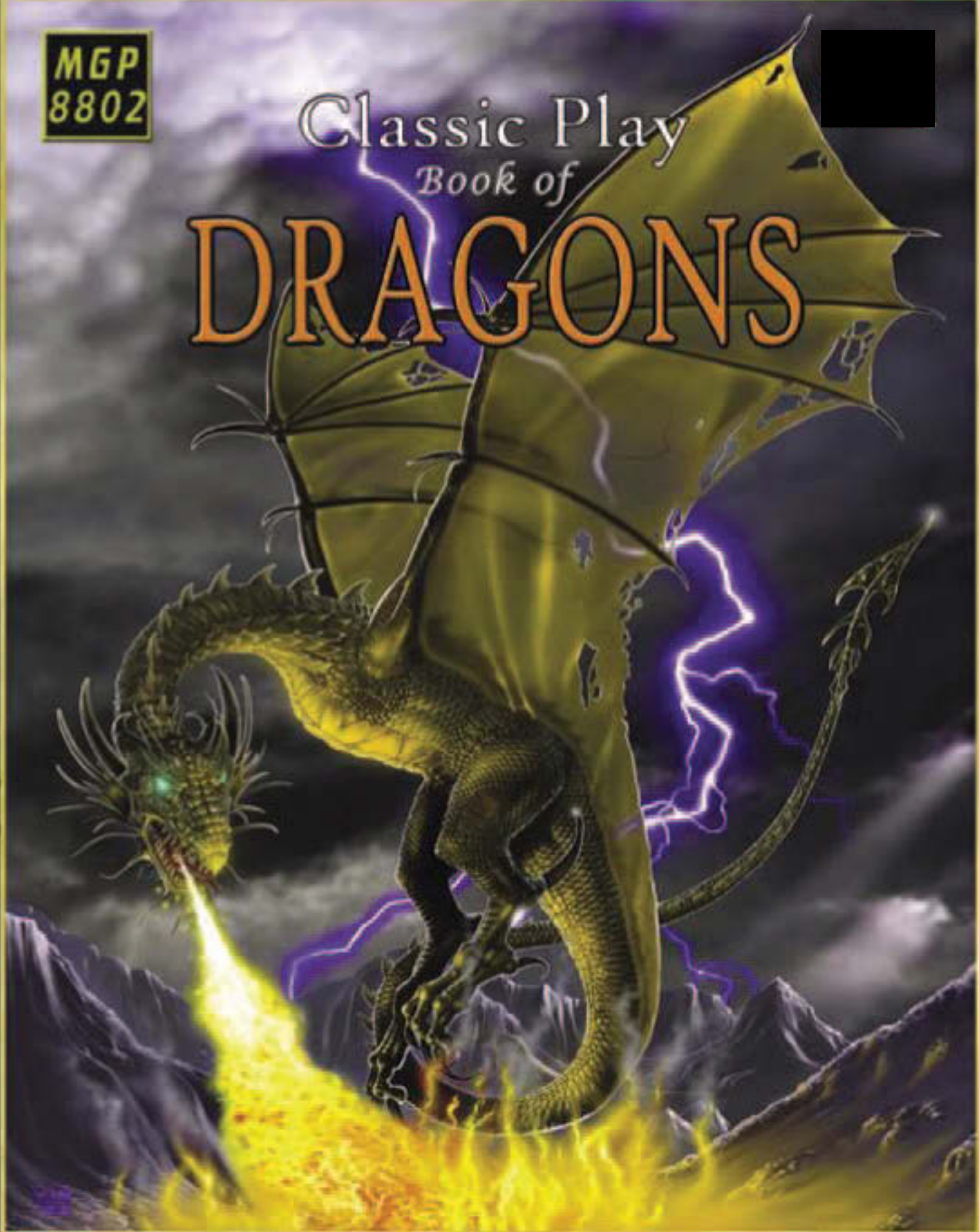


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Classic Play
Book of

DRAGONS



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Humanity's myths are dreams of dragons. No other creature is quite so present, so dominant, in our stories. Almost every culture has its own tales of the serpents. Our fantasy reflects this, and dragons have been one of the defining elements of the fantasy genre for decades, and their pedigree in adventure gaming is obvious. There is good reason for this pre-eminence – no other creature has the power or the terrifying majesty of the dragons, no other creature has the curious alchemy of horror and glory that makes dragons so wonderful. On leathern wings, they soar across the skies of our imagined worlds. Their fire threatens the world, but also illuminates it.

The Desolation of the Dragon describes the region around a lair, and explores the effects dragons have on their environment. *Watchers on the Mountain* provides a system for tracking the progress of an adventuring party and the responses of the dragon and its servants. *Servants of the Dragon* has details on the various kinds of warriors and pawns used by dragons to defend their lairs and affect the mortal world.

Dragon Lairs has all the detail needed to design a dragon's lair, from a dank cave filled with rotting remains of previous adventurers to an ancient ruined city despoiled by the beast. When a party finally encounters the dragon, *Flattery and Riddles* lets them have a few last moments before the dragon employs its *Tactics and Warfare* to wipe them out.

If by some miracle the party survive, they can delve into the fabled *Hoards* of the dragons, or even into the carcass of their foe with reference to *Anatomy of the Dragon*.

Age Advancement presents a variant method for creating dragons especially skilled in warfare, or magic, or some other field of expertise. A selection of new *Feats* (with especially emphasis on the feared breath weapon) follows. The rules in those two chapters are then used as the basis of a system of *Dragon Design*.

The nightmarish fruits of that system are presented in *New Dragons*, ranging from the parasitical Sin Dragons to the noble Heraldic Dragon and chaotic Planar Dragons.

Dragon Magic has new spells and items for dragons (and their enemies). *Lifecycle and the Heritage of Dragons* delves into the physiology and history of the draconic species. *Hatching and Raising Dragons* examines the egg. *Campaigning* contains advice on using dragons in a game, as symbols, enemies, allies, mounts or even characters. Finally, a *Mortal Miscellany* deals with the response of the lesser races to the dragons.

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Classic Play Book of Dragons

Gareth Hanrahan

Contents

Introduction	2
The Desolation of the Dragon	4
Watchers on the Mountain	12
Servants of the Dragon	23
Dragon Lairs	52
Flattery and Riddles	68
Tactics and Warfare	75
Dragon Anatomy	93
Hoards	118
Age Advancement	124
Dragon Feats	141
Dragon Design	149
New Dragons	158
Dragon Magic	188
Lifecycle	204
On the Heritage of Dragons	209
Hatching and Raising Dragons	217
Campaigning	226
A Mortal Miscellany	244
Index	251
Designer's Notes	255

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INTRODUCTION

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The simplest adventure game is going into the dungeon, killing the monsters, and bringing back the treasure. Turn that monster into a dragon, and you've got a myth that has resonated through the centuries.

The *Book of Dragons* is designed to be the definitive guide to using dragons in a game. It complements but does not require the *Slayer's Guide to Dragons* and *Encyclopedia Arcane: Dragon Magic*.

OVERVIEW

The first half of this book traces the path of an adventuring party as they approach a dragon. *The Desolation of the Dragon* describes the region around a lair, and explores the effects dragons have on their environment. *Watchers on the Mountain* provides a system for tracking the progress of the party and the responses of the dragon and its servants. *Servants of the Dragon* has details on the various kinds of warriors and pawns used by dragons to defend their lairs and affect the mortal world.

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If by some miracle the party survive, they can delve into the fabled *Hoards* of the dragons, or even into the carcass of their foe with reference to *Anatomy of the Dragon*.

After this, we move on to customising dragons. *Age Advancement* presents a variant method for creating dragons especially skilled in warfare, or magic, or some other field of expertise. A selection of new *Feats* (with especially emphasis on the feared breath weapon) follows. The rules in those two chapters are then used as the basis of a system of *Dragon Design*.

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THE CLASSIC PLAY SERIES

Classic Play is a new series of books from Mongoose Publishing, each examining an element of fantasy gaming in glorious detail. Each book contains new rules, new ideas and insightful essays to bring a particular aspect of the game to life in your campaign.

I see you there, thief.

Yes, even in the shadows. Don't be so coy. Come forth. Come forth or burn to death.

Ah. The diplomacy of dragonfire never fails.

You thought you would catch me sleeping. Ah, innocence. I heard your footsteps through the stone, thief, and I can taste your sweat on the air. Even in this dim light, I mark your trembling lip and shaking hands. Your fear pollutes you. Be not afraid! I mean you no harm.

That's a lie, of course. Dragons lie on beds of gold, which is what drew you here, thief. Do you like my hoard? I see that you do. Your eyes, quivering behind their curtain of tears, flicker between two magnificent sights - me and my hoard. Even now, with your death close at hand, you cannot help but desire my gold. That is an avarice I can respect.

No, that does not mean you can keep the cup you stole. Put it down - wipe your grease off it, first.

Now...what shall we do with you, thief? Killing you is little sport. My teeth can tear through plate armour forged by dwarves and warded by elven-spells and my claws can shatter granite, while you are wearing what smells to be dried cow-skin. I don't suppose you're some sort of superhumanly agile acrobat who can evade my strikes like the wind.

snickt

No, obviously not. Oh, stop whimpering. The wound isn't that deep. I barely scratched you. It will heal and scar.

Now, you will run. You will run back the way you came, through the tunnels and winding worm-guts of my mountain. My defences will not slow you, my guardians will not bar your path. You will run to whatever fecid city or canker of a village you call home. Run home, dripping blood all the way.

It will be long years before I come for you, thief. That wound that wells up hot ruby blood now, it will be a old grey scar and a dull ache before I come for you. The dragonfear will never leave you; it will soak into the marrow of your bones and the sinews of your heart. You will listen in the night for the sound of leathern wings. Every shadow that passes overhead shall be a presage of doom. Every crackling fire shall carry the promise of my breath.

And I shall surely bring that fire. When you are old and grey, thief, when the short years of your life are running out and you are thin as a dried stick, then shall I take flight. I have marked you, scarred you; I have tasted your blood and know your scent. I shall find you, and I shall burn you and all your kin and all you hold dear. I shall scatter the ashes of your bodies and sift them for gold, I shall raze your home and set all the lands aflame in the glory of my wrath.

You are a thief, thief, and you will pay for daring to steal from my hoard. You will burn.

What more did you expect? You descended into the dungeon, and you found the dragon.

THE DESOLATION OF THE DRAGON

On rare occasions, a traveller may find a ghastly signpost on a country road – the burnt and crushed corpse, often that of an armoured knight. If any of the cadaver’s face survives, the expression is invariably one of terror. The corpse stands propped against a tree or stone, one hand outstretched. In that hand is a single gold coin, scarred by the marks of huge claws. This solitary coin is the wyrm-gild, the fraction of a dragon’s hoard that the wyrm gives away freely. The traveller may take the coin without consequences.

The broken corpse shows the consequences of trying to take more than that single coin. In leaving the wyrm-gild, the dragon marks the borders of his territory and declares that it has given the rest of the world its due. Anything beyond that coin must be bought with blood.

DOMAINS

Dragons are solitary creatures by nature. While there are nests or cities where several wyrms dwell, these places are very much the exception. Most dragons establish their lair in some cavern or dwarf-hold, then claim the surrounding territory as their domain. These domains bear little resemblance to the geographic or political borders of the region. Other dragons within the domain must either be driven out or forced to yield - chromatic and younger metallic dragons engage in physical combat, while the elder metallics resolve conflicts of domain using riddle-contests or negotiation. If a dragon yields to another, it becomes a vassal wyrm (see **On The Heritage of Dragons**).

Only other dragons and – rarely – other powerful beings are taken into account when a dragon claims its domain. The great egotism of the dragons prevent them from considering humans and other races as anything more than a quick snack or pets.

It is a great blessing that most dragons spend much of their time asleep or fasting. If a dragon indulges its appetite fully, it can depopulate its whole domain in a season or two. This is not because the dragon literally eats everything and everyone in the area, as even the most voracious monsters have limits to the amount of food they can catch, but a roused dragon might set forests alight, burn the life from a river, or smash a town into cinders purely because it can. Dragons do not merely hunt for food, they hunt to possess and selfishly destroy. Everything in a dragon’s domain exists at the dragon’s whim, and when the dragon’s ire is raised, the dragonfire will claim it.

Domain Size

The size of a domain is determined by the strength and size of its ruler. Obviously, especially strong dragons, or those with access to powerful magical items can safely claim a larger domain. The basic radius of a domain (centred on the dragon’s lair) is the dragon’s age category squared in miles, modified as follows:

Dragon Domain Size	
Dragon Status	Domain Size Modifier
Spellcasting	+1 mile per level of spellcaster
Vassal Dragons	+1/2 size of vassal’s domain
Mated Pair of Dragons	Increase domain size by 50%
Strength above 25	+1 mile per point above 25
Intelligence above 25	+1 mile per point above 25
Charisma above 25	+1 mile per point above 25

For example, the average Adult Red Dragon has a domain 51 miles in radius (36 miles due to age, +7 for being a 7th level sorcerer, +8 miles for a Strength of 33). The dragon can reach anywhere in its domain within two hours if it hustles, but it takes around two days at best for grounded travellers to reach the dragon’s lair – and at any point during that frightful march, the dragon could swoop down and incinerate them if their presence is discovered.

Benefits of Domain

The size of a dragon's domain determines how far its control extends. All dragons are paranoid to some extent, and with good reason. As a dragon ages, it must sleep more and more, so it requires a strong defensive perimeter to protect its slumbering form. Assassinations, sudden strikes and assault by dragon slayers kill far more dragons than disease or hunger. Dragons have an innate magical tie to the land around the lair, their essence bleeds into the earth and senses the approach of enemies. By claiming a domain and infusing it with the dragon's essence, as well as establishing a defensive network of watchers and servitors, the dragon is well prepared for attack.

This magical tie to the land does not extend to the sky above, so dragons are most vulnerable to other flyers and other dragons. Furthermore, grievous injury to the land can disrupt this tie. By wreaking havoc and destruction as it goes, an advancing dragon can 'blind' the defending wyrm and allow ground forces to approach undetected by the magical link. This tactic works best on dragons who lack servants and guards, such as most white dragons. A dragon's own injuries to the land will also blind it, so one of the best times to attack a dragon is just after it has gone on an orgy of fire and destruction. However, doing so means attacking at a time when the dragon is definitely awake and active.

The other major benefit of maintaining a domain is food. When a dragon hungers, it must eat voraciously for days. Having a domain well stocked with cattle, deer or humans means that the dragon is assured of having plenty to eat whenever it awakens. (For more details, see **Dragon Lifecycle**, page 204).

Younger dragons that are too weak to establish their own domains often willingly submit to an elder wyrm, becoming vassals protected by their master's domain. Should invaders enter the domain of the elder dragon, it can warn the younger wyrms of the approach of danger (although in some cases, an elder wyrm that has drawn the wrath of some powerful enemy may sacrifice one or more vassals

to save itself). Other young dragons establish lairs in the most isolated and desolate regions, preferring security over a ready meal.

A dragon does not have to establish a formal domain. Some prefer to hide in human society, shapeshifted into mortal guise and staying awake for years at a time. These dragons are often pariahs in draconic society, where status is founded partly on domain.

As a dragon ages, it must sleep more and more, so it requires a strong defensive perimeter to protect its slumbering form. Dragon defences are dealt with in the following chapters.

MAGIC EXHALATIONS

Dragons are magical creatures. This is not to say that they are created or even sustained by sorcerous powers, but that their mere presence heightens the ambient magic in the world. Every scale, every drop of blood in a dragon is charged with magical energy. While the dragon sleeps atop its hoard, its breath flows out into the surrounding land and seeps through the piled coins into the cracks in the ground. This infuses magic into the territory near the lair, transforming it into a reflection of the dragon's nature. This magic can even alter the weather and nature of the region – a black dragon causes swamps to erupt and fester around its lair.

This begs the question – do, say, blue dragons make their lairs in deserts because it suits their nature, or does the presence of the blue dragon turn any land into a desert? Generally, the former is the case, but over time, even the most lush or icy region will be altered by the presence of a blue dragon. The process may take centuries or longer, but as a dragon's lair is often used by a whole dynasty of successive dragons, the constant magical pressure can accomplish almost any changes given time.

The Desolation of the Dragon

When land is claimed as a domain by a dragon, it quickly becomes tainted and ruined. The fire and hunger of the beast consume the health of the land, while the dragon's magical presence warps and

The Tie to the Land

If using the Alert Level system on page 12, inflicting serious damage on the land immediately adds between 10 and 40 to the Alert Level, but also removes the following condition:

More than 8 characters in the party

+1 per character above 8

infects the soil. Life in the shadow of a dragon's lair, even that of a good dragon, is never safe.

This region is referred to as the Desolation of the Dragon by its few inhabitants. This term can often be something of a misnomer, as some domains are anything but desolate. Green dragons, for example, create regions of unnatural fertility and twisted life that bloom vividly even in the depths of winter, while the domains of blues crackle with energy and light. There is always, however, an oppression in the air of such places, drawn from the constant threat of attack from the skies and the constant feeling of terrible draconic power lurking in the heart of the region.

The domains of good dragons may also be referred to as Desolations if the wyrm pays little heed to the lesser inhabitants of the domain. If the dragon attempts to foster good relationships with its neighbours, the domain is called the Sanction of the Dragon.

Domains are divided into four sections; Borderlands, Outer Desolation, Inner Desolation and Heartland.

Borderlands

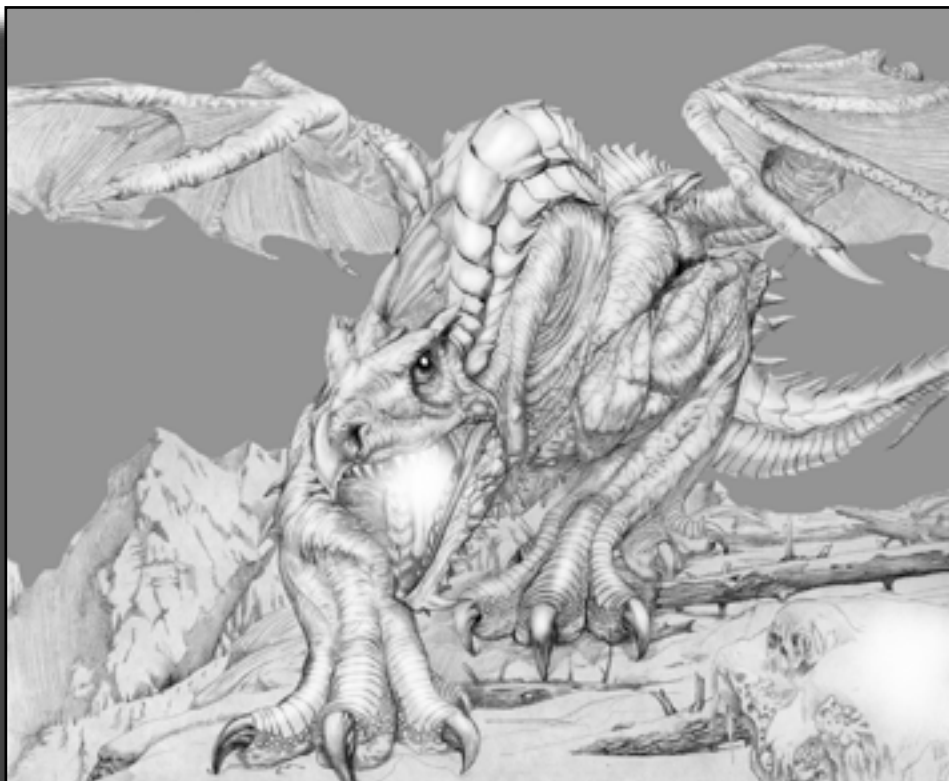
The borderlands are comprised of the outer half (or outer third, in the case of especially young or active

dragons) of the domain. From the point of view of most people, the borderlands are indistinguishable from the land outside the domain. Dragons rarely range this far out into their domain on hunting trips, and fly too high to be seen clearly from the ground. The borderlands are also unaffected by the dragon's magical emanations, so there is no supernatural sign of the dragon's claim on the region. The borderlands seem entirely free of draconic influence, except to those who know what to look for.

Most borderlands have some markers, like the wyrmgild, to show that the land beyond is claimed. The landscape may bear the scars of ancient battles, fought when the dragon first claimed its domain. Towns and villages in the borderlands are often infiltrated by agents of the dragon, but by and large life in the borderlands is peaceful and untroubled by wyrms for decades or even centuries. Communities in the borderlands may have defences and troops designed to fend off the dragon's attacks, but these are often neglected and left to rot in the long gaps between sightings of the dragon.

Outer Desolation

While inhabitants of the borderlands may laugh at the idea that a dragon claims their homes as its property, the folk living in the outer desolation are well aware of their draconic overlord. They may only see the shadow of the dragon once every few years, but it looms large in the stories and rumours they tell each other. The outer desolation is often surprisingly healthy and well-stocked despite having a dragon nearby, but that is because the outer desolation is the dragon's larder. It may feed on the inhabitants of the inner desolation every few months, but the outer desolation has years of peace and growth broken by sudden bouts of gorging and utter devastation. Most communities here



have well-trained troops and defences for use against the dragon, but these are aimed at convincing the dragon to devour somewhere else instead of actually attempting to kill the beast.

The outer desolation has much clearer signs of draconic presence. High peaks and overhanging rocks have claw-marks on them, showing that a dragon once perched there. Burns or acid scars in the ground are much less overgrown, and animal carcasses dropped from a great height can be found. The dragon's magical influence is much stronger here, contributing to the fear that oppresses everyone in the outer desolation.

The outer desolation covers the ground between the inner desolation and the borderlands.

Inner Desolation

The inner desolation covers a number of miles equal to the dragon's age category, stretching between the Heartland and the outer desolation. When the dragon is active, the inner desolation is the first place to suffer. The land is scorched and scarred almost to the point of death. Only a few creatures manage to scratch a poor existence from the ruined soil. There is no shelter here, no places to hide from the keen senses of the wyrm. The only people living here are those in service to the dragon, or those who tend – or are – the flocks of food animals. The folk of the inner desolation live with the constant threat of destruction. Some stay because it is their home, and they cling to it as fiercely as the dragon claims it. Some stay because they know that trying to leave will only draw the dragon's wrath sooner. Other stay because they are in league with the dragon, or have learned how to placate the beast with suitable sacrifices.

Heartland

The heartland is the region immediately around the dragon's lair, usually stretching a number of miles equal to half the dragon's age category. It is colloquially referred to as the dragon's doorstep, or the killing field. The heartland is filled with traps and watchtowers, and anything that might give shelter or protection to invaders is methodically burnt away. There are safe paths through the heartland, but they are known only to the dragon's trusted servants. Anyone daring to enter the heartland is seen as an enemy, and dealt with accordingly.

DESOLATIONS BY TYPE

Black Dragons

Borderlands: Blacks dislike leaving clear markers on their borders. Where they can, they use borders that are fluid, such as rivers that flood and recede as the seasons change. While black dragons dwell in swamps, they tend to claim territory outside the swamps too, to give them a varied diet.

Outer Desolation: The outer desolation is a dense swamp choked with creepers and fungi. The few settlements here are on stilts or built in one of the rare clearings. There are surprisingly deep rivers flowing through the swamp, their beds clawed deeper by the passage of the dragon, but most waterways are filled with slimes, sandbars and drifting logs. Adult black dragons often maintain 'dead zones' of stagnant water created using their *corrupt water* ability. Locals and wildlife know to avoid such places, as nothing can grow or live in those waterways. Anyone entering a dead zone must therefore be a stranger, and may be noticed by watchers.

Inner Desolation: The inner desolation of the black dragon is a section of the swamp where the trees and undergrowth twine together to form an almost impassable barrier. Travel time through the swamp is doubled due to the dense vegetation. Travelling above the trees, or in the deepwater channels that feed into a network of lakes and ponds is a far faster option, but both avenues of approach are watched by the dragon or its agents.

Heartlands: Black dragons and their servants create a great deal of waste and carrion, so the passage into the heartlands is marked by a great increase in the number of insects, parasites and foul creatures. The waters, especially the rain that falls in the heartlands sears the eyes and skin of those it touches – characters submerged in the water or caught in a downpour must make a Fortitude save (DC10) every ten minutes or suffer 1d3 points of subdual damage.

Blue Dragons

Borderlands: Blues tend to pay greater attention to the marking and state of their borderlands than any other type of dragon. Borders are marked with pyramids of skulls or other shrines, while borderland

communities are watched as carefully as those in the outer desolation.

Outer Desolation: The deserts of the outer desolation are where the blue dragons do the most hunting. The thermals rising from the hot sands allow the dragons to range further afield without tiring. The duration of *scrying* spells is increased by 50% here, due to the lack of sources of interference.

Inner Desolation: Featureless wastes marked only by the occasional patch of sand seared into glass by a bolt of lightning are the inner desolation of the blue. The heat here is intense and there is no shade, allowing enemies to be spotted from a great distance away. The dragon's presence charges the air with electricity, so little sparks of static electricity crawl over any metallic objects and inflict shocking bolts of pain. There is a 5% chance per day that a *lightning bolt* that a character wearing metal armour is struck by a small lightning bolt from the clear sky. This bolt inflicts 3d6 points of damage, and the character may make a Reflex save (DC15) to halve the damage.

Heartlands: Blues usually make their lairs atop mesas or other heights, so their heartlands tend to be slopes of loose scree, or else rolling dunes. The heartland is somewhat less open than the inner desolation, but still almost completely free of any sort of cover except for the broken stones at the base of the lair. Many blues keep herds of food animals near their lair, as hunting in the desert can be fruitless. The dragons often keep at least one crevasse or gap in the rocks filled with sand, for use as a hiding place.

Green Dragons

Borderlands: Green dragons have great influence over plants, and often shape trees to mark their borders. They keep their borderlands as inviting and pleasant-looking as possible. Many greens have a special loathing for the fey, and so shape their domains to look initially like a welcoming faeryland.

Outer Desolation: This region is usually a thick forest, filled with life. Green dragons are more likely to have allies, servitors or *dominated* agents than other dragons, so the forests teem with both prey and pawns. The deceitful dragons often have *dominated* agents make contact with approaching

enemies and lead them into traps – or into the dragon's maw.

Inner Desolation: The inner desolation of the green dragon is choked with thick undergrowth. Like the swamps and waterlogged jungles of the black dragon, this barrier of magically enriched vegetation halves travel times. The thick forest canopy and closely packed trees seem to offer shelter and concealment from a patrolling wyrm, but green dragons can slither through the densest forest by using streams and waterways or just smashing their way through obstinate obstacles. The biggest green dragons are the stealthiest, as green great wyrms can use *command plants* to make the trees bend silently apart and create a path for the monster.

Heartlands: The heartlands of a green dragon are a garden of horrors. Here, the monster sets up traps and torture devices, keeps its prisoners and living larder, and indulges its malicious and aggressive streaks. The ambient magical energies of the dragon attract large numbers of dangerous or carnivorous plants.

Red Dragons

Borderlands: Red dragons mark the boundary of their domain with fire and ash. The vain beasts believe that everyone remembers the fury of their passage, even after centuries. Often, the only clue that one is entering a red's domain is a thin stratum of black ash in the soil.

Outer Desolation: The red dragon's desolation is, in fact, extremely fertile. Crops bloom, animals grow fat, towns are prosperous and successful. The dragon's presence blesses the land, its magical fires renewing and strengthening the dragon's domain. Every few generations, though, the dragon harvests the outer desolation, laying waste to the towns and cities and stealing their treasure.

Inner Desolation: The inner desolation is a wasteland. The red dragon's spiritual weight shatters the landscape and draws up hot gases and lava from deep underground. A stinking miasma of volcanic gases and ash hangs over the desolation. Nothing green can live for long here without being scorched by flames or wilting due to lack of light. The oppressive presence of the dragon saps the will – characters in the inner desolation must make a Will save each day, at a DC equal to the number of days spent in the desolation. If they fail the save, they

suffer a cumulative -1 morale penalty to all other Will saves until they leave the inner desolation. Finding good shelter (i.e., better than camping in the open) or good company gives a +5 morale bonus to this save.

Heartlands: In the heartlands of a young red dragon, the earth oozes molten rock and fire from a dozen gaping wounds. Twisting dragon-shapes of lava crawl down the slopes, and smoke belches from the cracks and cave mouths. Still, the agonies the land suffers under a young dragon are essentially natural. Older red dragons strain the boundaries between planes by their mere presence, and portals to the elemental plane of fire may tear open to disgorge angry elementals and salamanders. Fire spells cast in this region are treated as if the caster is one level higher than his actual level.

White Dragons

Borderlands: Where possible, white dragons prefer to roost on islands. The borderland of the white dragon is therefore the stretch of ice-specked water around the dragon's isle. The only markers used are the floating corpses of frost giants or other trespassers.

Outer Desolation: The outer desolation of the white dragon waxes and wanes with the seasons, as it is the region of frozen ice on the shores of the island. In the summer, the outer desolation breaks up and floats away. Approaching the lair during the winter is suicidal, as the white dragon is then at the height of its power. Most successful assaults are made in the spring, when worst storms and blizzards are gone, but the ice is still relatively firm underfoot.

Inner Desolation: The inner desolation of the white dragon is a confusing maze of jagged rocks and snowdrifts. The dragons cunningly use their weather

manipulation abilities to coat landmarks in ice and snow, turning the whole island into a blank white landscape without reference points. Survival checks to avoid getting lost have their Difficult Class increased by 5.

Heartlands: White dragons put their *icewalking* ability to its fullest use, creating slides and other ice obstacles wherever they can. The frozen carcasses of uneaten prey dot the landscape, but can provide a grisly source of cover or food when hiding from a patrolling dragon. As white dragons freeze their food immediately after killing it, they often freeze and trap the escaping spirit of the prey. Wraiths and other undead are especially common in the white dragon's heartlands.

Brass Dragons

Borderlands: Brass dragons clash with blues for territory. The blue dragons carefully mark their borders with elaborate constructions, with the brass dragons take great delight in smashing or defiling. The brasses often mark their borders with trophies.

Outer Sanction: Both blues and brasses prefer hot, sandy deserts, but the larger blues usually claim the choice sands. Brasses are limited to what remains. In regions where dragons are scarce, the outer sanction of the brass dragon is a hot desert of rolling dunes. Where dragons are more common, the blues



usually control such regions, leaving the brasses to rule over scrubland or broken ground.

Inner Sanction: Brasses feed off morning dew, so their inner sanctions contain gardens and artificial oases. By digging deep into the sand and magically controlling weather and winds, the brasses can sculpt the landscape and bring carefully placed channels of green life to the desert. This is not to say that these inner sanctions are completely hospitable places – the brasses love intense heat, so anyone who strays from the gardens will quickly wander into the hottest, driest deserts imaginable. The extensive use of *control winds* spells and the brasses' connection to weather often creates permanent windstorms, siroccos and roaming sandstorms in these sanctions.

Heartlands: Brass dragon heartlands are mountainous regions, often overlooking a hidden green valley. The heartlands contain a number of high mesas, suitable for lounging in the sun and keeping an eye out for trespassers or the hazy shadow of an approaching blue dragon.

Bronze Dragons

Borderlands: Bronze dragons are very military-minded, and establish watchtowers and fortresses on their borders if they can, manned by servitors or other agents of the dragon. Commonly, their domains correspond with those of humans or other races, so the dragon subverts or otherwise engages mortal guards for its own ends.

Outer Sanction: The outer sanction of the bronze dragon is usually a very safe and well-protected area, thanks to the strength of the border guards and the watchfulness of the resident dragon. The dragon's presence draws water to the surface and causes rain, so these regions may suffer from flooding or unnaturally strong tides.

Inner Sanction: The inner sanction of the bronze is either on or near the sea or another large body of land. Sea-caves, either on an island or on-shore, are favoured sites for a lair. Bronzes place huge stones in the waters approaching their lair, just below the surface. Ships that do not know the hidden paths through the sanction will run around on these artificial reefs. Bronzes regularly patrol the waters below such reefs, looking for goods and treasure spilled from the wrecks.

Heartlands: Bronze heartlands are, quite simply, fortifications. The dragons practise defence in depth, often putting special emphasis on moats and water-based traps. Intruders may be drowned or swept away by fast-flowing rivers that the dragon diverts down channels it has carved in the rocks near its cavern.

Copper Dragons

Borderlands: Coppers have a habit of putting riddles or puzzles on their borders. Travellers entering a copper's domain often find cryptic messages carved into cliff-sides or boulders. The dragons use *stone shape* to create especially complex or elegant notices.

Outer Sanction: Copper dragons like *interesting* places, and have a habit of making places interesting by their mere presence. Their outer sanctions often contain wizard's towers, bardic academies, faery groves or other curiosities. Co-incidence and strange luck is an everyday occurrence in the domain of the copper dragon.

Inner Sanction: The inner sanction of the copper dragon is a dangerous place. The coppers prefer it that way – not only does it encourage the presence of the poisonous creatures they love to dine upon, but it also ensures that those brave enough to come near the dragon are probably interesting enough to be worth talking to. Encounters in a copper dragon's inner sanction are usually one Encounter Level higher than normal.

Heartlands: While the enmity between copper dragons and red dragons is nowhere near as bitter as that between blues and brasses, the copper dragons are always on their guard for attacks from red rivals. Their heartlands, therefore, are usually prepared for such an arena. The coppers put their *spider climb* and stone-working magics to work, creating passages and holes in the rocks too narrow for the red to squeeze through, or opening up geysers and streams to ameliorate the damage of the red's fiery breath.

Silver Dragons

Borderlands: Silver dragons do not mark the borders of their domain with any physical mark or item. Instead, at the height of midsummer, the dragon flies up above its lair and lets the summer sun reflect off its silver scales. Beams of bright light

shine from the dragon, and momentarily illuminate every inch of the domain. This leaves a mystical brand on the region that other dragons can sense. Young, enthusiastic silvers perform this ritual every year, but older dragons mark their lands only when they choose to increase their holdings.

Outer Sanction: The outer sanction of the silver dragon is truly a blessed region. The presence of the creature enhances the spirit and good nature of every living thing in its realm. The silver light awakens and illuminates the soul. Paladins and other true heroes are common in such places.

