

THE VENGEFUL WYRM

The Vengeful Wyrms is a mighty adversary from legend. It makes its lair in the region of the characters' home, and has slept for many generations of men. Now it is beginning to stir, hunt, and look for treasure for its bed. Even the heroes of old could not stand against the Wyrms, but the characters must find a way to protect the village from this mighty beast. To complicate matters, the bloodline of the Vengeful Wyrms runs through the human inhabitants of the land, and blood calls to blood.

This Threat Pack will create a very powerful villain in your campaign. The Wyrms begins rather inactive, and its attacks grow in frequency at a slow pace. However, the Vengeful Wyrms will prove an almost impossible foe for your characters to face. This Threat therefore is a good choice for a long-running campaign.

DURING CHARACTER CREATION

Many generations ago, the Wyrms took the shape of a mortal, and at least one of the characters bears the blood of dragons. The Vengeful Wyrms desires its mortal kin, wanting them for servants and playthings.

Randomly determine one of the characters to be the inheritor of this bloodline. Any other characters related to the wyrms-blooded individual are therefore also related. These characters can sense when the dragon is near, getting an immediate sense of its presence when it is within one mile. This can serve to help them hide from the Wyrms when it is in its wrath. Characters descended from the dragon can even home in on its precise location by making a successful Wisdom check, given they're within that one mile limit. However, the Wyrms will recognize its own; it can detect its descendants by smell, and its perverse sense of family will ensure the beast pay close attention to its kin. It is up to GM and group preference whether the characters know that they are related by blood to the Vengeful Wyrms.

The third table in every playbook determines an NPC with whom the chosen character has a special connection. One of the NPCs determined in this manner has recently stumbled upon the lair of the Vengeful Wyrms, and knows where it sleeps. This NPC is reluctant to speak of the matter, as a great fear gripped him and he ran from the location.

| 1d6 | How did the Vengeful Wyrms affect your childhood? | Gain |
|-----|---|-------------------------------|
| 1 | When the dragon first flew from its lair and went hunting, you were in its path and were scorched by its fire. | -1 Str, +1 Con |
| 2 | When you were growing up, stories of the Wyrms fascinated you more than any others, and you have learned everything you could of the beast. | -1 Wis, Skill: Dragon Lore |
| 3 | You met the dragon alone one evening by chance. You were frozen with terror, convinced of your death, but the dragon said you were too small to eat, and spoke with you instead. It laughed and said it enjoyed your company. | -1 Cha, Skill: Riddles |
| 4 | Your grandparents told you recently that you are descended from a mighty hero who died in combat with the Vengeful Wyrms, and warned you that the beast remembers its foes. | -1 Int, +1 Str |
| 5 | You lost your little finger while trying to save one of the village's sheep from the hunting Wyrms. | -1 Dex, Skill: Animal Ken |
| 6 | During that month you spent sick playing chess, a stranger with red eyes and hair came and challenged you to a game, which you promptly lost. When the stranger left, you heard the flapping of great leather wings. | -1 Con, +1 Int |

Finally, at least one character should make a roll on the above table as their fourth roll during character creation.

ON THE CAMPAIGN MAP

After the characters have determined all of the major locations on the campaign map, secretly mark one of them as the lair of the Vengeful Wyrm. It is likely that this is a remote location, such as a far away mountain or cave complex. However, it is not out of the realm of possibility that the dragon sleeps beneath any number of locations, including a major city or human settlement. In such a case, come up with a convenient means of entrance and egress for the dragon; the locals may or may not realize what lives beneath them. In all cases, the GM will have to determine how the dragon interacts with the other creatures or secrets at the location.

Additionally, the GM should choose two other major locations created by the players which are quite far apart from one another. These should be the resting places of the two pieces of the magical sword, Scalebreaker, detailed below.

Finally, the GM should add the Scorched Stone minor location somewhere roughly two days' travel from the characters' home village. This location is presented in full below

THE SCORCHED STONE

This minor location is the site of an ancient and famous battle in which a hero and a simple farmer fought against the Vengeful Wyrm and drove the beast back to its lair using a magical sword. A standing stone was erected in commemoration of the battle.

