu-kol places those who offend him. There is no prisoner in it at this time.

There is one entrance to this place, a double door of 16-foot height, each panel four feet wide, set into the south side of the building. It is heavy, so it is hard to open even a single panel (three characters shoving hard

or one with Str 18 to push it inwards without sticking), but the bar is not dropped to secure it. There are windows of four-foot height and three-foot width in the other three walls – east, west and north – at nine-foot sill height. Each window is covered by a hide on a pole to keep out drafts. The hide curtain to the north is rolled up on its pole, so that window allows a view in and out.

The interior of the hall has a central fire pit with a roof opening allowing the smoke to rise where the cage is suspended. A whole aurochs is spitted over a bed of coals here, being turned by an ogress servant. The 'mayor' has a huge table and chair for his meals and a heap of hides and animal pelts for a bed. There are two big barrels used as stools by the two ogresses that wait on Molu-kol, and their pallets are at the far (northern) end of the open space inside the place. The 'mayor' is seated in his chair, drinking ale from a keg holding four gallons. The other ogress is sitting on his lap feeding him morsels – loaves of bread dipped in a mixture of rancid butter and wild onions in a large flat dish atop the table. In fact the dish is a *large steel shield +1* but only close inspection reveals it as such.

If the party assails the inhabitants of the hall while they are so distracted, they will certainly gain surprise.

Those humanoids from below will not take note of any commotion and noise from the hall, thinking it more of the usual!

Molu-kol

Male stone giant/athach hybrid, 4th level barbarian
Huge Abaration (Earth)

Hit Dice: 14d8+4d12+90 (179 hp)

Initiative: +2 (+2 Dex)

Speed: 50 ft

AC: 21 (+2 Dex, -1 Size, +10 Natural)

Attacks: 2 huge clubs +20 melee, bite +23 melee; or rock +14/+9/+4 ranged

Damage: Huge club 2d6+8, bite 2d8+5 and poison; or rock 2d8+9

Face/Reach: 10 ft. by 10 ft./15 ft.

Special Attacks: Throw rocks, poison (see *Core Rulebook III*)

Special Qualities: Catch rocks

Saves: Fort +13, Ref +7, Will +10

Abilities: Str 27, Dex 15, Con 20, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 8

Skills: Climb +14, Hide +10, Intuit direction +7, Jump +14, Listen +10, Spot +6, Swim +7, Wilderness lore +5

Feats: Multiattack, Multidexterity, Multiweapon Fighting, Blindfighting, Power Attack, Combat Reflexes

Challenge Rating: 14
Alignment: Neutral evil

Ogress Servant: 2

See *Core Rulebook III*. These are a pair of large and savage matrons. Each has 34 hp and a Speed of 40, and inflicts +10 damage rather than +7 with the clubs they wield.

Finding a Captive: In all events, the party will discover a captive here, as well as several others in the 'town' in and around the hill below if they go there. The captive held herein will emerge from a pile of filthy rags—the place where he hides to escape notice whenever possible. The fellow is a petty sorcerer of 3rd level who has been kept alive by Molu-kol to cast his spells upon demand. His name is Quentin, and he is not brave. He will not agree to go anywhere with the party that takes him other than back to human realms, but he will tell them that he had heard that the dragon dwells further on to the north-east, in a gloomy crevasse there. If questioned further he will tell the adventurers that he thinks this distance is considerable, probably 50 leagues!

The 'Mayor's' Treasury: Hidden away in one of the 'barrel-stools' are plundered items Molu-kol has kept hidden from Ghorkai:

3,570 sp, 455 gp, 63 pp, ten agates each worth 40 gp, and one *huge* diamond worth 9,000 gp.

There are also the following magic items: a *ring of protection* +2, four medium *potions*, a minor *arcane scroll*, a minor *divine scroll*, and a *minor wand*.

THE MAIN PORTION OF TRIUMPH

Fortunately for the heroic team, most of the usual inhabitants of this community are off in hunting and raiding parties. Their numbers, thinned from warfare with the dwarves, are such that this leaves only about 60 various humanoid combatants scattered about in the stone huts and hillside dens. Many of them are minimally threatening to a prepared party.

If the party crosses the rough terrain and scrub between the track and the hill upon and in which the 'town' is built, they may ascend to the top

unmolested, as dusk signals the denizens of the community to stir only a little.

Should the party follow the track and battle with the gnoll guards and the grey render there, there is still a chance that they can come to the town without attracting attention. However, as noted previously under the details of the checkpoint on the track, if even one of the gnolls escapes, it will raise the alarm. As the party enters the area immediately proximate to the bald hill, they will be assailed in waves as follows:

Bugbears: 9, Attack on round 1
 See *Core Rulebook III*

Ogres: 3, Attack on round 5
 See *Core Rulebook III*

Orcs: 16, Attack on round 12
 See *Core Rulebook III*

Goblins: 32, Attack on round 20
 See *Core Rulebook III*

Hobgoblins: 12, Attack on round 20
 See *Core Rulebook III*

Molu-kol's Ogre lemans (see above): 2, Attack on round 27

Molu-kol (see above): Attacks on round 28

If you have the inclination, you are welcome to elaborate on the hybrid theme, creating bizarre mutants of all kinds – perhaps one of the bugbears has a great pair of antlers, one of the ogres is grossly fat, one of the



orcs appears to have transparent skin, and one of the goblins has a duck's feet, or some similar collection of freaks.

If the party overcomes the whole of the town's fighting force, the remainder of the inhabitants will run away, hide, and generally make themselves scarce. When this occurs, various captives will begin appearing, running to the party and shouting thanks to them. In all there are 16 demi-human and 20 human slaves in the town. All of them are so thin and worn as to be useless with regard to bolstering the party's strength. (At the Games Master's option, one or more can be able characters who can assist, if the party has suffered losses and needs the help. Any such characters should then be taken over and run by players). Regardless of that, these former captives will tell the party about seeing Ghorkai. They say the dragon is a blue colour so dark it appears black except in bright light. They know that the wyrm has a lair in a place called the *Black Chasm* that is some miles distant to the north-east. If asked how far, most will not know, but one fellow will opine it is not really all that distant, perhaps 30 or so miles. If any enquiries are made with regard to the dwarves that were once the guardians of this vale, the party will learn from the slaves that the caves in which the dwarves lived are to the west, at the far end of the valley's northern perimeter. If the party goes in that direction they will automatically see the location listed below (The Caverns of the Highvale Dwarves) when at the western edge of the vale.

The only worthwhile treasure is in the hall atop the knob. If the party lingers to search the whole of the town, keep track of time in 10-minute segments, rolling a D20 at the end of each such time period and dividing the result by 2 to determine the number of gold pieces (all in silver and copper coins) that the searchers have found. If a 20 is rolled the adventurers have discovered a potion of some value – *healing* or the like as the Games Master decides. In such case, though, one of the parties that was away from town is now returning, and it will arrive in 20 rounds.

Gnoll Boss, 5th Level Ranger:

See stats above

Gnoll Archer: 8

See *Core Rulebook III*

Gnoll: 12

See *Core Rulebook III*

or

Ogre: 6

See *Core Rulebook III*

or

Orc: 27

See *Core Rulebook III*

or

Hobgoblin: 16

See *Core Rulebook III*

THE CAVERNS OF THE HIGHVALE DWARVES (AREA 4)

It is some 30 miles distance from the dwarves' caverns to the edge of the Black Chasm, about the same distance as it is to either place when journeying northwards from the southern edge of the vale. The travel rate here is an average of 2 mph, so a full two days are needed to cover the 30 miles distance. If the party gets off course or lost the time will be longer. While in the vale use the encounter table already given. If at all possible, try to engineer it so that the party arrive at the dwarf caverns in the late afternoon or early evening.