Inner Sanction: The inner sanction of the silver dragon is cloaked with mist. While silvers love to secretly wander among humans and other races in *polymorphed* disguise, they prefer to keep their privacy while in dragon form. The paths through the inner sanction lead through a confusing and ever-changing veil of thick fog that glimmers with its own eerie light. Survival checks to avoid getting lost have their Difficult Class increased by 5.

Heartlands: The exalted heartlands of the silver dragon are always in the clouds – either on mountains so tall that their peaks pierce the sky, or else physically on the clouds themselves. Flying is the only way to approach a dragon’s lair, although the silvers often build halls of audience where the worthy can attract the dragon’s attention.

Gold Dragons

Borderlands: Like their bronze cousins, gold dragons establish fortresses and watchtowers on the edge of their domain. They rarely rely on human aid, preferring dragons or magical guardians to keep their thresholds clear of intruders.

Outer Sanction: The spirits of gold dragons are more rarefied than those of their silver kin. While silvers exalt the souls of the dwellers in their domain, the presence of a gold dragon can often bring a domain closer to the outer planes (or the outer planes closer to the land). Magical effects and outsiders are common in the outer sanction of the dragon.

Inner Sanction: Of all the common dragons, golds are the best at long-term plans, creating schemes and crusades that may take generations to come to fruition. The inner sanction of the gold dragon is littered with the relics and tools of such schemes, such as the fortresses of paladin orders established by the dragon, or dungeons containing the trapped essences of defeated demons.

Heartlands: Gold dragon heartlands are bastions of good. Golden light seems to pervade the stones, and shadows are few and fleeting. The realm rewards heroism – any character who attacks an evil creature here gains a *protection from evil* effect for the duration of the combat, as cast by a 3rd level cleric.

A Draconic Primer

Although the draconic language is notoriously complex and intransigent, a smattering of draconic is a must for most adventurers. Therefore, a handful of useful draconic phrases are scattered throughout this book.

Draconic is primarily a language of names. In the common tongue, we might say ‘the wind is blowing’. The closest translation in draconic is s’kris’s, literally ‘the wind’s movement aspect’. Each noun has several commonly associated actions – the wind can be blowing, cold, warm, making flight difficult or easy and so on. The precise action being taken by the noun is indicated by subtle stresses on different syllables. Noun and verb are almost always combined in a single word. Draconic, in its High form, is a magically potent tongue. Saying ‘skris’s’ does not merely describe the blowing wind, it can create it. The act of description can cause it to occur, summoning up a breeze – or an air elemental.

The sacred true name of a dragon is always in the High Draconic tongue that is kept secret from all others. A dragon will have at least one common name in Low Draconic. This common name is derived from the true name, but magically neutered so it cannot be used to directly affect the dragon. Most dragons also acquire dozens of other names in the tongues of elves and men, as well as a host of descriptive titles and epigrams.

WATCHERS ON THE MOUNTAIN

If adventurers challenge a dragon in the open, they will most likely be blasted by dragon-breath and torn apart by the beast's mighty claws and fearsome teeth. If they face the dragon in its lair when it knows they are coming, they will be hindered by the lair's traps and defences, thwarted by the magical and military defences that the dragon has prepared, and eventually defeated once again. Attacking from ambush or using guile are the only ways to slay a dragon that carry any reasonable hope of success.

Dragons are well aware of this fact. All but the youngest or stupidest wyrm has a legion of defenders and guardians who keep watch for invaders. If the prospective dragon-slayers are not stealthy enough, they will be spotted by these watchers, the dragon will be alerted, and they will be destroyed.

This chapter presents a system for judging how stealthy the player characters are, and what defences, if any, they trigger as they approach the dragon's lair. The basic mechanic used is a score called the Alert Level, which measures how aware the dragon and its guardians are of the characters. If the party are careful and take steps to prevent the enemy from learning of their presence, they can keep the Alert Level from rising too quickly.

The five stages of Alert Level are:

Alert Stages	
Alert Level	Stage
0-20	Unwary
21-40	Watchful
41-60	Suspicious
61-80	On Guard
81+	Alerted

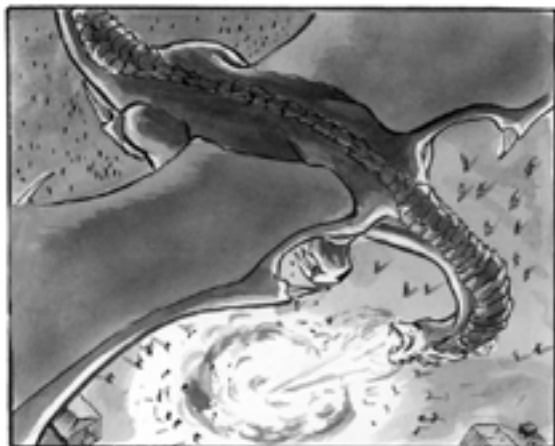
Unwary: The defenders have no idea anyone is approaching their defences. They are relaxed and rather sloppy when it comes to maintaining patrols and security. Many guards have abandoned their posts in favour of other work or distractions

Watchful: The usual state of a garrison; the defenders have no reason to suspect an attack is coming, but are still on their guard and keep sending out patrols and watching for enemies.

Suspicious: The defenders know some enemy is out there, but are not yet sure of the nature, number or intent of the attacker. Patrols are increased and preparations are made to repel an attack. However, normal activities such as crafting items or farming continue at a reduced rate.

On Guard: The defenders are sure that a specific enemy is lurking nearby, and are ready to fight. All other activities are put on hold – war is come to the garrison.

Alerted: The enemy has been located, and the garrison is actively hunting or engaging them.



Starting Alert Levels

The Games Master should begin tracking alert level when the characters enter the Desolation of the Dragon, or when they begin to make active preparations for an attack on the dragon (for example, if the characters are going after a red dragon, visiting an alchemist to buy two dozen *potions of fire resistance* might alert the dragon's spies). The initial alert level is determined by adding the dragon's Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma modifiers together, modified as follows:

Alert Level Modifiers	
The dragon...	Alert Level Change
... is very paranoid	+10
... is famously paranoid	+15
... is injured	+1 per 8 hit points or point of ability score damage
... has one or more rivals	+5 per rival
... is currently engaged in a major plot	+10
... has a hoard worth more than 25,000 gp	+5
... has a hoard worth more than 50,000 gp	+10
... has unhatched eggs, wyrmlings, or young	+3 per egg or infant dragon
... is asleep	-5
... has been asleep for more than one month	-1 per month
... has guardians	See page 23, for individual modifiers for guardian types

Beginning Alert Level cannot go above 40 (Watchful).

Example: The adult green dragon Cerefax is very paranoid (+10) and has a further +10 to its alert level from its ability scores. However, its servitors are lizardmen, who make poor guardians (-8). It has a beginning alert level of 12.

Sleeping Dragons

Dragons spend much of their lives slumbering, so there is a chance that a dragon is sleeping when the party begins their quest to slay it. As the Alert Level climbs, there are several triggers that may wake the dragon. The longer the dragon stays asleep, the better the party's chance of success.

Optionally, a result of 'sleeping' might mean that the dragon is engaged in some other activity, such as spell research, moulting, communing with the gods – basically, 'sleeping' is used as a catch-all term for 'the dragon is, thank heavens, not actively defending itself right now'.

Dragon Wakefulness	
Dragon Age	% chance of being active
Wyrmling	40%
Very Young	35%
Young	30%
Juvenile	25%
Young Adult	20%
Adult	15%
Mature Adult	10%
Old	8%
Very Old	5%
Ancient	3%
Wurm	2%
Great wurm	1%
Draco invictus	1%

Using Alert Levels

The next five pages each contain a set of *actions* and *events* for each of the five stages. *Actions* are things done by the player characters and other forces opposed to the defenders. Some actions automatically raise the alert level; others only affect the alert level if detected by the defenders. A careful party can therefore hide their presence for much longer than a noisy, obvious assault team.

Generally, a stealthy party will increase the alert level by 0 to 5 points per day; the average party by 6-10 points, and a noisy party by anything up to 15 or 20 points.

Triggers are the responses made by the defenders to the rise in alert level. If the alert level goes past a trigger value, the defenders make some change to their defences or try to locate the party.

Alert levels are semi-abstract system, designed to keep track of enemy responses without forcing the Games Master to keep track of every single guard and lookout.

UNWARY (Alert level 0-20)

Description

Guards are relaxed and not suspicious. There are few patrols or other security measures. There will be a minimum number of troops at any watchtower

Unwary

Actions	
Character Action	Alert Level change
Movement	
<i>Characters move stealthily</i>	+0
<i>Characters move openly</i>	+1
<i>Characters move blatantly</i>	+3
<i>More than 4 characters in the party</i>	+1
<i>More than 8 characters in the party</i>	+1 per character above 8
Encounters	
<i>The party engages in combat</i>	+1
<i>...and leaves obvious traces such as bodies</i>	+1
<i>The party fights guards or patrols</i>	+5
<i>... and leaves obvious traces such as bodies</i>	+5
<i>... and the guards report back to their superiors</i>	+10
Magic	
<i>The party use especially showy, loud magic, such as damaging evocations or summonings</i>	+2/level of the spell
Sightings	
<i>The party are seen by guards</i>	+2
<i>...and do not somehow allay suspicion</i>	+10

Triggers	
Alert Level	Trigger
10	Guards ordered to shape up: the -1 morale penalty to perception is removed
18	Average patrol dispatched
20	Alert status changes to Watchful

or guard post. An atmosphere of indolence or decay hangs over the defended region. Other activities take precedence over defence.

Special

Unaware guards have a –1 morale penalty to their Spot, Search and Listen checks.

Reduce alert level by 1 point every three days, to a minimum of the beginning alert level.

WATCHFUL (Alert level 21-40)

Description

Guardians are alert but not expecting trouble. The Watchful triggers are mostly to do with reinforcing defences and preparing for combat.

Special

Reduce alert level by 1 point every three days, to a minimum of the beginning alert level.

Watchful

Actions	
Character Action	Alert Level change
Movement	
<i>Characters move stealthily</i>	+0
<i>Characters move openly</i>	+1
<i>Characters move blatantly</i>	+3
<i>More than 4 characters in the party</i>	+1
<i>More than 8 characters in the party</i>	+1 per character above 8
Encounters	
<i>The party engages in combat</i>	+1
<i>...and leaves obvious traces such as bodies</i>	+3
<i>The party fights guards or patrols</i>	+5
<i>... and leaves obvious traces such as bodies</i>	+8
<i>... and the guards report back to their superiors</i>	+10
<i>The party moves from one section of the Desolation to another</i>	+3
Magic	
<i>The party use especially showy, loud magic, such as damaging evocations or summonings</i>	+2/level of the spell
Sightings	
<i>The party are seen by guards</i>	+3
<i>...and do not somehow allay suspicion</i>	+12

Triggers	
Alert Level	Trigger
20	If the dragon is asleep, drop down to Unwary
25	Average patrol dispatched
30	<i>Divinations</i> employed
30	Average support dispatched to threatened area.
35	1d4 average patrols dispatched
35	Attempt to wake dragon, +5 to check
40	Alert status changes to Suspicious

SUSPICIOUS (Alert level 41-60)

Description

The guards know that a hostile or dangerous force has entered their territory, but are not yet sure of its intent or nature. Most of the triggers during the Suspicious stage concentrate on identifying or

capturing the party. Other activities are put on hold in favour of defence.

Special

Reduce alert level by 1 point every day, to a minimum of the beginning alert level.

Actions	
Character Action	Alert Level change
Movement	
<i>Characters move stealthily</i>	+0
<i>Characters move openly</i>	+1
<i>Characters move blatantly</i>	+3
<i>More than 4 characters in the party</i>	+1
<i>More than 8 characters in the party</i>	+1 per character above 8
Encounters	
<i>The party engages in combat</i>	+2
<i>...and leaves obvious traces such as bodies</i>	+1
<i>The party fights guards or patrols</i>	+10
<i>... and leaves obvious traces such as bodies</i>	+10
<i>... and the guards fail to report back to their superiors</i>	+10
<i>The party moves from one section of the Desolation to another</i>	+5
Magic	
<i>The party use especially showy, loud magic, such as damaging evocations or summonings</i>	+2/level of the spell
<i>The party scry on the defenders, and are detected doing so</i>	+5
<i>The party leave evidence of using magic</i>	+1/level of the spell
Sightings	
<i>The party are seen by guards</i>	+5
<i>...and do not somehow allay suspicion</i>	+15

Triggers	
Alert Level	Trigger
40	If there has been no sign of the enemy in three days, drop down to Watchful
45	Attempt to wake dragon, +10 to check
45	Skilled patrol dispatched
45	Average support dispatched to threatened area
45	<i>Divinations</i> employed
50	Skilled patrol dispatched
50	Security measures changed
50	Dragonstrike
55	Attempt to wake dragon, +15 to check
55	Skilled support dispatched to threatened area
55	<i>Scrying</i> employed
55	Information gathering employed
60	Attempt to wake dragon, +20 to check
60	<i>Scrying</i> employed
60	Information gathering employed
60	Skilled patrol dispatched
60	If anything is known about the party, move to On Guard status. Otherwise, keep on repeating the other triggers of Alert Level 60 each day

ON GUARD (Alert level 61-80)**Description**

The guards know that the player characters are attacking, but have been unable to capture or destroy them.

Special

The stress of being *on guard* causes average guards to suffer a -1 morale penalty to Wisdom for every three days of on guard. Reduce alert level by 1 point every day.

Actions	
Character Action	Alert Level change
Movement	
<i>Characters move stealthily</i>	+0
<i>Characters move openly</i>	+3
<i>Characters move blatantly</i>	+3
<i>More than 4 characters in the party</i>	+1
<i>More than 8 characters in the party</i>	+1 per character above 8
Encounters	
<i>The party engages in combat</i>	+2
<i>...and leaves obvious traces such as bodies</i>	+1
<i>The party fights guards or patrols</i>	+5
<i>... and leaves obvious traces such as bodies</i>	+0
<i>... and the guards fail to report back to their superiors</i>	+5
<i>The party moves from one section of the Desolation to another</i>	+10
Magic	
<i>The party use especially showy, loud magic, such as damaging evocations or summonings</i>	+3/level of the spell
<i>The party leave evidence of using magic</i>	+1/level of the spell
Sightings	
<i>The party are seen by guards</i>	+5
<i>...and do not somehow allay suspicion</i>	+5

Triggers	
Alert Level	Trigger
60	If there is clear evidence the party have been destroyed, or no sign of the party after four weeks, drop down to Suspicious
65	Tailored defences
65	1d4 skilled patrols dispatched
65	Skilled support dispatched to threatened area
65	Attempt to wake dragon, +30 to check
65	Dragonstrike
70	Security measures changed
70	<i>Scrying</i> employed
70	Information gathering employed
75	Attempt to wake dragon, +45 to check
80	Attempt to wake dragon, +50 to check
80	Dragonstrike
80	Elite patrol dispatched
80	Move to Alerted

ALERTED (Alert level 61-80)

Description

The guards know that the player characters are attacking, but have been unable to capture or destroy them.

Special

Reduce alert level by 1 point every three days, to a minimum of the beginning alert level.

Actions	
Character Action	Alert Level change
Movement	
<i>Characters move stealthily</i>	+0
<i>Characters move openly</i>	+5
<i>Characters move blatantly</i>	+5
<i>More than 4 characters in the party</i>	+1
<i>More than 8 characters in the party</i>	+1 per character above 8
Encounters	
<i>The party engages in combat</i>	+4
<i>...and leaves obvious traces such as bodies</i>	+0
<i>The party fights guards or patrols</i>	+5
<i>... and leaves obvious traces such as bodies</i>	+0
<i>... and the guards fail to report back to their superiors</i>	+0
<i>The party moves from one section of the Desolation to another</i>	+5
Magic	
<i>The party use especially showy, loud magic, such as damaging evocations or summonings</i>	+3/level of the spell
<i>The party leave evidence of using magic</i>	+1/level of the spell
Sightings	
<i>The party are seen by guards</i>	+5
<i>...and do not somehow allay suspicion</i>	+5

Alert Level	Trigger
80	If the party are in retreat, drop down to On Guard
80	Be on your guard! Remove the morale penalty from being <i>on guard</i>
85	Attempt to wake dragon, +60 to check
85	Dragonstrike
85	<i>Scrying</i> employed
85	Elite support sent to threatened area
90	Attempt to wake dragon, +90 to check
90	Dragonstrike
90	Elite support sent to threatened area
95	Attempt to wake dragon, +90 to check
95	Dragonstrike
100	Dragonstrike

EVENTS

Movement

Characters move stealthily: The characters stay off the roads, disguise themselves, travel by night, keep to the forests, wind walk while dressed in white, travel in the shape of animals, or teleport.

Characters move openly: The characters move normally, without deliberately drawing attention to themselves.

Characters move blatantly: The characters ride along main roads, fly, or otherwise travel in a fashion sure to draw notice.

Encounters

The party engages in combat: The noise of combat and the use of magic draws attention if there is anybody nearby to hear. If the characters are in a very isolated location, or take pains to fight quietly, the alert level does not increase.

The party fights guards or patrols: These are guards or patrols who serve the dragon. If guards from some other organisation are encountered, the alert level is unchanged.

...and leaves obvious traces such as bodies: If the party disguise who killed the guards, hide the bodies, or otherwise allay suspicion, the alert level does not rise.

... and the guards report back to their superiors: This can only happen if one or more of the guards escape from the characters, or have a method of communication (message spells, alarm bells etc).

... and the guards fail to report back to their superiors: As the alert level rises, the *lack* of communication from a guard post or patrol becomes more significant.

The party moves from one section of the Desolation to another: Borderlands to outer desolation, outer desolation to inner desolation etc.

Magic

Especially showy, loud magic, such as damaging evocations or summonings: Fireballs, lightning bolts, planar allies, etc.

The party scry on the defenders, and are detected doing so: The alert level increases by 5 the first time *scrying* is detected, and by 2 each subsequent time.

The party leave evidence of using magic: This might include summoned creatures, petrified or paralysed monsters, or the party showing up fully healthy and healed minutes after a difficult fight.

Sightings

The party are seen by guards: The guard must be sure he saw intruders. If the party get out of sight before the guard can confirm their presence, he must make a DC20 Wisdom check – if he fails, the alert level does not rise.

...and do not somehow allay suspicion: A successful Bluff check coupled with a good explanation of the party's presence may work, as may disguises or enchantment spells.

TRIGGERS

Attempt to wake dragon: If the dragon is asleep, roll again on the Dragon Wakefulness table, adding the stated bonus. If the dragon wakes up, it takes charge of the defences (possibly adding to the magical abilities available). Also, dragonstrikes become available to the defenders.

Average patrol dispatched: A patrol of average servants of the dragon (see Chapter 4, **Servants of the Dragon**) is sent to track down the party. Patrols always include at least one character with the Track or Scent feat. There is a percentage chance equal to the current Alert Level that the patrol crosses the party's trail within 1d6-1 days after being dispatched.

Patrols that fail to find the party keep searching for two weeks, then return to wherever they came from. Patrols that manage to track the party follow them and attack (if they believe they can win) or else gather information and leave markers and messages for other patrols.

Average support dispatched to threatened area: A number of average servants of the dragon are sent to bolster defences in a region near where the party were last sighted. This either increases the Encounter Level of a location by 1, or else 'restocks' an area cleared of enemies by the party.

Divinations employed: The defenders use whatever divination spells are available to them to learn about the party. Possibilities include using *commune* to learn more about the party, locating them with *commune with nature* if the party are within range, using a *divination* spell to guide patrols, and using *legend lore* or *vision* to learn more.

Optionally, this trigger can also result in the enemy harassing the party with *dreams* or *sendings*.

Dragonstrike: If the dragon is awake, it takes to the skies, patrolling for 2d8 hours before returning to its lair. If it spots the party, it swoops down and breathes on them, and may attempt to snatch one away for questioning or snacking. If the dragon knows where the party is, it heads straight there, and attacks along with any patrols within range.

Elite patrol dispatched: As *average patrol dispatched*, but an elite patrol is highly skilled and much more of a match for the party – see **Servants of the Dragon**, page 23 for details.

Elite support dispatched to threatened area: As *average support dispatched*, but the elite support takes charge of the location and fortifies it against the player characters.

Scrying employed: The defenders use whatever scrying spells are available to locate and track the party. If they have access to *teleportation* magic, they may attempt to *teleport* assassins (or even the dragon) to the party's location at an opportune moment; otherwise, they guide patrols so that the patrols automatically cross the party's trail.

Information gathering employed: Agents are sent out to question people who might have heard rumours of the party. There is a percentage chance equal to the current alert level (+25% if the agents are evil, -50% if good) that cruel tactics such as intimidation and torture are used to extract information. If the party has had contact with towns or villages in the Desolation, their allies there may be questioned and forced to reveal what they know of the party.

Security measures changed: if the enemy uses keys, passwords, codes or other security measures, it changes these where feasible.

Skilled patrol dispatched: As *average patrol dispatched*, but using skilled trackers. See **Servitors of the Dragon**.

Skilled support dispatched to threatened area: As *average support dispatched*, but the presence of skilled troops may raise the Encounter Level by up to 2 points.

Tailored defences: The defenders order their troops to use tactics and equipment that is specifically designed to counter what they know of the party. For example, if the party prefer to use *fireballs*, then any enemy spellcasters they encounter are more likely to have *protection from fire* or a counter-*fireball* prepared. Parties which spend most of their time *invisible* will encounter enemies using *see invisible* or accompanied by creatures with Scent and Tremorsense.

Stage Change Triggers

Most triggers happen only when the alert level rises to their level. However, the lowest trigger in each of the five alert stages happen only when the alert level *falls*. Alert level cannot drop from one stage to another without the conditions for these lowest triggers are filled. For example, the State Change Trigger to move from *Watchful* to *Unwary* is 'If the dragon is asleep, drop down to Unwary'. While the dragon is awake, the alert level cannot go below 21 (watchful).

SPECIAL ACTIONS

There are several actions a party of player characters can take that also affect the current alert level.

Decoys

A decoy is essentially another party of adventurers, taking an alternate route through the defender's territory. A decoy group can be either Stealthy, Average or Noisy, and raise the alert level by 5, 10 or 15 points respectively per day. The advantage of a Decoy is that any trigger that would normally target the player characters, such as a patrol being dispatched or a dragonstrike, may target the decoy instead (roll randomly – a trigger has an equal chance of targeting any one decoy or the party of player characters).

Raising a decoy may require the player characters hiring mercenaries, arming peasants who are willing

to aid their quest, or tricking other adventurers into travelling into dangerous territory.

Disinformation

Disinformation involves the characters subverting the enemy's communications by sending false orders, tricking the guards, faking their own deaths, and other deceptions. Using Disinformation usually requires a Bluff or Forgery check (or even Perform, used when the characters are pretending to fall over a convenient cliff to their deaths), opposed by the defender's Sense Motive, Forgery or Spot, depending on circumstances. If the party's check succeeds, the alert level is lowered by the difference between the two checks.

Distractions

Distractions are like decoys, but on a much larger scale. The classic distraction is an army invading one side of the defender's territory while the player characters sneak in from the opposite direction. The size of a distraction increases the alert level immediately by a certain amount, but also draws away a proportionate number of triggers. For example, if an army arrives on a dragon's doorstep, the dragon is far more likely to launch a dragonstrike on them instead of spending a day searching for a rumoured band of adventurers.

Distractions		
Distraction Size	Alert Level Increase	Chance of drawing Triggers
Small (minor revolt, military buildup on borders)	20	20%
Minor (border raids, forest fire)	30	30%
Medium (attack on outlying area)	40	40%
Major (major attack)	50	50%
Complete (siege)	60	60%

USING THE ALERT LEVEL SYSTEM

The alert level system is designed to take some of the burden off the Games Master by determining some of the responses of the enemy to actions of the player characters. The simplest way to use it

is to check the tables of actions and triggers each game day (when the Alert Level is below 60) or after each encounter (when the Alert Level is above 60) and have any triggered events happen as soon as is appropriate. For example, if a dragonstrike is triggered, the dragon will take off from its lair and start hunting the characters. If they are crouched on the slopes of the dragon's mountain, they will see its huge shadow pass over them like an omen of doom, and the dragon will be on them within minutes. If they are still many miles away, they will just see a dot against the clouds, and it might take many hours for the dragon to reach their location. It gives the impression that the world beyond the player characters is a dynamic, ever-changing place, that the monsters are not just sitting in rooms waiting for the party to break in and slaughter them.

Core Rulebook II gives some excellent advice on making the game world more dynamic, but even the best Games Master can forget to have distant antagonists react to player character actions. Alert levels are a reminder, they offer a series of prompts and ideas to the Games Master. They should be seen as a ruleset in the strictest sense – not attacking the party with a patrol when the 'patrol dispatched' trigger is hit is perfectly fine. Alert levels are a Games Master's assistant, not a replacement.

Quick Checks

As alert levels run from 0 to 100+, the current alert level can be used as a percentage chance to determine the status of some underdetermined factor. Is the commander of an outlying outpost aware that the main base is under attack? Roll percentile dice – if the result is greater than the alert level, he knows of the danger. Is the door locked? Are the guards asleep? Alert level can be used to resolve any of these questions.

Adding Actions and Triggers

The Games Master should consider adding more actions and triggers to the various tables, to reflect specific events and responses in his game. For example, if the entrance to the dragon's lair is protected by an ancient dwarven fortification called the Marblehead Gate, then the action 'Marblehead Gate falls: increase alert level by 15' could be added to all the stages. Similarly, if the dragon has the ghosts of the dwarven builders of the Marblehead gate in his thrall, the trigger '65: Ghosts of Marblehead haunt the party' could be added.

As presented, the alert system models an assault on a dragon's lair, hence all the 'attempt to wake dragons' and 'dragonstrike' entries. However, alert levels can be used for any situation where the player characters are attempting to sneak into, invade or otherwise oppose an enemy organisation (and that covers about 75% of adventures). Dragon-based entries should be replaced with more appropriate actions and triggers. For example, consider a game where the evil cult is trying to summon a powerful entity from the Far Realms. The ritual takes many days to prepare, so the longer the player characters take, the better the chance the enemy has of summoning the entity (i.e. every day that passes, the cult gets a +1 bonus to whatever roll is used to summon the entity). By adding the triggers 'Attempt to summon entity' to the On Guard or Alerted stages, the Games Master allows the party to 'force the enemy's hand'. If the characters can cause enough havoc and damage, the evil cult may try to call the entity forth too early and botch the summoning roll.

Adjusting for Play Style

As written, the alert level system rewards avoiding combat and making extensive use of stealth, trickery and counter-divination spells. While this encourages careful, tactical play and sneaking around like a thief, it can result in boring sessions if the players prefer combat. By increasing or decreasing the change to alert levels resulting from each action, the Games Master can 'tweak' the alert level system to suit the group's preferred style of play.

For example, the basic encounter at the Suspicious stage reads:

The party engages in combat: +2
...and leaves obvious traces such as bodies: +1
The party fights guards or patrols: +10
... and leaves obvious traces such as bodies: +10
... and the guards fail to report back to their superiors: +10

This means that minor encounters with unintelligent monsters will not greatly affect alert level, but any clashes with guards or patrols will significantly raise the alarm – and a botched encounter will be utterly disastrous. If the Games Master wants the party to be able to attack guards without feeling like they have failed, the actions should be changed to:

The party fights guards or patrols: +2
... and leaves obvious traces such as bodies: +10
... and the guards fail to report back to their superiors: +1
... and the guards report back to their superiors: +10

Now, attacking guards will raise the alarm only slightly. The party still have to be careful, and must still contain the situation by not letting survivors raise the alarm and by concealing the results of the battle, but failing to sneak past a guard post is not a huge catastrophe.

Many players enjoy combat. A good Games Master should not use alert levels to make the game boring for such players. 'Saw nothing, nothing saw us' is a successful session in terms of keeping alert level down, but it can be a dull evening of play for some. At the same time, other players really enjoy sneaking and coming up with elaborate plans to defeat enemy security. The Games Master should observe his players and alter alert level to suit them.



SERVANTS OF THE DRAGON

Dragons are as close to gods as any living creature can be. Their thoughts are subtle and unfathomably deep, their souls bright and powerful, their forms both beautiful and terrible. The passing of a dragon can cause the strongest heart to quiver and quail with fear. This fear can turn to awe, or even reverence, with a few carefully chosen words from the dragon's beguiling tongue. Without even trying, many dragons find cults and tribes worshipping them as divine beings, or ambitious sycophants offering their services to the mighty dragon.

When a dragon makes an effort to seize control over lesser beings, it can carve out an empire or build a conspiracy in a few years where it would take generations for a human to accomplish. With their long lives and paranoid, suspicious, multilevel minds, dragons make excellent conspirators and politicians. Some wyrms are deeply enmeshed in the politics and warfare of the lesser races, weaving plots and pursuing goals with schemes that involve whole nations and take generations to complete. If every dragon exerted its influence to the same degree, they would doubtless rule over much of the world.

Dragons cast long shadows. Every thing that lives in a domain is affected by the wyrm.

SERVANT TYPES

Young chromatic dragons see lesser beings as either thieves, entertainment, or food (and individuals generally occupy first one, then the next category). Elder dragons are capable of drawing more subtle distinctions between the lower creatures, and assign creatures to the following categories:

Agents

Spies and information brokers, agents live in towns and cities, far from the dragon's lair. They do not fight for the dragon, but listen to every whisper and watch every face. Agents spend too little time in the dragon's presence to be overcome by fear or awe, so

they usually serve the dragon for the money. The gold of dragons is especially valued (see Hoards, page 118, for details on this curse). Often, a family serves as agents for many generations, living off monies earned from investing the initial gold given to them by the dragon. Agents are expected to send word back to the dragon if they hear of anything that deserves the wyrm's attention, and to obey the rare orders that comes back down the secret communications channels. Agents are usually rogues, bards, or experts,

Example agent: *The Inn of the Iron Pipe is a rather isolated but still welcoming inn that stands near a major trading route. According to tradition, the first innkeeper built the inn with a pouch of gold given to him by a knight-errant who spent the night at his farmhouse hovel. That innkeeper's descendant is a young man named Dagvaard, a proud and kindly man who takes excellent care of all those who shelter in his inn. Once a year or so, a stranger with a rasping voice visits the inn, and Dagvaard reluctantly spends an evening cloistered in conversation.*

The stranger is the half-dragon offspring of a silver dragon, who suspects correctly, but is unable to prove, that Dagvaard is an agent of a red dragon. Dagvaard's wife is a sorcerer, who uses whispering winds to send her husband's messages to the other servants of the dragon. Dagvaard's family owe a debt of honour to the red dragon, and so he must continue to watch all who pass through his inn, which is on the borderlands of the dragon. He likes the half-silver stranger, but knows that he cannot hide the truth forever and must one day deal permanently with his annual visitor.

Guards

Guards protect the dragon's lair and domain. They do not necessarily fight for the dragon, but defend its home because it is also theirs. Guards may live in the region because of the dragon's presence (such as fire elementals or salamanders able to exist on the prime plane thanks to a red dragon's fiery lair) or simply dwell in the shadow of a dragon for protection (such as warring lizardfolk tribes who seek out draconic patrons). Although guards have little or no evidence outside the dragon's domain, they do protect the wyrm while it sleeps. Guards are usually barbarians, warriors, or rangers.

Example guard: *Felrip of the kobold tribe of the Sacred Eggshell scurries through the dusty tunnels beneath the desert sands. He has seen the shadow of the blue dragon Khyasin flit over one of the hidden look-out posts. If the dragon is hunting, there will soon be carrion-flesh to eat, and every kobold pup is taught that if you eat like a dragon, you will grow like a dragon. Felrip wonders how he will fit through the tunnels if his wings grow, but he does not worry. His grandsire's grandsire's grandsire prospered in the shadow of Khyasin; so shall he.*

In the echoing tunnels, he hears the footsteps of hundred other kobolds, all running to the feast.

WARRIORS

While guards protect the dragon's domain, warriors push out the borders of the domain, conquering new lands and gathering treasure in the name of the dragon. Sometimes, warriors are drawn from the ranks of the guards within the domain; other dragons hire mercenaries, ally themselves with warlords, or even become involved in human wars (either in human guise, or even – rarely – openly). Dragons who work in concert with warriors are especially dangerous and ambitious ones. Warriors are usually barbarians, fighters, or rangers.

Example warrior: *The dragon banner flew fitfully over the army. The castle walls towered about the besiegers, impenetrable and insurmountable. Jonas nervously rubbed his woodcarving knife. Given a few weeks of work, they could build siege towers and engines that could – maybe – take the castle, but winter was closing and supplies were short. They were deep in the territory of the Frost Mages, and the coming cold would surely turn the tide in favour of the enemy.*

Suddenly a cry rose up from behind Jonas. 'The general is coming! The general is coming!' A proud knight in brownish-gold armour pushed through the ranks of his men. He looked up at the ice walls of the castle for a moment – then with a flare of light and a sound of trumpets, the general transformed into a dragon. A single lightning bolt shot from his jaws and the wall shattered and collapsed. The dragon spoke, and those the voice was strange and reptilian, it still had the noble cadence of the general. 'Onward! For glory and the spring!'

SERFS

Those who make their homes within the Desolation are serfs of the dragon, whether they know it or not. Just as a human lord demands taxes and tributes from his peasantry, so too does the dragon. Of course, a human lord takes his share once a year, and only takes a portion of the peasant's wealth. A dragon may only take its share once a generation, but it takes everything. While serfs are not as militarily skilled as guards or warriors, nor as observant and treacherous as an agent, they often support the dragon out of fear or religious awe, and may oppose enemies of the dragon – if the dragon is slain, they say, their burden will be lifted, but most prospective dragonslayers succeed in doing nothing more than rousing the beast's wrath... Serfs are usually commoners or experts. Note that there may be more people living in a dragon's domain than there are serfs; the difference between a serf of the dragon and another humble peasant is that the serf is so broken by fear and sorrow that he will act against enemies of the dragon.

Example serf: *As was the tradition, they had left her tied to the post just outside the village. The post was older than the village, and the villagers sometimes wondered what had been bound to it before they came. To her credit, she did not cry more than a few tears as they bound her.*

The dragon descended in a flurry of snow and white wings. It sniffed her once, gobbled her down in three bites, then took off again. The alchemist clapped his hands together. 'He didn't notice! She's nothing more than mandragora root, a little liquid payt, a drop of maiden's blood, and a little magic! With this formula, no-one will ever have to sacrifice their daughters to the dragon again!'