The Scorched Stone is an opportunity for players to search for clues and solve a little puzzle. Along the way, Intelligence checks for searching and Wisdom checks for noticing details may be called for. Let the players use their wits to put things together, but do not be afraid to use ability score checks in a pinch.

The farmer's house was made of stone and still stands, though it is very dilapidated from neglect. There is an inscription on the standing stone in a very ancient language. Assuming the characters are able to decipher this description, they will learn that three stones of the farmer's house were removed and used in three other

locations in the area: a small well on the grounds, the base of the standing stone itself, and a bridge over a nearby stream.

If the characters are able to discover these three stones and put them back in their proper places in the house, a small nook in the corner of the house will be revealed. Contained in the nook is a small leather bag the size of a man's fist. The bag is magical, and nothing placed within it will spoil. Within the bag is a pristine bronze key. This key plays an important role in completing the artifact described below.

SCALEBREAKER

There is a mighty but broken artifact in the land, a magical sword made to slay the Vengeful Wyrm and its kin. Named Scalebreaker, its blade and hilt are now separated and housed in two different locations, both difficult to find. The gamemaster should place these two treasures at major or minor locations across the map. Diligent characters might be able to discover clues about the sword and its locations if they study hard enough or ask the right questions.

Wherever the gamemaster places the blade and hilt of the Dragonslayer Sword, the key found at the site of the Scorched Stone opens a vault containing the hilt of the sword. On its own, the hilt gives its possessor a +5 to all saves versus breath weapon.

The blade is housed elsewhere. On its own, the blade is relatively useless, but if attached to an ordinary hilt, it becomes a +3 longsword.

Combining the two pieces of the sword is not difficult, and any skilled blacksmith can manage it. Once completed, Scalebreaker becomes significantly more powerful. The whole weapon is a +3 longsword, does double damage to all dragons and all who bear their blood, grants its wielder +2 AC, and gives a +5 bonus to all saving throws versus breath weapon. More importantly, the bearer instantly knows the true name of the Vengeful Wyrm.

There is a drawback to this mighty weapon. The Vengeful Wyrm can sense the presence of this blade and hates that character with a passion. Anyone within about a mile of the dragon will immediately be known to the beast unless it is in a deep sleep.

THE DRAGON'S LAIR

The Vengeful Wyrms' lair is beneath one of the major locations on the campaign map. Unless the location is extremely secluded, the entrances to the lair are hidden. The lair will have a minimum of two such entrances, one human sized, and one large enough for the dragon to squeeze its massive body through. If it is at all appropriate for the location of the lair, there will also be a third entrance located in the ceiling through which the Wyrms can fly.

The tunnels twist and turn and defy mapping. Instead of using a set map for the lair, make sure that the following important locations are present and describe to the characters the confusing passages between.

The man-sized entrance to the lair passes directly by a chamber occupied by the Dragon Born servants of the Wyrms. The servants live in a single chamber, and the Dragon Born like to place traps near their home; they are particularly fond of placing lit braziers throughout and using their Flame Charm spell to direct the flames outward and burn any unwary intruders. The fires are small but burn hot, and cause 1d6 damage if directed at the characters.

A series of twisting caverns lead to the central chamber of the lair, an enormous, roughly circular room filled with the treasure hoard of the Vengeful Wyrms. The caverns wind back on themselves numerous times and lead ever downward. Several of the twisting caverns lead to small ledges overlooking this central chamber, while others lead to the ground floor. This is where the dragon sleeps. If there is an aerial entrance to the lair, it is in the ceiling of this chamber.

A hidden door within this chamber leads to a smaller room which houses the dragon's more delicate treasures, such as its spellbooks, scrolls, and tapestries. The Wyrms must change into human form in order to access this room, and likes to do so frequently so that it might bask in its hoard.

The amount of treasure contained in the Vengeful Wyrms' lair is beyond calculation. The gamemaster can place any number of magical items here. The coins, gems, and other valuables will make the characters rich beyond comparison. They will require concerted effort

to transport home, and are likely to wreck the economy of any place other than perhaps the largest of cities or kingdoms. For certain, there is more than enough treasure here to make all of the characters kings of their own realms.