When the western portion of the place is reached, read the following aloud to the players:

There is a great mountain cliff visible ahead, rising to fill the whole horizon to the west. Even from here you can see that there has been much fighting in the area. There are signs of defoliation, fire, and general devastation. As you draw a bit closer to the sheer rock face, it can be seen that there is a narrow roadway leading up to the three large openings, all of which are partially collapsed—another sure sign that there was much warfare here some years back.

The roadway is now a very dangerous path. One section has fallen completely, requiring that characters jump across a 9 ft. gap to safely cross it. A character missing the other side but managing to jump 7 ft. or 8 ft. may make a Reflex saving throw (DC 15) to grab the far edge and pull himself up. Later there is another dangerous section, where only a narrow portion of path remains. A Balance or Climb skill check (DC 13) must be made to navigate this section. Failure can again be dealt with by a successful Reflex saving throw (DC 15) to grab the rim of the path. Unless magically saved from precipitation due to failure of skill or reflexes, a character falling from either danger point will plummet several hundred feet and be killed. Of course, a careful party that uses ropes and pitons will likely avoid such a dreadful fate befalling one or more of its members.

Only the uppermost of the three cave openings is not fully blocked, after some 30 or 40 feet distance into the mountain. If the blocked end of either of the two lower

openings is roughly disturbed, for example by trying to move the fallen stone pieces so as to gain entry, there is a 50% chance that this will cause more rock to fall from the ceiling. All participating must then make a Reflex saving throw at DC 18 to avoid being struck for 2d10 damage.

The uppermost cave mouth also appears to be closed after some 35 feet distance inwards, but a careful inspection using Search skill (DC 15) or done by a dwarf or gnome character, will reveal that several small stones can be moved so as to thereafter roll aside a boulder and get inside. When this happens read the following aloud to the players:

You have managed to find a way into a littered passageway. Much stone and rubble fills the sides of the once-broad tunnel, but it is clear in the middle. Proceeding inwards for another 20 or so paces, your party finds itself in a chamber, a cave that has been enlarged and decorated by the hands of many expert miners and masons. This space is round, about 90 feet across and with a domed ceiling at least 30 feet overhead. There are three wide archways piercing its far wall. These are screened by low walls of dry-laid stone blocks that have crenels and merlons at their top.

Even as you assess what you see, a deep and gruff voice booms forth: 'If ye are friends, lay down your shields and weapons, step forward with your hands held high. Be ye foes, come as ye like, for we'll cut you down and lay ye low soon enough!'

Any member of the party that is a dwarf, or is familiar with them will be reasonably sure that the speaker is of the dwarven race. If the team decides to do as they are told, laying down their arms, they will be greeted suspiciously, then warmly by the dwarves hidden behind the screening barricades. Otherwise, they will be attacked by these mountain dwarves:

Prince Ludfast, dwarf chief

Male dwarf, 8th level cleric/7th level fighter

Medium-size Humanoid (Dwarf)

Hit Dice: 8d8+7d10+78 (144 hp)

Initiative: +1 (+1 Dex)

Speed: 15 ft

AC: 22 (+1 Dex, +3 Full Plate +11)

Attacks: +3 greataxe +21/+16/+11 melee, or dagger +15/+10/+5 missile

Damage: +3 greataxe 1d12+11, or dagger 1d4+4

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: None

Special Qualities: Spells

Saves: Fort +16, Ref +7, Will +12

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 12, Con 21, Int 12, Wis 18, Cha 11

Skills: Appraise +3, Climb +9, Craft +3, Diplomacy +10, Gather information +1, Hide -3, Knowledge (religion) +9, Spellcraft +10, Swim -7, Wilderness lore +6

Feats: Brew Potion, Combat Reflexes, Improved Critical (greataxe), Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Toughness, Track, Weapon Focus (greataxe), Weapon Focus (dagger), Weapon Specialisation (greataxe)

Challenge Rating: 15

Alignment: Lawful neutral

Cleric Domains: Healing, Protection.

Cleric Spells Per Day: DC 14+spell level; 0-level: *detect magic, detect poison, guidance x2, read magic, resistance*; 1st level: *Bane, Bless, cause fear, command, divine favour, cure light wounds*; 2nd level: *augury, darkness, hold person, lesser restoration, shield other*; 3rd level: *dispel magic, helping hand, meld into stone, summon monster III, protection from elements*; 4th level: *air walk, discern lies, sending, cure critical wounds*

Possessions: +3 greataxe, +3 platemail, three potions of cure moderate wounds, potion of truth

Rudd, dwarf lieutenant

Male dwarf, 6th level fighter

Medium-size Humanoid (Dwarf)

Hit Dice: 6d10+12 (52 hp)

Initiative: +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 20 ft

AC: 16 (+1 Dex, chain shirt +4, small steel shield +1)

Attacks: Battleaxe +8/+3 melee, or Light Crossbow +7/+2 ranged

Damage: Battleaxe 1d8+3, or crossbow 1d8

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: None

Special Qualities: None

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +2

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 9

Skills: Appraise +4, Climb +0, Craft +10, Diplomacy +0, Handle animal +6, Listen +2, Ride +10, Spot +2, Wilderness lore +3

Feats: Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (battleaxe), Weapon Specialisation (battleaxe)

Challenge Rating: 6

Alignment: Lawful neutral

Grimfast, dwarf champion

Male dwarf, 6th level fighter

Medium-size Humanoid (Human)**Hit Dice:** 6d10+12 (67 hp)**Initiative:** +2 (+2 Dex)**Speed:** 15 ft**AC:** 20 (+1 Dex, +8 Full Plate, +1 Small Steel Shield)**Attacks:** +1 *Shortsword* +12/+7, or crossbow +8/+3**Damage:** +1 *Shortsword* 1d6+5, or crossbow 1d8**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.**Special Attacks:** None**Special Qualities:** None**Saves:** Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +2**Abilities:** Str 19, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 10**Skills:** Appraise +4, Craft (Weaponsmithing) +6, Handle animal +3, Jump +5, Knowledge (religion) +7, Profession (engineer) +4, Ride +11**Feats:** Blind-fight, Dodge, Expertise, Improved Disarm, Mounted Combat, Skill Focus (ride), Weapon Focus (short sword)**Challenge Rating:** 6**Alignment:** Lawful neutral**Dwarves****24 male and 6 female dwarves, 4th level warriors****Medium-size Humanoid (dwarf)****Hit Dice:** 4d8+4 (24 hp)**Initiative:** +0**Speed:** 20 ft**AC:** 14 (+4 chainmail shirt)**Attacks:** Handaxe +5 melee, or heavy crossbow +4 ranged**Damage:** Handaxe 1d6+1, or heavy crossbow 1d10**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.**Special Attacks:** none**Special Qualities:** none**Saves:** Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +1**Abilities:** Str 19, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 10**Skills:** Appraise +2, Climb +3, Craft +3, Handle Animal +2, Jump +6, Knowledge (Religion) +2**Feats:** Quick draw, Run**Challenge Rating:** 3**Alignment:** Lawful neutral

These have heavy crossbows, cocked and aimed for an initial round of attack.

In the case of a friendly meeting, the party will learn that although their king, Olgar Obsidian, was slain along with most of his people, some dozens of the clan survived. The survivors managed to get messages to their kinfolk, and now the clan is in the process of rebuilding, waiting for their numbers to grow

sufficiently to begin a new war against the mongrels, humanoids, and the scheming, clever and strange black dragon. So long as the characters are prepared to talk rather than fight, they will soon find common cause with this beleaguered dwarf community.