Then the massive jaws closed on the alchemist, and he was gone.

SERVITORS

Although the forelimbs of dragons are surprisingly adept at handling small objects, dragons soon grow too large to perform many simple acts, such as locking a dwarf-made chest or repairing a damaged wall. Magic and shapeshifting can overcome this handicap, but some dragons turn to servitors instead. Servitors are the trusted (or dominated) majordomos of the dragon's lair, who aid the dragon with tasks best suited to the humanoid form. Some servitors are valued aides and advisors, employed by

the dragon as acolytes or servants in the same way a human lord might maintain a cleric or a seneschal. Others are terrified, cowering lickspittles, or even voice-controlled golems. A servitor may be of any class.

Example servitor: *'Milady' said Cibar, 'I have laid out your best ballgown and slippers.' He paused for a moment, then plucked a diamond necklace and a tiara from the shining hoard and placed them next to the dress. Finding suitable jewellery was always so hard when Milady had so many exquisite items in her bed. The cave shook slightly as the silver dragon entered, each multi-ton footstep shaking gems and coins loose from the hoard. 'Milady will hardly be allowed onto the dance floor in that form' Cibar muttered.*

Cultists

Dragons are often worshipped or mistaken for gods. Primitive tribes fear the wrath of the dragon just as they fear storms or drought, and pray to them as they pray to the gods. More enlightened cults see dragons as either avatars of the gods, or earth-bound demigods who are worthy of devotion. Some conniving dragons engineer cults, playing into the religious beliefs of their followers to reinforce their faith and create legions of fanatics. Cultists are usually sorcerers.

Example cultist: *The Greengod's eyes flared with anger. 'Doubt, Nathias? Doubt? Intolerable. I am the lord of harvests, who brings life and death.' Matching deed to word, the green dragon spat a plant growth spell at the vines, which suddenly grew thicker and stronger. The cultist fell to his knees before the dragon. 'Forgive me, greengod, for my foolishness!'*

The dragon smiled. 'No. You shall not pass through the jaws of heaven...not unless you prove yourself to me.'

'Anything' begged Nathias.

'There is a man who must die' said the dragon.

ORGANISATIONS

Not every dragon has servants. Some disdain all contact with lesser beings, trusting to their own strength and defences. Others simply tolerate the presence of humanoids or guardian monsters

in their domains, but pay little attention to the health or activities of such creatures. However, some dragons rule over their domains like kings or generals, imposing and maintaining order on their underlings. Such organisations can be roughly divided into several types. A dragon can have several organisations under its control.

Organisations contain varying numbers of the different types of servant mentioned earlier. These servants can be of average, skilled or elite quality.

- † **An average servant** is an ordinary member of the servant's race, with one or two class levels at most. The creatures in *Core Rulebook III* are usually average servants. Average servants are rarely much of a threat to player characters, except in large numbers (unless, of course, the dragon has average Troll guards and the party is around 4th level or some such combination).
- † **A skilled servant** has specialised in one or two areas – a skilled warrior has several levels of fighter and better equipment, a skilled Guard might have several extra skill ranks in Listen or Spot, a skilled Cultist might have a one-use magic item like a *scroll of fireball*. Skilled servants may also be ordinary members of powerful races, such as genies. A battle with skilled servants should test the characters (i.e., be of an Encounter Level equal to or slightly higher than the average party level).
- † A dragon has only a handful of **elite servants** – these are the captains and warlords in the army or the master spies and guild masters among agents. Elite servants are not necessarily the leaders of the army, cult or organisation, but they are the members who are trusted with the most important roles, and are the last line of defence. They usually have multiple class levels in their specialisation, bringing them up to par with the player characters; elite servants are also well armed and well equipped. Other elite servants are rare or unique creatures, such as other dragons or powerful golems. A clash with Elite servants should be a grim, lethal struggle for the party.

Organisation Feats

Each of these types has a feat associated with it (see page 148, Dragon Feats), similar to the Leadership feat. If a dragon has one of these feats, it controls a number of followers, determined by its leadership score (hit dice plus Charisma modifiers plus modifiers – see individual feats for specific details). These followers are spread throughout and even beyond the dragon's domain, but their common quality is that they are all loyal to the dragon. The dragon may not be their primary loyalty (an agent might be reporting to six different spymasters, one of which is the dragon) but they will work to further the dragon's schemes and oppose the player characters if they are enemies of the dragon. A dragon may have other creatures living in its domain and defending its lair; the values given for each organisation are essentially extra resources for the dragon, like the followers attracted through the Leadership feat.

Each organisation has a set of Leadership Modifiers associated with it, as well as notes on the benefits of controlling it and how to run the organisation in a game. The number of followers listed should be used as a guide to the sort of forces the dragon can muster.

A dragon can take any of these feats more than once – a red dragon can have a cult, a network and a triple-sized army.

Dominions

In a dominion, the dragon rules by fear and fire. It is a figure of terror that sometimes swoops down from the sky. A dragon that holds a dominion has no truly willing servants; its followers are either cowed by fear, or have thrown their lot in with the dragon because they have seen the destruction an angry dragon can wreak. Only evil dragons claim dominions.

Most of the followers of the dragon in a dominion are serfs, but there are also a large number of Guards, usually evil humanoids drawn by rumours of destruction and suffering. These guards keep the

Dominion					
Leadership Score	Serfs	Average Guards	Skilled Guards	Elite Guards	Servitors
3 or less	5	-	-	-	-
4-6	10	-	-	-	-
7-10	20	5	-	-	-
11-14	40	10	-	-	1
15-19	80	25	1	-	2
20-24	160	45	2	-	3
25-28	320	70	3	-	4
29-32	640	100	4	-	5
33-36	1,000	140	5	-	6
37-40	1,500	175	7	-	7
41-43	2,000	210	10	-	8
44-47	3,000	255	15	1	9
48-51	4,000	305	20	2	10
52-55	5,000	370	30	3	11
56-59	7,500	500	40	4	12
60-63	10,000	750	50	5	13

unfortunate inhabitants in line even when the dragon is slumbering.

Example Dominion: *The adult white dragon Gwendling rules over the Bay of Ten Thousand Teeth. He has a leadership score of 18, which means 80 of the humble crofters and fisherfolk who live on the shores of the bay pay the dragon homage. When the dragon is too lazy to hunt, he flies down and freezes the waters of the harbour, and will only smash the ice when the fisherfolk turn over their stockpiles of salted herring. The jarl of the fisherfolk, a Skilled warrior, has seen three of his sons die at the hands of the dragon, and has given up hope of freeing his people from Gwendling's tyranny. He and his 25 warriors therefore defend the dragon's lair.*

Benefits of a Dominion: Determine the gold piece limit of the serfs as if they were a community of equal size (e.g, 1,000 serfs equals a small town, which has a gold piece limit of 800 gp). Increase the dragon's hoard by an amount equal to the dragon's Age Category multiplied by this gold piece limit, as the dragon harvests wealth from its dominion every few decades. The starting alert level is increased by 0 in a dominion.

Dominion Leadership Modifiers	
The Dragon is...	Leadership Modifier
Evil	+3
Chaotic	+3
Notably cruel	+3
Currently awake	-3
Has a Frightful Presence	+6
Caused the death of other followers	+3

Using a Dominion in a game: A dominion is shrouded in fear. Death could come from the sky at any moment. Villages in the dominion have shuttered windows, and the peasantry walk with hunched shoulders and constantly watch for winged shadows flitting over the ground. The overwhelming impression should be one of hopelessness – the dragon has ruled here, unchallenged and unassailable, for decades, so the dragon’s frightful presence has become a constant.

Networks

Dragons who maintain networks are interested in lesser creatures, or are paranoid or ambitious enough to invest time and resources in creating

an organisation of spies and assassins to gather information for the dragon. Red and black dragons and their silver and gold counterparts often create networks, but for radically different goals. Black dragons use their networks to plot ambushes and raids; red dragons seek out contacts within thieves’ guilds, to find out new sources of gold and treasure. Gold dragon networks send word of rising evils back to the dragon, so the gold can act to destroy the threat before it grows too powerful. The agents of silver dragons are drawn from the ranks of all the friends and contacts the dragon made while wandering in human form.

Networks are mostly made up of agents, although there are also a handful of guards and warriors who are used when a little more muscle is required.

Example Network: *Their symbol is the Hidden Sun. They serve the gold dragon Aura. Every member of the order has a true and noble heart, but each of them is sworn to serve an evil master. A member might be a thief, or a slaver, or advisor to an orcish warlord, or apprentice to a necromancer. They swallow their conscience and serve loyally, for they know that one day the sun will rise.*

When she strikes, Aura takes the form of one of her agents. Using the trust built up by the agent’s years

Network					
Leadership Score	Average agents	Skilled agents	Elite agents	Average Guards	Average Warriors
3 or less	1	-	-	-	-
4-6	2	-	-	-	-
7-10	5	1	-	-	-
11-14	8	2	-	-	-
15-19	14	3	-	1	1
20-24	20	5	-	2	2
25-28	29	7	-	3	3
29-32	38	9	1	4	4
33-36	50	12	2	5	5
37-40	62	15	3	6	6
41-43	77	18	4	7	7
44-47	82	22	5	8	8
48-51	100	26	6	9	9
52-55	118	30	7	10	10
56-59	139	35	8	11	11
60-63	160	40	9	12	12

of service, her disguise can take her into the very heart of evil. The gold dragon can walk into the thieves' guild or the necromancer's fetid pit without being questioned or magically probed. Where the shadows are deepest, Aura brings the cleansing fire of dawn.

Network Leadership Modifiers	
The Dragon...	Leadership Modifier
Is Neutral	+3
Is a spellcaster	+3
Has Intelligence 20+	+3
Has Wisdom 20+	+3

Benefits of a Network: The dragon may use the resources of its network to make a Gather Information check on any topic without leaving its lair. Having a network increases the beginning alert level by 15.

Using a Network in a game: The terrifying thing about a network is not the paranoia it creates, not the threat of the party's movements being watched and reported back to the dragon, its true strength is its reach. Anyone the party meet – not just in the dragon's domain, but far outside it – could be a member of the network and a servant of the

dragon. The influence of most dragons is tethered to the lair; flee far enough away, and the dragon will not follow. Dragons with a network can track their enemies through agents, and strike at a time of their choosing.

Fiefdoms

A fiefdom is essentially an organised dominion – instead of raining down fire and devastation every decade and stealing the scraps of treasure from the beleaguered inhabitants, the dragon rules over the domain like a human king. Few humans willingly serve an evil dragon, so the subjects of an evil dragon's fiefdom are usually evil humanoids like goblins or lizard men. Good dragons rarely claim fiefdoms; partly because most have little interest in ruling, but mainly because human kings are often unwilling to trust such a powerful and alien neighbour.

Fiefdoms offer an excellent mix of servants, as the inhabitants are much better disposed towards the dragon.

Example fiefdom: *The flooded kingdom of the trolls is a maze of weed-choked channels, small, muddy islands and sucking marshes. Above and below the waterline, the trolls and their aquatic scrag cousins*

Fiefdom					
Leadership Score	Serfs	Skilled Guards	Skilled Warriors	Skilled Agents	Average Servitors
3 or less	5	-	-	-	-
4-6	10	-	-	-	-
7-10	20	5	-	-	-
11-14	40	10	-	-	1
15-19	80	25	1	1	2
20-24	160	45	2	2	3
25-28	320	70	3	3	4
29-32	640	100	4	4	5
33-36	1,000	140	5	5	6
37-40	1,500	175	7	6	7
41-43	2,000	210	10	7	8
44-47	3,000	255	15	8	9
48-51	4,000	305	20	9	10
52-55	5,000	370	30	10	11
56-59	7,500	500	40	11	12
60-63	10,000	750	50	12	13

prey on smaller animals and fish. For many decades, they were nothing more than another hazard of the swamp, as the trolls were too disorganised to pose a real threat. No troll king could come to power, because their powers of regeneration prevented the trolls from effectively killing each other. Now the black dragon Hezimish is acting as kingmaker and kingslayer with its acid breath, and a troll king has arisen, uniting the tribes under the dragon.

Fiefdom Leadership Modifiers	
The Dragon	Leadership Modifier
Is lawful	+3
Has a stronghold, as opposed to a lair	+3
Is currently awake	-3
Has a Frightful Presence	+3
Caused the death of other followers	-3

Benefits of a Fiefdom: The chief benefit of a fiefdom is the sheer variety of assets available to the dragon. A ruling dragon can call upon any of its skilled servants to perform tasks. Having a fiefdom increases the beginning alert level by 5.

Using a Fiefdom in a game: Characters fighting a dragon with a fiefdom face the same challenges as they would when attacking a noble baron or duke – wealth, a castle, knights and men-at-arms, a court wizard or cleric, and a populace loyal to their lord. Of course, few barons or dukes can fly, breath fire, or wipe out an army single-handed. Still, the fiefdom is the only type of organisation where the dragon has won the loyalty of ordinary folk, which denies the player characters any hope of support from others while in the dragon's domain.

Armies

While dragons are often found in the vanguard of armies, serving as living siege engines and weapons of terror, they rarely become leaders or warlords. The arrogance of most wyrms prevents them from seeing the fighting skills of lesser creatures. A few dragons, usually bronzes or especially cunning greens, do appreciate the virtues of an army, and assemble legions of loyal warriors to invade the

Army					
Leadership Score	Average Warriors	Skilled Warriors	Elite Warriors	Average Servitors	Skilled Agents
3 or less	5	-	-	-	-
4-6	10	-	-	-	-
7-10	20	5	-	-	-
11-14	40	10	-	1	-
15-19	100	25	1	2	1
20-24	200	45	2	3	2
25-28	300	70	3	4	3
29-32	400	100	4	5	4
33-36	550	140	5	6	5
37-40	700	175	6	7	6
41-43	850	210	7	8	7
44-47	1,000	255	8	9	8
48-51	1,200	305	9	10	9
52-55	1,500	370	10	11	10
56-59	2,000	500	11	12	11
60-63	3,000	750	12	13	12

surrounding territories and bring more subjects into the domain of the dragon.

Example army: *The Legion of Bronze is the unimaginatively-named mercenary army led by the bronze dragon Rempos. He was masquerading as an officer in a small mercenary unit, Kyarl's Marauders, when the command tent was overrun by ghouls. Rempos cast off his human identity and used his draconic might to save his fellow soldiers. After the battle, the survivors begged the dragon to stay and lead them. Since then, the mercenary unit has grown from a handful of bedraggled, ghoul-chewed survivors into a large, well-equipped army. The bronze banner has flown proudly on half a hundred battlefields, and under Rempos' leadership, the Legion has proven itself time and time again.*

Army Leadership Modifiers	
The Dragon...	Leadership Modifier
Has a stronghold as opposed to a lair	+3
Caused the death of other followers	-3
Has won several notable victories	+3

Benefits of an Army: The obvious benefit of an army is its military force. It also increases the size of a dragon's domain by 20%, and provides a +10 to the beginning Alert Level.

Using an Army in a game: If a dragon has an army, it presumably has a goal for the army, such as conquest or a crusade. Oddly, this is one of the easiest organisations for a party to deal with; the army is likely to be focussed on offence, not defence, so a cautious, stealthy group who can keep the alert level down should be able to penetrate the dragon's defences. However, armies have a huge number of warriors, so frontal assaults on the dragon are suicidal even without taking the dragon's own combat abilities into account.

Cults

Dragons are figures of intense religious awe and fear to many. The dragon is a living connection to magic and power. Sorcery springs from their blood and the land is blessed or cursed by their lives. Dragons are the eldest of all races; closest to the gods in might and glory – but unlike the distant and cryptic gods, dragons are creatures of this world. A cleric must devote years of his life to prayer and discipline before he can *commune* with his deity, but a dragon cultist's deity is with him in the flesh from his first initiation.

Cult					
Leadership Score	Average Cultists	Skilled Cultists	Elite Cultists	Skilled Servitors	Skilled Agents
3 or less	5	-	-	-	-
4-6	10	-	-	-	-
7-10	20	5	-	-	-
11-14	40	10	-	1	-
15-19	100	25	1	2	1
20-24	200	45	2	3	2
25-28	300	70	3	4	3
29-32	400	100	4	5	4
33-36	550	140	5	6	5
37-40	700	175	6	7	6
41-43	850	210	7	8	7
44-47	1,000	255	8	9	8
48-51	1,200	305	9	10	9
52-55	1,500	370	10	11	10
56-59	2,000	500	11	12	11
60-63	3,000	750	12	13	12

For their part, dragons enjoy being worshipped. Cultists rarely have the terrified edge of eloquence that other supplicants possess, but they more than make up for it with fanatical devotion and self-sacrifice. Cultists might worship a dragon out of fear, or out of awe, or out of a belief that they too can share in the long life and vast power of the dragon. Many cults become breeding stock for the dragon,

producing half-dragon servants for the cult's master. Others serve as utterly loyal guardians, assassins or spellcasters.

Example cult: *The Blooded were a cult dedicated to the service of the blue dragon Visinth. All members of the cult pledged their lives, and the lives of their children unto the ninth generation to the dragon. For decades, the cultists held ceremonies and sacrifices venerating the dragon, but all that came to an end when Visinth was slain – disintegrated, in fact – by a rival wizard. The cult collapsed.*

Visinth fought her way clear of the afterlife and has returned to the material world as a weak form of ghost dragon. Only those pledged to her service can perceive her, so she must work through the descendants of her cultists. However, nine generations have passed since her fall, so only a handful of aged people still bear her mark. Visinth is desperately trying to guide this scattered handful of haggard geriatrics to positions of power, so they can assemble the resources for a great ritual to resurrect the dragon.

Cult Leadership Modifiers	
The Dragon...	Leadership Modifier
Has a stronghold as opposed to a lair	+3
Is a spellcaster	+3
Can cast divine spells	+3
Has a Frightful Presence	+3

Benefits of an Cult: Loyalty, power and worship – apart from stroking the dragon's ego (and that is certainly enough reason to maintain a cult for most dragons), cultists are usually more amiable to learning magic than ordinary, saner followers. Cultists are also more willing to undergo magical experiments; if a dragon is engaged in crossbreeding or creating new forms of life, cults provide both magical might, lab assistants, and a constant source of raw materials for experimentation.

Using an Army in a game: Draconic cults should be as scary and freakish as possible. Cultists have gone through fear and terror and come out the other side, worshipping dragons for what they are – terrible,

destructive, beasts possessed of great strength, both physical and magical. While religions and philosophies provide moral guidance, the dragon cult teaches nothing but submission and service to the god-wyrm.

Running an Organisation

The various types of servant in an organisation give some idea of its command structure – the dragon is in charge, giving orders to the leader of the organisation, who are guarded and aided by the elite servants. The rank and file of the organisation are the average servants, while their officers and captains are skilled servants. Beyond this simple chain of command, every organisation is different.

Do the members of the organisation even know they are ruled by a dragon? An agent in a far-flung network might never know that she is reporting to an inhuman monster. Using magic and deception, a dragon can easily masquerade as a human lord, a divine being or an ancestral spirit.

How does the dragon communicate with its followers? Do lieutenants climb up to the dragon's lair to receive their orders? Is the organisation's stronghold built atop the lair, with the dragon's commands echoing up stone shafts from deep underground? Dragons could also use magic to send commands, or fly out to meet with its followers at ritual meeting places.

Organisations have their own symbols and codes. Each follower of the dragon might be branded in some way, or know a ritual phrase by which other members of the organisation can identify themselves. Player characters might be able to infiltrate the organisation by wearing these symbols, but acquiring them can be painful and dangerous – if every cultist of the black dragon Dyijec has their eyelids burnt off with acid, the player characters might quail at trying to join the cult.

Destroying an Organisation

While most player characters will choose to evade the dragon's followers as much as possible, or fight them head-on in small groups and ambushes, some may choose to attack the dragon's power base before attacking the dragon. This approach requires a great deal of diplomacy and cunning. Dragons are extremely protective of all their possessions, and see an attack on their followers as an attack on

themselves. Also, in many cases, the followers are too loyal or too fearful of the dragon to be easily swayed.

Still, disrupting an organisation is a worthwhile tactic if the dragon's defences are too strong to overcome and too cunning to sneak through.

Damage inflicted on the organisation is measured using the Leadership score. Every victory won by the party temporarily reduces the dragon's Leadership. For example, the adult white dragon Gwendling (see the Example Dominion, above) has a dominion with Leadership 18, giving him 25 average guards. If the characters inflict 5 points of Leadership damage and reduce the dragon's Leadership score to 14, the number of average guards available to him is reduced to 10. This damage might be inflicted by convincing the jarl of the fisherfolk to rise up against the dragon, or by sowing chaos and confusion by destroying part of the village.

Leadership Damage	
Action	Leadership Damage
Slaying the dragon	50
Severely wounding the dragon	20
Destroying the dragon's lair	20
Destroying the dragon's stronghold	30
Killing or subverting an elite servitor*	2
Killing or subverting a skilled servitor*	1
Killing or subverting a major leader	5
Killing or subverting the head of an organisation	25
Disrupting lines of communication	5
Destroying a major symbol of the organisation	3
Destroying a major stronghold of the organisation	8
Rallying the support of the population	10

* The leadership score is not reduced if this death was expected – if a warrior is killed in battle or on patrol, this does not disrupt the organisation. If the

same warrior is ambushed or assassinated, this is disruptive and demoralising.

The dragon's Leadership score is renewed at a rate of 1d4 points per week. If the dragon gets personally involved in repairing damage to the organisation, add the dragon's Charisma modifier to the amount of Leadership restored.

The Games Master should use the above values as a guideline when determining the effects of other player character actions on the dragon's organisation.

SERVANT RACES

Dragons can be found in any habitat, from arctic wastes to desert sands, from dry mountains to the deepest oceans, and beyond on all the myriad planes of existence. In all of these environments, there are thralls and guardians to be recruited or enslaved. Each race has its own unique qualities and drawbacks. Each entry also includes notes on alert level, for dragons who rely primarily on that race. For example, if most of a dragon's servants are kobolds, the initial alert level is increased by 4. However, a single kobold in an army of orcs will not increase the beginning alert level.

As dragons live for centuries, they take a long view when it comes to servants. Roles and even names become hereditary – a dragon's chief servitor might always be a child of the Scrawling family. The dragon may also arrange marriages and breeding practices among its followers, crossbreeding and even siring half-blooded offspring to improve the stock of its servants.

Doppelgangers

No race makes better natural agents than doppelgangers. Their shapeshifting and telepathy gives them supernatural skill at deceit and information gathering, and they are ruthless enough to be excellent assassins. Doppelgangers do not see other humanoids as anything more than tools and toys, but dragons cannot be mimicked and are therefore worthy of respect.

Doppelgangers do not consider other beings to be worth watching, so reduce the beginning Alert Level by 5.

Dragons

Dragons are much too proud to willingly serve another of their kind. There are but three exceptions. A dragon that has advanced to the exalted status of *Draco Invictus* can dominate lesser dragons, who willingly obey such a powerful and glorious being. Secondly, a young dragon that has not yet left the nest will keep watch for its parents. Thirdly, and most common of all, a dragon who defeats another can spare the loser's life in exchange for its loyalty. These defeated dragons are referred to as vassal dragons.

Dragon servants are hugely powerful and watchful, but they rarely have the same level of loyalty as other servants. A vassal wyrm is always looking for an opportunity to safely betray and overthrow its master. A defeated dragon will not act directly against its master, but it might 'accidentally' fail to destroy a party that seems to have a chance of slaying the master. A dragon can act as any kind of servitor (apart from serf), but lack the faith required to be a good cultist.

Each vassal dragon increases the beginning alert level by 4.

Draconic creatures

Half-dragons, dragon-men, and other dragonkin – creatures of the blood are the favoured servants of many wyrms. The offspring and kinfolk share many of the powers of the dragon, but unlike true dragons, draconic creatures tend to be loyal or even in awe of the full dragon. Not all dragons are willing to mingle their blood with that of lesser creatures, but those who are willing to debase themselves are rewarded with powerful and devoted servants.

Some draconic creatures use the half-dragon template presented in *Core Rulebook III*. More are presented later in this chapter.

Draconic creatures are very dutiful, and increase the beginning alert level by 3. Furthermore, any damage to the dragon's Leadership score is halved due to the loyalty of draconic creatures.

Dwarves

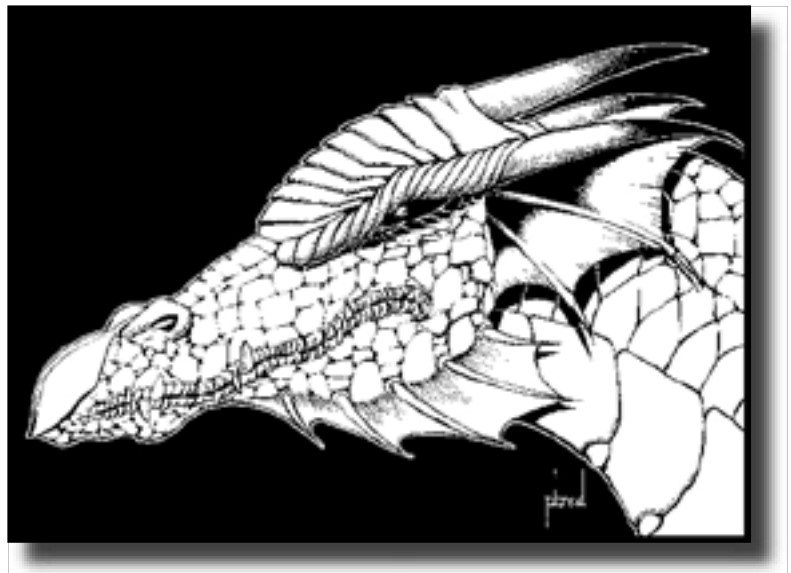
The relationship between dwarves and dragons is a complex one. Both dragons and dwarves dwell in caves. Both have a great love for gold. Dwarves build great treasuries overflowing with wealth; dragons incinerate the defenders and steal the dwarves' gold.

If the dwarves can overcome their innate distrust of dragons, which they extend to all colours and types of wyrm, the two can work very well together. Dwarves can put the dragon's strength and breath weapons to good use, while dragons value the craftsmanship and trap-building of the dwarves. If the two are working together, the dragons will not covet dwarven gold – or so the theory goes. Dwarves are generally unwilling to go to war for any cause except their own, and their stubborn pride keeps them from being cultists, but dwarven agents and guards are common. So too are dwarven serfs – many proud underground kingdoms have been conquered by fire wyrms.

Dwarves have no affect on the beginning alert level.

Elementals

The eldest dragons are often served by elementals. The presence of element-aligned dragons, such as the fiery red or airy silver, can open natural portals to the elemental planes, giving the elementals access to the prime material. This world is very strange to elementals – they come from a realm of almost perfect purity, without any substances other than the native element. By comparison, the material plane



is a bizarre melange of every element; beautiful, alluring, fascinating and lethal to a pure being. A water elemental or air elemental cannot endure for long in an impure world without the support of magic. *Summoning* spells can hold an elemental together, as can the natural magic of a dragon.

Elementals therefore willingly aid their draconic host, for as long as the dragon lives, they can endure the strangeness of the material plane. Air elementals can breathe in the rich scents and pollen without dispersing, earth elementals can fuse with rare stones and minerals without crystallising. Elementals are usually found as guards, although air elementals can be agents, and any elemental can accompany an attacking dragon as warriors.

Elementals reduce the beginning alert level by 3.

Elves

Some legends claim the dragons are the eldest race; other give that honour to the elves. The two do respect either other (some would argue that elves and dragons are the two most arrogant races in the world, so they have to see eye to eye). Elves are too free-spirited to be enslaved by a dragon, but partnerships between the two are common. Good elves are honoured by the presence of a metallic dragon in their kingdoms; gold and silver dragons are often found as allies and advisors to the elves. The drow often ally with black or blue dragons, each hoping to manipulate the other.

Elves are too caught up in their own affairs to make good warriors, but their stealth and heightened senses are useful when acting as guards. Elven cultists and servitors are also common, drawing on elven magic and diplomacy to please their draconic patron.

Elves raise the beginning alert level by 5.

Fey

The fey are too troublesome and unreliable to make good servants for most dragons. Green dragons harbour a special hatred for the fey, and enslave or devour them when they can. Fey fear dragons almost as much as they fear cold iron – dragons are solid and ‘real’, far more so than other creatures. The shadow of a dragon has more true substance than a nymph or dryad, so the mere existence of dragons is dangerous to the fey.

Some ambitious fey do brave the dragon’s lair. Nixies can be found in the service of black, green or bronze dragons, trading service for protection. The water insulates the fey somewhat from the dragon, allowing them to endure the dragon’s presence.

Fey servants do not affect the beginning alert level.

Genies

Djinn and jann are often called to serve brass or blue dragons. The dragon usurps the place of the djinn caliph or jann amir, ruling over the genies in its domain. The genies rarely tolerate the rule of dragons, so clashes and rebellions often ensue. The greater power of the dragons keeps the genies in check, but their spirits are never broken. Despite their troublesome, rebellious natures, genies are among the strongest and most adaptable servants available to dragons.

Genies are often sent on missions to the outer planes to retrieve items or allies for their dragon master. The less the dragon calls upon his genie servants, the longer the gap between rebellions, so dragons use genies sparingly. The great advantage of genies is their unpredictability; illusion magic, trickery, *invisibility*, weather control and strange creatures and weapons brought back from the planes can all be employed against attackers.

Genies raise the beginning alert level by 3, but every time the alert level reaches a new stage (Watchful to Suspicious, Suspicious to On Guard, etc), the dragon’s Leadership score suffers 1d6 points of damage.

Giant

Giants are one of the most popular servant races. Firstly, they are on the same scale as dragons, allowing the dragons to use giant-constructed buildings without having to change shape. Secondly, the strength and magical abilities of giants often complement those of dragons, making them excellent partners in warfare. The two races also dwell in similar habitats, making their homes in caves, volcanoes, mountains, or amid the clouds.

Sages believe that the ancient dragons created the first giants from human stock, warping them to a more suitable size and imbuing them with magic and elemental energies. If this is so, there must have been a rebellion millennia ago, for giants with

dragon servants are almost as common as dragons with giant servants.

Gold dragons favour storm or cloud giant servants, as do silvers. Reds can often be found in the company of fire giants, and the clashes of white dragons and frost giants are legendary among the dwellers in the ice lands.

Giants raise the beginning alert level by 1.

Gnomes

Most dragons dismiss gnomes as useless creatures, save green dragons, who dismiss them as useless but tasty creatures. The few dragons who have taken gnomish servants have found them to be surprisingly useful. Gnomish alchemy can do wonders for draconic breath weapons, and the gnomes are nosy and cunning enough to make good agents. Furthermore, gnomes lack the strength of will of elves or dwarves, and can easily be broken and dominated.

Gnomes are found in the service of black, green or copper dragons as agents or servitors. Gnomes have no effect on alert level.

Gnolls

The hyena warriors of the desert respect strength, and the blue dragons are more than willing to demonstrate theirs. While gnolls are too chaotic and undisciplined to be good guards or soldiers, a large gnollish army can be assembled very quickly. All the dragon needs to do is hunt down a few gnoll tribes, incinerate the chieftains and warlords, and announce that it now rules the gnolls. These ramshackle warbands usually last no more than a few weeks before degenerating to dog fights and anarchy, but this is often enough time to wage a small war.

Gnolls decrease the beginning alert level by 3. A dragon can temporarily add 5 to its Army Leadership score by recruiting gnolls.

Goblins

Goblins are so common that they cannot be overlooked as servants, despite their relative lack of virtues. Keeping goblins in line is difficult, as they are distracted by petty acts of malice or indulgence instead of focussing on larger schemes. The occasional bright goblin can be put to use as an

agent, but most goblins are good for nothing except being serfs or guards.

Nomadic goblin tribes circle the inner desolation of many dragons, raiding towns and villages in the outer desolation and scavenging in the aftermath of the dragon's hunts. Over time, the goblins often come to worship the dragon, but their lack of innate magic means that they are rarely useful as cultists.

Goblins decrease the beginning alert level by 4.

Golems

Creating a golem takes a great deal of time and energy. While some dragons are famed artificers, most wyrms prefer to steal golems instead of making them. Luckily, both golems and gold are often found together; constructs are commonly installed as guardians of treasuries and vaults that are raided by dragons.

Golems are too rare to be wasted as ordinary guards or serfs. Golem warriors serve as shock troops in armies, while golem servitors can function even in the most inhospitable lairs. Golems also do not suffer from exhaustion, so they remain fully watchful for centuries (and do not suffer from Wisdom damage from being On Guard or Alerted). Golems increase the beginning alert level by 3.

Halflings

Like gnomes, halflings are ignored by most dragons. They are too troublesome to be serfs, and rarely have enough gold to be worth attacking. Other than the few halfling agents who offer their services to dragons, the halflings are beneath the notice of wyrmkind.

It is this anonymity that makes halflings valuable to gold dragons. Several ancient gold dragons masquerade as halflings. Their nomadic movement along trade routes allows the dragon to keep watch over a wide region, and the halflings shield the dragon from easy detection by its foes.

Halflings have no effect on the beginning alert level.

Hobgoblins

Militaristic hobgoblins are often recruited by evil dragons as guards and warriors. They have an excellent grasp of tactics and discipline, and fall

eagerly in line with the dragon's commands. As long as the dragon can keep the various rival bands from attacking each other, a hobgoblin army is one of the best weapons a wyrm can have. Especially malicious dragons either *dominate* hobgoblin leaders to force them to work together, or else sire half-dragon, half-hobgoblins and guide them into positions of power within the army.

Hobgoblins raise the beginning alert level by 5.

Humans

Always ambitious and flexible, humans make excellent servants in every respect. Humans are commonly either serfs, cultists, or servitors, as humanoids and other monsters are physically more suited to being guards and warriors.

Humans have no affect on the beginning alert level.