IMMINENCE AND SCHEMES

The Vengeful Wyrms is a destructive beast with few goals beyond feeding, gathering its family members, and acquiring treasure. At the beginning of the campaign the characters may be able to avoid the Wyrms and go about their adventures. As the campaign progresses, the dragon will become more and more active, until it is impossible for the characters to ignore the beast's predations.

The Vengeful Wyrms begins the campaign with an Imminence Rating of 1. Mark a date on the calendar every six months thereafter. Alternatively, use the solstices or equinoxes if you find it more convenient to do so. On each of these dates, the Wyrms' Imminence rating increases by 1 as it increases its activity in the world and ceases its long periods of sleep. It uses the following activation table, regardless of its Imminence rating:

| 1d6 | Threat Effects |
|-----|--|
| 1 | A random village or settlement other than the characters' home village is burned by the Vengeful Wyrms. |
| 2 | A farm at the characters' home village loses its crops and livestock to the beast, or a large swath of the village's hunting grounds are turned to ash. Meat will be even scarcer this winter. |
| 3 | The Vengeful Wyrms is out and about. If the characters have an encounter this week it will be with the Wyrms itself. They should probably hide when this happens. |
| 4 | The Wyrms sends agents looking for his descendants. If one of the characters is a descendent of the Wyrms, then any encounter rolls this week will be with 1d6 Dragon Born. |
| 5 | The Wyrms sends agents to a city or village looking for delicate artifacts to add to his hoard, such as books or scrolls. |
| 6 | The Wyrms comes to a human settlement in human form to challenge people in games and contests. If the characters are at home, they will probably be the ones challenged. |

PLAYER ACTIONS

Unimpressed with intrigue or indirect pressures, the Wyrms are likely to continue in their rampages until destroyed or somehow compelled to sleep for another generation. However, the beast does have a strong sense of self-preservation, and will likely go into hiding and nurse its wounds if attacked. Therefore, if the PCs (or another group of heroes) manage to significantly harm the dragon, causing 20 or more points of damage in an encounter, its Imminence rating will decrease by 1. If reduced to zero Imminence in this manner, the Vengeful Wyrms will return to Imminence 1 as usual after six months of sleep.

If the characters are desperate to stop the Vengeful Wyrms' rampages but do not wish to resort to violence (a wise group of heroes indeed!), then the gamemaster is encouraged to come up with another way that the Wyrms might be forced into far away lands or back into their slumber. Perhaps there is a powerful ritual which will cause the beast to sleep for fifty generations of men, or perhaps a mate could be found for the Wyrms in a distant land uninhabited by men. Alternatively, if the characters do wish to rid the world of the dragon forever but fear facing it themselves, they may be able to mobilize a great army and find some way to help the soldiers approach the Wyrms' lair unnoticed.

Whatever approach the players choose, the Wyrms are a very formidable foe, and it should prove no easier to deal with the monster by using these other methods than it is to face it in combat. Solving this problem will be very, very difficult.

NPCs AND MONSTERS

THE VENGEFUL WYRM

The Wyrms are themselves a massive beast, a creature of legend. The dragon is a difficult challenge even for experienced heroes, and the group will have to leverage every advantage available to them in order to defeat it. The stats below are for a useful example dragon, but the GM should tailor the dragon to its part in the campaign. You could just change out its breath weapon for the water dweller trait to make a decent ocean dragon, or you can design a weaker or different dragon using the Making Dragons rules on p.103 of the 'Bestiary' booklet of *Beyond the Wall and Other Adventures*.

Hit Dice: 18d10 (101 HP)

AC: 30

Attack: +18 to hit, 1d10/6d6 damage (claw/bite)

Alignment: Neutral

XP: 18,000

Notes: *Breath Weapon* (once every five rounds the Wyrms may breathe fire, causing d12+36 points of damage to all in near range; targets who pass a saving throw take only half damage), *Dragon Fear* (all foes must make a saving throw versus polymorph or be gripped by a powerful physical fear, receiving a -3 penalty to all rolls unless they flee the dragon's presence), *Flight* (the Wyrms may fly on its huge wings), *Magician* (the Wyrms may cast cantrips, spells, and rituals as a mage of 4th level and is assumed to have an Intelligence and Wisdom of 16 if needed to make a test), *Smell Kin* (when in Near range, the Vengeful Wyrms can smell its descendants and immediately identify them), *Swift* (the Wyrms gain a number of attacks equal to the number of opponents in close range of it, up to a maximum of two claw attacks and one bite), *Transformation* (the Wyrms can adopt human form at will, though it always appears somewhat draconic and fiery), *True Name* (the Wyrms has a true name which gives his foes power over him)