Though these dwarves are struggling to survive, the party will get little impression of that from the feast they throw that evening. Hospitality is one of their most important traditions – once a party has been welcomed into the hold, they will not leave without filling their bellies with the best food and drink the dwarves have available. If you and your players wish it, this is an opportunity for a fun bit of roleplaying, with the dwarves telling tales of lost treasures, singing songs of epic battles, and drinking. Lots of drinking. After a few hours of this, Prince Ludfast will suggest a competition between one of the guests and his champion, Grimfast. The contest is to be in three parts: axe-throwing, engineering, and drinking, in that order. This is intended to be a friendly contest, although the Prince will give a small prize to the winner.

Axe-throwing is quite straightforward: small kegs, which at the start of the night contained strong whisky, will be set up on a ledge about 35 feet away from the contestants. The kegs are effectively AC 14 due to their size, and the usual range penalty of –6 applies. A successful hit will knock a keg off; a successful critical hit will split the keg precisely in half, each half falling neatly to one side. The Player Character can have first throw, with the two contestants alternating thereafter, each taking three shots. If either contestant manages to split a keg in half, he will be acclaimed the winner at once. Otherwise, the character who knocked off most kegs will win. In the case of a tie, the contest will continue till the next character knocks off another keg, at which point that character will win.

The engineering contest will involve creating a castle from empty beer-bottles. The dwarves take this as seriously as any other contest, and opposed Profession (engineer) checks must be made by both contestants. The winner will be the character who constructs the most impressive tower. Ties should be resolved as usual for tied skill checks.

The drinking contest is essentially a series of Fortitude saving throws. It is assumed that both contestants are already fairly drunk. Both must drink a tankard of some alcoholic drink simultaneously. The first drink is beer, and each contestant must make a Fortitude saving throw at DC 11 to down it. Each additional drink cumulatively raises the Fortitude DC by +1 (for beer), +2 (for mead) or +3 (for whiskey). Contestants

alternately choose the drink they must both drink next. The first contestant to fail a Fortitude saving throw loses the contest by either failing to finish his drink, vomiting, or falling over unconscious, with the other contestant being declared the winner. If both contestants fail the same saving throw, determine who kept most of the drink down randomly – that character will be the winner.

For reference, Grimfast has a +8 attack with a throwing axe, a +6 rank in Profession (engineer), and a +7 Fortitude saving throw.

Prince Ludfast will present the winner with an antique ring of dwarven gold from his own finger. If sold, it would fetch up to 1,000 gp to a collector, but only about 150 gp to an ordinary jeweller or merchant. It has far more value as a token of the Prince's esteem, and the bearer, so long as he can satisfactorily explain how he came by it, will always be welcome at Highvale and several other nearby dwarf holds.

If the player won, the party should realise that a reciprocal gift would be appropriate, particularly if they become aware that this is a struggling colony. So long as they offer something of reasonable value, at least 500 gp but preferably more like 2,000 gp, the correct form will have been observed. If this is done, or if the Player Character lost the contest but was a gracious loser and the group offered at least some kind of gift to the dwarven prince, Ludfast will seriously warm to the adventurers. He will suggest that he might have two human-made items in his treasure room that would be useful to those so bold and daring as to fight against the fearsome half-giant, Molu-kol, and his even more terrible master, the dragon named Ghorkai.

Of course, the dwarves need money to help rebuild their community and its forces. They can either loan these items to the party (again, preferably for a token gift of gems to the value of at least a couple of thousand gp), or sell them at a good rate. The nominal value of each item is given below, but the Games Master should consider the possibility of the dwarves selling these items as cheaply as half price to a party that has impressed them sufficiently.

- a +4 shield of lightning resistance (49,000 gp)
- a +4 sword with bane properties verses giants, half-giants, ettins, etc (72,000 gp)

Regardless of whether or not the party obtains the valuable magic items from the dwarves, if they are on good terms with them the prince will provide any healing needed by characters, supply them with food

and drink for a week's travel, and describe a hidden path that will enable the team to get to the mongrel hamlet in two days' time with only one check for encounters made each day and night – four checks total.

Furthermore, Prince Ludfast will inform the characters that the track east from the hamlet leads to a humanoid village, the 'Town of Triumph,' in which the worst of the dragon's humanoid servants dwell, and where the malformed half-giant Molu-kol commands.

The character who took part in the drinking contest must make another Fortitude save at DC 15 or suffer a -1 penalty on all attacks the following day due to nausea, headaches and giddiness.

ALONG THE MOUNTAIN TRACK

The track from Triumph winds eastwards about 10 miles. The forest to either hand is gloomy and depressing, usually grown so that the way is a tunnel passing under twisted limbs and branches above, with trees whose leaves are an unhealthy green or purple-black in hue. The way then angles north-east, the path snaking downwards between the hulking lines of peaks to either hand, mountains that seem to crowd close and watch with malign awareness and anticipation.

The journey here will take three full days. After the party has been trekking north-east for a day, the sky darkens and clouds gather around the peaks. Lightning flashes, thunder rolls and rain falls. The next two days are rainy, a light but steady rain that lessens to a drizzle, almost ceases, then resumes as a downpour for a while, goes to flurries, and so forth. All the characters will be wet, chilly, and likely out of sorts after a few hours of this. Role-play this to the hilt if you are so inclined.

Use the following table for encounter checks:

ENCOUNTER TABLE

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Rockfall: one character in direct path so unless a Reflex saving throw (DC15) succeeds, the |
|---|---|



unfortunate individual will be struck and suffer 6d10 damage.

2 Lightning strike: Each character and each mount in the party must be checked for proximity to where the bolt hits, and arcs from the main strike leap to. A d20 roll of 1 indicates the individual suffers 10d10 electrical damage, and each number above that deducts two d10 from damage, so a result of 2 equals 8d10, 3 equals 6d10, 4 equals 4d10, 5 equals 2d10, 6 or higher indicates no proximity to the discharge. No saving throw for this. Ignore this result on day 1.

3 Flash flood: if the party, or any member thereof, is not on the track such persons will be struck by a wall of water, and unless a Fortitude saving throw (DC12) succeeds, all not saving will be swept away, suffer 6d6 damage, and be lost from the remainder of the party, requiring one full day (12 hours) to get back to the point on the track near where they were swept away - ignore this result on day 1 and 4. Swollen stream: blocks path for one day, so party must wait and undergo at least four more checks (three night time and one early morning) - ignore this result in the day.

5 Bear, dire: see *Core Rulebook III*.

6 Lion, dire: see *Core Rulebook III*.

7 Boar, dire: see *Core Rulebook III*.

8 Wild game: deer, elk, wild cattle.

9-10 No encounter.

THE BLACK CHASM (AREA 3)

This feature is the great rift shown on the map as a dark line running for some 15 leagues from the south-west to the north-east. Ghorkai's lair is at its terminus. When the adventurer team has entered the southwestern end of the place, read aloud the following descriptive text:

The chasm you are descending into must once have been a deep riverbed scoured out by rushing water sweeping along many rocks and boulders. It is now dry. The dim light shows a sombre scattering of lifeless boulders and smooth grey stones littering its floor. There is no water here, no living thing. All is desolate. The utter silence is eerie, setting your nerves on edge. The sound of your own passage seems unnaturally loud, and makes your jangled nerves tenser still. Coupled with the faint odours that come wafting from beyond - unpleasant and indefinable stinks and stench of ineffable sort that come and go without benefit of breeze, that you can somehow taste too, a

revolting experience at times - all of your senses rebel at proceeding into this gloomy canyon. Yet go forward you must.

To proceed further will mean your party must have supplies—food of some sort and water. The high sides of the stone channel overhang the way, shadow the gloom. Only during the middle of the day does the sunlight shed a brief brightness here, and that illumination makes the shadows under ledges all the blacker! Other than when the sun is directly overhead, all that is seen here is dim and shadowy, with a glimmer here and there from some mineral crystal catching a stray beam of light. At least the rock-strewn road that this channel offers is relatively straight. That is the sole advantage offered. No wonder this is called The Black Chasm.