Kobolds

One of the two most popular servant races, kobold theology centres around the belief that kobolds are descended from dragons. Their fervent faith is easily leveraged by dragons to turn kobolds into cultists. A single dragon can easily control dozens of kobold tribes, combining them into a surprisingly effective religion or army. The dragon must keep careful watch over his kobold followers; while other followers drift away or become disloyal, kobolds cause more trouble by trying to win the favour of their draconic overlord. Civil wars can be sparked by one kobold tribe building a bigger temple to the dragon than other; the kobolds can also draw the wrath of neighbouring kingdoms by stealing gifts for the dragon.

Kobolds are usually found in the service of blue and red dragons.

Kobold servants increase the beginning alert level by 2. Furthermore, any organisation made up of kobolds gives a +4 bonus to the dragon's Leadership score for that organisation.

Lizardfolk

Dragons have a strong sense of kinship with lizardmen. The lizardfolk speak a guttural, degraded form of the Draconic language, but it is still recognisable as the ancient tongue of dragons. The minds of lizardfolk are brutish and short-sighted, lacking the refined cruelty and subtlety

of dragons, but the two races do think very much alike. Lizardman society is like malleable clay to dragons, easy to shape and mould and guide. With a few words and a short demonstration of might, a dragon can turn a tribe of lizardmen from humble hunter-gatherers into fanatic cultists or blood-thirsty warriors.

Some dragons feel protective towards the lizardmen, seeing them as cousins who have fallen into barbarism, and try to give the lizardfolk civilisation and purpose. Most dragons are less sympathetic, and see the lizardmen as nothing but particularly effective and willing servants. While lizardmen can be found in any domain, they are usually in the service of black or green dragons.

Lizardfolk add 2 to the beginning alert level. Furthermore, any organisation made up of lizardmen gives a +4 bonus to the dragon's Leadership score for that organisation.

Ogres

Dragons who need muscle, but are too young to control giants turn to ogres. Pound for pound, an ogre is almost as strong as a giant, and are often better suited for use as guards or warriors. The sheer stupidity of ogres makes them prime targets for mind-altering spells and enchantments, although they are equally vulnerable to similar spells from attackers, and so should not be relied upon to hold the line against spell-casting foes.

Merrow (aquatic ogres) are a favoured race for black dragon guards. The rare ogre mages despise dragons – partly for enslaving their kin, but mainly because both ogre mages value wealth almost as much as dragons, and covet the dragons' hoards. Several dragons were slain by their own ogre bodyguards who were subverted by a disguised ogre mage.

Ogres subtract 2 from the beginning alert level.

Orcs

Often dismissed as a second-rate follower, orcs lack the ferocity of gnolls and the discipline of kobolds. They are also considerably less impressed with displays of the dragon's might, and cannot be dominated as easily as gnolls or goblins. Red dragons are the only chromatic species to commonly employ orcs as servants, and they tend to institute breeding programs to produce more reliable half-

orc warriors. Given time, discipline and training, orcs can be shaped into an effective and loyal army, but this requires more effort than many dragons can bother with.

Orcs subtract 3 from the beginning alert level.

Planetouched

Dragons have a natural connection with the outer planes, and seem to attract planetouched. Tieflings are drawn to the chromatics; aasimars to the metallics, although exceptions are not unheard of. Tiefling servants are forced into the role of agent, regardless of their personal inclinations. Aasimars are used by good dragons as agents or warriors (often, an aasimar is sent to act as a 'lightning rod' and attract the attention of evil forces. When evil finally reveals itself, the metallic dragon can strike). Few dragons can completely fill an organisation with planetouched, but they are found as skilled and elite members.

Planetouched increase the beginning alert level by 3.

Salamanders

Like elementals, salamanders sometimes make their way from their home plane to elemental-biased regions of the Prime Material. The usual strategy for recruiting salamander servants involves the dragon slaying the noble salamanders leading the group, and claiming their title. More noble salamanders will rise from the ranks, but these new nobles tend to be too intimidated by the dragon to make trouble and instead become elite servants. Furthermore, the salamanders soon become dependant on the dragon; without the dragon's hot breath to spark new flame pits, the salamanders cannot incubate their young. Salamander smiths are especially valued by red dragons, who put them to work making weapons and tools for the dragon.

Salamanders are usually guards or warriors, although salamanders are also exhibited as signs of the dragon's power to cultists.

Salamanders have no affect on the beginning alert level.

Troglodytes

The consensus among dragon overlords is that troglodytes are easy to recruit, surprisingly loyal,

pleasantly ferocious – and disgusting. Dragons have a stench all their own, a rich foulness comprised of thick sulphur, the sick sweetness of decay, strong musk, and the harsh metallic smell of blood. For them to object to another creature's odour would seem to be the height of hypocrisy, but they have good reason.

Troglodytes release their stench when frightened. The frightful presence of dragons triggers this response, even if the dragon is no threat to the troglodyte. It is completely involuntary. A dragon overlord reviewing its troglodyte troops must somehow overlook the streams of foul musk that dribbles down the legs of the soldiers and pools in the mud. Dragons have an acute sense of smell – although they can overcome the nausea produced by troglodyte musk, they certainly do not find it pleasant.

Troglodytes are therefore never found near (or upwind of) a dragon's lair, or as servitors. Troglodyte can be serfs, guards, warriors and cultists, and are usually found serving black dragons. Especially smart troglodytes can be used as agents. This accounts for the black dragon's reputation as the foulest of dragonkind.

Troglodytes raise the beginning alert level by 1.

Trolls

Dragons with fiery or acid breaths can easily dominate a troll gang. While trolls have no fear (or conception) of death, they understand pain when made familiar with it. A few well-placed blasts from a breath weapon can scar a troll and convince it to serve the dragon. Trolls are good for nothing except guards and warriors, but they do make excellent guards and warriors. Dragons often encourage crossbreeding between trolls and more intelligent humanoids, to blend the useful regenerative powers of the troll with disciplined and skilled troops.

Trolls have no affect on the beginning alert level.

Undead

The undead are a terrifying servant to have. Tireless, relentless, remorseless, the undead are also eternally watchful. Empty eyesockets do not blink, and dead minds care nothing for distractions. The dead need no supplies, and hunger only for the warmth of

living beings. For an evil dragon, the undead might be considered the ultimate servant.

Fortunately, few dragons have the necessary necromantic powers to raise an army of the undead. Undead make poor servitors, cultists, or agents, but are peerless guards and excellent warriors.

Undead raise the beginning alert level by 5, and do not suffer from the fatigue that comes with being On Guard or Alerted for long periods of time.

NEW SERVANT RACES

In the hidden places of the swamps and mountains, there are things that were made to serve dragons in ages past. Some crawled away and hid when their first masters were slain, only to fall under the dominion of another wyrm. Others fled the tyranny of dragons, seeking refuge in the shadows. Most, however, are still in the thrall of the descendants of their creators.

Alchemical Serpent

Medium Dragon

Hit Dice: 6d12+12 (51 hp)

Initiative: +2 (dex)

Speed: 30 ft

Armour Class: 20 (+2 Dex,+8 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 18

Base Attack Bonus/Grapple: +6/+11

Attack: Bite +11 melee (1d8+8)

Full Attack: Bite +11 melee (1d8+8)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. x 5 ft /5 ft

Special Attacks: Constrict (1d8+8), Improved Grab, Spells

Special Qualities: Acid Blood, Energy Immunity, Telepathy

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

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 12

Skills: Bluff +6, Concentration +6, Diplomacy +5, Intimidate +6, Listen +8, Spot +8, Search +4

Feats: Acid blood, Alertness

Climate/Terrain: Any

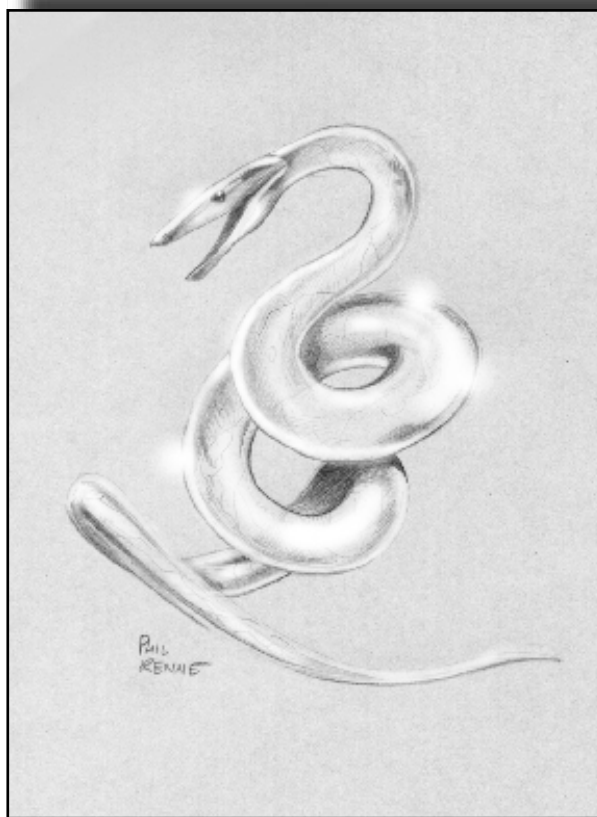
Organisation: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 4

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Usually chaotic evil

Advancement: 7-10 HD (Medium), 11-15 HD (Large)



Alchemical serpents are made from the blood and saliva of a dragon, together with a complex and rare mixture of alchemical essences and magic. They are boneless serpents of liquid glass, and the blood that gives them life can clearly be seen running through their translucent bodies.

These creatures are used as guardians and overseers by the dragon who created them. The dragon that donated the blood for the serpent can telepathically control it, even over great distances. Many cult temples have an alchemical serpent twining around the central altar, whispering orders to the high priest. When the dragon is not telepathically controlling the serpent, it is a sullen and brutish creature. Dragon cultists watch the eyes of the serpent, for when the dragon is in control, the serpent's eyes flood with blood.

If the master dragon dies, the alchemical serpent goes insane. It assembles a fragmentary personality out of the shards of memories left over from telepathic contacts and often comes to believe it is the dragon.

Combat

Alchemical serpents behave quite differently in combat depending on whether or not the dragon is 'in'. If uncontrolled, the serpent lashes out and tries to bite and crush enemies. On the other hand, if the dragon is in telepathic control, the serpent defends itself using magic and attempts to learn as much as it can about its attackers. In normal circumstances, there is a 5% chance per round that the dragon telepathically enters the serpent.

Acid Blood (Su): Anyone who injures the serpent with a melee attack must immediately make a Reflex save (DC15) or take 2d4 damage. The type of damage is the same as the serpent's energy immunity.

Energy Immunity (Su): The alchemical serpent is immune to one type of energy, which is always the same type of energy used by the dragon's breath weapon. For example, an alchemical serpent created from a red dragon's blood is immune to fire.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the serpent must hit with its bite attack. If it gets a hold, it can constrict.

Constrict (Ex): An alchemical serpent deals 1d8+8 damage with a successful grapple check against Medium or smaller creatures.

Spells (Su): If the dragon is controlling the serpent, it can cast one spell per round through the serpent as if using the project image spell.

Telepathy (Su): The dragon that donated the blood for the serpent can telepathically contact the serpent and possess it. The dragon can see through the serpent's eyes and speak through its mouth. However, due to the limitations of the medium, the dragon is restricted to the serpent's skills.

Construction

Making an alchemical serpent requires the blood and spit of a dragon, as well as alchemical materials totalling 10,000gp in cost. The creator must make a Craft (alchemy) check (DC20) to begin the

growth process, which takes 6d4 weeks to complete. To animate the serpent, the creator must have the Craft Construct feat and spend 500 XP. The spells project image and sending must be cast into the serpent as it emerges from the cauldron of creation.

Draconic Cuckoo

Small Dragon

Hit Dice: 3d12 (20 hp)

Initiative: +4 (Improved initiative)

Speed: 30 ft., Fly 40 ft. (poor)

Armour Class: 14 (+1 Dex, +1 size, +2 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 13

Base Attack Bonus/Grapple: +3/+1

Attack: Bite +5 melee (1d6+2)

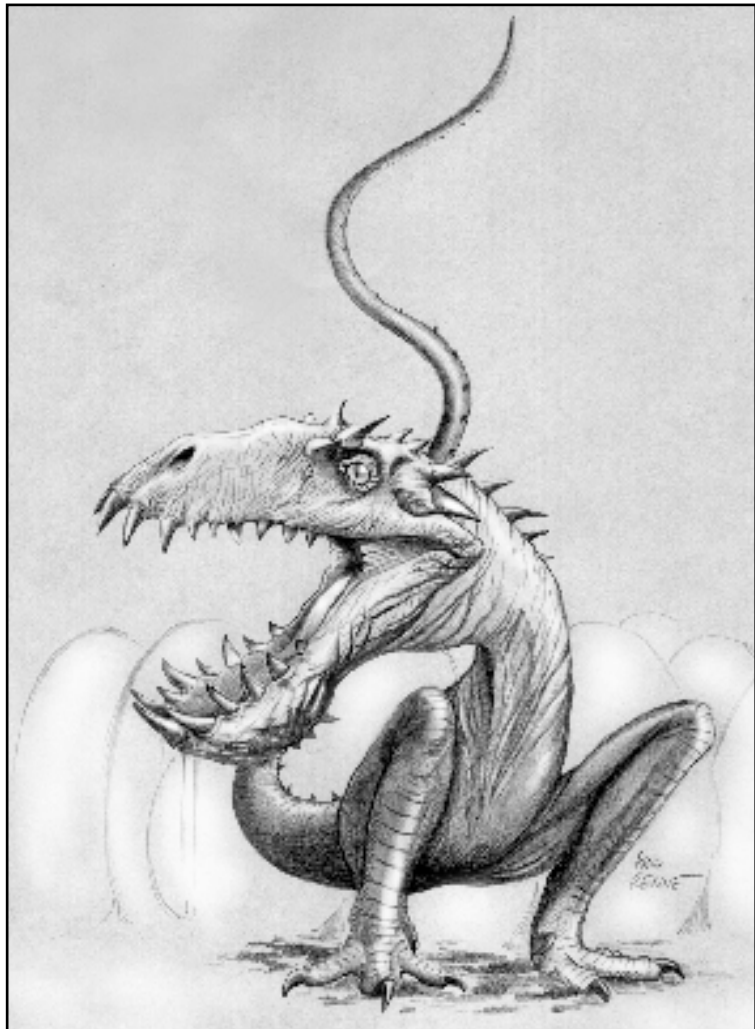
Full Attack: Bite +5 melee (1d6+2), 2 claws +0 (1d3+1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. x 5 ft / 5 ft

Special Attacks: Exploding Attack, Chew

Special Qualities: Cocoon

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +3



Abilities: Str 14, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 3, Wis 10, Cha 10

Skills: Listen +4, Jump +10, Spot +4

Feats: Improved Initiative

Climate/Terrain: Any

Organisation: Solitary or clutch (2-4)

Challenge Rating: 2

Treasure: None

Alignment: Usually chaotic evil

Advancement: 4-6 HD (Medium)

These ghastly creatures resemble a dragon hatchling, if half the mass of a hatchling was in its jaws and teeth. Draconic cuckoos have thick, knotted muscles and strong tails to keep their grotesquely overgrown heads aloft. Their legs are similarly overdeveloped, adapted for quick, brutal jumps. Like wyverns, they have no forearms, and their upper bodies are weak and thin. The breathing of the cuckoo is shallow and desperate, as their too-small lungs fight to draw enough breath in to fuel the dragon's actions.

Despite their name, these creatures are valued by true dragons – in fact, they were created by them. Draconic cuckoos are the last line of defence for a nest of dragon eggs. They weave leathery cocoons around themselves, which appear identical to an egg. Inside its cocoon, the cuckoo hibernates for months on end, waiting for something unfamiliar to disturb its false egg. When an intruder comes near the nest, the cuckoo explodes out, its massive jaws maiming and tearing away chunks of flesh until the nest is quiet and safe again.

When the true dragons hatch, the cuckoo slinks away into the depths of the lair, to lay its own sickly clutch of eggs that will safeguard the next dragon generation.

Combat

Draconic cuckoos attack when any unfamiliar creature comes within 20 feet of their false egg. They leap out and furiously bite the intruders.

Exploding Attack (Ex): In the first round of combat, the draconic cuckoo jumps out of its egg, gaining a +20 circumstance modifier to its Jump check. It also gains an insight bonus to its attacks this round equal to the difference in initiative scores between it and its target. Characters who did not roll initiative this round are considered to have initiative 0. For example, if the cuckoo's initiative is 13 and

its target's initiative is 3, the cuckoo has a +10 bonus to attacks in the first round of combat.

Chew (Ex): If the cuckoo hits with its bite attack, it can begin to chew its opponent in subsequent rounds. While chewing, its jaws lock onto the enemy, and it automatically hits with its bite attack. A chewing cuckoo can be dislodged by prising its jaws open, which requires a Strength check (DC14) to accomplish.

Cocoon (Ex): Draconic cuckoos can create a false eggshell around themselves. This false egg mimics the surface colouring of the real dragon eggs in the nest. Observers may make a Spot check (DC15) to notice slight differences between a cocoon and a real egg.

Hoblizard

Large Monstrous Humanoid (Aquatic, Reptilian)

Hit Dice: 3d8+6 (19 hp)

Initiative: +0 (dex)

Speed: 30 ft

Armour Class: 18 (+7 natural, +2 large shield), touch 10, flat-footed 18

Base Attack Bonus/Grapple: +3/+9

Attack: 2 claws +3 melee (1d6+2) or greatsword +3 melee (2d6+3) or javelin +2 ranged (1d6+2)

Full Attack: 2 claws +3 melee (1d6+2) plus bite +1 melee (1d6) or greatsword +3 melee (2d6+3) plus bite +1 melee (1d6) or javelin +2 ranged (1d6+2)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. x 5 ft /10 ft.

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

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 12

Skills: Balance +4, Listen +4, Jump +9, Spot +4, Swim +9

Feats: Multiattack

Climate/Terrain: Temperate and warm marsh

Organisation: Gang (2-3), band (6-10 plus one leader of 3rd-6th level) or tribe (50-100 plus 50% non-combatants plus 3 lieutenants of 3rd-6th level and 1 leader of 4th-10th level and 1 cultist of 4th-10th level)

Challenge Rating: 2

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Usually lawful evil

Advancement: By character class

Hoblizards are to lizardfolk as hobgoblins are to common goblins – bigger, stronger, nastier, and more regimented. They stand a head taller than their



lesser kin, and their long tails are often armoured in well-forged steel. Their barbed greatswords are much finer weapons than the greatclubs favoured by ordinary lizardfolk.

In their swampy homes, hoblizards build huge military camps where they drill and train endlessly. Hoblizards dominate the surrounding tribes of lizardfolk, using them as fodder and disposable troops. The added discipline enforced by the hoblizards does make the lizardfolk into better and more dangerous warriors. The hoblizards can also hide their presence by disguising their attacks as the disorganised raids of ordinary lizardfolk.

Hoblizard society is dominated by the dragon-worshipping sorcerer-cultists. When the hoblizard tribe is serving a particular dragon, the cultists dedicate themselves to that patron wyrm. At other times, the cultists worship the draconic deities. The cultists preach that hoblizards must constantly hone their skills and prepare for the day when the dragons will rise and their chosen servants will make war upon all non-draconic creatures.

Combat

Hoblizards are tactical experts, adept at creating and following complex battle plans. They co-ordinate their attacks and fight with perfect discipline. Their major weakness is the assumption that their dragon masters will rule the skies unchallenged; hoblizard tactics and training are vulnerable to attacks from above.

Skills: The hoblizard's tails give a +4 racial bonus to Jump, Swim and Balance checks.

Hoblizard Characters

Hoblizards' favoured class is Fighter, although a significant minority are Sorcerers. These sorcerers usually become cultists, although some prefer to use their magical powers on the battlefield.

Huntbeast

Large Magical Beast

Hit Dice: 4d10+12 (51 hp)

Initiative: +1 (dex)

Speed: 40 ft

Armour Class: 16 (+1 Dex, +5 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 15

Base Attack Bonus/Grapple: +4/+12

Attack: Bite +7 melee (1d8+4), 2 claws +2
melee

Full Attack: Bite +7 melee (1d8+4), 2 claws +2
melee (1d4)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. x 10 ft /5 ft.

Special Qualities: Taste for Blood, Scent

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +1

Abilities: Str 19, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 3, Wis 10,
Cha 3

Skills: Spot +2, Survival +8

Feats: Endurance

Climate/Terrain: Any temperate

Organisation: Solitary or pack (2-4)

Challenge Rating: 2

Treasure: None

Alignment: Usually neutral

Advancement: 5-10 HD (Large)

Huntbeasts are mostly dog, but their sunken eyes, oversized nostrils and scaly hides are clear signs of magical remaking. They are specially bred for hunting and tracking, and combine the keen senses and loyalty of canines with the remorseless



dedication of reptiles. A huntbeast can track its prey for weeks without tiring or straying from its course.

The most noticeable feature of huntbeasts are the broad scales that cover their muzzles and necks. These scales conceal secondary scent receptors. A huntbeast on the prowl can make their scales flare up, like the feathers of a peacock, exposing these sensitive receptors and enhancing its perceptions. The huntbeast gets a +10 insight bonus to its scent checks while its scales are flared, but its natural armour class bonus is reduced by 3 due to exposing the receptors.

Unlike the dire wolves that they are derived from, huntbeasts make poor mounts. They can be ridden, but dislike it and tend to chew at their saddles – or riders, if a foot comes within range of a mouth. Huntbeast handlers usually ride alongside their animals to keep up with their fast, tireless pace.

Combat

Huntbeasts are incapable of complex tactics – when they come close to their quarry, the smell completely overwhelms their restraint and they rush straight into battle.

Scent (Ex): Huntbeasts can track by scent. They have a remarkable sense of smell, which is further enhanced by the scent receptors that stud their head and neck.

Taste for Blood (Ex): If a huntbeast injures a creature it has been tracking, the release of blood and sweat drives the creature into a frenzy. It enters a rage, like that of a 1st level barbarian; however, instead of gaining a +4 bonus to Strength and Constitution, it gains a +1 bonus for every 5 points of damage it inflicts on its scented target, to a maximum of +8.

Scalers

Tiny Dragon

Hit Dice: 1d12 (7 hp)

Initiative: +3 (dex)

Speed: 20 ft., Fly 30 ft.

Armour Class: 17 (+3 dex, +2 size, +2 natural), touch 15, flat-footed 14

Base Attack Bonus/Grapple: +1/-9

Attack: Bite +4 melee (1d3)

Full Attack: Bite +4 melee (1d3)

Space/Reach: 2 1/2 ft. x 2 1/2 ft /1 ft.

Special Attacks: Breath Weapon

Special Qualities: Shriek

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +2

Abilities: Str 5, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 4, Wis 10, Cha 3

Skills: Climb +8, Listen +2, Spot +2, Search +2

Feats: Dodge

Climate/Terrain: Any

Organisation: Solitary or next (2-12)

Challenge Rating: 1/2

Treasure: None

Alignment: Usually neutral

Advancement: 2-4 HD (Small)

These tiny parasites resemble the dragons they feed on. Scalers are small, winged lizards with papery wings, wickedly sharp little teeth, and a taste for carrion. They crawl through the lairs and over the

slumbering forms of larger dragons, feeding on the insects that sometimes burrow into their hides. Scalers also eat fragments of moulted skin and loose scales, grooming the dragon as it sleeps. Especially brave scalers even dart into the dragon's mouth to pluck chunks of meat and gristle from between razor-sharp teeth.

For their part, true dragons tolerate these parasites in the absence of better servants. Scalers are able to detect the emotions of other dragons, and know when to make themselves scarce if the dragon is angered or hungry. Gold and silver dragons find scalers distasteful, but most of the other dragon breeds save white dragons have scaler companions. (The scalers cannot endure the frozen wastes where white dragons dwell.)

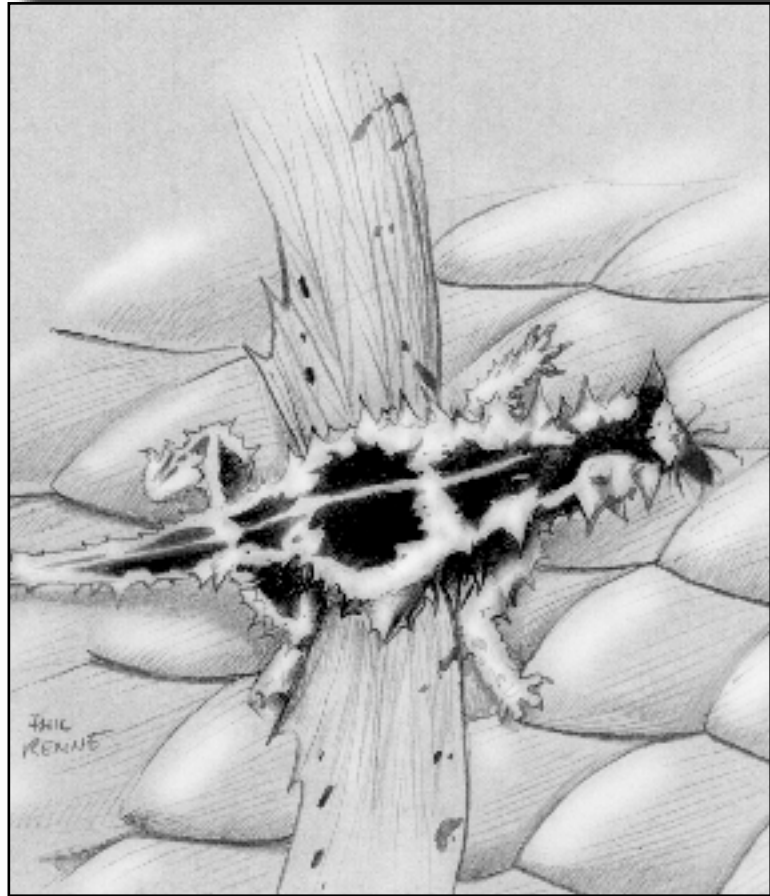
Eating the flesh of dragons always has strange effects. The scales and magic-gorged parasites that form the scaler's diet give it a minor breath weapon that mimics the breath of their host dragon. This breath weapon always smells foul and fetid, as befits a carrion eater.

Scalers are relatively unintelligent, but they have a certain amount of animal cunning, coupled with a taste for mischief. They like to toy with their prey, and often mimic the behaviour of larger dragons.

Combat

Scalers begin shrieking when they enter combat. This eerie cry is made by the scaler forcing air over specially-shaped teeth at the sides of its mouth. The shrieks are irritating and painful, and may also attract other scalers and guards or even awaken a sleeping dragon.

Breath Weapon (Su): Three times per day, a scaler can fire a jet from its mouth. This jet forms a cone 10 feet long, and inflicts 1d10 points of damage. The type of damage depends on the dragon that the scaler has been feeding from – a scaler who grooms a blue dragon breathes static electricity, for example. Victims are allowed a Reflex save (DC10) to take half damage.



Shriek (Ex): When a scaler shrieks, any creatures within 20 feet must make a Fortitude save (DC5) or be deafened for 1d3 rounds. Shrieking is a free action for scalers.

Slithering

Huge Construct

Hit Dice: 14d10+40 (117 hp)

Initiative: -1 (dex)

Speed: 30 ft., Fly 50 ft (perfect).

Armour Class: 22 (-2 size, -1 dex, +15 natural), touch 7, flat-footed 22

Base Attack Bonus/Grapple: +10/+25

Attack: Buffet +15 melee (2d6+10)

Full Attack: 4 Buffets +15 melee (2d6+10)

Space/Reach: 10 ft. x 20 ft /10 ft.

Special Attacks: Detonate, Envelop

Special Qualities: Construct, DR50/Slashing, DR20/magic, Draconic Memories, SR20, Squeeze

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +4

Abilities: Str 25, Dex 8, Con -, Int -, Wis 11, Cha 3

Climate/Terrain: Any

Organisation: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 13

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always neutral

Advancement: 15-20 HD (Huge)

Slitherings are the animated form of a dragon's shed skin. After a moult, the husk of the discarded hide can be imbued with magical force and turned into a strange form of magical puppet. On first glance, a slithering looks like a rather bedraggled dragon. Closer examination reveals that the skin of this 'dragon' hangs from a boneless, fleshless field of magical energy, and that its eyes are empty holes in the thin veil that is its head. Most slitherings have the vestigial remnants of wing-moult, but do not use these to fly – the magical field that animates the creature can move smoothly through the air.

Only very odd and unpleasant dragons use slitherings in their lair – after all, the entities are made from discarded skin, and are about as appealing as a zombie made from one's clone. The constructs are usually placed to guard hidden entrances to the dragon's lair, or wrapped around an alchemical serpent and used to control a cult.

The magical field used to animate a slithering draws its power from the slow decay of the moulted scales. Unlike most constructs, then, slitherings are mortal and rarely last more than two or three centuries. If too much of a slithering's husk is destroyed, the magical field collapses violently.

Combat

Slitherings are surprisingly unpredictable opponents. Their basic mode of attack is to slam enemies with folds of their loose, billowing skin. A slithering usually uses its head or limbs to strike, but as the whole of its form is equally composed of moulted dragon-scales, so it can attack with any piece of itself, extruding a flap of armoured hide as a weapon. More alarmingly, it can choke enemies with its skin, or draw on a range of draconic powers inherited from the previous wearer of the skin.

Envelop (Ex): If a slithering hits with two buffets in the same round on the same opponent, it can choose to envelop that opponent. The victim is trapped in a fold of the slithering, and begins to suffocate. A *Escape Artist* or *Strength* check (both at DC 40) is required to free the victim. A victim cannot do anything other than try to escape while enveloped. If the victim chokes to death while enveloped, the slithering gains another 3d6 years of life. The

slithering's number of buffet attacks is reduced by one for every victim it is currently enveloping.

Detonate (Su): When the skin of a slithering is destroyed – i.e., when the slithering is reduced to zero hit points – the magical field animating it explodes. This causes an explosion that inflicts 1d6 points of electricity damage (to a maximum of 20d6) for every point of damage in excess of that required to reduce the slithering to zero hit points. For example, if the slithering was at 5 hit points, and suffers 10 points of damage, it explodes for 5d6 points of damage. The radius of the explosion is 5 feet per point of damage. Victims may make a *Reflex* save (DC17) to take half damage.

Damage Reduction (Su): Only slashing weapons have any real effect on the wispy flesh of a slithering, and then only magical weapons.

Draconic Memories (Su): A slithering can draw on the memories and abilities of the dragon it was made from. Every round, roll on the following table to determine which ability the slithering 'inherits'. Use the standard statistics for a dragon of the type and size that shed the skin. Each ability lasts only one round.

1. None.
2. The slithering gains a breath weapon attack.
3. The slithering gains blindsight.
4. The slithering gains the spell-like abilities of the dragon.
5. The slithering gains the spellcasting abilities of the dragon.
6. The slithering gains the physical attacks of the dragon.

Squeeze (Ex): Slitherings can push their scaly forms through extremely small gaps, no more than six inches wide. They only move at a rate of 5 feet per round while squeezing.

Construction

Creating a slithering requires, firstly, a relatively intact dragon-skin husk. The husk is then imbued with magic, a process that requires the caster to painstakingly sculpt the internal skeleton of a dragon in invisible fields of force. To do so requires the *Craft Construct* feat, 75,000 gp, and the spells *telekinesis*, *unseen servant*, *clone* and *limited wish*. After all this is done, the caster must spend 2,000XP to animate the husk.

Vessel Golem

Large Construct

Hit Dice: 20d10+30 (140 hp)

Initiative: -1 (dex)

Speed: 20 ft. (can't run)

AC: 33 (-1 dex, -1 size, +25 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 33

Base Attack Bonus/Grapple: +15/+29

Attack: Slam +25 (2d10+10)

Full Attack: 2 Slams +25 (2d10+10)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. x 5 ft /10 ft.

Special Attacks: Inner Fire, spill, stored energy

Special Qualities: Construct, recharge, magic immunity, damage reduction 50/+3

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

Abilities: Str 30, Dex 8, Con -, Int -, Wis 11, Cha 1

Climate/Terrain: Any

Organisation: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 18.

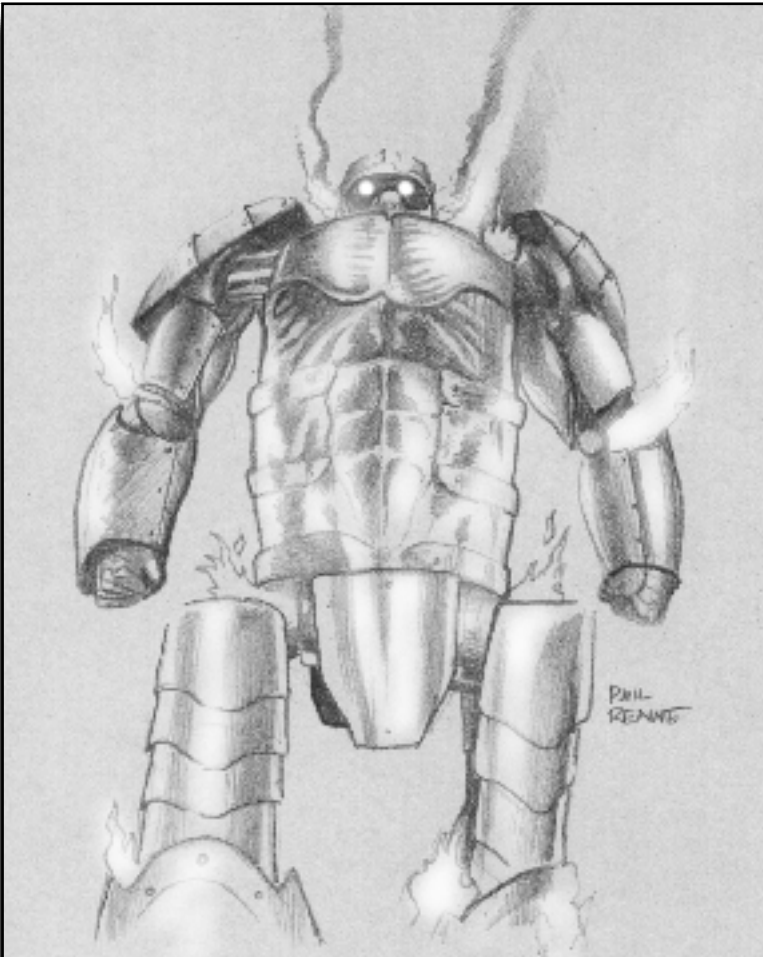
Treasure: None

Alignment: Always neutral.