THE DRAGON BORN

These mortal descendants of the Vengeful Wyrms guard their lair, gather treasures for their master, and leave it offerings. Their draconic master has taught them some spells so that they may better protect their lair and communicate with one another. The Dragon Born have set traps throughout the lair so that they can take advantage of their Flam Charm spell, and they use Whispering Wind to let each other and their master know of impending dangers. They typically travel in packs of three or four when out and about, but the Wyrms may have gathered as many as twenty to their lair.

Hit Dice: 2d8 (9 HP)

AC: 12

Attack: +2 to hit, 1d8 (sword)

Alignment: Chaotic

XP: 100

Notes: *Smell Kin* (when in Near range, a Dragon Born can smell its relations and immediately identify them), *Spellcasting* (a Dragon Born may cast two spells per day as a level 2 mage and knows the Flam Charm and Whispering Wind spells)

THE VENGEFUL WYRM

IMMINENCE

THREAT EFFECTS:

- 1 A random village or settlement other than the characters' home is burned by the Wyrms.
- 2 A farm at the characters' home village loses its crops and livestock to the beast, or a large swath of the village's hunting grounds are turned to ash. Meat will be even scarcer this winter.
- 3 The Vengeful Wyrms is out and about. If the characters have an encounter this week it will be with the Wyrms. They should probably hide.
- 4 The Wyrms sends agents looking for his descendants. If one of the characters is a descendent of the Wyrms, then any encounter rolls this week will be with 1d6 Dragon Born.
- 5 The Wyrms sends agents to a city or village looking for delicate artifacts to add to his hoard, such as books or scrolls.
- 6 The Wyrms comes to a human settlement in human form to challenge people in games and contests. If the characters are at home, they will probably be the ones challenged.

PERSONALITY

NAME:

APPEARANCE:

PECULIAR TASTES:

SCALEBREAKER

- THE BLADE • +3 longsword
- THE HILT • +5 save vs breath weapon
- ASSEMBLED • +3 to hit and damage
 - 2 damage to dragons and dragonkind
 - +2 AC
 - +5 save vs breath weapons
 - the true name of the Vengeful Wyrms
 - Wyrms knows sword's location if nearby

THE DRAGON'S LAIR

LOCATIONS

THE WYRM SLEEPS BENEATH _____
ITS LAIR CONTAINS

The Chamber of the Dragon Born

Traps: Braziers + Flame Charm: 1d6 damage

Many Twisting Caverns

Chase scenes (DEX)
Risk of getting lost (WIS)

The Massive Central Chamber

The Dragon's Rest: Face the Wyrms
Overlooks: Spying and Sneaking
The Hoard

Concealed Treasure Room

THE DRAGONBORN

Number Appearing: 3-4

Hit Dice: 2d8 (9 HP)

AC: 12

Attack: +2 to hit, 1d8 (sword)

Alignment: Lawful

XP: 100

Smell Kin: identify relations by smell in Near range.

Spellcasting: 2 a day of Flame Charm and Whispering Wind

THE DRAGON

Hit Dice: 18d10 (101 HP)

AC: 30

Attack: +18 to hit, 1d10 (claw), 6d6 (bite)

Alignment: Neutral

XP: 18,000

Breath Weapon: use once every five rounds: damage d12+36, engulfs those in near range, victims may save for half damage

Dragon Fear: foes save versus polymorph or fear, -3 to all rolls or flee

Flight: the Wyrms may fly on its huge wings

Magician: as a mage of 4th level, with Intelligence and Wisdom of 16

Smell Kin: when in Near range, the Wyrms can smell its descendants

Swift: up to two claw attacks and one bite per round, 1 per opponent in near range

Transformation: adopt human form at will, but always appears somewhat dragonic and fiery

True Name: this dragon has a true name which gives its foes power over it