Refugees from The Mother of Witch's fallen domain inhabit the rift, brought here by the presence of Ghorkai. These include fiendish creatures - hags, shadows, wights, etc. If you, the Games Master, decide to elaborate on this, feel free to use the following encounter table in conjunction with the checks for the appearance of skeletons covered in the following paragraph. If the d10 check is a 1, then find the special encounter from the following table. Space restrictions here prevent inclusion of stats and treasure, so you will have to work those out for yourself.

ENCOUNTER TABLE

1	Annis
2	Manticore (1-2)
3	Shadows (3-6)
4	Medusa
5	Wights (3-6)
6	Harpies (2-5)
7	Yeth hounds (7-10)
8	Night hag
9	Lamia
10	Gargoyles (3-6)

Furthermore an evil influence lies over the place; periodically, huge skeletons erupt from the pebble-strewn floor of the dry riverbed and attack any living things within their range. As Games Master, check for skeletons every four hours, six checks per day—morning, forenoon, afternoon, evening, night and late night. 1-3 on D10 indicates that skeletons suddenly arise from the riverbed's floor, moving to attack the party. There will be 7-12 (d6+6) skeletons in a group, and their size is determined by rolling D10 for each one in the group.

- 1-2 Small skeleton
- 3-7 Medium skeleton
- 8-9 Large skeleton
- 10 Huge skeleton

For skeleton statistics refer to *Core Rulebook III*.

AN ENTERTAINING INTERLUDE

Some years past Issenglas, a dwarven artificer skilled in weapon-making and magic, fashioned a blade designed to kill Ghorkai. With four stalwart companions from his clan, Issenglas ventured into this dire place bent on slaying the dragon. Unfortunately, the grim inhabitants of the chasm captured him and his companions before they could reach the dragon's lair. At the half-way point of their trek along the Black Chasm, the party comes across five blackened X-frame structures upon which the skeletal remains of the five dwarves hang. As they observe this they are attacked!

From nearby caves a pack of eight ghosts rushes forth.

Ghast: 8

See *Core Rulebook III*

The ghosts have no treasure, but after they are defeated if the adventurers search the area where the dwarves were slain, they will possibly discover the pommel of a sword poking up from the grey shale at the foot of the central X-frame. Use of the Search skill makes finding the object easy, the check being made at a DC of 10. Otherwise, each character in the area must make a Spot check (DC 20) to notice the iron pommel protruding from the pebbles.

Sword of Issenglas: This odd weapon is the size of a shortsword; its blade is fashioned from green-tinted crystal of preternatural hardness that emits a faint luminosity. No evil being can touch the sword, for the soul of Issenglas entered the blade at the moment of his death. The dwarf-sword awaits a wielder who will fight the dragon. The blade is a *shortsword of frost* +3, but against Ghorkai it becomes a *bane* weapon, gaining +5 to hit and, in addition to the frost bonus, an extra 3d6 points of damage. Furthermore the wielder is immune to Ghorkai's terrible breath weapons. Issenglas can communicate telepathically with the one holding the blade. He tells of his desire to kill the wyrm, and the properties of the sword. When, and if, the dragon is dispatched, the soul of Issenglas departs. The weapon loses its glow and is thereafter merely a +3 *frost blade*. The spirit of Issenglas is neutral good and has Intelligence 15, Wisdom 16, Charisma 14 and

an Ego of 16. If its wielder will not face the dragon, it will attempt to gain *dominance*, thereafter forcing an attack on Ghorkai or demanding that it be given to the best fighter in the party. Issenglas is not unreasonable: if a *temporary* retreat (to heal and prepare) is suggested, it will reluctantly agree.

THE DRAGON'S SECRET LAIR (AREA X)

At the terminus of the Black Chasm, in the face of the cliff formed by a long-vanished waterfall, the party will come to the end of their quest.

Ghorkai's second lair, the place in which the dragon dwells most of the time, is at the abrupt end of the great cleft. This is cut into the bedrock by the river that once flowed here. Where it plunged down into the gorge there is now a crumbling cliff face that marks the chasm's north-western terminus. Ghorkai's cave is in that cliff, 100 feet above the party. Of course the dragon is aware that foes have come close!

If the adventurers scale the rock to assault him, Ghorkai will use protective magic, then sally forth and attack. The dragon will employ wing attacks to buffet and blow adventurers so they fall, hovering near the rock face and making 'snatch' attempts, etc. Those knocked from the cliff are allowed a Reflex save (DC 20) to grab hold of the dragon's tail or claw as they fall. Thereafter successful Strength contests between character and dragon are required or the adventurer plummets to the ground—and the dragon will be ascending into the air while trying to dislodge the character! Of course the desperate player can attack at +4 meanwhile.

If seriously wounded (at 30% or less hp) Ghorkai retreats into his cave and makes a final stand, recasting defensive spells and creating darkness before the party enters. To try to scare the heroes away it uses sound imitation and *ventriloquism* to give the impression that a family of dragons inhabits the cave!

ENCOUNTER AREAS

1. The Entrance Tunnel: The dotted line indicates where the edge of the tunnel into the cliff face begins. The cave passages are basically 15 feet in width, the floor irregular but swept clear of debris, the walls likewise rough with irregular formations that have been smoothed and polished a bit by the passage of Ghorkai in his comings and goings. The ceiling has no stalactites, being also smoothed out and concave from the dragon's activity.

2. First Cave: This cave is 45 feet long to the west, a bit over 20 feet wide at its narrowest. The ceiling is only 20 feet high near the walls, doming a bit to reach around 25 feet at the rear central portion. A wyvern, as sharp of ear as it is of tooth, resides here and will move to attack any creature other than Ghorkai passing its cave. See *Core Rulebook III*.

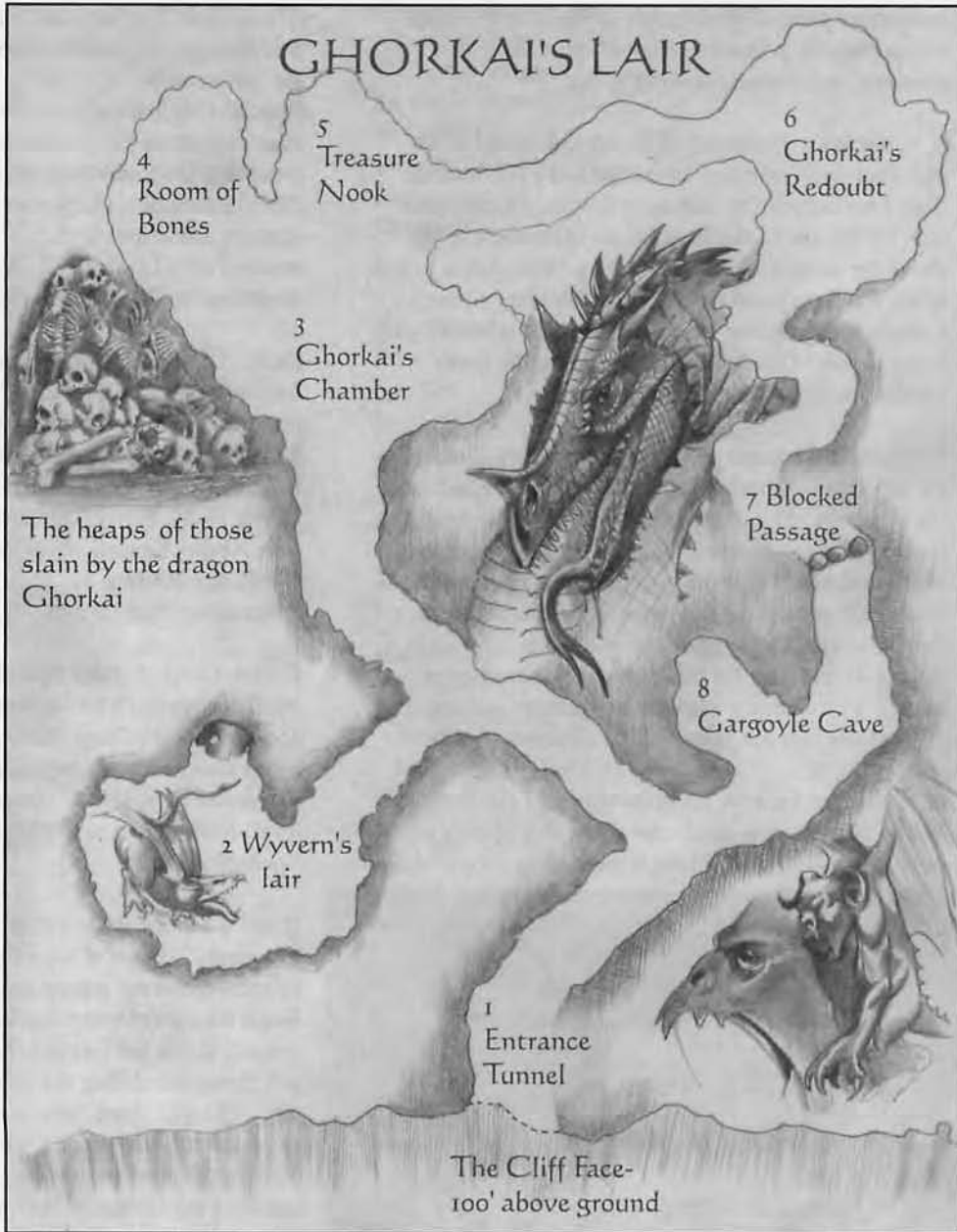
Note the pool of water in the northernmost niche of this cave.