Advancement: 21-25 HD (Large), 26-30 HD (Huge)

A vessel golem is a variant of an iron golem. Its huge, ornate barrel-shaped chest is a magical reservoir of dragon-fire. As a vessel golem ponderously walks, jets of smoke and flame issue from its joints. The golem's head is hinged and can flip open like the lid of a flagon, allowing its inner fires to be refuelled. Each vessel golem is built for a specific type of dragon, so gas, acid or electricity-powered golems also exist. Vessel golems are among the most prized possessions of their dragon masters; a golem will never go idle for long, but will be inherited or claimed as a spoil of war after the death of a master.

Like all golems, vessel golems are clumsy and slow. However, the vessel golem can use its inner fires to quicken its pace and enhance its abilities, allowing it to effectively aid its dragon master in pitched battle. A vessel golem can even spill some of this fire out as a breath weapon, blasting its foes in concert with its master. The golem must be cautious, though, for if it exhausts its energy reserve, it will become nothing but a dark and empty shell until its fires are renewed.



Vessel golems are used as enforcers and bodyguards by ancient dragons. Most wyrms are far too egotistical to fight in concert with an ally or partner, believing themselves to be utterly peerless warriors. A vessel golem is not an independent being, but is an extension of the dragon's wrath and therefore acceptable.

Combat

As long as a vessel golem is charged with magical energy, it is a truly fearsome foe. The best hope for an enemy is to exhaust the golem, but this is a difficult task.

Construct: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, disease and similar effects. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

Inner Fire (Su): A vessel golem's vessel contains energy from a dragon's breath weapon. A vessel holds a maximum of

five points of energy per hit point of the golem. If a golem's vessel is ruptured, which occurs when the golem's hit points drop one-fifth of its stored energy, it immediately spills to reduce its stored energy down to a containable level (i.e. less than five times its current hit points). A randomly encountered golem has 250+1d100 points of energy.

If a golem is reduced to 0 stored energy, it shuts down and is inactive until recharged. A shut-down golem cannot absorb spells cast at it to recharge – a dragon must breathe into it or a spellcaster must deliberately cast a spell into the golem to reawaken it.

Recharge (Su): A vessel golem can be recharged by a dragon with an appropriate breath weapon; its head flips open and the dragon breathes into the golem's reservoir. A vessel golem can also automatically absorb spells targeting it that do the appropriate type of damage; a golem fuelled by electricity can recharge itself by absorbing a *lightning bolt* spell, for example. A spell or breath weapon gives the golem one point of stored energy per point of damage that could be inflicted. If this brings the total above the golem's capacity (i.e. five times its hit points), it spills out the excess. Recharging is not an action for the golem.

Stored energy (Su): A vessel golem must spend one point of stored energy per hour of movement and per round of combat or intense activity. It can also spend stored energy as a free action to give itself any of the following abilities, each of which lasts one round.

Ability	Cost
1 st extra attack per round	10 points
2 nd extra attack per round	15 points
3 rd extra attacks per round	20 points
4 th extra attacks per round	30 points
<i>Heal</i> self (as the spell, cast by a 20 th level cleric)	100 points
<i>Dimension door</i> (as the spell, cast by a 20 th level sorcerer)	40 points
<i>Dispel magic</i> (as the spell, cast by a 20 th level sorcerer)	40 points
Cleave feat	20 points
Power attack feat	30 points
Extra 10 feet of movement	10 points

Spill (Su): A vessel golem can spill out some of its stored energy in a cone 20 feet long and 20 feet wide. This cone inflicts 1 point of damage per point of energy expended. Those struck by the cone may make a Reflex save (DC20) to take half damage.

Magic immunity (Su): Vessel golems are immune to all spells, except those that recharge it (see above), *knock* and spells that cause energy drains. *Knock* causes the golem to instantly spill 2d10 points of energy, while energy drain spells reduce the golem's stored energy reserves by 10 points per negative level.

Construction

Creating a vessel golem begins with an unfinished iron golem. The construction of the vessel to hold the dragon's breath costs 50,000gp and requires a successful Alchemy check (DC20). In addition to the usual spells for animating an iron golem, a vessel golem requires the caster to use *imprisonment*. Vessel golems cost 2,500 XP to animate.

Bought Undead

In a dragon's hoard, two gold coins can easily be overlooked amid many thousands of their fellows, piled in golden drifts and glittering dunes. Still, something about these two draws the eye. They gleam in a curious fashion, as if catching light beams from some past time or brighter world. When touched, the coins fly up, spin in the air for a moment – then drive themselves into the eyesockets of the nearest creature. The coins mill their way through bone and lodge themselves in the unfortunate's skull.

Death soon follows – but this is a death bought and paid for by the mage who enchanted the coins. Whatever forces rule over the departure of the dead are bribed by the magic of the coins, and the victim's spirit is instantly dragged back to animate the corpse. Within a few seconds of touching the coins, the victim has been transformed into an undead guardian of the hoard, his soul bought for two pieces of gold.

Bought undead attack anyone other than the wizard who created the coins. Most dragons lack the power or interest to enchant such things, but still use bought undead coins as traps within their hoards. With luck, the coins will deal with a party of insolent burglars, and then all the dragon need to

do smash the animated undead and carefully pluck the coins from its ruined skull.

Combat

Bought undead are created by a pair of magical items called the *coins of death purchase*. If a humanoid creature touches one of these coins, they fly up into the air and try to embed themselves in the creature's eyesockets. The victim must make a Reflex save (DC25) to dodge the coins – if this fails, the coins drive into the victim's eyes. The victim must now make a Fortitude save (DC20) each round or die. The coins also inflict 2d10 points of damage per round. The only way to remove the coins is to *dispel* them, or else to prise them off by jabbing the point of a blade under the coin without stabbing the victim's eye. This requires an attack roll against AC20 – if this fails, the victim is stabbed, blinded, and takes a critical hit from the weapon used. If the attack roll hits, the attacker may try to prise one of the coins out, which requires a Strength check (DC15). If one coin is removed, the victim will not return as a bought undead, but may still be killed by the other coin unless it too is removed.

If the victim dies, the coins reanimate the corpse as a bought undead within 1d4 rounds. The creature that rises still has the coins embedded in its eyes, but can see with terrifying clarity. A field of dark light surrounds it, but the gold still gleams brightly in its eyesockets. The bought undead stalks and kills its former allies and the other thieves who dared touch the gold.

Construction

Caster level: 16th **Prerequisites:** *Create Undead, Fly, Trap the Soul* **Market price:** 216750gp (50 charges).

Creating a Bought Undead

'Bought undead' is a template that can be applied to any humanoid or monstrous humanoid of between sizes Tiny and Huge, referred to as the base creature. The creature's type changes to 'undead'. It uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

HD: Increase to d12. The hit points of a beginning bought undead are equal to its Hit Dice multiplied by 12, minus the current damage total of the recently-deceased character.

Speed: Same as the base creature.

AC: Natural armour increases by +6.

Attacks: A bought undead retains all the attacks of the base creature, and also gains a slam attack if it did not already have one.

Damage: Bought undead have slam attacks. If the base creature does not have this attack form, use the damage ratings in the table below. Creatures with natural attacks retain their old damage ratings or use the values below, whichever is better.

Bought Undead Slam Attacks	
Size	Damage
Tiny	1d3
Small	1d4
Medium	1d6
Large	1d8
Huge	2d6

Special Attacks: Bought undead retain all the special abilities of the base creature. They also gain the following special attacks. Unless otherwise noted, the saving throw DCs for these abilities is 10+1/2 the undead's Hit Dice + its Charisma modifier.

Sneak Attack (Ex): Bought undead gain a special sneak attack, usable only when they attack their former allies from ambush. This sneak attack inflicts +4d6 points of damage, and stacks with sneak attack damage from other sources.

Negative Energy Field (Su): Bought undead are surrounded by an aura of negative energy. Anyone struck by a melee attack from a bought undead, or who comes within reach of it, must make a Fortitude save (DC as given above) or suffer a negative level.

Special Qualities: A bought undead retains all the special qualities of the base creature, and adds:

Damage Reduction (Su): Bought undead have damage reduction 20/+2.

Turn Resistance (Su): Bought undead cannot be turned while within 50 feet of the hoard from which they were created.

Create Undead (Su): As a standard action, a bought undead can throw up to five pairs of coins into the air. These pairs of coins fly off and land on the eyes of any corpse, infusing them with negative energy. This acts as a *create undead* spell cast by a cleric of equal level to the bought undead.

Spell-like abilities (Sp): 3/day: *Haste*, *slow* 1/day: *Circle of doom*. All abilities are as cast by a

character of level equal to the bought undead's Hit Dice.

Saves: Same as the base creature.

Abilities: Increase from the base creature as follows: Str +8, Dex +0, Int -2, Wis -2, Cha -2. As undead, bought undead have no Constitution score.

Skills: Bought undead have a +6 racial bonus to Listen, Move Silently, Spot and Survival checks. Otherwise, same as the base creature.

Feats: Add Track.

Climate/Terrain: Any.

Organization: Solitary.

Challenge Rating: Same as the base creature +2.

Treasure: Standard.

Alignment: Always neutral evil.

Advancement: By character class.

Dragonbonded

Some dragons delight in having servants whose minds have been moulded by the dragon's will.

These servants can read the dragon's mind and act almost as extensions of the monster, as a spokesman or a spy or an alternate identity. Other servants dwell in the dragon's lair, polishing its scales and cleaning its teeth. Princesses and virgin sacrifices may be taken off to work as the scullions of a wyrm.

Transforming a human or other creature into a dragonbonded requires that the two spend at one month or more in each other's company. Every three days, the human's Will saving throw is reduced by one for the purposes of resisting the dragon's will. Once the creature's Will save reaches zero, the bond is established and the dragon may invoke a *Dominant Person* effect on the dragonbonded creature at will over any range. The victim normally may not save against this effect, although if the dragon is forcing the victim to act against his alignment, he may be able to recover some tattered fragments of his self-awareness.

Good dragons sometimes employ dragonbonded, but treat them with much more respect than evil dragons do.

Creating a Dragonbonded

'Dragonbonded' is a template that can be applied to any humanoid or monstrous humanoid, referred to as the base creature. It uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Special Qualities: A dragonbonded retains all the special qualities of the base creature, and adds:

Energy Resistance (Su): Dragonbonded may ignore the first five points of damage from an energy type that matches that of their draconic patron.

Mindlink (Su): Dragonbonded have an empathic link with their patron, allowing the two to share emotions and images. In each other's presence, this bond grows to full telepathy.

Saves: Dragonbonded saves are all increased by +2.

Dragonbonded may not make Will saves to resist effects generated by their draconic patron.



Abilities: Increase from the base creature as follows: Str +2, Con +2, Cha +2.

Skills: Dragonbonded have a +3 insight bonus to Diplomacy and Knowledge (dragons) checks. Otherwise, same as the base creature.

Climate/Terrain: Any.

Organization: Solitary.

Challenge Rating: Same as the base creature.

Treasure: Standard.

Alignment: As the base creature.

Advancement: By character class.

Goldghost

The lure of the dragon's hoard can catch even the dead. Sometimes, those under the influence of the curse of gold do not pass away to the afterlife when they are slain. Instead, they return to haunt the hoard that consumed their minds even in the moment of death. A goldghost will not willingly share the hoard with anything, not even the dragon, but dragons have learned to contain the undead and use them as traps for thieves.

A goldghost is a shimmering spectral version of its former self, with flecks of gold floating throughout its immaterial form. Their faces are twisted by miserly greed. The ghost immediately attacks anyone carrying gold or other treasure from its hoard. It will keep attacking until all the treasure is recovered and burglars are driven away.

Goldghosts are under a compulsion to gather and guard their gold. Scattering a handful of gold coins in front of the ghost may force it to stop and telekinetically pick up the gold. If coins are scattered at the ghost, it must make a Will save (DC equal to one-tenth the value of the coins in gps) or spend one round picking up the gold.

Creating a Goldghost

'Goldghost' is a template that can be applied to any aberration, beast, dragon, giant, humanoid, magical beast, monstrous humanoid or shapechanger, referred to as the base creature. The creature must have an Intelligence score of at least 6. The creature's type changes to 'undead'. It uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

HD: Increase to d12.

Speed: Goldghosts have a fly speed of 30 feet per round with Perfect manoeuvrability.

AC: Natural armour is the same as the base creature, but only for ethereal encounters. When a goldghost manifests, its natural armour value is 0, but it gains a deflection bonus equal to its Charisma modifier or +1, whichever is higher.

Attacks: A goldghost retains all the attacks of the base creature, although those relying on physical contact do not affect ethereal creatures.

Damage: Against ethereal creatures, the goldghost uses the base creature's damage ratings. Against material creatures, the goldghost cannot deal physical damage at all but can use its special attacks.

Special Attacks: The goldghost retains all the special attacks of the base creature, although those relying on physical contact do not affect non-ethereal creatures. The goldghost also gains a manifestation ability plus three other special attacks described below. The save DCs for these abilities are equal to 10+1/2 the ghost's Hit Dice + its Charisma modifier.



Manifestation (Su): A goldghost can *manifest*, remaining on the Ethereal plane but also moving to the Material. While manifested, it is incorporeal but can make incorporeal touch attacks. Its spells can affect both Ethereal and Material targets, but Material targets are immune to spells that rely on touch.

Golden touch (Su): A goldghost may make a golden touch attack instead of using its normal attacks. Anyone struck by this attack must make a Fortitude save (DC as given above) or shatter into a pile of 10d100 gold coins. This kills the target and prevents *raise dead* spells.

Throw Coins (Su): A goldghost may telekinetically control its hoard. It may throw coins at targets. This ability creates a cone attack 30 feet long and 30 feet wide, emanating from either the ghost or the centre of its hoard. Anyone caught in the hoard takes 10d4 points of damage (Reflex save for half). This counts as scattering the hoard, so the goldghost must make a Will save at the start of the next round or be compelled to spend its action gathering the coins.

Miser's Keeness (Su): A goldghost gets a +1 insight bonus to its attacks for every 50gp worth of treasure in the possession of its target. Only coins, jewels and other non-magical creatures count for this ability.

Special Qualities: A goldghost retains all the special qualities of the base creature, and adds the undead and incorporeal types, as well as:

Turn Resistance (Su): Goldghosts cannot be turned while within 50 feet of the hoard from which they were created.

Saves: Same as the base creature.

Abilities: Increase from the base creature as follows: Cha +4. As undead, goldghost have no Constitution score.

Skills: Goldghosts have a +8 racial bonus to Hide, Listen, Search and Spot. Otherwise, same as the base creature.

Feats: Same as the base creature.

Climate/Terrain: Any.

Organization: Solitary.

Challenge Rating: Same as the base creature +2.

Treasure: Standard.

Alignment: Always neutral evil.

Advancement: By character class.

Weredragon

Despite their name, these shapeshifters are not truly lycanthropes, and the moon has no effect on their transformations. The first sorcerers were an attempt by dragon mages to marry the innate magical power of the dragon with the quickness and adaptability of lesser creatures. Similarly, weredragons are the product of an experiment to bypass the long youth of the dragonkind, and create dragons that are fully-grown in a scant score of years.

An orphaned child left on a monastery doorstep or a changeling infant found in a peasant's crib could be a weredragon, for they appear completely human and mundane for most of their youth. When the weredragon reaches maturity, however, its draconic heritage asserts itself. The weredragon begins to dream of flight, of gold, and of fire. Soon, the changes begin, as the weredragon begins to transform into a dragon.

Usually, this is the end for the weredragon. Its growth was too hasty, too forced, and it cannot



sustain the draconic form. It transforms into a draconic runt that soon sickens and dies, collapsing into a pile of unfinished wings and brittle, broken scales. A few weredragons do manage to survive the process, becoming true dragons, but these are rare indeed.

Weredragon Lycanthropy

Creating a weredragon begins with a lycanthrope. The lycanthrope is made to bite the infant through a bandage soaked in dragon's blood. This causes the lycanthropy virus to be infused with draconic properties as it infects the child. Only an infant, a being of unformed potential, can be turned into a weredragon – after a few years of life, the body is too set in its ways to accept such a radical change.

All weredragons have a strange scar somewhere on their bodies; the bright white marks of an animal bite, surrounded by the purplish, scarred discolouration caused by exposing soft skin to dragonsblood.

Creating a Weredragon

'Weredragon' is a template that can be applied to any humanoid character, referred to as the base creature. The creature's type changes to 'dragon' and it gains the shapeshifter subtype. It uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Special Qualities: A weredragon retains all the special qualities of the base creature, and adds:

Control Shape: A weredragon that is aware of its nature may learn the Control Shape skill as a class skill. This Wisdom-based skill is used to control the character's transformations. If the weredragon fails a Control Shape check, it suffers an amount of temporary Constitution damage equal to the difference between the roll and the Difficulty class for the check.

Transformation (Su): A weredragon may attempt to transform into a half-dragon (as per the template) or a full dragon at will. The type of dragon is determined by the dragon who created the weredragon. The

character must make a Control Shape check to transform into an alternate form, as follows:

Weredragon Shapeshifting	
Desired Form	Control Shape DC
Original humanoid form	10+character's level
Half-dragon	15+character's level
Dragon	20+character's level

The size of the dragon that the character transforms into depends on his current age.

Weredragon Size		
Age	In Human Years	Dragon Size
Adolescence	14-17	Young
Young Adult	18-21	Juvenile
Adult	21-25	Young Adult
Full adult	25+	Adult

If the weredragon's Control Shape bonus ever exceeds 20+his current level, he permanently becomes a full adult dragon.

Saves: Same as the base creature.

Abilities: Same as the base creature.

Skills: Same as the base creature.

Feats: Same as the base creature.

Climate/Terrain: Any.

Organization: Solitary.

Challenge Rating: Same as the base creature +2.

Treasure: Same as the base creature.

Alignment: A weredragon always shares at least half its alignment with that of its parent dragon – a gold weredragon will always be either lawful, or good. It may be, but does not have to be, lawful good.

Advancement: By character class.

DRAGON LAIRS

'There.' The ranger pointed to one cave mouth. It looked identical to all the other gaping holes that bored into the side of the mountain.

'You're sure?' I asked.

'Watch for the smoke. Three...two...one.' A thin wisp of smoke drifted out of the cave and vanished on the breeze. For a moment, I perceived the smell of sulphur. He's in there, sleeping. We've found the lair.'

LAIR FEATURES

A dragon's lair is more than a pile of gold in a cave. The wyrm dwells at the heart of a maze of traps and dangers, designed to protect the dragon and its hoard as it sleeps. Each lair is a gauntlet unique to the dragon. Although there are as many different types of lair as there are dragons, there are features and sections common to most.

Common Features

Every lair, regardless of size, construction, or the type of dragon residing there, includes the following locations. In small lairs, they may be combined; for example, a single cave might include the dragon's dining room, hoard chamber, and killing ground. In larger complexes, each chamber is its own feature.

Entrances: A lair has at least one main entrance, large enough for the dragon to pass through. As this is the obvious route of attack, the path leading from the entrance to the heart of the lair is heavily trapped and closely watched by the dragon. For anything other than another dragon or a very, very well-equipped party, a frontal assault on the lair usually proves disastrous.

While having a single main entrance is defensible, it does mean that the dragon's movements can easily be tracked. By waiting and watching the front door, a thief can see when the dragon is not at home and steal its hoard. Dragons with the ability to *polymorph* themselves often use a human-sized entrance to come and go secretly, avoiding anyone

spying on the main entrance. Other dragons sometimes have a second, hidden dragon-sized exit to the lair.

If the dragon has any form of servant, they have their own entrance into the lair such as a secret passage or human-sized stairwell. These entrances never lead directly into the heart of the lair. Some lead to the dragon's gauntlet, or to the killing ground.

Gauntlet: Dragons are essentially aristocratic killers. They love to pit themselves against suitable foes to prove their strength and power, but do not like to be bothered by inconsequential or petty thieves. Creatures incapable of being interesting and challenging foes are nothing but chaff to be scattered by a breath weapon blast; barely worth the effort of waking up and eating them. The gauntlet, then, is a series of traps and guardian beasts designed to kill intruders. Anything that makes it through the gauntlet must be capable of arousing the dragon's interest (and probably has valuable equipment and treasure worth adding to the hoard).

The gauntlet is usually the outer section of the lair, outside the dragon's living chambers. In larger lairs inhabited by creatures other than the dragon, the gauntlet is essentially the dragon's privacy screen and is located between the servant's quarters and the dragon's chambers. Only those permitted to speak to the dragon know the safe path through the gauntlet.

The gauntlet is a combination of filter, defensive measure and playground – it kills those unworthy to face the dragon, saps the strength of those who might be a threat, and lets the dragon indulge its taste for cruelty. A selection of traps suitable for use in a dragon's gauntlet can be found below.

Killing Grounds: Dragons are traditionally at their most dangerous in the lair, but most lairs are cramped, enclosed places where the dragon's advantage of flight is negated. The answer to this riddle is the killing ground – a chamber at the heart of the lair dedicated to battle. The Killing Ground is where the dragon defends its lair against other wyrms and where it chooses to meet worthy intruders.

The ideal killing ground is an environment bathed in the dragon's element – a fiery pit for a red dragon, a stagnant pool for a black dragon – which is just big enough for the resident wyrm to spread its

wings and flap a short distance (or use the Hover feat). Dragons with a cone-shaped breath weapons favour enclosed regions, such as a tongue of rock with a steep drop or lake of fire on either side, where enemies are trapped and have no place to run from the dragon's wrath. Lightning-breathing and other dragons with line-shaped weapons prefer 'murder alleys' – long straight passages free of obstruction, where the dragon can target enemies from a long distance.

If the lair is big enough, the killing ground is a multi-level chamber, such as a vertical shaft or a chasm open to the sky. The ground is usually broken, forcing creatures smaller than the dragon to make Balance or Jump checks to move. The main purpose of the killing ground, however, is to defend the lair against rival dragons, so any weapons or traps present are designed to kill these enemies. Most killing grounds, especially ones in conquered lairs, have at least one anti-dragon trap – see below.

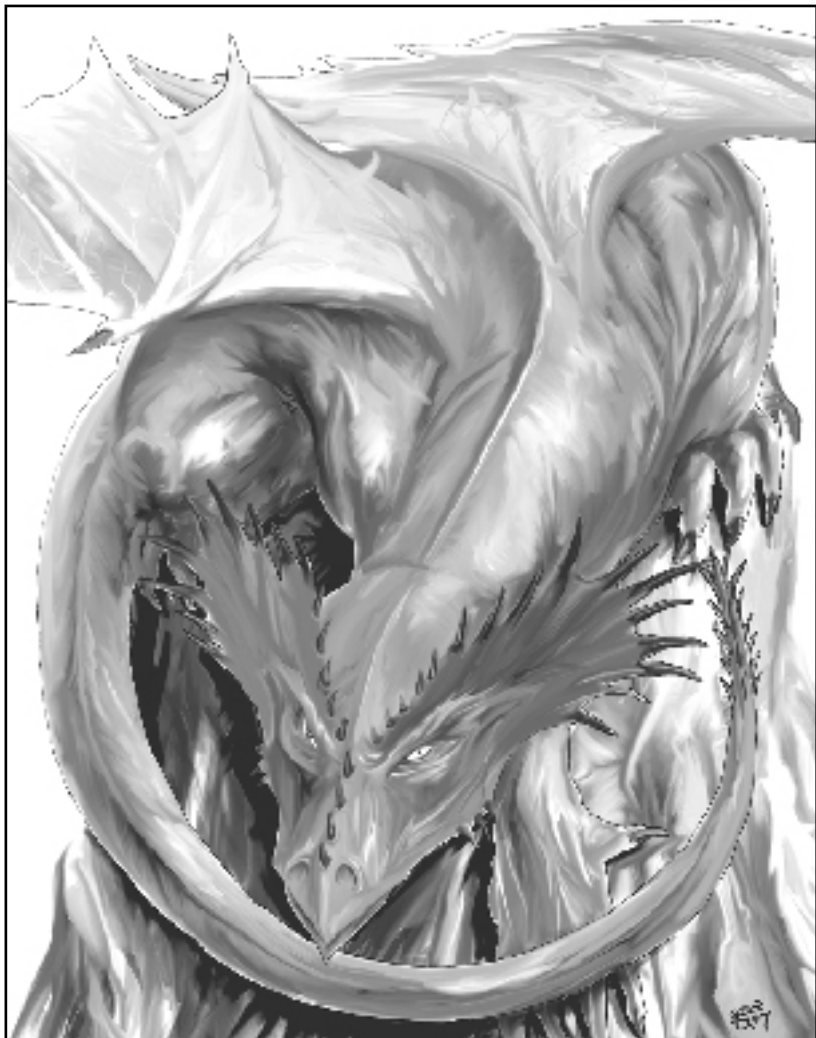
The killing ground is the worst possible place to fight a dragon. Its total familiarity with the terrain gives it a +1 circumstance modifier to all attacks. Creatures smaller than the dragon have to make Balance checks to move from obstacle to obstacle, and suffer a –2 penalty to all Reflex saves due to the cramped and uneven conditions. When designing a killing ground, think of all the nastiest tricks that the dragon could come up with during decades of contemplating defences and tortures, and put as many of these tricks as possible into the chamber.

Audience Chamber: Dragons have minions, servants, agents and acolytes, not to mention respectful or terrified visitors to talk to. While dragons grumble about being disturbed, most welcome a chance to speak. They adore banter and riddling talk, and value flattery above all other tributes save treasure. The audience chamber is a room for the dragon to speak to such guests in safety.

Audience chambers are richly decorated with ornaments that

emphasise the grandeur and magnificence of the resident wyrm. Sometimes, the supplicant must climb up to a pulpit to speak to the dragon; in other chambers, the supplicant enters at the base of a well and the dragon looks down from above. Some wyrms prefer an audience chamber resembling a confessional, where the dragon speaks from the other side of a thick grate. In every case, the chamber's acoustics are perfectly pitched to resonate with the dragon's voice, giving the dragon a +2 circumstance modifier to Diplomacy and Intimidate checks.

For safety's sake, the audience chamber always puts the supplicant at a severe disadvantage. For example, those in a pulpit or down a well have nowhere to dodge to if the dragon breathes. Audience chambers often include traps that the dragon can trigger if it is alarmed or displeased by the supplicant's words. The audience chamber and killing ground mark the end of the 'public' regions of the lair. Anything beyond these chambers is the dragon's own domain,



and only a handful of the most trusted servants will ever be permitted to enter it.

Dining Room: The skills of dragon-kind in rhetoric are legendary. Their skills in cuisine are somewhat less fabled. Dragons have simple tastes when dining – meat, and plenty of it. They do, however, distinguish between the meat of different species of prey, and can be extremely and alarmingly picky. Sentient species are considered delicacies, although dragons find dwarves almost unedible. Most dragons cook their food by breathing on it, although acid-breathing dragons who can easily digest anything prefer raw meat. The dining room is a chamber containing a small pit. Food is placed in the pit and blasted with a breath weapon. Pantries or jails containing captured food animals adjoin the dining room. Dragons usually eat in the wilderness while hunting, so the dining room is only used when the dragon is forced to stay at home for long periods (for example, when it fears that thieves are watching its lair, or when a rival is hunting for it). The pantry is stocked by servants of dragon, if available; otherwise, the dragon must carry extra food supplies back with it after hunting.

Dragons who dine on elemental essences often use curious hookah-like devices called peluda pipes to aid digestion. While the dragon can just eat the gemstones or the dew or whatever contains the essence, the pipes draw out and recirculate the gaseous essences from the dragon's stomachs, making the meal more digestible and pleasant. Dragons with the ability to take human form maintain a dining chamber that would not be out of place in the manorial home of a rich lord (although the surrounding may be quite different – the table may be spread with a white tablecloth and laden with a delicately prepared feast, but few rich lords dine in dim and dank caverns).

For those who are extremely brave and cunning, the dining room offers a method of bypassing the defences and reaching the heart of the dragon's lair. The dining room is usually just off the dragon's audience chamber or even its hoard, so anyone captured by the dragon or its servants and brought to the pantry will be brought through the gauntlet and killing ground. Prospective meals are stripped of weapons and equipment and locked in the pantry, but a resourceful hero could perhaps sneak a lockpick or concealed weapon in. Ironically, the dragon-blooded sorcerer is among the strongest candidate for this route of attack, as he carries his

magic in his mind and not in an easily removed spellbook.

Midden: Also located near the dining chamber, the midden is where the remains of the dragon's prey are dumped along with other waste. Some middens are simply deep pits packed full of waste. Others are located on the banks of an underground river and the waste is washed away downstream. (Such a water feature provides another access point to the dragon's lair.)

Hoard Chamber: The heart of the dragon's lair, this chamber is always and instantly dominated by the great pile of treasure on which the dragon sleeps. (See page 118, Hoards, for details on stocking a dragon's hoard.) Dragons dislike fighting here, as it puts their beloved treasure at risk. The hoard chamber is usually the largest chamber in the lair – not because the hoard fills it, but because dragons are eternally optimistic about how much treasure they will claim in years to come.

In addition to the hoard, this chamber contains whatever items or comforts the dragon needs; prisoners to be questioned, books or scrolls to be studied, eggs to be guarded, *scrying* pools, shrines, snacks and so forth.

Refuge: The refuge is a small, hidden chamber in the depths of the lair. The entrance is always concealed (Search DC 10+the dragon's Intelligence) but must be quickly accessible by the dragon – preferably it is close to the killing ground. The refuge is the dragon's emergency cache of supplies. It contains curative items like *healing* scrolls or potions, as well as devices to turn the tide of battle or to provide a quick escape, such as a *teleportation* item. Some rare refuges are even large enough for the dragon to hide inside. Whenever the fight turns against the dragon, it uses the contents of the refuge to restore itself.

Escape Route: If a dragon's defences fail and it cannot win on the killing ground, its lair quickly changes from a fortress into a tomb. Most lairs therefore include at least one back door known only to the dragon and used only in dire need. Shapeshifting dragons use secret passages that are too small for their pursuers to follow. It is more than a little ignominious for a mighty red dragon to slip away disguised as a kobold, but a victorious blue rival cannot fit down a kobold-sized tunnel. Dragons who can breath water or walk through fire

Refuge Contents

The items contained in a refuge depend on the age and wealth of the dragon. A young dragon might have found only a few common healing potions, while an elderly dragon has had time to collect singularly powerful protective items and might even have purchased or made its own items. Assume that the dragon has allocated between 2-10% of its hoard towards the refuge, and spend this money on suitable items.

Dragon Challenge Rating	Refuge Cost	Sample Items
2-4	50gp	<i>Potion of cure light wounds</i>
5-8	200gp	<i>2 potions of cure light wounds, potion of sanctuary, potion of protection from good or potion of mage armour</i>
8-12	600gp	<i>Potion of cure moderate wounds, 3 potions of cure light wounds, potion of sanctuary, potion of protection from good, potion of protection from whatever the opposite of the dragon's law/chaos alignment is.</i>
15-18	2,500gp	<i>3 potions of cure moderate wounds, arcane scroll of teleport, potion of sanctuary, arcane scroll of dispel magic.</i>
19-21	5,000gp	<i>Arcane scroll of time stop, 3 potions of cure serious wounds, arcane scroll of dispel magic</i>

hide their escape routes at the bottom of a lake of water or lava. Green dragons, with their mastery over plants, cover the escape route with a tangle of roots. Blue dragons keep a sand-drift over the entrance to the escape route.

Each escape route also includes a method for blocking or dissuading pursuit, from a little-used guardian monster to a simple portcullis.

The escape route offers another hidden route for entering the dragon's lair. However, the exit of the escape route is always exceedingly well hidden. A

dragon might pile huge rocks atop the entrance, knowing it can later burst out using its draconic strength. The entrance could be located at the bottom of another lake, or covered by a permanent *illusion*. Anyone climbing up the escape route will also find themselves emerging right on top of (or even beneath) the dragon.

Scry-and-fry

All the dragon's traps and defences are useless if the attackers can *scry* the inside of the lair and teleport inside. Some wyrms use spells like *dimensional lock*, *greater lairguard*, *screen* and *golden arcane lure* to counter such attacks; others are careful never to reveal their true name to anyone and never let anyone who sees them survive, preventing most *scrying*. Not every dragon is smart or careful enough to guard against teleportation, though.

Optional Chambers

Not every lair includes the following locations. Each serves a particular purpose, which not every dragon cares about.

Hatching Sands: Dragons can be found far beyond their 'natural' habitats. A blue dragon is most at home in the hot deserts, but it can endure the cold and wetness of the northern lands if necessary. Dragon eggs are considerably more delicate, so a dragon trying to raise a brood far from home must make special preparations. The hatching sands are a section of the lair where the temperature, humidity and other conditions are kept at precisely the correct levels to promote the hatching of an egg. Most dragons use simple spells like *prestidigitation* to adjust the environment in concert with physical changes like lighting fires, packing the eggs in ice or hot sand (depending on the dragon type) or bathing them in oils or herbal solutions.

A captured hatching sands counts as a hatchery that is always at the correct temperature (see Hatching Dragons, page 220).

Nursery: Wyrmlings and young dragons are rarely permitted to roam freely. A nursery is a chamber that can be closed, penning the creatures in. A nursery contains toys and snacks (carefully disarmed and tenderised by the adult) for the young dragons, along with perches, treats and servants.

Chapel: The few dragons who are moved by the religious spirit build temples to whatever draconic powers they venerate. These chapels are usually cathedral-like caverns.

Baths: These are innumerable parasites and fungal infections that can trouble a dragon's scaly hide, and a good bath is the only cure for such diseases (other than *remove disease*). The bath is usually a pool of scalding hot water, although blue dragons prefer to wallow in scratching sand. (Black dragons do not seem to mind diseases and just wallow in their own filth.) Anyone falling into a hot dragon's bath suffers 1d6 points of heat damage.

Coins and gems caught in the dragon's breast-scales can be dislodged during the bath, as can loose scales from the dragon's flanks. The bottom of the bath therefore contains treasure worth 1d6 gp x the dragon's age category.

Library: Dragon books are made out of sheets of beaten metal or alchemically preserved and stiffened parchment. Their tomes are octagon shaped – instead of reading from left to right and top to bottom, the dragon reads from the centre of the page out in a spiral, twisting its neck around instead of moving its eyes. A dragon's library contains several dozen tomes on various topics, from philosophy to popular novels. Dragons rarely keep any sort of journal, as their memories are far less fallible than other of mortals, but many do record a somewhat edited version of their glorious deeds for posterity. Another popular item is a catalogue of items in a hoard; dragons remember everything they own perfectly, but writing it down and passing the book onto other wyrms is a great way to show off.

A dragon book weighs between 40 and 80 pounds. Sample dragon books include:

† *Theology of the Wyrms:* A draconic analysis of the use of dragons and draconic imagery in mortal religions. It is studied to gain insight into the actions of paladins and other avid dragonslayers.

† *On the Five-Headed Veneration of Tiamat:* A religious text urging dragons to praise their dark goddess through five separate sacraments – destroying, despoiling, ravaging, ruining and consuming.

† *Fierhagan's Dream:* A popular work of fiction that takes place entirely within the realm of dreams. Most humans find the book quite impenetrable.

Study: Dragons who can take human form keep a special chamber for human-sized books, scrolls and other equipment that might be damaged by conditions in the rest of the lair. These studies are well-equipped with all the comforts and conveniences of the average wizard's study, from padded chairs and oak desks to a roaring fire in the hearth and a fine wine cellar.

Some dragons use the study as an audience chamber or laboratory.



Shrine: While a chapel is used for the dragon to worship a higher power, the shrine is for mortals and other creatures to worship a different higher power – the dragon. Shrines contain images, icons and relics (like discarded scales or teeth) of the dragon, and often include a place where the dragon can speak to its followers. Only dragons with cults or other fanatic followers maintain shrines.

Laboratory: Dragons with an interest in arcane matters keep a lab. The equipment is dragon-sized, but otherwise is similar to the tools and ingredients used by a human wizard in his research.

Sunning Stone: Many dragons love to laze in the sun, and keep a large flat slab of rock atop or just outside the entrance where they spend much of their time. Dragons sunning themselves suffer a –1 penalty to Listen and Spot checks, and a –2 penalty to initiative due to their inattention and sleepiness.

Perch: A perch is a high pinnacle of rock from which the dragon can watch the lands around its lair. When it spots its prey, it spreads its wings and dives off the perch, catching the thermals and soaring out over its domain.

Servant’s Quarters: If the dragon has personal servants, they are usually given chambers adjoining the audience or hoard chambers. Depending on the dragon, the servant’s quarters may be luxurious and richly decorated, or foul holes inhabited by wretched slaves.

Garrison: Even dragons without their own armies may employ a small number of guards to patrol the hard-to-reach areas of their lair. These guards are usually drawn from the local humanoid population, although more ambitious dragons use half-dragons, human mercenaries, or other more powerful creatures. The garrison is located in the outer sections of the lair, beyond the gauntlet and audience chamber.

Outfitting a Lair

In a game with dragon characters, the question of how much a lair costs may come up. The actual lair itself is free for natural or conquered lairs. Constructed lairs must be built using the usual costs for large constructions (even a relatively modest lair costs as much as a castle).

The trappings and features of lairs have the following costs, but these should be used as guidelines, not absolute prices. The cost of the various features vary

Feature	Cost	
Gauntlet	-	The gauntlet’s costs are determined by the traps used – see below.
Killing ground	500gp per age category of the dragon	This cost only covers sculpting and adjusting the killing ground; traps cost extra.
Audience chamber	3000gp	This is the minimum cost; most dragons show off by making their audience chamber as awe-inspiring as possible, which costs more.
Dining room	1,500gp	Includes jail cells and firepits.
Midden	500gp	
Hoard chamber	300gp per age category of the dragon	Does not include the cost of the hoard.
Refuge	500 gp	This covers the cost of building and concealing it.
Escape route	1,000 gp	This covers the cost of concealing the escape rout.
Hatching sands	1,000 gp	
Nursery	500 gp per hatchling	
Chapel	2,000 gp	
Bath	100 gp per age category of the dragon.	If the bath requires a furnace for heating, this costs another 1500 gp. Most dragons just use their breath weapon to heat the bath.
Study	-	
Library	1,500 gp	Covers shelving, light and construction.
Shrine	2,000 gp	
Sunning stone	100 gp	
Perch	-	
Servant’s quarters	500 gp	
Garrison	750 gp	Does not include the cost of guards.
Traps	Varies	See individual trap descriptions.

depending on the lair – it is obviously much cheaper to adapt an existing escape tunnel than it is to build a new one.

TRAPS AND DEFENCES

Click.

- the last sound heard by many adventurers.

Lethal Traps

These traps are found around the perimeter of the dragon's lair, protecting the entrances to the dragon's escape tunnel and other rarely used sections.

Sluice Lock: Black and bronze dragons often lair underwater. The sluice lock trap is installed on a stream or other watercourse that flows out of the lair via a passageway. Anyone creeping up the waterway triggers the trap, which opens a lock upstream. When the lock opens, a trio of blades drop from the surface. A wall of water from a small reservoir rushes down the passageway, sweeping intruders away and slamming them into the blades.

CR: 3; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; water knocks over characters (Balance check, DC20 to avoid) and washes prone characters into blades (1d8 damage); never miss, onset delay 2 rounds; Search DC 15, Disable Device DC 15. *Market Price:* 4,500 gp.

Gas Pit: This trap is found often in green or black dragon lairs, near the midden. Explosive gases from the rotting remains in the midden are channelled into a deep pit where they gather. Small copper pipes travel from the base of the pit to the frames of sealed doors elsewhere in the complex. When the door is opened, the gas floods the room. Closing the door scrapes a tiny piece of flint, creating a spark and igniting the gas if it has not

already been detonated by the torches or lanterns carried by the intruders. The explosion also lights the gas in the pit, creating a warning flare telling the dragon that someone has opened one of the sealed doors in the lair.

CR: 3; mechanical; proximity trigger; automatic reset; 4d6 fire damage to all within 10 feet, Reflex save (DC12) halves damage; Search DC 30, Disable Device DC 10. *Market Price:* 6,600 gp.

Voice from the Fire: This trap consists of a model of the dragon's head, like a gargoyle. Whenever anyone comes close to it, an *alarm* spell triggers the voice. It uses a combination of *vision* and *detect thoughts* to pick up on the thoughts and fears of the intruders. It then questions and intimidates them, using whatever it gathered from the *vision*, before blasting them with a *fireball* (or other attack spell suitable for the dragon). Finally, the statue sends a



sending to the dragon, informing it of all that it has learned.

CR: 4; magic; spell trigger (*alarm*); timed reset; interrogation + *fireball* (5th level sorcerer); Search DC 10; Disable Device DC 30. *Market Price:* 129,500 gp.

Breath Channel: A breath channel is a narrow passageway that seems to slope upwards into the heart of the lair, usually the dragon's hoard chamber. The end of the channel can clearly be seen from the start, so it appears to be a perfectly good route into the lair. However, the channel is an optical illusion, and the far end of the channel is actually a narrow slit. The shaft also conducts noise clearly. On hearing the sound of intruders climbing up the shaft, the dragon leaps over and breathes down. The channel is too narrow to permit anyone to dodge the blast from the breath weapon, so the intruders are caught for the full damage.

CR: 1/3rd that of the Dragon. *Market Price:* 2,500 gp.

Gauntlet Traps

These traps are designed to weaken opponents and to give the dragon a chance to judge how dangerous they are. If they are strong enough to survive the gauntlet, they are worthy to be eaten by the dragon.

Sliding-block Maze: The roof of this maze is made up of dozens of ten by ten stone blocks, mounted on rails. The dragon can perch atop the maze and use its strength to shove the blocks in one direction or another, opening up holes in the roof wherever it chooses. This allows the dragon to play with enemies, attacking then closing the maze roof once more.

CR: - *Market Price:* 10,000 gp.

History Lessons: This is a chamber decorated with carvings and painting showing past glorious deeds of the dragon. The exit to the chamber can clearly be seen at the far side of the room. At least one of the carvings is wrong – for example, the dragon might be shown being injured by a sword, where in reality it was struck by a lance. If this error is touched, the trap is disarmed. Otherwise, anyone opening the door is struck by a scythe that stabs down from above.

CR: 4; mechanical; proximity trigger; automatic reset hidden bypass (Search DC25); Atk +20 melee (2d4+8/4, scythe); Search DC 20, Disable Device DC 20. *Market price:* 22,000 gp.

Dispel Chasm: A Dispel Chasm is a pit too wide to easily jump across (usually 20 feet wide). The pit is either bottomless or else clearly lined with spikes and other nasty implements of pain. Most characters will attempt to *fly* or *spider climb* across. The trap is triggered when any magical effect crosses the half-way point above the pit. A *dispel magic* effect fills the whole chamber. Ideally, anyone relying on a spell to cross the chasm is hurled into the depths below.

CR: 9; magic device; proximity triggered; no reset; spell effect: *dispel magic* (15th level sorcerer) dropping into 100 deep spiked pit (10d6), no Reflex save to avoid falling; Search DC 40, Disable Device DC 20; *Market Price:* 56,250 gp.

Dragon Traps

These traps have a single purpose – to kill rival dragons entering the lair. Many of these traps were adapted from dwarven designs. Often, a trap that failed to kill the dragon who conquers a dwarf-hold is rebuilt and reused.

Double Portcullis: This cunning trap consists of two portcullises that drop down suddenly, trapping the dragon's neck and tail. The dragon must make two Reflex saves (DC 20), one for each portcullis. The dragon suffers 6d6 damage for each failed save. If one save or the other is failed, the dragon can smash or wriggle free by making a Strength or Escape Artist check (DC 30).

If both portcullises hit, the trap becomes truly effective. The two are linked by a series of gears and crossbeams. When the dragon pushes at one portcullis, it drives the other one down even more firmly. Unless the dragon works this out by making an Intelligence or Disable Device check (DC15), it must apply its Strength modifier as a penalty to its Escape Artist checks, or its Escape Artist skill ranks as a penalty to its Strength checks while trying to escape.

Wingclipper Trap: This nasty trap consists of a concealed pit trap in a high-ceilinged room. If the dragon steps on the pit, it begins to slowly open (Reflex save, DC 5 to avoid falling in). Most dragons will leap back and spread their wings to fly over the pit – but opening the pit has activated the second part of the trap. A moment after it begins to open, a pair of vicious blades swing down and chop into the dragon's wings, crippling them. If the dragon is struck by these blades (which have an attack bonus of +30, and deal 4d6+8/x4 damage), it cannot fly for one round per three points of damage inflicted, and falls into the pit.

Tailpinning Spike: The softest part of a dragon's body is its underside, but its neck and belly are held far above the floor. The tail, however, drags along behind the dragon. A tailpinning spike is a vicious trap that drives a metal spike up through the weak underside of the tail. Barbs then burst out of the spike, catching on the inside of the tail and preventing the dragon from just lifting its injured tail off the spike. If a tailspinning spike hits (attack bonus of +15), it deals 2d6 damage to the dragon, and requires an Escape Artist check (DC20) to escape. If the check is failed, the spike deals damage equal to half the dragon's Strength modifier.

An old trapper leads his young apprentice out into the woods. They go deep into the forest, past the tame woodlands near the village, out into the wild regions where the trees knot together, branches twined thickly together like shapes locked in combat or torment, where the shadows are sullen and impenetrable. The undergrowth claws at their boots, and the ground is sickeningly soft like rotten flesh. Shapes that might be squirrels and might be fungoid horrors skitter from branch to branch. Still, they press on. In the black heart of the wood, they come upon a cave mouth. It is overgrown with hanging weeds, and slime coats the rocks outside the entrance. A harsh chemical stench fills the air, searing the back of the apprentice's throat and making his eyes water. A distant rumble, like a mountain stretching, echoes out of the cave.

Terrified, the apprentice asks the old trapper 'is this a dragon's lair?'

'It is', replies the trapper, 'the lair of a great green dragon, who wakes but once every ten years. It is the custom of our village to send the dragon a sacrifice when he wakes.'

'Oh', says the apprentice, who was considerably brighter than he looked. 'I'll be running off now, if you don't mind.'

'They usually do', says the trapper sadly.

Despite that grim tale, relatively few dragons live in simple caves. Rough natural caverns are the lairs of dragons too weak or too young to find a better lair. Most dragons live in constructed buildings, either built by their own claws or by servants, or in places that the dragon has conquered. Shelter and comfort are very much secondary concerns for dragons. Some lairs are fortresses, designed to protect the dragon when it sleeps. Others are like wizard's towers, only scaled for a dragon-sized mage, or are temples proclaiming the glories of the resident wyrm. There are three major categories of lair:

† **Natural Lairs**

† **Constructed Lairs**

† **Conquered Lairs**

NATURAL LAIRS

Natural lairs are usually caves or sections of a tunnel network claimed by a dragon. Some dragons claw their own lairs out of muddy hillsides or dwell in overgrown sheltered canyons. Young dragons are quite comfortable in natural lairs, as they are small enough to fit into quite modest caves. Larger and older dragons have more trouble with natural lairs – a fifty foot long wyrm is unlikely to find a convenient single cave it can fit its nose into, let alone a cave it can use as a home.

The other problem with natural lairs is that there are very few caves that are not already occupied. The lightless tunnels below the ground are inhabited by more than worms and wyrms; orcs, goblinoids, deep dwarves, drow and a thousand thousand nameless scuttling things dwell in the underdark. While few of these creatures can threaten a dragon singly, claiming territory in a cave network often requires multiple skirmishes with the other residents.

Most caverns are connected to other caves via tunnels, so if the dragon does not want to claim the whole cave network, it must be prepared to either bargain with or destroy its neighbours, or else block off these tunnels by collapsing the roof. A few blows from a tail or breath weapon blasts can destroy a tunnel, but these rubble-choked passages can be often be reopened and used as a back door into the dragon's lair. Most dragons who claim cave networks prefer to slaughter or recruit the existing denizens of the caves.

Crawling Through Caves

As described in *Core Rulebook I*, squeezing through a narrow passageway slows movement by half and causes a -4 penalty to attacks and armour class. Dragons are adept at crawling through narrow gaps. By flattening their wings against their bodies and moving more like a snake than a four-legged beast, the dragon can slither through caverns that is one-third as wide as its normal space. Furthermore, the dragon's bite attacks do not suffer the -4 penalty to attacks.

Cave Network Features

Entrance: As caves are part of the natural landscape, their entrances can easily be concealed with plants or rocks. If the dragon is currently active, such concealment is rarely used – when flying in and out, it is tiresome to have to carefully creep around the obstacles at the entrance, so only young and fearful dragons keep the lair entrances concealed constantly. Most wyrms only hide their lairs when preparing to sleep.

The entrance to a cave lair is marked by claw marks unless it is wide enough for the dragon to spread its wings and fly out. The entrance is invariably trapped, guarded or both. If the entrance is concealed, the Search check DC to find it is 10 + the dragon's Intelligence modifier- the dragon's Size Modifier, and the Spot check DC to notice it is 15+the dragon's Intelligence modifier- the dragon's Size Modifier.

The best caves have a large drop just outside the entrance, allowing the dragon to spread its wings, drop off, and fly – otherwise, the dragon has to flap its wings to drag itself off the ground, which takes much greater effort.

Cliffs: Dragons are agile climbers (and, if there is room in the cave to spread their wings, can fly), so many lairs include vertical shafts, cliffs or unbridged chasms. The bones of more than a few thieves can be found at the base of these shafts, as dragons love to crawl or fly down and pluck intruders off the rock face.

Passageways: If the lair is bigger than a single cave, then it probably contains one or more passageways linking different chambers. These passages are marked with all the signs of the dragon, such as claw-marks on the floor (and the scratches made by wing-tips and wing-claws on the walls and ceiling), discarded scales, and scorch-marks. Dragons without access to magic like *floating disk* or *gullet of surprising capacity* must drag treasure and items down these passages, so signs of the dragon's recent meals can be found by examining the floor.

Dragons clear the passageways of obstacles that hinder their progress, such as stalactites hanging from the ceiling that might tear their wings. Smaller barriers do not affect the dragon, so Medium creatures might have to jump over cracks or clamber over rocks that the dragon just steps over.

Collapsed Passageways: If the passage has collapsed, a suitable Knowledge or Craft check (DC10) can detect how much of the passage has blocked (characters with the stonemasonry ability can just make an Intelligence check). It takes twenty minutes of work to clear five feet of blocked passageway. Some dragons use *stone shape* or just melt the stone to form a solid plug – such stone barriers must be broken through or demolished.

Choked Passageways: Some cave passages are not entirely blocked, but are choked by an obstacle. Desert caves fill with sand, forest caves with roots or creepers, swamp or sea caves with mud and stagnant water. These passages slow movement to a number of feet per round equal to the character's Strength modifier.

Main Cavern: The largest open space in the cave is used as the dragon's dining chamber and killing ground (see Lair Features above). The most direct route from the entrance always leads to this cavern. The main cavern contains whatever carrion is left after the dragon's most recent meals. Some dragons reduce the remains to ash or dust with a breath, other dragons dump the carcass during their next excursion out of the lair, or just live in their own filth.

This is where an unprepared dragon will encounter any visitors or invaders, so the floor of the cavern is often scarred by breath weapon blasts and claw marks. Bones may be scattered around or arranged as a macabre monument to a defeated foe (dragons have a tendency to address their soliloquies to the bodies of slain enemies).

Stench: Caverns are the least well ventilated type of lair, so the gases and foul smells of the dragon tend to gather in the depths. The smell of most large animals is bad enough, but many dragons have fiery or acidic breath weapons that cause toxic fumes. These foul stenchs require any creatures not used to the smell to make Fortitude saves (DC equal to 5+ the age category of the dragon, +1 per level of the lair, and +1 to +3 depending on the foulness of the dragon's breath weapon). If the Fortitude save is failed, the character is nauseated for 1d4 rounds and sickened for one minute per point by which the save was failed.

CONQUERED LAIRS

The dragon slithered over the marble floor towards me. I could dimly make out the inlaid holy symbols beneath the patina of scratches and gouges left by three centuries of the dragon's usurpation.

'You dare return here, priest?' hissed the dragon. 'I devoured your betters when I was young. I broke upon their temple and piled their relics upon their altars as a bed for myself. I make a ruin of the sacred vaults and made ashes of the high clerics. I turned the hymns of the choristers into a chorus of screams. I drove your petty god from this place and made it my own. I am god here now, priest.'

I reached out to the high altar and smeared my blood on the Tear of Heaven. A terrible light filled the room. I braced myself for the searing pain of the dragon's breath, but instead I smelt rose petals and incense. 'The angels beg to differ, worm!', I spat, as the host of heaven cascaded into the ruin of the church.

The most common form of lair is that built by enemies of dragons. More wyrms roost in the ruins of dwarf-holds and castles than in natural caverns. The pattern is a familiar one – the dragon grows old and strong, and its greed and hunger grow with its strength. It scents the gold in the coffer of a fortress, swoops down to break through the defences, drives out the inhabitants and makes a bed of their treasure.

Once the dragon has conquered the place, it begins to adapt it to its own needs. It smashes down a series of walls and widens the main corridor to create a proper entrance. As some walls are load-bearing structures and therefore cannot be removed, the entrance passage in a conquered lair usually takes a winding path through the building. Often, the passage links the biggest rooms and the dragon crawls from dining hall to vaulted-ceiling church to throne room to treasury. The debris created by this renovation is used to block side entrances or just pushed into unused rooms. (These rooms offer excellent hiding places to infiltrators, although some dragons are in the habit of randomly firing their



breath weapons into unused rooms to clear out vermin.)

Traps and defences that failed to keep the dragon out may be reset and reused. Some dragons go further, repairing the damage they inflicted during their assault and restoring the conquered fortress to its former glory. Some dragons even hire the descendants of the dwarves they drove out to repair some particularly beautiful piece of stonework. Others prefer the devastation, and continue to desecrate their home even as they dwell there.

A Dozen Places to Lair

1. A cathedral
2. A granary
3. A theatre or opera house
4. A guildhall
5. A mausoleum
6. A lighthouse
7. A library
8. A senate or government building
9. A factory
10. A wizard's tower
11. A monastery
12. A wrecked ship

Conquered Lair Features

The contents and structure of a conquered lair depends mainly on what the place was before the dragon came. A conquered lair made from a human keep on the borderlands is greatly different in every respect from a lair made from a dwarven forge-temple or one made from the enchanted trees and interwoven branches of an elven treetop city.

Path of the Dragon: These are passages used by the resident dragon. The walls have been widened to fit the creature's bulk and the ceiling is marked and scarred by its wings. Following these paths leads to the areas of the lair used by the dragon.

Unstable Areas: The damage caused by the dragon's assault has weakened sections of the building. There is a 1% chance per point of damage inflicted by bludgeoning attacks, falls, spells and



other effects that shake the area that the ceiling collapses. 1d10 five-five squares are struck by the collapse. Anyone in one of the affected squares must make a Reflex save (DC12) or be struck for 2d10 points of damage.

Forgotten Chambers: Often, a section of the lair can be cut off during the dragon's initial attack by falling stones or a closed secret door. These forgotten chambers may never be discovered by the dragon or its servants, and lie untouched for centuries. These chambers are a safe refuge in which to hide, and may contain useful and unspoiled items.

Trophy Chamber: Of all the lair types, conquered lairs are most likely to contain a room dedicated to the remains of those who once held the lair. The corpses of dwarves may be piled atop the crypts of their ancestors; a human lord may be kept in a gibbet for months after his castle has fallen. Trophy

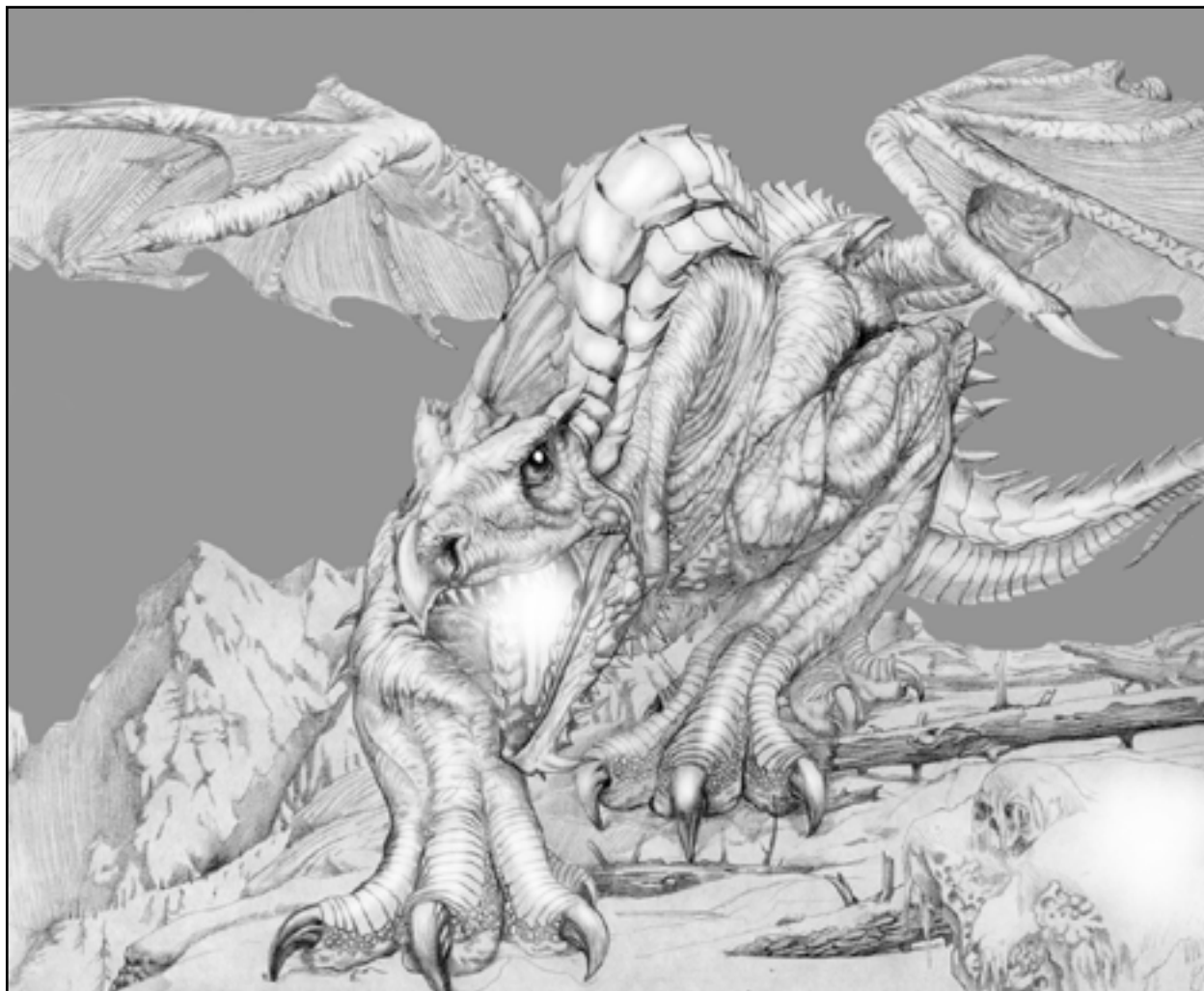
chambers often contain discarded but still potent magical weapons once used by the defenders.

Undead: In a conquered lair, undead are like pesky vermin – they keep coming back. The ghosts or spectres of whatever creatures the dragon killed in conquering the lair return to protest the desecration of their homes. The claws and teeth of dragons are magical weapons, and can temporarily destroy some types of undead, but this is not a permanent solution. Some dragons bring in clerics to annihilate or rebuke the undead, while others choose to live with the problem of having to incinerate zombies every few years. These undead can be ghastly allies to those trying to infiltrate a lair.

CONSTRUCTED LAIRS

The tower ahead of us looked like the horn of a unicorn. I tried to determine where the cloud ended and the stone began, but soon realised that the whole place, tower and base alike, was formed from a single solidified cloud. It caught the light and glittered like the sea in summer. Then, our host emerged from his lair. The light caught him, embraced him, and his silver scales shone as brightly as any star. I fell to my knees.

'Welcome.' His voice was music. I was kneeling on a cloud thousands of feet above the ground, supported by nothing at all, with a thousand enemies only a few minutes behind me, and I had never felt safer in my life.



These lairs are castles, dungeons or other edifices built specifically for the dragon. While some dragons construct their lairs themselves, lifting huge blocks of stone into place, most use servants, slaves or summoned creatures to build their homes. Building a lair is huge investment of time and resources, so a dragon only bothers to construct such a fortress when it has a distinct need to do so.

Constructed lairs are astonishing feats of architecture. While sections of the lair may resemble a human fortress, with battlements and buttresses and walls, the dragon-designed sections are like nothing else in the world.

Built for gigantic creatures, the hallways are wider than cathedrals. Even the small rooms are vast enough to contain the dragon, and the largest are wide plains of scratched stone with a constructed sky-vault above.

Built for winged creatures, the towers reach for the sky. There are no stairways, no ramps, just sudden discontinuities of height. In some galleries, there is no floor, just walls and ceiling. Every surface may be used – items and devices can be located on the ceiling or high above the floor, for everywhere is equally within easy reach of the dragon.

Built for serpentine creatures, the corridors twist and coil. There are no chairs, only poles to slither around or hang from. There are no doors to pull open, only portcullises connected to pressure plates or curtains to push through.

Built for dragons, these fortresses are terrifying even for allies of the wyrm. The fundamentally alien nature of dragon-built places makes the stones seem to slither and crawl, makes the wind blowing through the windows seem like the exhalations of some gigantic creature, makes every sound seem like the scratching of claw on stone. The whole building becomes an ancient, living thing coiled into the shape of rooms and passageways... or perhaps it lies there with its mouth open, waiting for unfortunates to walk down its gullet and explore its stomachs.

No non-dragon ever sleeps well in a constructed lair.

Constructed Lair Designs

Every constructed lair reflects the dragon who built it, but there are a few common themes.

Monument: This lair is built in the shape of a huge statue or other monument. Some dragons are vain enough to dwell inside a massive stone statue of themselves, coiling up inside their own hearts. Others build monuments to honour fallen heroes, or to praise the gods, or to mark some other momentous event. All monuments are built to impress, and are usually constructed out of a high peak overlooking a hidden valley. The outside shape of the monument dictates what chambers and facilities can be included inside. Blue and bronze dragons commonly build monuments.

Fortress: A fortress is the most practical of the constructed lairs – most of it is a conventional castle, a home for the dragon's troops and a defensive strongpoint that could be the lynchpin of a military campaign. Instead of a central keep, however, the fortress has either the entrance to an underground lair, or else a tall tower where the dragon dwells. Red and bronze dragons build fortresses.

Temple: Dedicated temple-lairs put the richest cathedrals and churches of other races to shame. These massive complexes are constructed hymns to the dragon-gods. The winds caused by the beating of wings are channelled through stone pipes and valves, so the whole temple is an instrument that sings songs of praise whenever a dragon flies through it. Depending on the deity being worshipped, the temple may be shine with the light of a platinum sun, or be caked in blood and filth and suffering. Copper and black dragons build temples.

Library: The ancient heritage of the dragon race does not go unrecorded. Most dragons have a few books, but others build and dwell inside gigantic libraries containing thousands of volumes. This is not done entirely out of altruism; these libraries are sacred places, and rival dragons do not dare carry their attacks into the lair itself. Gold and silver dragons commonly build libraries.

Ritual Space: Some lairs are constructed for a specific reason, to tap a naturally occurring source of power or wealth such as a magical portal, an enchanted spring or a rich mine. Other lairs are built to channel magical power for some purpose – a domed lair could reflect and enhance the magic



of gold, transforming impure gold into its elemental ideal. Red and copper dragons commonly build ritual spaces.

Eyrie: An eyrie is a lair designed for multiple dragons to share. Up to a dozen dragons, not including hatchlings and immature creatures can dwell in a single eyrie. These lairs are gigantic domes or towers, lined with vast windows and aerial entrances. Often, an eyrie guards some particularly

important location or relic. Most eyries are inhabited only by dragons of the same type, or at least with dragons of the same alignment. Of all the constructed lairs, eyries are the only one that is built for dragons in captivity.

Council Chamber: A council chamber is a specially constructed lair where many dragons can meet. Atop or at the heart of the lair is a vast open chamber, where the actual gathering takes place. The rest of the lair contains small caves and rooms where delegates can rest and sleep. One dragon acts as caretaker and dwells in the lair, while the rest visit only when summoned.

DESIGNING A LAIR

When designing a dragon's lair, begin with a map. For natural lairs, the map can be generated randomly by drawing uneven cave shapes on a piece of paper and linking them with tunnels, or based

on an existing cave map. For conquered lairs, the best thing to do is to take a map of a castle or dungeon from some other source and adapt it.

Constructed lairs are trickier, as they are not based on an existing place, but are instead built by the dragon. Choose one of the example constructed lair types mentioned above, or come up with the reason why the dragon built its lair instead of claiming an existing place. The key to designing an interesting

Dragon cities

There are no remaining dragon cities. There were few enough even in their heyday, as dragons have never been a populous species. These cities were essentially vast constructed lairs providing lairs for hundreds or even thousands of dragons. They were built high in the mountains, carved out of the rock of the peaks. Most were destroyed in ancient civil wars, or abandoned and left to decay tens of thousands of years ago.

The greatest of these cities, known as WyrmsHOME, was constructed atop, on and around a massive chunk of magical rock that floated above the clouds. WyrmsHOME was a shining jewel, inhabited by tens of thousands of dragons, and every part of its surface was covered by some building or lair. At the heart of WyrmsHOME was a temple containing an artefact known as the Last Egg. Certain draconic heresies suggest that this egg was sired by Bahamut and laid by Tiamat, and its hatching will signal the beginning of the end of the world.

WyrmsHOME is gone now. Some terrible accident or malicious attack caused the city to fly up into the furthest reaches of the atmosphere, where the air is too thin to fly and too cold to breathe. Dragon astronomers insist that WyrmsHOME continued to rise out of the world, flying into the heavens where it became the morning star, but others believe that a wyrm strong and brave enough could fly up and find the lost city of the dragons. Many have tried, but most have fallen back to earth after their wings froze solid and shattered. Some, however, have never returned, and the dragons insist they found WyrmsHOME.

lair is *adaptation* – dragons change places to suit themselves, adapting the existing structures to their needs. Therefore, instead of creating the whole lair from top down, the Games Master should take the map, which represents the existing structure before the dragon moves in, and then put himself in the role of the dragon and adapt it.

The various rooms on the map should be assigned a function. The following table can be used to generate random functions for each room – roll 1d20 and add +1 for every chamber after the first, stopping once you hit the hoard chamber at the heart of the lair. Alternatively, assign functions based on the size and location of rooms on the map.

Roll	Chamber
1	Empty chamber
2	Empty chamber
3	Empty chamber
4	Trap
5	Trap
6	Trap
7	Gauntlet
8	Gauntlet
9	Gauntlet
10	Killing ground
11	Killing ground
12	Audience chamber
13	Audience chamber
14	Dining room
15	Dining room
16	Hatching sands or Nursery
17	Study or Library
18	Chapel or Shrine
19	Bath or Sunning stone
20	Hoard chamber
21	Trap
22	Audience chamber
23	Hoard chamber
24	Hoard chamber
25+	Hoard chamber

Once you have a vague idea of the internal layout of the lair, you can begin adapting it. Pick an entrance such as the main gate, and move the dragon in along the corridors from the entrance to the hoard chamber, taking the route of least resistance along the widest corridors. If the dragon must squeeze down a corridor, widen it and fill another chamber with the debris from the widening. Once the dragon has reached the hoard chamber, move the dragon from the hoard chamber to any other rooms it would want to visit, such as the audience chamber or library. Keep widening chambers and reallocating space until the lair is comfortable for the dragon.

Now start adding traps. The average dragon’s lair has a number of traps equal to its Challenge Rating, although at least a third of these will be located in the killing ground and another third along the gauntlet. The other traps should be used to protect back entrances and other obscure sections of the lair.