3. Ghorkai's Own Cavern: At The main (front) portion this irregular area is some 40 feet deep to the north and averages over 50 feet wide, east and west. The stone ceiling is quite high, 40 feet at the middle, a little less, perhaps 35 feet, near the walls.

The dragon is clever, and if it seems a good tactic to him, Ghorkai will hide his bulk in the eastern section of this cavern, positioned to use his long neck to peer southwards or possibly eastwards in the direction of area 6.

4. Cul-de-sac: This indented portion of the cavern is nearly 20 by 20 feet in width and depth, measures a bit over 400 square feet, and has a ceiling height of only 25 feet. In this place Ghorkai stores the skulls and bones of those foes he particularly relished defeating, having carefully stripped their skeletons of flesh as he devoured them, so as to have such trophies to gloat over.

5. Treasure Nook: Here in the eastern indentation of the cavern there is a space of over 400 square feet extent. The forepart is 25 feet wide, the rear, some 20 feet to the north of the entry, is only 15 or so feet. The



ceiling slants sharply downward, from 35 feet at the entrance to 15 feet at the back of the place. When sleeping, Ghorkai moves partially into this nook, settles down atop his coins, with his head pointed in a southerly direction so as to be able to watch both that direction and to the east as well.

Ghorkai's Hoard: 12 precious items of dwarf-wrought jewellery each worth 1d3x1000 gp; 25,000 gp in coins – 13,000 in coppers, 9,000 in silver pieces, 3,000 gold; a glittering pile of gems worth a total of 30,000 gp.

Magic Items: +2 shortbow, a unique potion brewed by The Eldest Witch which grants its imbiber one

permanent point of intelligence at the cost of losing two permanent points of constitution, a *deck of illusions*, and a large *carpet of flying*.

6. Ghorkai's 'Redoubt': This 45-foot-long by 20-plus-foot-wide cave has an escape route southwards. (See 7 hereafter.) The ceiling is low, only a bit more than 15 feet above the floor, so no opponent can get above the dragon when he is in here. His plan is to lurk in the southern portion, assail any intruders coming towards him from the west, and then flee when they are in confusion. Ghorkai will speed along the snaky southern way on his route to the outside.

7. Blocked Passage: Three large bounders close off the cave here. Ghorkai has placed them here to fence out intruders. The dragon can move them aside in two rounds so as to squeeze past and exit the lair, passing area 8 and heading at full speed to area 1. However, if the enemy is perceived as weak, and Ghorkai has a breath weapon use to spare, he will likely turn north instead of leaving. He can then attack intruders in areas 3-5 or continue to circle towards areas 6 and 7 again if the foes are going in that direction in pursuit.

8. Cave-like Area: A slight widening of the passage and an alcove to the north-east make this place a small cave in its own right, although the ceiling is only about 15 feet high save in the alcove where it is about 20 feet because of a dome there. Four gargoyles (*see Core Rulebook III*) lair here.

**Ghorkai, Adult Indigo Dragon (144 years old)
Huge Dragon**

Hit Dice: 21d12+126 (242 hp)

Initiative: +0

Speed: 40 ft., Fly 150 Ft. (Poor), Burrow: 20 ft., Swim: 60 ft.

AC: 29 (-2 Size, 21 Natural, 0 Dex)

Attacks: Bite +27 melee, 2 claws+22 melee, 2 wings +22 melee, tail slap +22 melee

Damage: Bite 2d8+8, claw 2d6+4, wing 1d8+4, tail slap 2d6+12, crush 2d8+12

Face/Reach: 10 ft. by 20 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: Breath weapons (DC): lightning 12d8 (27), 100 ft line; acid 12d4 (27), 40 ft cone; amalgamated 6d8 lightning/6d4 acid (DC 27) a 100 ft line of searing acid through which a blue lightning bolt hurtles; once per day *special amalgamated blast* (DC

27) a 100 ft. line for 12d8 lightning damage and 12d4 acid damage, no breath weapon can be used afterwards for 2d4 rounds

Special Qualities: *Create/destroy water* (Sp) 3/Day, *sound imitation* (Ex), *ventriloquism* (Sp) 3/Day *water breathing* (Ex), *darkness* (Sp) 3/Day, *corrupt water* (Sp); immunities: sleep, paralysis, lightning, acid; damage reduction: 5/+1

Saves: Fort +17, Ref +12, Will +15

Abilities: Str 26, Dex 10, Con 21, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 15

Skills: Bluff +15, Concentration +17, Diplomacy +15, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (dragons) +15, Knowledge (geography) +14, Knowledge (history) +14, Knowledge (religion) +12, Listen +23, Spot +23, Search +23, Spellcraft +23

Feats: Flyby, Hover, Quicken Spell, Quicken Spell-Like Ability, Snatch, Wingover

Challenge Rating: 16

Alignment: Neutral evil

Caster Level: 5, Base Spell DC: 13+spell level

Spells Known: (0-level) *Detect Magic*, *Mage Hand*, *Mending*, *Open/Close*, *Read Magic*, *Resistance*, (1st level) *Comprehend Languages*, *Expeditious Retreat*, *Protection from Good*, *Tenser's Floating Disc*, (2nd level) *Resist Elements*, *Whispering Wind*

Spells/Day: 6/7/5

If and when the dragon dies, light begins to seep into the gorge. Almost at once the odd blade of grass can be seen sprouting amidst the previously lifeless shale. Small trickles of water can be seen flowing up from the ground, along the formerly dry riverbed. The grim and evil things inhabiting the chasm will flee for pastures new... Maybe those 'new pastures' will be near some town and the adventurers will find more worthy work there in the months to come. That is entirely in the able hands of the Games Master, of course.

Note: If Ghorkai was killed earlier in the adventure another creature, maybe a demon or a devil, may have claimed the hoard and be inhabiting the cave.