If the dragon has servants, pick two representative types and move them from the entrance to the dragon’s audience chamber and to the hoard chamber. Ensure there is at least one path through the lair that is passable for them without too much trouble (i.e. they do not have to leap over a pit trap or take damage from an unavoidable hazard).

Finally, customise the lair to the dragon. Make it reflect the dragon’s personality and style.

FLATTERY AND RIDDLES

Dragons are mighty beyond compare; their hide is stronger than plate, their claws more destructive than sword or spell, their magic greater than that of any mortal hedge-mage. Their shadow is fear itself, their presence brings terror, their breath is death...but greater than all these things is the ego of the dragon. They *know*, deep down in their hearts, that they are the lords and kings of all the world, the best and the brightest and the strongest of all things that are, were or ever shall be, and that the whole of creation exists purely to bring them into being and to amuse them. Each individual dragon is, of course, the best of his kind, the chief of calamities, the most dire of dangers, the wealthiest, strongest, handsomest and more glorious thing in all the lands in all the worlds on all the infinite planes of creation.

In short, dragons can give elves lessons in being self-satisfied and egotistical.

This personality trait can be of huge benefit to those who must deal with dragons. The beasts love flattery and praise, as it confirms their own self-image. They also love riddles and puzzles, as it allows the dragon to prove just how smart and wise it is. Characters can stall dragons for some time through these stratagems. The trick is not baffling the dragon, or laying on the praise so thickly that it becomes mockery.

Flattery is the only way to manipulate most dragons. Greed also works with chromatic dragons, and the metallics may respond to pleas for aid. There are several distinct modes of flattery and diplomacy, each of which is best employed at a particular time. The Dragon Conversation Matrix

summarises this, below. Think of it as a game of snakes and ladders – the party begins in the lower reaches, where the dragon is Hostile or Unfriendly towards them. If they pick their words carefully, they can climb up to Indifferent or even Friendly. One mistake, though, and the attitude of the dragon plunges back down to more threatening levels.

There is a 25% that an Unfriendly Dragon lets the party go without a fight, and 50% when the dragon is Indifferent. A Hostile dragon attacks a retreating party if it thinks it can win, while Friendly or Helpful dragons automatically permits them to leave if they so desire.

Sample dialogue is included for inspirational purposes.

THE DRAGON CONVERSATION MATRIX

This system allows the Games Master to track the current attitude of the dragon towards the player characters. The various actions the characters can take in conversation are listed along the top; the dragon's current attitude is on the left-hand column. Cross-reference the two to discover firstly the Difficulty, the result of a failure, and the result of a success.

Add the Dragon's Sense Motive skill to the Difficulty to work out the Difficulty Class for the action (essentially, the Difficulty is used as the dragon's dice roll for its Sense Motive check). The longer the conversation drags out, the more irritated the dragon gets – apply a cumulative -2 penalty every round after the fifth round if the dragon's attitude is still below Friendly.

Conversation Matrix						
Attitude	Grovel	Praise	Flattery	Absurd Flattery	Intrigue	Deal
Hostile	5/Attack/>U	25/Attack/>U	15/Attack/>U	10/Attack/>U	10/Attack/>U	25/Attack/+2I
Unfriendly	5/-6/+2F1	10/>Ho/+2F1	5/-4/+4AF	15/-6/>I	10/-6/+2D	20/>Ho/>I
Indifferent	5/-6/+2F1	5/>U/+2F1	5/-6/>Fr	15/>U/+4F1	10/>U/+2D	15/>Ho/>F
Friendly	15/>I/+2F1	15/>I/>Hp	5/>I/+2P	20/>U/+2P	5/>I/+4D	10/>U/>Hp
Helpful	15/>I/+2F1	15/>I/>+2D	10/>I/+2P	25/>U/+2P	5/>I/+4D	15/>U/Aid

Matrix Results	
Result	Meaning
Attack	Dragon attacks (or retreats if it suspects it cannot win)
>Ho	Dragon becomes Hostile
>U	Dragon becomes Unfriendly
>I	Dragon becomes Indifferent
>F	Dragon becomes Friendly
>Hp	Dragon becomes Helpful
-x	Next check suffers a -x circumstance penalty
+xP	Add +x to the next Praise check
+xFl	Add +x to the next Flattery check
+xA	Add +x to the next Abject Flattery check
+xD	Add +x to the next Deal check
Aid	Dragon aids the characters; see <i>Helpful</i> , below

The Dragon's Attitude

The initial attitude of the dragon is determined by how it encounters the party, and its alignment. Good dragons usually start at Indifferent to most races, while an evil dragon is Unfriendly if it recently fed, or Hostile if hungry or just in a bad mood. Most dragons will be Hostile if surprised in their lair. Especially powerful dragons may indulge themselves by starting at Friendly, showing that they are not only the strongest, most powerful, most magnificent, most witty and most glorious creatures around, they are also the most generous.

Hostile

Hostile does not automatically imply that the dragon is attacking the party – it probably is, but it could also be preparing itself for battle by casting protective spells, calling its guards, or just contemplating whether to peel the plate mail off the paladin before roasting or cook him in braised armour jacket. There is a 50% chance that a Hostile dragon attacks, rising to 100% if it receives the slightest provocation.

Sample dialogue:

'I am the wyrm (Name), the great and the terrible. Tremble before me!'
'Your bones will be playthings for my hatchlings.'
'I..am a dragon. You...are lunch.'

'You should not have come here, little thing.'
'RRRAAAGH!!'

Unfriendly

The only difference between hostile and unfriendly is that the dragon is slightly more than a split-second away from attacking. The dragon considers the party a threat or an irritation, and has merely paused for a moment before destroying them. It has no particular desire to stay its hand, and will soon attack unless given a reason not to.

Sample dialogue:

'You dare beard me in my own lair? Are you insanely brave or merely insane?'
'Behold, I shall grant all your wishes, so long as they are death wishes.'
'If you throw down your weapons and worship me as your living god, then perhaps I shall make your deaths not quite so slow as they should be. I am not without mercy.'
'Ah, little thief. You have stolen a sight of my hoard, but that is all. Not one coin of mine shall be yours, not even for a moment. You end here.'

Indifferent

Dragons bore quickly. If the characters have moved the dragon's attitude to Indifferent, they have successfully convinced it that they are no threat to it, or to its hoard. They are almost nothing to it, just little insects buzzing about its head. If the insects keep buzzing and irritate the dragon, it will swat them and think nothing more about it. An Indifferent Dragon is at least not chewing on the characters this instant, but it will soon attack if they do not prove themselves...interesting.

Sample Dialogue:

'Keep talking...'
'Ah, so you are little monkey-things, not true men. Excellent. A knight I must perform respect before eating, but you spineless little things I can safely ignore! Rejoice! You are not worth even my scorn.'
'I can see why they sent you. Your fellow mortals must be as tired of your prattling as I am.'
'You are small, and weak, and slow. No sport at all. Tell me, do you burn well? As you as flammable as, say, a thornbush? Or does that fat make you into more of a candle?'

Friendly

The definition of terms is important here. 'Friendly' does not mean that the dragon considers the party to be its allies, or even worthy or respect. It merely means that it now amuses the dragon to adopt courtesy and civility towards them. It is friendly in the same way that a well-fed cat is friendly with a mouse – they are being fattened up, and may soon be invited to dinner.

Sample dialogue:

'Ah, but I have been an ungracious host! Please, sit. Relax. Lay down your arms – no harm shall come to you while I am your friend. In the shadow of my wings there is naught but peace and warmth.'

'You speak with rare perspicacity. Surely you are a scholar of legendary prowess and considerable insight to have recognised the true depth of my greatness. I would bow my head to you, sir, if only it were fitting – but you of all people know that it is not. Still, you have my honest respect as a thing that knows its place. Kudos, sir, kudos.'

'My, but are we not the most eloquent gang of vagabond thieves and lair-crashers that has graced my humble cavern in many a long century. Your deaths are still as certain as the stars – make no mistake about that – but be assured I shall greatly enjoy eating you if your meat is half as sweet as your tongues.'



'Fascinating. You have a rare gift to speaking the honest and plain truth, and I do respect that. Come, sit here before me while I measure you for a gilded cage, that you may continue to amuse me.'

Helpful

Again, helpful does not automatically mean ‘the dragon helps the party’ (although good dragons might aid the party on some important quest). It is more that the dragon now suspects the party could be of help to it. It might merely let them go freely (or let them go after extracting a small tribute, which they shall surely give happily), or employ them to carry out some mission. The dragon might even gift them with a few coins or trinkets from its hoard, as a reward for their honest and whole-hearted recognition of its glory. If the dragon is a guard, it might allow the characters to pass by.

Sample dialogue:

‘Verily, you are princes among mortals. You may leave with my blessing – but return, and I may not be so generous.’

‘I see... I see. You have hidden merits, little one. I shall be...lenient.’

‘Rejoice, little creatures that tremble in my presence like leaves in the wake of the hurricane of my passage! Your lives take on new meaning and new glories, for you, despite your obvious and unfortunate deficiencies, shall be allowed the singularly great and unquestionably glorious honour of doing my good self some small service...’
‘Well done. You get to live.’

Flattery Actions

The various actions mentioned in the Conversation Matrix each take one round to perform. One member of the party should be designated the spokesman, and actually makes the Bluff or Diplomacy checks (see below) to perform the action. However, the other characters in the party must either follow the spokesman lead (for example, when grovelling, it is not very effective if only one person throws himself at the dragon’s feet while the other six members of the party keep their bows trained on the dragon’s throat), or do nothing.

Characters other than the spokesman may perform actions, but must hide them from the dragon’s attention. Spell-casting requires both Bluff and Sleight of Hand checks (unless the character has the Silent or Still Spell feats respectively), drawing a weapon or item needs a Sleight of Hand check, etc. All these checks are opposed by the Dragon’s Spot check. Depending on their positions, characters may hide behind other characters while performing actions, using their Hide skill instead

of Bluff or Sleight of Hand. Especially stealthy characters may make Hide checks to get out of the dragon’s line of sight (-10 to the Hide check). If the dragon sees other party members acting suspiciously, its attitude drops one level (if Hostile, it attacks).

Grovel

Grovelling is simple. The characters prostrate themselves in front of the dragon, drop their weapons, avert their faces from the beast’s awesome glory, and whimper as best they can. Grovelling should involve a complete collapse of the party’s offensive and defensive capacity – concentration should fail, readied weapons should fall, concealed characters should stumble out of the shadows begging for forgiveness. The dragon wins, the party surrender.

Grovelling requires a Bluff, Diplomacy or Perform check (opposed by the dragon’s Sense Motive plus the difficulty determined from the Dragon Conversation Matrix, above). Grovelling is less plausible if the party are a close match to the dragon – subtract the dragon’s Challenge Rating from the average party level +5. If the result is greater than zero, apply it as an Insight penalty to the grovelling check.

Sample Dialogue:

*‘Oh ****. We surrender!’*

‘....’

‘Run away! Run away!’

‘I have soiled myself.’

‘Spare us! Oh please spare us!’

Praise

Praise is fundamentally honest. Even when ego and hyperbole are ignored, dragons are singularly powerful and magnificent creatures, worthy of respect in many ways. Praising these qualities is a good way to win the dragon’s respect while retaining one’s own dignity.

Praise requires a Diplomacy check (opposed by the dragon’s Sense Motive plus the difficulty determined from the Dragon Conversation Matrix, above). While praising, a character can still converse with the dragon; praise affects how the dragon is addressed, but the character can still ask questions and so on.

Sample Dialogue:

*'Your magnificence...'
'Great one...'
'My lord...'
'If you would but hold back your wrath for a moment, sire...'*

Flattery

Flattery is praise with bells on. Every second word out of the character's mouth is some compliment to the dragon. A character using flattery can only communicate at half the normal rate – it takes several of the baroque, even labyrinthine sentences of flattery to actually say anything at all.

Flattery requires a Diplomacy or Perform check (opposed by the dragon's Sense Motive plus the difficulty determined from the Dragon Conversation Matrix, above).

Sample Dialogue:

*'O chieftest of calamities...'
'Your claws are thunderbolts, your wings are stormclouds, your voice is thunder, and your breath breaks the sky.'
'Your hoard is the ransom of ten kings, and the ruin of ten nations.'
'O most gracious and glorious serpentine lord...'
'Greatest of wyrms, lord of disasters, most cunning conspirator, the living fire that brings all enemies to ash...'*

Abject Flattery

Abject Flattery is basically pathetic. It is the verbal equivalent of grovelling; the character is saying absolutely nothing except how wonderful the dragon is. The problem with Abject Flattery is that it can be perceived as insulting mockery if the character goes too far. Luckily, the egos of most dragons are so vast that 'too far' is very very distant indeed. Unlike Praise or Flattery, the character does not truly believe in what he is saying; it is simply too outrageous. While using Abject Flattery, no information can really be transferred – it is a pleasant noise made by empty vessels.

Abject Flattery requires a Bluff or Perform check (opposed by the dragon's Sense Motive plus the difficulty determined from the Dragon Conversation Matrix, above).

Sample Dialogue:

*'Most magnificent and dire serpent, we poor misguided fools were foolishly misguided and misguidedly fooled into daring to brave the dire dangers of the lair of the magnificent serpent which is of course incarnate in your unquestionable great and quite exceptional glorious, not to mention most magnificent and dreadfully dire self.'
'Spare us, o lord, from your breath, which burns crops and brings famine, which burns churches and bring sorrows, which burns castles and brings chaos, and which, burning us, would bring certain death. Let us not become ash blown on your whirlwind exhalations; let not our flesh bubble and boil, our bones not blacken and crack, our armour not melt and sear, in the face of your fiery gout. Do not gouge us with your claws, which even now in repose are more deadly and piercing than a legion of spearmen, nor hammer us with your tail, which shatters rock more surely than any siege engine. Do not throw spells as us, which would blast our minds and bind our bodies or turn us into something quite unpleasant. In short, o lord, we ask – nay, entreat – nay, beg, yes, beg on bended knee and on pain of most ghastly death to spare us.'
'O most terrible and divine wyrm, we abjure our humanity. We are but dogs before your might, mongrel curs yipping nonsensically and scrabbling for scraps, unaware and uncomprehending of the lofty nature of your plans. Did I say dogs! Pah! We are insects before you, insects that crawl pitifully in the dirt and cower in the shadows, fearing that our cobweb castles and blind ant-cities should be burned away with but a thought from your magnificent self! Ah! Insects! Did I dare to compare myself to an insect before you, oh lord? In truth, we are nothings, less than nothings, infinitesimal fractions of the least portion of the smallest nothing that can not even be conceived of, for it is far too small for anyone to even think of conceiving of such an infinitely irrelevant thing of nothing such as we are lord, only we are not even that!'*

Intrigue

If a dragon is interested in a character, it is less likely to kill the character. Intrigue is the careful art of dropping hints and riddles to keep the dragon interested and amusing, and to convince the dragon that the character is worth more alive than dead. Common intrigue tactics include riddles, vague allusions to the character's abilities, allies, or secrets, and sentences that seem to offer insight or important information, but then just trail off...

Intrigue requires a Bluff or Diplomacy check (opposed by the dragon's Sense Motive plus the difficulty determined from the Dragon Conversation Matrix, above).

Sample Dialogue:

'My lord, have you perhaps heard of...'

'Hold back your breath but a moment, o dragon, I would parlay with you.'

'I was unaware that you had mastered the necromantic arts – for that is the only way you shall learn more if you kill us. If you cannot call up the dead, then you should listen.'

'Walk with me, my liege.'

Deal

'Never deal with a dragon' says the proverb, but it can be beneficial if the characters are willing to give way. Dealing involves offering the dragon services, help or even a tribute of treasure. The best deals require the dragon to give almost as much as the player characters.

Dealing requires a Diplomacy check (opposed by the dragon's Sense Motive plus the difficulty determined from the Dragon Conversation Matrix, above). For every (100gp per age category of the

dragon) worth of treasure or items given to the dragon, the character gets a +1 bonus to the check. If the character's check exceeds the dragon's Sense Motive by 10, he may ask for a minor service from the dragon. If he exceeds the dragon by more than 20, he may ask for a major service from the dragon.

Sample Dialogue:

'Consider this gift a small token of my esteem.'

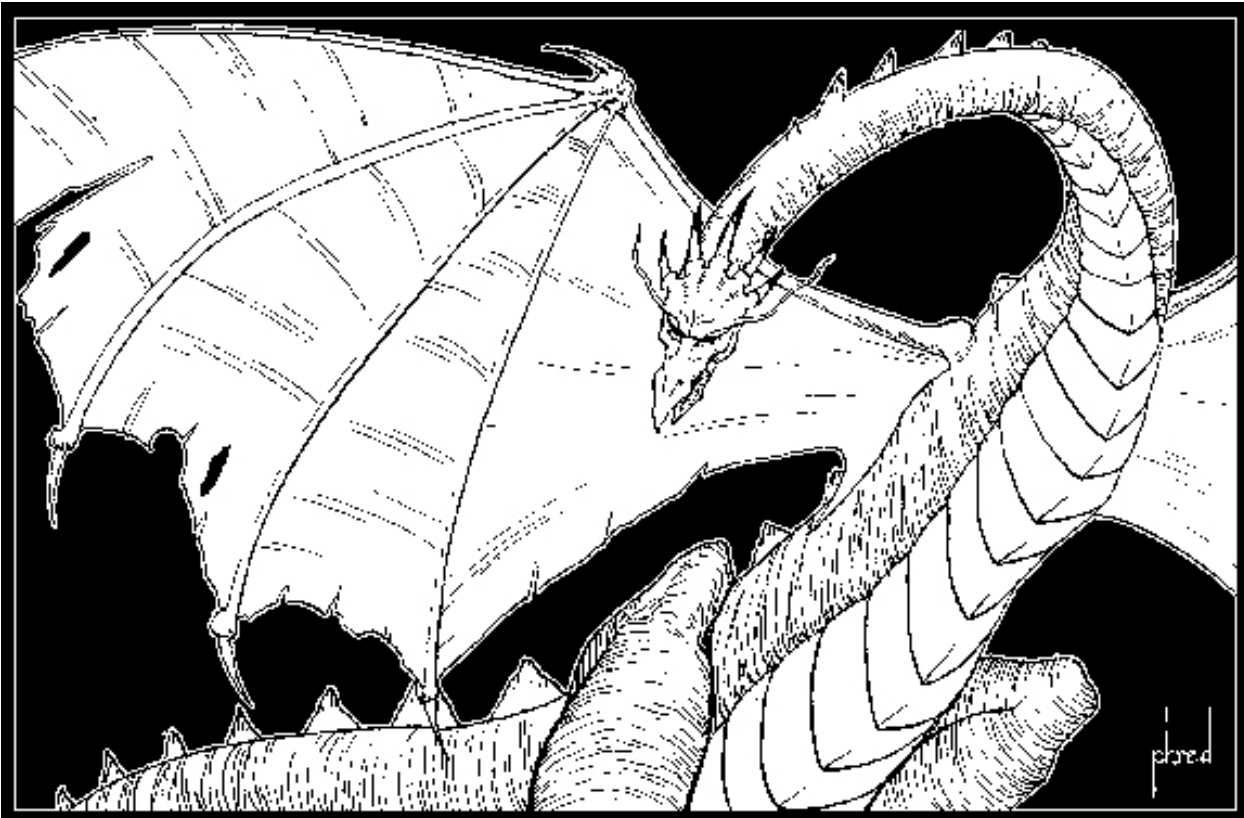
'My lord, we may be of service to you.'

'Let us discuss this like civilised folk, and not ravening monster and cowering adventurer.'

Roleplaying and Ruleplaying

Wherever two or more gamers gather together in one place, the debate about social rules arises. The d20 rules includes skills like Diplomacy and Bluff, which measure a character's conversational skills – but while a player can't swing a sword or cast a spell at the gaming table, he can talk to the Games Master 'in-character'. Should a player's own real-world charisma take precedence over the character's abilities?

Resolving situations through pure roleplaying, without recourse to dice or rules, is the smoothest and most 'immersive' style of play, but it does



penalise players who simply are not as quick-witted or eloquent as their characters. Also, it allows a player whose character is only average at social situations to gain a high 'virtual' Charisma – in game, Osric the Half-Orc may be only charisma 9, but if Osric's player is naturally good at talking, he will be able to bluff and cajole the Games Master's NPCs using real-life charisma instead of Osric's mediocre score. (Pushed too far, this simply becomes bad roleplaying; a Charisma 6 character should end up annoying or angering non-player characters, not charming them.)

At the other extreme, reducing conversations and negotiation to dice-rolling and abstract tactics makes the game seem very flat, but does ensure that everyone is on an equal footing, and allows a tongue-tied player to play the suave elven bard just as the combat system allows someone who doesn't know one end of a sword from the other in real life to be a swashbuckling, death-dealing machine in the game.

Finding a middle ground between these two extremes is usually the best solution.

Perhaps give a +1 bonus to Charisma-based skill checks if the player's roleplaying impresses the Games Master, rising to +2 or +3 if he even impresses the other players. Alternatively, let the player choose on a case-by-case basis whether to resolve a social situation by roleplaying or through Charisma and skill checks, or work out the average result of the player's roleplaying and skill check.

Social situations in role-playing games are tricky. Unlike combat, exploring a ruin, or crafting an item (no-one is going to alchemically craft the Philosopher's Stone or swing a great-axe at the gaming table*), they can be performed by the character or the player. (Riddles, puzzles and tactical problems are similar to social situations in this respect; a balance has to be found between the player's own abilities and the in-game abilities of his character).

*: Yeah, yeah, ok, in live action roleplaying the *player* can swing the axe. You still can't craft the Philosopher's Stone though.

Riddles

A good riddle can occupy a dragon's mind for some time. To ask a riddle, the character must make a *Intrigue* action (see above). Riddles are resolved as an opposed *Intelligence* check between the dragon and the riddler – if the character wins, the dragon will pause and ponder the riddle for one round per point of success (i.e., if the character beats the dragon's check by 5 points, it will take 5 rounds to work out the riddle). While pondering the riddle, the dragon continues to watch the characters, but the conversation is essentially 'paused' – the dragon concentrates on the riddle instead of talking. The characters may act secretly, using *Bluff* and *Sleight of Hand*, while the dragon is pondering the riddle. The dragon suffers a -4 penalty to its *Spot* checks while pondering as it is distracted – but if it notices that the characters are violating the sacred riddle game by using riddles as a delaying tactic, it drops two attitude levels.



TACTICS AND WARFARE

Dragons glory in battles. It is the ultimate test of their strength and skills, and therefore the proof of their superiority. It is undeniable dangerous to engage in combat, even for a dragon, so they devote much of their time to plotting strategies and countermeasures for suspected and hypothetical opponents. Dragons are always thinking three steps ahead, but fury often overcomes thought and the dragon's overconfidence sometimes leads to defeat.

That said, it takes a singularly keen blade or deadly spell to take advantage of that overconfidence; when one's only chance is that your foe is *too* sure of victory, it hardly inspires hope.

It came as a blur of wings, hammering against the sky furiously as if intent on brutally assaulting the air. Its roar seemed to be a physical thing, a wall of sound travelling just ahead of the oncoming dragon, like the bow wave of a mighty ship. He braced himself for the ram, for the impact of that terrible noise, but the fire came first. Flames gushed around the edge of his raised shield. He could smell his cloak burning, the oil on his armour joints suddenly evaporating and encrusting, his own skin being seared by the heat. Then it was above him, upon him, the sky a mess of claws and wings and pinions and lashing tail. Blindly, he swung his sword, feeling it almost wrench out of his hand as it bit into the belly of the rushing wyrm. Pain shot through his wrist.

Blood rained on the ground behind him, hissing as it struck the rocks. He smiled.

DRAGONS AGAINST ADVENTURERS

Adventuring parties are one of the greatest threats to a dragon. From the wyrm's perspective, a party is a six-headed beast that is enormously resilient - each of its constituent parts must be slain separately - and able to make many attacks at the same time. The party has tough, powerful claws, who cut at the dragon with sharp swords and rage-fuelled axes. It spits two or more spells at the dragon each round, and often greatly exceeds the dragon's grasp of magic. It often has all sorts of strange skills,

from bardic music to monk or roguish agility to the command of nature. The party can heal with terrifying speed, even while in the midst of combat. The adventuring party is indeed a terrible and fearsome beast, a malformed but lethally effective chimera-thing, all legs and limbs and armour.

General Tactics

The age and abilities of a dragon determine what precise tactics it employs, but some general tactics are usable by hatchlings and great wyrms alike. These are presented more or less in order of use.

Forewarned Is Forearmed

Even a little knowledge about the adventuring party can be the difference between victory and defeat. The dragon should employ scouts, spies and *scrying* to observe the party, paying particular attention to their items and abilities. Sacrificing a pawn to observe the party in action is a common tactic. If the dragon is sure that the party intend to attack it, it should attack them first, preferable when they are already engaged in combat or similarly distracted.

Parlaying with the group can give the dragon a little lead time to prepare itself if caught unaware.

Attack From Above

A grounded dragon is often a dead dragon. Most characters can deal much more damage with their melee weapons, so the longer the dragon stays out of range of melee, the better. The most common attack pattern begins with the dragon flying over the party (triggering the creature's Frightful Presence) and breathing (targeting those unaffected by fear, or any obvious mages or clerics). The dragon should then either cast spells from above, or else dive down and *briefly* engage in melee. The goal here is to destroy the party's capacity to attack at range, and to heal. Therefore, the dragon should target (in order) clerics, wizards, sorcerers, and those with bows or the ability to fly. If the dragon has the Fly-by Attack feat, it should swoop down and attack without landing; otherwise, it should stay well away from the party's fighters and barbarians while chewing and clawing the more vulnerable mages and other spellcasters.

The dragon's huge jaws closed around Kretnor of the Wolf Tribe and flew up into the sky.

'It got the barbarian! It got the barbarian!' squeaked his halfling companion.

* chop *

'The barbarian got it! The barbarian got it!'

'Aaaaaaaagh!'

'Kretnor can't fly! Kretnor can't fly!'

* thump *

'Call it a draw! Call it a draw!'

Divide and Conquer

While the adventuring party as a whole is more than a match for the dragon, its individual portions are easily defeated. Dragons are excellent grappler, and the Snatch feat allows them to do damage and grapple in the same round. If a dragon can grab an enemy (ideally, using Fly-By attack to minimise its exposure to attacks, and targeting clerics above all others), it can fly away and carry its victim off. In single combat, the dragon should be able to quickly dispatch the character (especially with feats like Quintilateral Rend). Clerics are favoured for this fate; they are tough enough to survive area attacks like dragon breath, they can boost their combat abilities enough to be a threat in concert with fighters, but most importantly of all, they can heal the rest of the party. Denying the party healing allows the dragon to outlast the weaker mortals – with careful tactics, the dragon can inflict damage on the party faster than the party can damage it, but the presence of a cleric counters this.

If the cleric cannot be abducted, then any other party member will do. Spellcasters are the best choice; the protective and enhancing spells cast on the party will wear off eventually, and killing the wizards, sorcerers and bards will reduce the abilities of the fighters and barbarians.

A dragon need not simply devour the character it abducts; once the victim has been beaten into submission, it should be interrogated or even pressed to into service.

When the dragon is running short of time, it can just fly straight up after grabbing a target and let go after a round or two. A 400 foot drop will put a dent in the finest armour (and probably reduce the contents of the armour to paste).

Finally, where flying is not an option, *wall* spells and similar effects should be used to split the party up, letting the dragon tackle enemies individually.

Ten great combat feats for dragons

Hover. Two extra claw attacks and automatically blinds opponents.

Flyby attack: Lets dragons use melee attacks without getting bogged down in brawls with fighters.

Multiattack: +3 to all claw attacks.

Lightning Reflexes: Without Dexterity bonuses, any increase to a dragon's Reflex save can help.

Quick Breath: Faster breath attacks keep the enemy under pressure.

Snatch: Claw and grab the enemy, then fly away.

Lingering Breath: Cleans up weaker foes and forces Concentration checks.

Sunder: A warrior without a weapon is far less damaging, especially since dragons have Damage Resistance.

Power Attack: With an excellent Base Attack Bonus and huge Strength, it makes sense...

Cleave: ...to squish the fighter after Power Attacking the sorcerer.

Five poor combat feats for dragons

Combat Reflexes: No Dexterity bonus means no extra attacks.

Spring Attack: Flying is a much better option than walking.

Quicken Spell-like Ability: Not *always* a poor choice, but a lot of dragon special abilities are not worth using in combat.

Combat Casting: With that much Constitution and lots of skill points, spellcasting is rarely a problem.

Toughness: Just...no.

Overwhelm and Maim

If forced into melee, the dragon should attempt to scatter its foes by charging headlong into them. Bringing wizards and other rear-line combatants (like archers) within reach allows the dragon to make attacks of opportunity against the more vulnerable characters. Melee attacks should be concentrated on one character at a time, to eliminate each one as



YOUNG DRAGON TACTICS & MAGIC

Young dragons (from wyrmlings to juveniles) cannot make crush or tail sweep attacks, limiting their melee options. Low-level parties do not rely on combined arms and magic as much as high-level parties, so removing mages and clerics is not as important as splattering the front-line fighters, preferably from range. These parties almost never have fliers, so the dragon is fairly safe if it stays aloft and breathes down.

Young dragons lack both a Frightful Presence and Spell Resistance, so quick, brutal attacks from ambush are preferred.

Magic

Many young dragons have no caster levels at all, and few have more than first level spells. The spells that a dragon has ready depends on how much foreknowledge

the dragon has of the attack. If the dragon knows the party is coming (Alert Level of On Guard or Alerted), it will have cast the spells marked by a * before the party arrive. The spells are listed in the order most dragons learn them; a dragon with caster level of 1 will know *shield* and *expeditious retreat* but not *magic missile*.

quickly as possible. Breath attacks should be used on the area just in front of the dragon (this is where the Sinuous Neck feat comes in handy), clearing its path. Downed or unconscious opponents should be stepped on, doing claw damage for Large or smaller dragons, and Crush damage for Huge or bigger dragons. This ensures that the enemy stays down and prevents a pesky cleric from healing a defeated fighter.

Young Dragon Spells
0th level
<i>Detect Magic</i>
<i>Read Magic</i>
<i>Dancing Lights</i> *
<i>Mage Hand</i>
1st level
<i>Shield</i> *
<i>Expeditious Retreat</i> *
<i>Magic missile</i>

Shield and *Expeditious retreat* both last for one minute per level, giving the dragon four or five rounds of protection. The speed boost allows the dragon to quickly reach the party or escape, allowing it to decide how long the encounter lasts for. *Dancing lights* is little more than a distraction, but can be used to surprise the party – send the lights hurtling towards them, and nervous characters might dodge the projectiles.

At this level, the dragon really should not spend much time worrying about magic. Its enemies are unlikely to have effective long-term defences against its breath weapon, so it should just stay out of range and keep blasting them. If it has a Charisma bonus giving it extra spells, they should be used to recast *shield*.

ADULT DRAGON TACTICS & MAGIC

Adult dragons acquire Damage Resistance, seriously powerful breath weapons and attacks, and worthwhile magic. Their foes are considerably more capable and better-equipped, though, requiring more cunning tactics and preparation. A dragon of this age is much more likely to have worthwhile servants that can be used to soften and distract the party before the dragon flies in and destroys them.

The air is still the best refuge for the dragon. Mid-level parties often have limited access to *fly* spells and other aerial items, and magical flight is much more agile than the dragon's clumsy wings. The dragon's speed is its advantage, so it should circle out of range of the enemy, zooming past every few rounds to blast away with its breath weapon.

The party is much more likely to be prepared for the dragon's breath (equipped with *protection from elements* and *resist elements*), so the dragon should cast *dispel magic* before attacking.

Crush attacks become available when a dragon reaches Huge size. The best use for this is to leap on top of the party front-line, crushing the fighters while reaching out and biting the other characters.

Magic

Adult dragons usually have caster levels ranging from 3rd all the way up to 9th, giving access to up to fourth level spells. Again, if the dragon is aware of the party, it will always have the spells marked with a * cast before they approach.

Mirror image and *protection from evil* both have long durations, so they work well with *shield* and *expeditious retreat*. *Dancing lights* are unlikely to fool an experienced party, but the dragon's spells now last long enough to justify taking a round to cast *resistance* (every little helps). *Magic missile* is a useful spell for those rounds when the dragon is waiting for its breath weapon to recharge. *Featherfall* counters the falling damage from *wingbind* or *hold monster*.

Resist elements is used by Cold or Fire dragons to protect them from their weakness. *Mirror image* and *invisibility* are an added layer of protection. *Darkness* can be cast on a stone and placed under the dragon's tongue, and then dropped on the party just before the beast breathes or attacks as a free action. While under the tongue, the darkness is contained, and the dragon has blindsight anyway.

Adult Dragon Spells		
0 th level	1 st level	2 nd level
<i>Detect Magic</i>	<i>Shield</i> *	<i>Resist elements</i> *
<i>Read Magic</i>	<i>Expeditious retreat</i> *	<i>Mirror image</i> *
<i>Dancing Lights</i>	<i>Magic missile</i>	<i>Darkness</i> *
<i>Mage Hand</i>	<i>Featherfall</i>	<i>Invisibility</i> *
<i>Resistance</i> *	<i>Protection from evil</i> *	
3 rd level	4 th level	
<i>Dispel magic</i>	<i>Wall of ice</i>	
<i>Protection from elements</i> *	<i>Scrying</i>	
<i>Fireball</i>		

Dispel magic counters party protections and removes dangerous spells. *Protection from elements* improves on *resist elements*. *Fireball* has a nice Long range, and again works as a temporary replacement for a recharging breath weapon. (Red dragon should probably substitute *lightning bolt* or another ranged-damage spell). Finally, *wall of ice* should be used in its wall configuration to divide the party. Red dragons can also catch the wall in their breath attack once it has been breached, turning it into a fog that they can navigate using blindsight.

Swapping Spells

The spells listed are merely suggestions – if there is a spell in this book or elsewhere that suits a dragon better, the Games Master should replace one of the listed spells. This list represents what the ‘average’ dragon has prepared; some have quite different and exotic spell repertoires.

As dragons have only a limited number of known spells, the more esoteric spells such as *gullet of surprising capacity* are usually stored on scrolls and cast only when needed.