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*Then Wiglaf advanced
through the death-fumes,
wore his helmet
to help his lord.
He spoke these words:
'Dear Beowulf, may you
accomplish all well,
as you did in youth,
as I have heard tell.
Don't surrender the glory
of your life. Defend now,
with all your strength,
your brave deeds.
I will help.'
After these words
the dragon angrily came;
the terrible spirit
another time attacked
with surging fire.
Fire waves burned
Wiglaf's shield
down to the handle,
his mail could not
protect the young
spear-warrior.
He ducked behind
his kinsman's shield.
Then the war-king
remembered past deeds,
struck mightily with his sword
so that it stuck
in the dragon's head;
Naegling, the great sword of
Beowulf,
ancient and shining,
broke, failed in battle.
Fate had not granted that
the iron sword would help.
I've heard that Beowulf's*

*swing was too strong
for any sword,
overstrained any blade,
anytime he carried
a blood-hardened sword
into battle.
Then the terrible dragon
a third time rushed,
hot and battle-grim.
He bit Beowulf's neck
with sharp tusks—Beowulf
was wet with life's blood;
blood gushed in waves.
Then, I've heard,
Wiglaf showed courage,
craft and bravery,
as was his nature - he went
not for the thought-seat,
but struck a little lower,
helped his kinsman
though his hand was burned.
The sword, shining
and ornamented,
drove in so that
the fire abated.
Then the king controlled
his senses, drew his
battle knife, bitter
and battle sharp, which
he carried on his mail,
and cut the dragon
through the middle.
The enemy fell - strength
had driven out life;
the two kinsmen, together,
had cut down the enemy.
So should a warrior do.
That was Beowulf's last victory;
his last work in this world.*

It is said that in England during the Middle Ages a young nobleman by the name of Lambton went fishing on a Sunday even though he had been warned that doing so would bring bad luck. His fishing yielded nothing but a peculiar worm of no great size that he threw into a well. Lambton was a brave fellow who answered the church's call and set out for the Holy Land to participate in the crusades. While he was away the worm crawled out from the well but now it was an enormous dragon!

The land for leagues around was brought to ruin for the dragon killed any and all people it met. It grew ever larger until it could coil its massive body around a hillside.

When Lambton returned from the crusades he went to a witch and asked her how he might kill the terrible dragon. She demanded that in return for her help Lambton must promise to kill the first living thing he met after slaying the worm.

With the witch's help Lambton killed the dragon but to his horror the next person he met was his own father. The good knight could not kill one he loved and so broke the promise he had made to the witch; it is said that for nine generations thereafter his family was cursed and that all died untimely deaths.

The song of the Lambton Worm

*One Sunday morn young Lambton
went a-fishin' in the Wear;
An' caught a fish upon his huek,
He thowt leuk't varry queer,
But whatt'n a kind a fish it was
Young Lambton couldn't tell.
He waddn't fash to carry it hyem,
So he hoyed it in a well.*

*Whisht! lads, haad yor gobs,
Aa'll tell ye aall and aaful story,
Whisht! lads, haad yor gobs,
An' Aal tell ye 'bout the worm.
Noo Lambton felt inclined to gan
An' fight in foreign wars.
He joined a troop o' Knights that cared
For neither wounds nor scars,
An' off he went to Palestine
Where queer things him befel,
An' varry seun forgot aboot
The queer worm i' the well.*

*But the worm got fat an' growed an' growed,
An' growed an aaful size;
He'd greet big teeth, a greet big gob,
An' greet big goggle eyes.
An' when at neets he craaled aboot
To pick up bits o' news,
If he felt dry upon the road,
He milked a dozen coos.*

*This feorful worm wad often feed
On calves an' lambs an' sheep,
An' swally little bairns alive
When they laid doon to sleep.
An' when he'd eaten aal he cud
An' he had has he's fill,
He craaled away an' lapped his tail
Seven times roond Pensher Hill.*

*The news of this most aaful worm
An' his queer gannins on
Seun crossed the seas, gat to the ears
Of brave an' bowld Sir John.
So hyem he cam an' caught the beast
An' cut 'im in three halves,
An' that seun stopped he's eatin' bairns,
An' sheep an' lambs and calves.*

*So noo ye knaa hoo aall the folks
On byeth sides of the Wear
Lost lots o' sheep an' lots o' sleep
An' lived in mortal feor.
So let's hev one to brave Sir John
That kept the bairns frae harm
Saved coos an' calves by myekin' haalves
O' the famis Lambton Worm*

*Noo lads, Aa'll haad me gob,
That's aall Aa knaa aboot the story
Of Sir John's clivvor job
Wi' the aaful Lambton Worm*

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The Ravage of Ghorkai

Gary Gygax and John Creffield

INTRODUCTION

When compiling the Slayer's Guide to Dragons certain portions of this adventure were cut to conserve space in the finished book. Here we present those missing parts, they include extra background information for the players, a challenging combat encounter at Gladespoint, a village of hybrid mongrels and a horrid ogre mage chieftain.

THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE AREA

First let us recap upon the different geographic locations featuring in the adventure. The Vale of Mongrels is detailed below:

Deselene, the state that lies to the south of the Zastvel Mountains

Gladespoint, a frontier fortress and village of Deselene's northern marches

Mitersee, capital city of Deselene

Northfens, a marsh of about 25 square miles between the forks of the Salls River (area 3)

Salls River, its eastern and main branch demarks Deselene's northern border

The Black Chasm of Ghorkai, the indigo dragon (X on map), in the Zastvel M.

Triumph, the town in the Black Chasm (3 on map)

Vale of Mongrels, formerly Highvale, once a dwarf land (area 2)

Zastvel Mountains, the long mountain range to the north of Delelene

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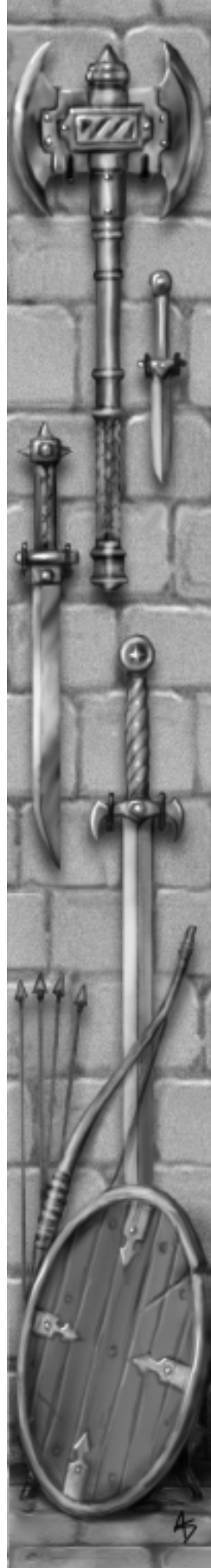
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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Here we review the protagonists in this drama, friends and foes of the brave adventuring party. Archpriest Halfren and Chungti are detailed below:

By mention: *The Mother of Witches*, the eldest witch

By mention: *Rezelna*, daughter of the eldest witch

By mention: *Olgar Obsidian*, the slain dwarven king of Highvale

Archpriest Halfren, the ruler of Deselene whose palace is in Mitersee

Kruhesh, the a vile, two-headed half-breed son of Ghorkai

'*The Choirmaster*' Chungti, the ogre mage underlord of the Vale

Prince Ludfast, Dwarf Chief

Molu-kol, the half-giant 'mayor' of the town of Triumph

Ghorkai, the indigo dragon

BACKGROUND FOR THE PLAYERS

Read aloud those portions of text hereafter that are indicated by bold italic type.

Your band of adventurous heroes has been travelling in the theocratic realm of Deselene, its sovereign lord being Archpriest Halfren who rules as king. Upon reaching the capital city of the state, the walled city of Mitersee, it became clear to all of you quite soon after arrival therein that all was not well. Everywhere folk were sombre, and there was suspicion plainly written on the faces of those who spoke with you. No great skill was needed to discover the root of this. Rumours were rife of impending invasion by hordes of humanoids and lizardmen known to be wreaking havoc currently in the northern marches. The citizens of Mitersee were dismayed. The gathering of the Archpriest's Host would take weeks, and what if the foe attacked tomorrow? All strangers were suspect, your brave party the more so because of your obvious fighting ability and 'exotic' nature.

All of this made you uneasy, so it was decided to move on before someone accused you of being agents of the enemy, a mob attacked, or officials had your party arrested. As you were preparing to depart, though, what should happen but that very thing! A

platoon of soldiers accompanied by several able-looking officers, one likely a cleric and another a sorcerer, commanding them. With considerable numbers of armed populace surrounding you, there was no question about attempting escape.

'Come with us,' the captain of the force commanded.

'For what reason?' came your response. When the reply to your query came, it was sufficiently non-threatening to cause you to comply rather than fighting to get free:

'Our Sovereign Lord, Archpriest Halfren, has commanded your presence before him!'

IN THE PALACE CITADEL

The heart of Mitersee is the palace citadel, its centre the great throne room where your party now kneels before the Archpriest. The ruler of Deselene is arrayed in gorgeous robes of royal blue and gold, seated on a silver chair of state that is inlaid with gold and gems. He speaks now:

'Arise, strangers, and be at ease. This is no trial. You are brought here in summary manner only because of Mitersee's need, my auguries told me of your coming, that you were of good heart, would assist Us in this time of peril.'

You see that the Archpriest is a slight man, elderly, but seems to exude vigorous power. No doubt he is strong and active. Halfren's grey eyes are full of both kindness and purpose as he fixes his gaze upon each of you in turn, and you can not fail to note the furrows of concern that mark his forehead.

'You are here to assist Mitersee. Some 60 miles north of here are gathered bandits and raiders—men and humanoids, all murderous scum! By divinations and communing did We learn of your coming. These same auguries made it clear that you were the very thing needed at this time—an adventuring band composed of heroes who will go forth to the marches on Our border and smite the marauders there.'

The Archpriest pauses, smiles at you. The expression, his words and bearing instil confidence that he is benign, honest, and truly in need. He seems satisfied that you are not unwilling to listen further, continues thus:

'I am loathe to require help from those not of my realm, so I am requesting your service. There is danger, great peril perhaps, for my own stalwart men meant to guard the frontier have been defeated. If you will pledge your swords and abilities to me to fight against the foul invaders, then will We give you commissions as My agents so as to command even nobles if you are in need. Also will you receive all that you need to get you to the north where the foe gathers for further incursion into this fair land. Ah, it is dreadful to think of the slaughter and pillage they have wrought there. Will you serve Mitersee thus?'

Of course you accept, but ask many questions in the bargain. There is no force for you to lead now, as all the cleric's men are needed here, where a force is to be gathered in case the invaders are too numerous for even heroes such as you to manage. Your first charge is to gain information, send it back via a handful of scouts and messengers who will accompany your party. If possible, you are also to slay the leaders of the invading marauders, and thus throw the attackers into confusion. This delay will enable the priest-lord to assemble his nobles, gather a strong force, and march north. Should your party actually be able to deliver a severe defeat to the foes of Mitersee, so much the better, as the host of the realm can then bring fire and sword to the enemy's land, and kill or drive far off all evil sure to be there.

You will each receive honours from the Archpriest himself when you succeed. Such benisons as knighthoods, lesser titles, grand serjeant for example, for those of common birth, made citizens too. Each brave defender of his realm will be given a silver casket containing 1,000 gold coins. Of course any monetary treasure taken in the process of carrying out your commission will be one-half your own, the other portion being that of the state. Objects of magical sort taken are given freely to your party. Unless such be of the sort that are known as artefact or relic, these, of course, being claimed as the right of Mitersee to possess. In such unlikely case, other compensation will be given to you.

There is some dark power behind the invasion, Archpriest Halfren informs you. His commune spells and other divinations have revealed that much, but they have not informed him of the exact nature of the evil that is manipulating those who ravage and kill. Perhaps there is some clue

somewhere, but he is at a loss to discover any such information...

Note that the ranger guide-scouts will remain in the vicinity of Gladespoint unless the party follows the direct route, tracking the lizardman raiders, as you will discover as you read on.

AT GLADESPOINT

A small rearguard of lizardmen is still looting in the ruins:

As you come closer to survey the carnage, look for survivors, you see that there are a number of lizardmen still active, in the process of looting. They notice you now, so it will be a fight.

There are 15 lizardmen total. One is a druid with useful spell ability (7th level), and two others are barbarians (level 5), they also have a trained giant lizard.

Those lizardmen with the *ride* skill use it to control the savage giant lizards their tribe keeps as pets and guards; these lizards are particularly hefty and strong, easily able to bare a lizardman's weight.

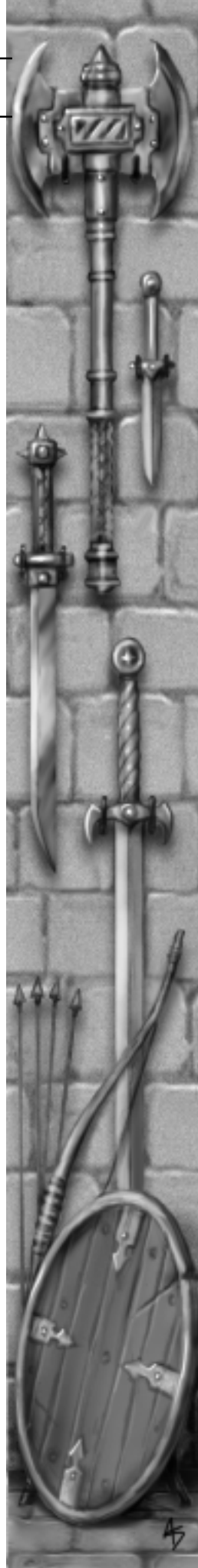
Lizardman Druid

Tazyn, female lizardfolk Drd7: CR 8; Size M; HD 2d8+6 + 7d8+21; hp 78; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (+2 Dex, +5 Natural); **Attack:** 2 claws +7 melee and bite +5 mêlée, or javelin +8/+3 ranged; **Damage:** claw 1d4+1, bite 1d4, or javelin 1d6+1; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +8; AL NE; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 9, Wis 17, Cha 9.

Skills and feats: Animal empathy +7, Balance +6, Concentration +13, Handle animal +9, Hide +2, Jump +7, Listen +3, Move silently +2, Spot +6, Swim +9; Extend spell, Heighten spell, Multiattack, Skill focus (animal empathy).

Possessions: 4 javelins, potion of *fire breath*, potion of *protection from elements (fire)*

Druid Spells Per Day: 0th level: *cure minor wounds* x3, *guidance* x2, *resistance*; 1st level: *calm animals*, *cure light wounds* x3, *magic fang*; 2nd level: *barkskin*, *charm person or animal* x2, *heat metal*; 3rd-level: *cure moderate wounds*, *poison*, *summon nature's ally III*; 4th level: *dispel magic*



Lizardman Barbarians (2)

Gagh, male lizardfolk Bbn5: CR 6; Size M; HD 2d8+6 + 5d12+15; hp 61; Init +0; Spd 40 ft.; AC 15 (+5 Natural); **Attack:** 2 claws +10 melee, bite +8 melee or javelin +6/+1 ranged; **Damage:** claw 1d4+4, bite 1d4+2, or javelin 1d6+4; SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +5; AL NE; Str 18, Dex 11, Con 17, Int 7, Wis 15, Cha 10.

Skills and feats: Balance +7, Jump +10, Listen +2, Ride lizard +8, Spot +2, Swim +16; Endurance, Iron will, Multiattack.

Possessions: 2 javelins, potion of *heroism*

Tzerg, male lizardfolk Bbn5: CR 6; Size M; HD 2d8+4 + 5d12+10; hp 64; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 17 (+2 Dex, +5 Natural); **Attack:** 2 claws +10 melee, bite +8 melee, or javelin +8/+3 ranged; **Damage:** claw 1d4+4, bite 1d4+2, or javelin 1d6+4; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +3; AL NE; Str 18, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 4, Wis 15, Cha 9.

Skills and feats: Balance +6, Craft (raft building) +4, Hide +2, Jump +10, Listen +2, Move silently +2, Spot +2, Swim +13; Multiattack, Power attack, Run.

Possessions: 4 javelins, potion of *cure serious wounds*

Lizardmen: 12

Lizardfolk: CR 1; Medium-Size Humanoid (Aquatic, Reptilian); HD 2d8+2; hp 14 each; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+5 natural) or 17 (+5 natural, +2 large shield); **Attack:** 2 claws +2 melee (or greatclub +2 melee) (1d4+1), bite +0 melee (1d10+1), or javelin +1 ranged (1d4); AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Balance +4, Jump +7, Swim +9; Multiattack.

Giant Lizard

Riding Lizard, Giant: CR 3; Large-Size Animal; HD 5d8+25; hp 50; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft., swim 30 ft.; AC 16 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +5 natural); **Attack:** Bite +10 melee (1d10+7); SA -; SQ -; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 25, Dex 13, Con 21, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Climb +13, Hide +6*, Listen +4, Move Silently +5, Spot +4; -.

*Hide +10 in overgrown areas

The lizardmen have amassed an assortment of weapons and other gear to carry back to the tribe;

they also have a purse holding 40 gp and a tapestry with gold thread worth 400 gp.

THE MONGREL HAMLET

This place lies in the Vale of the Mongrels. When the party reaches the general area indicated, they will discover the community of half-humans, humanoids, and other sorts of mongrels. These are savage folk that worship Ghorkai. Describe it along these lines:

Upon surmounting a long and brushy ridge, you see below you a depression between the ridge and the rising foothills of the Zastvels to the north. In this hollow, amidst tall weeds and heaps of refuse, is a collection of mud huts, ramshackle hovels and log cabins crowding each other and the two dirt lanes that cross and connect a no-less-rutted but broader track that runs east to west in the filthy hamlet. As you observe the place unseen, you note that there are perhaps 200 or so inhabitants, mongrels all. Surprisingly, most of those you see are females and young; there are few able-bodied warriors here.

There are actually 30 capable hybrid human-humanoid warrior-types that will fight the adventurers. For ease of running this encounter, all are grouped together in regards their statistics – essentially those of bugbears, but without the +3 to HD. They are led by a formidable chief however, ‘The Choirmaster’ Chungti, ogre mage, who is charged by the dragon to keep the Vale in subjugation. Thus Chungti will fight to the death, for if he is defeated and survives the battle Ghorkai will kill him. All who are under his command fear the ogre mage greatly. Chungti is known as ‘The Choirmaster’ because he loves to gather prisoners together and torture them so they ‘sing’ in horrendous ‘chorus’ from his ministrations...

Ogre Mage, Chungti

Chungti the ogre mage; CR 8; Large Giant; HD: 5d8+15; **HP:** 47; **Init:** +4 (Improved Initiative); **Speed:** 30 ft, fly 40 ft (good); **AC:** 21 (-1 size, +5 natural, +7 *chain shirt*+3); **Attacks:** Huge *greatsword*+2 +10 melee, or Mighty composite huge longbow +2 ranged; **Damage:** Huge *greatsword*+2 2d8+10, or Mighty composite huge longbow 2d6+4; **Face/Reach:** 5 ft by 5 ft./10 ft.; **Special Attacks:** Spell-like abilities (At will, *darkness* and *invisibility*; 1/day, *charm person*, *cone of cold*, *gaseous form*, *polymorph self*, and *sleep* save DC 13 + spell level; cast as 9th level sorcerer; **Special Qualities:** Regeneration 2, SR 18; **Saves:** Fort +7, Ref +1, Will +3; **Abilities:** Str 23, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 17

Skills and Feats: Concentration +6, Listen +5, Spellcraft +4, Spot +5; Improved Initiative

Possessions: +3 *chain shirt*, huge +2 *greatsword*, huge mighty composite longbow.

Hybrid Mongrel Warriors (30)

Mongrel: CR 2; Medium-Size Humanoid (Mongrel); HD 3d8; hp 13; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (+1 Dex, +3 natural, +2 leather, +1 small shield); **Attack:** Morningstar +4 melee (1d8+2), or javelin +3 ranged (1d6+2); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Climb +2, Hide +3, Listen +3, Move Silently +6, Spot +3; Alertness.

If the village is ‘captured’ the adventurers can, by demanding information (forcefully and with threat and intimidation), get directions to the *Black Chasm* where the dragon dwells. Of course, the party will thus come upon the ‘Town’ of Triumph first. If any inquiries are made in regards to the dwarves that once were the guardians of this vale, the party will learn from the humanoid mongrels that the caves in which the dwarves lived are to the west, at the far end of the valley’s northern perimeter.

If the party then goes to explore there, or heads there first, they will automatically see the location when at the western edge of the vale.

GHORKAI ERRATA

Regrettably errors were made when allocating Ghorkai’s feats. Here is the correct list: Aerial Sweep, Crash Landing, Flyby, Hover, Snatch, and Wingover. Details of the Aerial sweep and Crash Landing feats can be found on page 77 of *The Slayer’s Guide to Dragons*.

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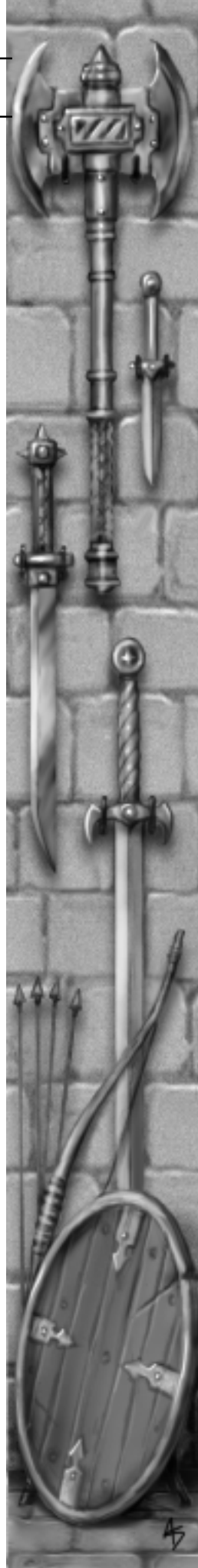
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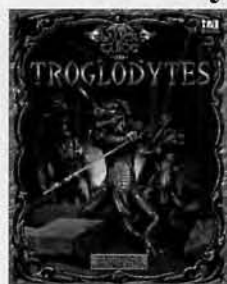
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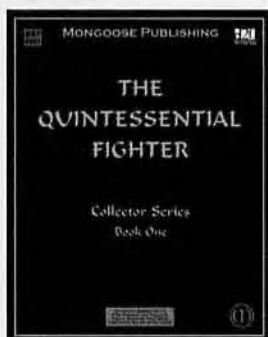
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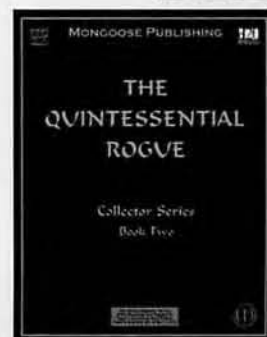
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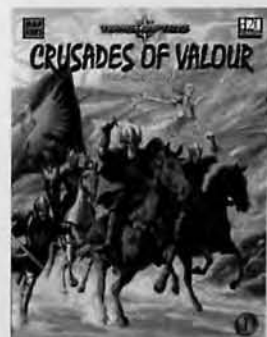
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