OLD DRAGON TACTICS & MAGIC

Once a dragon has reached old age, it has grown into a creature capable of topping kingdoms and shaking the world. In combat, it is a killing symphony, able to inflict hideous amounts of damage with every claw and bite attack. A single old dragon can defeat a whole army, scattering them like burnt leaves before its fury. Such ancient wyrms attract the attention of the most powerful and skilled heroes, who wield magic weapons and spells almost as deadly as those of the dragon.

In short, high-level combat tends to end up with things getting very dead very quickly. A single misstep is far more damaging here than at mid-levels, as attacks are proportionately more damaging and spells more likely to instantly kill or cripple the target. A single missed saving throw can result in the dragon turning to stone, or being dumped in the negative material plane, or turned into a tortoise, or energy drained to nothingness.

Therefore, old dragon tactics need to be extremely well planned and defensive, while still destroying opponents as quickly and effectively as possible.

Dragons, with their universally good saving throws and high spell resistance, are better placed than most creatures to survive high level combats, but still need to have a full array of magical defences established to have any hope of surviving.

In combat, flight is unlikely to be much of an advantage – most high-level parties are capable of either following a dragon into the skies, or else arrange events so that they engage the dragon in a confined space. If the dragon does manage to attack from the air, it should circle out of range as much as it can (high-level druids have notably potent long-range spells, but even some arcane spells cast by a high-level wizard can reach a flying dragon, so the dragon should use Fly-by Attack and Strafe if it can).

On the ground, the dragon should begin with a crush attack, as it can probably encompass the entire party beneath its bulk. Tail sweep attacks hit automatically, so they are effective against enemies with absurdly high armour classes (or irritating defences like displacement). The dragon’s attack bonus is high enough to confidently hit most enemies (and if the dragon is hitting regularly with low rolls, it is time to break out the Power Attacks).

At this level, the dragon cannot overlook the importance of allies. No dragon wants to share its victory, but *summoned* servants, slaves, and constructs like vessel golems are extensions of the dragon’s will and therefore not a threat to its glory. Magic items should also be chosen carefully; a dragon this old does not have an entirely random assemblage of items, but has several items that are immediately useful to it – scrolls of *heal*, certainly, but also handy devices like *ioun stones* or *dust of disappearance*.

Magic

The magical abilities of dragons expand greatly as they reach their full growth. Their blood slows, congeals, and the bright shards of magic settle in their veins and compress into the highest echelons of sorcery, like diamonds. An old dragon’s spellcasting ability ranges from 5th level (an old white dragon) to 19th (a red great wyrm) or even 23rd (a gold draco invictus).

As before, spells marked with a * are cast by the dragon before battle.

Again, the basic plan is to enhance the dragon's defensive capabilities (*shield*, *expeditious retreat*, *haste*, *protection from spells* etc) while bombarding the party from a distance with *fireballs*, *disintegrates* or even *meteor storms*. This spell list includes a few defences against scrying (*false vision* and the wonderful *mind blank*) as well as some quick methods for escape, like *teleport*. One especially nasty tactic is to use a quickened *dispel magic* an instant before breathing.

A few spells require special notes. *Alter self* can be used by the dragon to fit into cramped areas, by shrinking down its wings. A dragon can enter an area 50% smaller than normal while using *alter self*. *Dimensional anchor* prevents enemies from escaping, or from following the dragon if it has to flee. It also has a good range at this level, so it can be cast while the dragon is circling overhead. *Dominate person* can be used on the party, or as a method to interrogate them remotely. *Repulsion* is tailor-made for big creatures with reach; just set the *repulsion* range to 10 or 15 feet, and the dragon can engage in melee without being attacked in return. The spell requires a Will save, the weak save of most melee-based characters. It also guards against unseen rogues trying to make sneak attacks.

Tense's transformation gives useful bonuses to the dragon, but should be held in reserve until the dragon is out of ranged attack spells. Note that for dragons, a breath weapon is a ranged attack. *Plane shift* is another doubly useful spell; it can be used to dump a troublesome fighter on, say, the elemental plane of fire if he fails his Will save, or to escape if the

Old Dragon Spells		
0 th level	1 st level	2 nd level
<i>Detect Magic</i>	<i>Shield</i> *	<i>Resist elements</i> *
<i>Read Magic</i>	<i>Expeditious retreat</i> *	<i>Mirror image</i> *
<i>Dancing Lights</i>	<i>Magic missile</i>	<i>Darkness</i> *
<i>Mage Hand</i>	<i>Featherfall</i>	<i>Summon monster II</i> *
<i>Resistance</i> *	<i>Protection from evil</i> *	<i>Alter self</i> *
3 rd level	4 th level	5 th level
<i>Dispel magic</i>	<i>Wall of ice</i>	<i>Teleport</i>
<i>Protection from elements</i> *	<i>Improved invisibility</i> *	<i>Dominate person</i>
<i>Fireball</i>	<i>Scrying</i>	<i>Sending</i>
<i>Haste</i> *	<i>Dimensional anchor</i>	<i>False vision</i>
6 th level	7 th level	8 th level
<i>Disintegrate</i>	<i>Limited wish</i>	<i>Protection from spells</i> *
<i>Repulsion</i> *	<i>Plane shift</i>	<i>Prismatic wall</i>
<i>Tense's transformation</i>	<i>Prismatic spray</i>	<i>Mind blank</i> *
9 th level		
<i>Time stop</i>		
<i>Wish</i>		
<i>Meteor storm</i>		

party are surprisingly tough. *Limited wish* and *wish* are costly, but are another useful spell to have in emergencies. Unlike the players, the dragon can afford to dedicate its magic to support, not offence.

LAIR COMBAT

All the above tactics assume that the dragon attacks (or is attacked by) the party in the wilderness. If the fight takes place in the dragon's lair, everything changes. Ideally, the dragon fights the party on its killing ground (see the Dragon Lairs chapter), where it can use the traps and defences of the lair to its advantage. All the above tactics still hold

Cleric Spells

Blues, red and most metallic dragons can cast clerical spells and have access to a limited number of clerical domains. Sometimes, these spells are granted to especially pious dragons; others are just a reward by a grateful deity to those who have furthered the god's aims, wittingly or unwittingly (many red dragons gain their spells after looting the temple of a rival god).

With their high Charisma giving them lots of bonus spells, dragons can quickly heal themselves back to full health using divine magic. Other excellent divine spells include *entropic shield* (20% miss chance against the only attacks that can hit a flying dragon!), *silence* (cast it on the same stone as *darkness* and drop it in the middle of the party), *animate dead* (the divine version is two levels lower, making it much more efficient), *death ward* and *spell immunity* (more protection against magic), *blade barrier*, *heal*, *word of recall* (back to the lair), *control weather*, *greater planar ally* (no need to bind the ally, unlike *planar binding*) and *implosion* (cast, then circle over the party imploding them one by one).

sway – the dragon knows every inch of the killing ground intimately, and should attempt to force the characters that it is not fighting in melee to move into the traps. The best approach is to scatter the party by charging at them; the weaker characters flee into areas unexplored by the rogues and thieves and get caught by the dragon's hidden traps.

A dragon forced to fight in the heart of its lair should carefully consider its options. If the party has no way to *teleport* or leave the lair through extraplanar travel, it is often best for the dragon to retreat from the lair and wait for the party to leave through one of the watched entrances instead of fighting within the cramped confines of the lair. This tactic does leave the hoard unguarded, but smarter wyrms will grit their teeth and be patient, preferring to retrieve their gold from the mangled bodies of the thieves instead of fighting them in close quarters and losing the advantage of flight. The hoard also presents a major problem for the dragon – breath weapons and delicate items do not mix, and an errant fire blast can turn a pile of gold into a liquid mess. (See Hoards, page 118, for more details on this.)

If the dragon must fight in its inner sanctum, it should try to draw the adventurers away from the hoard and towards the killing ground. *Wall* spells and feigning weakness can convince adventurers to pursue their foe instead of looting first.

So it all goes wrong...for the party

Battling a dragon should be one of the most terrifying and dangerous activities possible for a character; the ultimate test of skill, nerve and tactics, a feat worthy of song and renown. It is a dance of death, no quarter asked nor given. Either the beast is brought down, or another skull adorns its lair; there can be no other outcomes.

At least, that is the idea and certainly an unprepared party deserve to get slaughtered by a dragon. However, a string of unlucky dice rolls or a particular effective breath weapon blast can lead to the players losing when they have done everything right. Rather than let the game end because the dragon is about to wipe out the entire party, the Games Master could...

'Fudge' (secretly alter) the attack and damage rolls of the dragon. The breath attack only did 39 points of damage to your 30hp mage, not 40; the bite missed the fighter this round. One clever trick is to call for

saving throws against the breath *before* announcing how much damage is done; if all the vulnerable characters made their save for half damage, the rolled damage can be used, but if some failed the save, the Games Master can tone the damage down to that not everyone dies. Fudging should only be used sparingly – some players really dislike it. Give the characters a one-round grace period of fudged rolls, and if they are still in combat with the dragon after being given this chance to regroup or retreat, let them have it.

Have the dragon parlay with the characters. Dragons have goals and desires, just like the player characters. Have the beast offer to employ them, and send them off on a quest to bring it more treasure. If the party are accompanied by non-player characters such as hirelings or cohorts (or, better yet, familiars or bonded mounts), the dragon can keep hostages. Similarly, the dragon can demand a tribute of treasure instead of just killing everyone.

Dragons have enemies and rivals. If the party have inflicted significant damage on the dragon, one of its rivals could suddenly show up to deliver the finishing blow. This can either be a *deus ex machina* rescue for the party (Sir Ortheo the Dragonslayer rides up to save the day) or a rather nasty plot twist (a bigger dragon suddenly swoops down and attacks the one the party were fighting; the new dragon quickly defeats the first one, claims it as a vassal, then turns to the party...).

If the party have access to *resurrection* magic (or if the Games Master just wants to keep one character alive, to keep long-term campaign plots going and to serve as the nucleus of a replacement group of characters), then let the dragon kill all but one of the characters (usually the cleric). The survivor is spared because the dragon wishes to interrogate him, or else feed him alive to the hatchlings. This unfortunate survivor is stripped of equipment, and must escape the dragon's lair before *raising* his friends or forming a new party.

Dragons enjoy *playing* with their victims. A cleric might be offered his freedom if he denies his god. The dragon might drop the party into an infamously lethal dungeon after stripping them of their items and treasures, or pit parties members against each other in a series of duels. Dragon cruelty might save the lives of the characters, but at a terrible and painful cost.

The Games Master is of course under no obligation to spare the players. Dragon-slaying is supposed to be dangerous.

DRAGONS AGAINST SLAYERS

While the adventuring party against the dragon is the most common encounter in fantasy role-playing games, it is the single dragonslayer versus the beast that dominates myth and legend. Sigurd, Beowulf, St. George – the lone warrior or knight-errant pitting valour and lance against talon and fire.

Dragons almost invariably have the upper hand in such battles. Many of the tactics described above for fighting whole parties are based on the concept that the dragon should split the party up because it can defeat any single opponent easily. Here, there is always but a single foe. Therefore, the dragon should simply concentrate its attacks on the enemy, circling and breathing or meeting the slayer head-on.

If a puny mortal is willing to fight a dragon single-handedly, he must have some advantage or hidden weapon. Dragons are much more willing to trade flattery and insults with a single foe than with a group; it gives the wyrm more time to observe this foe and to determine if he is brave or merely suicidal. Noble dragonslayers such as paladins often fall for this trap, pausing to give the wyrm a moral lecture or a last chance to repent; more pragmatic slayers sneak up on the dragon, hoping to catch it sleeping or to attack from ambush.

Stealth and determination are the two best weapons for a dragonslayer. A lone warrior can stay out of sight much more easily than a whole party, and the dragon will be more fearful of a single brave knight than a whole gang of thieves.

So it all goes wrong...for the dragon

If the unthinkable happens and the dragon is losing the battle, it does not wait for the killing blow to fall. All but the youngest and most foolish dragons have a whole series of contingency plans to deal with unexpected defeat. Options include:

Retreat: Take to the skies, fly back to the lair, retreat to the refuge – anything but stay in the fight. Dragons have long memories, and can deal

with their enemies later. Even if the attackers can fly, dragons fly faster than anything short of an air elemental.

Call for Help: Servitors or summoned creatures nearby can be called to aid the dragon. Even calling on non-existent allies can stall attackers for a round.

Parlay: Dragons do so love the sound of their own voices. Engaging the party in conversation can stall a combat for a few rounds, giving the dragon's breath weapon time to recharge and spell durations to expire. The topic of conversation can be anything, from suggesting an end to hostilities to observations about the party's impressive tactics and skills.

Lie: Seed doubts in the minds of enemies – if the party are barely winning, whisper to them that they were sent to die at the dragon's claws, and it is only their own heroism that saved their lives. If the party easily defeated the dragon, suggest that their whole quest is just a distraction, and some other interest or holding of theirs is under attack this very moment.

Bargain: Offer the party treasure, magic, blood, service, eggs, anything to get them to stop attacking. Bargains can be broken and oaths twisted if necessary (dragons with a sense of honour will keep their word, but are not above using cunning diplomacy and word-play to weasel out of a seemingly binding promise). One of the nastiest tricks is to offer the enemy their pick from the dragon's hoard; the dragon then accompanies them back to its lair, and ambushes them when they reach the killing ground.

Feign Death: The sheer toughness of dragons makes it remarkable easy for one to pretend to be dead. Their internal fires always take several hours to die, so even a dead dragon is warm and bubbling for some time. All the dragon needs to do is let a spear pierce its flank in some unimportant area (behind the wingmount, where it all it will do is scrape off the ribs), let out a pained roar, and fall down 'dead'. Most attackers will head for the hoard instead of butchering the corpse.

Surrender: If all else fails, it is better to live as a worm than die as a wyrm. Dragons can be subdued or captured by threatening them with death. At the very least, the dragon will outlive its captors, and can rebuild later.

DRAGONS AGAINST ARMIES

Dragons are the ultimate weapon on the battlefield. While an adventuring party has the experience (not to mention the saving throws and hit points) to survive a dragon attack, most armies are made up of low-level warriors and fighters. A single dragon swooping over the front lines could panic hundreds of soldiers by its presence alone. Breath weapons are just as good as *fireballs* for clearing away troop formations, but unlike wizards or sorcerers, dragons are not restricted to a limited number of breath weapon attacks per day.

When fighting an army, the dragon's first priority should be to identify those few individuals or war machines that actually pose a threat to it, such as high-level characters, wizards, or ballistae. The dragon's first attacks can target these threats, while still shattering the rest of the army – area attacks do considerable amounts of collateral damage, and the dragon's frightful presence can be triggered while targeting enemies that are immune to it. Breathe on the enemy general, and the foot troops are panicked just as much as if the dragon had breathed on them instead.

Archers firing en masse are unlikely to be able to bring the dragon down, but they can be an irritation. Flight allows the dragon to easily avoid any defensive formations of pikemen or foot soldiers in front of the archers and blast them from above.

In short, the only thing that can stop a dragon on the battlefield is magic, powerful characters, or another flying monster. Any army comprised entirely of low-level warriors without access to powerful, accurate ranged attacks is doomed, no matter how big it is. Dragons cannot be defeated by swarm tactics – as long as they can take to the sky and breath, the wyrms rule the battlefield.

Sieges

Conventional castles are relatively easy for a dragon to defeat. The monster need only fly up and burn the defenders from the walls, or fly over the battlements, smash down the gates of the keep, and set fire to the heart of the castle. Towers are much better suited to defending against dragons – if the chief defensive tactic is to keep a wall between the defenders and the besiegers, then the dragon can just fly over it. Towers

'They have seven fire-worms of adult size, another nine but a few decades from the egg. The younglings are in the air, the adults have repelled the knights' charge and threaten to feast upon the flower of Etalonian chivalry.'

'Have the war-wizards bombard the front lines with ice storms; it should drive off the dragons and give our clerics time to pull the bloody nobles out. They're the ones paying our bills. Once the adults are in the air, hit them with whatever mage-winds we can summon – and get our own siege dragons aloft. They're too fat and slow to contend with their war-worms, but they can burn a hole in their lines and give us a chance to come up with a way to get those dragons slain permanently.'

-CONVERSATION BETWEEN MERCENARY COMMANDERS AT THE BATTLE OF ROOK'S FORD.

or other sealed keeps can barricade their windows against a dragon's fly-by assaults, preventing the monster from just exhaling its way to victory. Of course, without a curtain wall, the besiegers can easily approach the walls of the tower and have sappers collapse the defences. The best design for anti-dragon fortifications is a concentric network of narrow buildings – essentially, walls thick enough to contain passageways and arrow-slits in the centre. The dragon cannot breathe on the defenders, as they are not standing exposed on the battlements, nor can it land without facing fighters who sally forth from the walls to attack it with spears or polearms.

The problem with this defensive system is cost; building walls that thick and strong costs three times as much as a normal curtain wall.

The dwarven tactic, which is much more effective against dragons, is just to build the castle inside a mountain and be done with it. Dragons hate besieging this kind of fortification; the only options are to starve the defenders, or smash down the doors and try to storm the keep by crawling in. Starving is often more of a problem for the dragon than for the dwarves; sitting watch on the gates of the dwarven citadel leaves little time for the dragon to hunt, and that assumes that the dwarves even need to leave their mountain home and do not have mushroom farms or massive food stockpiles. Storming the mountain is the usual approach, but that means *extremely* close-quarter fighting. More dragons fall to dwarven portcullis traps and stern pikemen than to human knight-errants in shining armour.

Care and Feeding

Fortunately for the humble soldiers of the world, dragons rarely join armies. The cost of feeding one is considerable – a juvenile red dragon demands at least 2 Hit Dice worth of meat per day, which works out at about 5 gold pieces per day or a landscape quickly stripped of cows. Draconic mercenaries are almost unheard of, although bronze dragons do sometimes serve openly as such, demanding outrageous fees of up to a thousand gold pieces per age category per day.

Those few armies who do use dragons must raise the creatures from the egg, training them to subsist on trail rations and the bodies of the dead, to transport troops, fight in formation and hardest of all, to obey orders from a lesser being.

Dragon Armies

Wyrms sometimes raise armies for their own ends (see *Servants of the Dragon*, page 23). These forces are trained to work with the dragon. Special units equipped with heavy shields watch for the dragon's approach, then leap into the breach in enemy lines caused by the dragon's breath attack, their shields protecting them from the aftermath of the breath. Other troops carry billhooks and guisarmes to pull enemies away from the dragon if it is forced to land. Still others carry potions or talismans containing *featherfall* spells, and can leap from the dragon's back into the thick of the fray.

DRAGONS AGAINST DRAGONS

Ritual Combat

When two wyrms fight against each other, tradition demands they adopt a ritualised form of combat. These engagements always take place in the air, at the border between their two domains. The combat begins with the two wyrms exchanging breath weapon blasts. Dragons with line-type breath weapons have the upper hand here, striking first as the two approach each other. (If one dragon wishes to give its opponent a chance to surrender honourably, it loses its breath before the other is in range). The two then make a single pass, biting and clawing at each other. The victor is the dragon who inflicted the most damage.

For especially bitter disagreements or vassal challenges, the dragons make another two passes. There is no requirement that the dragons wait until their breath weapons are recharged, but it is customary to do so, especially if both dragons have equal ranges to their weapons.

A Draconic Primer, continued...

Dra'gnos'kc: The ritual duel.

Dra'pyrem ryeech aquwhis: Literally, 'the breath that shatters rivers'; refers to a dragon who uses its breath weapon in a second or third pass before its opponent is ready to breathe again. Informally, an opportunist.

Mor'chyem: The loser in a ritual duel.

Open Warfare

When ritual duels are not enough, dragons fight to the death in open warfare. Their battlefield is the sky – the battling wyrms chase other through clouds and around mountaintops, searching for the elusive, momentary advantage over the enemy. There are three major advantages that a dragon seeks to gain in battle: damage, range and magic. A fight between two or more dragons is a viciously fluid combat, with each trying to maximise its control of three factors while simultaneously trying to counter its opponent's actions.

† **Damage:** The simplest of the three advantages, the dragon who inflicts the most damage on its opponent has an edge in the fight. Not much of an edge, admittedly, as dragons are very resilient creatures and are capable of enduring hideous injuries and still continuing to fight. Their hot bloodlust sustains them, and many dragon battles have ended with the winner succumbing to his wounds just as soon as the broken loser tumbles down out of the sky. Older and bigger dragons are obviously stronger and tougher, and seek to close with smaller enemies.

† **Range:** A blue dragon can strike a foe with a bolt of lightning from a great distance, but the acidic clouds of the greens are only usable at close range. Manoeuvrability and flying speed also affect a dragon's ability to close to spell, breath or melee range. Height also plays a part, as dragons can swoop down from above to great effect. Again, elder dragons have both longer breath weapons

and fly faster than their younger counterparts. Younger dragons therefore prefer to fight their elders in ravines or other somewhat confined areas, where the agility of youth is more useful than the speed or strength of age.

- † **Magic:** Thanks to excellent saving throws and spell resistance, casting effective spells at dragons is a rather uncertain proposition. Most dragons use their spells to enhance their own abilities, although some conjure aerial obstacles such as *walls of fire* or *acid fog*.

The Quick Aerial Combat System

Dealing with combat in two dimensions can be tricky enough. Adding in a third dimension, not to mention movement speeds of 200 feet per round, limited manoeuvrability, and lots and lots of area attacks makes the problems even worse. A battle in the skies between two or more dragons can take a very long time to resolve. This optional system speeds things up somewhat.

In the Quick Aerial Combat System, there are four ranges; Close, Medium, Long and Out of Range. Each combatant has a Move Factor, determined by dividing its flying movement rate by 50 (rounding down) and adding its Manoeuvrability (Perfect=5, Good=4, Average=3, Poor=2, Clumsy=1). An adult red dragon has a Move Factor of 5 (150/50+2), a very young gold has a Move Factor of 6 (200/50+2), while a Pegasus has a Move Factor of 5 (120/50+3).

The combatants usually start at Out of Range, but distances change quickly. Subtract the attacker's Move Factor from the defender's (if both combatants are spoiling for a fight, just pick one to be considered the attacker). The attacker may decrease the distance between the two by making a Move Factor check. If the check fails by more than 10, increase the distance between the two by one step.

Closing Ranges	
Reduce Range by	Move Factor DC
1 step	10
2 steps	15
3 steps	25

At Out of Range, the two combatants cannot attack each other. The defender can try to flee by hiding or outlasting its pursuer.

At Long range, spells with Long range can be used.

At Medium range, spells with Medium or Long range, missile attacks, and line-shaped breath weapons can be used.

At Close range, all attacks including melee attacks can be used.

Each round, both combatants can gain a +1d4 bonus to their Move Factor by mentioning one of the following elements in the description of their movement. If both mention the same element, neither gets a bonus. (The easiest thing to do is have both combatants write down which element they are using at the start of each combat round.)

The intent here is to reward clever tactics without getting bogged down in details. These rules should only be used for minor and basically unimportant encounters; for important aerial battles, the more detailed d20 aerial combat rules from the *Ultimate Game Designer's Companion* should be used.

Common tactics include:

- † **Strike at the wingmount:** If a dragon can grapple another, it can pin the wingmount and stop its opponent from flying. Due to the position of the wingmount, at the centre of the dragon's back, the grappled opponent cannot pin its enemy's wings in the same fashion. The two dragons begin to plummet towards the ground. Just before they hit, the attacker releases its hold and flies off. Due to the pressure on the pinned wingmount, the victim cannot fly for several seconds after being released, and slams into the earth below.
- † In game terms, the attacking dragon grapples the defender from behind. If he keeps the defender pinned for a number of rounds equal to the defender's Constitution minus the attacker's Strength bonus, the defender cannot fly for 1d4 rounds after the pin is released.

- † **Breath shepherding:** The dragon uses its breath weapon to counter its enemy's movements. Smaller dragons can turn faster than larger ones; if a big dragon is chasing a smaller one, and sees the smaller dragon dip its wing and begin to turn to the left, the larger dragon fires its breath weapon to the left. If the smaller dragon continues to turn, it is struck full-force with the blast; if it continues straight on, the larger and faster wyrm catches up.

- † The attacking dragon must ready its breath weapon to make this attack. If the target begins to turn, the attacker loses its breath weapon. The target can choose not to move (and automatically avoids the breath weapon entirely) or can continue its turn and suffer the brunt of the blast (-6 circumstance penalty to its Reflex save).

- † **Dragon packs:** Even a group of younger dragons cannot hope to defeat a single older wyrm using physical attacks or magic – age brings just too many advantages. Staying out of the elder's reach is the younger wyrm's only option. When hunting in packs, the younger dragons circle and dodge, using their greater agility to prevent the bigger dragon from catching them. They ensure that the enemy can only catch one of them with each breath weapon blast; meanwhile, they bombard the enemy with their own breath weapons.

- † **Hiding in clouds:** The dragon's blindsight ability uses vibrations as a key sign of an enemy's approach. In the air, the range of blindsight is cut to 5 feet x the dragon's age category. Diving into thick clouds allows a dragon to evade its pursuers.

What do the characters do?

The skies above are filled with fighting dragons. Fire and ichor fall like bright rain. Up amid the clouds, battle is joined. How can the players get involved?

Spells, both offensive evocations like *fireball* and enhancements can be cast on dragons during the fight. Druids are especially useful for this, as weather control spells can affect the whole battlefield and their spells tend to have very long ranges. Characters with missile weapons might be able to hit a low-flying dragon with an arrow; even if their attacks are rather ineffective, the threat of attack from below might dissuade an enemy dragon from swooping down, limiting its options.

Rogues and rangers might climb onto trees, buildings or other tall terrain features, to slash at dragons as they fly past or to get a better field of fire with a bow. An especially agile character could even jump onto the back of an enemy dragon as it races over the battlefield.

Fly spells are of limited use, as they are relatively slow and the enemy dragon can easily avoid the flyer. However, a flying fighter or wizard can be a strongpoint in the skies, attacking anyone who comes close. Allied dragons can herd the enemy towards the flying character.

Dragon riding is covered on page 244.

NASTY TRICKS

Dragons spend long months plotting the defence of their lair and planning tactics for every possible eventuality. They come up with dozens of fallback plans, countermeasures, tricks and stratagems for combat, taking the most unlikely means of attack into account. Most dragons are prepared, at least on some level, for interplanar invasions, mobs of deranged peasants trying to carry away their hoard, or their own offspring returning to attack them.

Terrain Descriptors			
Close	Medium	Long	Out of Range
Terrain features	Terrain features	Clouds	Clouds
Biting and clawing	Dodging attacks	Gaining Altitude	Gliding on winds and thermals
Grabbing parts of the enemy	Swooping	Circling in to attack	Flying like an arrow

Black

Black dragons can create huge areas of *darkness* three times per day, which they can ignore thanks to their blindsight ability. Most parties can easily counter *darkness* with the clerical variant of *daylight*, but this requires the party to use three third-level cleric spells to counter a rather minor ability of the dragon. One tactic is to attack while the party are crossing a large body of water, such as a lake or moat. The dragon hides in the water, watching the party. As most clerics wear heavy armour, they will have to remove their armour before they can swim across. The dragon waits until the cleric is occupied before invoking *darkness* and attacking. If timed correctly, the cleric will be stuck half-in, half-out of his armour and unable to counter the *darkness* for several rounds.

Underwater attacks in general are favoured by black dragons. Dragons are excellent grapplers, so dragging enemies down and holding them underwater while they drown is easily accomplished. Some dragons use their wings as vast leathery nets to catch many enemies at once and drag them all down to their deaths.

Unlike the fiery blasts of red dragon breath, acid lingers for some time after the dragon breathes. A black dragon can poison a body of water with its acid, creating a lake of dilute acid. The strength of this acidic region depends on how quickly the water of the area is renewed. A quick-flowing river carries the acid away too quickly, but a slow river or lake filled with dilute acid inflicts up to one point per age category of the dragon per round. If the dragon is old enough to stagnate the water (using its *corrupt water* ability), it can double the damage as the acid does not dilute as quickly.

Blue

Blue dragons attack from carefully prepared ambush, either hiding in the loose sands or blending in with the blue skies above. Blues work well together, so pack tactics are common. Often, one dragon will glide on a thermal over the enemy, subtly herding them towards the ambush point. The dragons waiting under the sand then leap out and attack. Hover is an especially good feat, as the desert sands can be whipped up to blind enemies. Sound imitation and *ventriloquism* is used by one dragon to trick the blinded foes – it imitates the

voice of one party member, shouting ‘follow my voice!’, and guides the party into the waiting maws of the other dragons.

Blue dragons often fight in formation and train their servants to do the same. Their orderly minds like to see the enemy arranged in neat ranks – because if the enemy are all in a line, a single lightning bolt can catch multiple targets. Blue dragons are adept at setting up ‘kill zones’, such as narrow ravines or carefully arranged gaps between threatened areas, which seem safe but only serve to line up the enemy for a blast.

Create water can be used to create areas of wet sand (one five foot by five foot area per two gallons of water) that conduct electricity. Anyone standing in one of these areas that is adjacent to a lightning bolt attack is also struck by the effect of the bolt, but they automatically take half the damage and may make the usual Reflex save to take no damage, as if they had the Evasion ability.

Finally, a blue dragon wishing to weaken its enemies before attacking can swoop down and use *destroy water* on their canteens.

Green

Green dragons are both sadistic and brutish, delighting in suffering. They use their *dominated* servants and forest homes to their advantage, attacking then fading back into the greenwood. Unusually, green dragons often begin their attack from the ground, taking to the skies only when forced to.

A tail slap or claw attack can shatter tree-trunks, especially if the dragon has prepared the tree in advance by clawing at it (reducing the Break DC of the tree to 10). The dragon can use falling trees to block the path of characters or as weapons. A falling tree inflicts 2d8 damage, but characters may make a Reflex save (DC 7) for half damage. A single claw attack can topple one tree, a tail slap can topple one tree for a Medium or Large dragon, two for a Huge dragon, and four for a Gargantuan or Colossal dragon.

When flying, a green dragon can use its acid cone breath weapon to strip all the leaves from a swathe of trees, defoliating the forest and removing the concealment given by the foliage. Characters

attempting to hide from a hunting dragon cannot rely on the trees for cover.

Greens can also use all the acidic and underwater tricks of their black cousins.

Red

The proudest and most confident of all wyrmkind, red dragon tactics centre on locating and destroying the enemy with as much speed and terror as possible.

Dry branches, patches of oil and other flammable items can be scattered around the battlefield and set alight by the dragon's breath weapon. These firetraps are usually no bigger than bonfires (inflicting 2d8 damage if a character falls in), but the dragon can fan the flames with its wings while using the Hover feat. The cinders and sparks inflict 1d4 points of fire damage on everyone within the dust cloud caused by Hovering.

Red dragons can cast *locate object* several times per day. Most red dragons scatter a few distinctive items –usually attractive and expensive pieces of jewellery, or useful items such as *potions of healing* - around the outskirts of their lair in particular locations. The dragon's servants are ordered not to touch these items. If the dragon suspects the presence of an intruder, it can scan each of these objects in turn with *locate object*. If the object has moved from its usual resting place, it must be in the possession of the intruder...and thanks to the spell, the dragon knows the *precise* location of the enemy at this moment.

White

While only old white dragons can create *freezing fog*, even a young white can use its cold breath to cover cave roofs and other impassable objects with ice that it can then ice walk on.

White dragons cannot naturally breathe underwater as black or green dragons can, they can hold their breath for some time or use *water breathing* spells. One common tactic is to swim underneath an ice floe, wait until the party pass overhead, then burst up through the ice. If anyone falls into the water, the dragon can freeze the water with its breath.

DRAGON EQUIPMENT

As a rule, dragons do not bother with weapons beyond their own claws and teeth. Some wyrms do take advantage of tools, although this is usually seen as a sign of weakness. Dragons therefore have no natural weapon proficiencies and all these weapons are considered exotic weapons.

All the weapons and equipment here is of appropriate size for a Large dragon. To adapt it for larger (or smaller) creatures, double the cost and weight, and increase the damage as follows:

Masterwork and Magical Weapons

All of these items can be made to masterwork standards; indeed, given the huge cost and rarity of dragon weapons, it is much more common for the dragon to find an expert craftsman to forge its weapons than to accept shoddy work.

Magical versions of these weapons are also common (certainly, common relative to the number of the weapons in existence). Many draconic glaives are *vorpal*, while *two-bladed wyrmswords of speed* are popular among red dragons. Dragon armour often has the *reflection* property, while white dragons love *armour of cold resistance*. One notable green dragon has a suit of *light barding* made from dozens of captured suits of *elven chain*.

'Worry not! I am warded against fire! Ooh - what does that do?'
...last words of Jerich the Wizard

Weapon Size Changes				
Medium	Large	Huge	Gargantuan	Colossal
1d4	1d6	1d8	1d10	1d12
1d6	1d8	1d10	1d12	2d8
1d8	1d10	1d12	2d8	2d10
1d10	1d12	2d8	2d10	2d12
2d6	2d8	2d10	2d12	3d8
2d8	2d10	2d12	3d8	3d10
2d10	2d12	3d8	3d10	3d12

Exotic Weapons - Melee

Weapon	Cost	Damage	Critical	Range Increment	Weight	Type
Draconic glaive	250 gp	2d8	X3	-	25 lb.	Slashing
Tailblade	100 gp	+2d6	X2	-	16 lb.	Piercing
Wing razors	250 gp	+1d8	X3	-	12 lb.	Slashing
Wyrmword	300 gp	1d12	X2/19-20	-	20 lb.	Slashing
Wyrmword, two-bladed	1,000 gp	2d12	X2/19-20	-	40 lb.	Slashing

Exotic Weapons - Ranged

Weapon	Cost	Damage	Critical	Range Increment	Weight	Type
Blundercone	500 gp	*	*	20 ft.	15 lb.	*
Foreclaw bow	350 gp	1d10	X3	80 ft.	30 lb.	Piercing
Doombow	1,250 gp	2d12	X3	150 ft.	100 lb.	Piercing
Rock, dropped	-	2d10	X2	-	500 lb.	Bludgeoning
Wing whip	50 gp	1d6	X2	10 ft.*	10 lb.	*

Armours							
Armour	Cost	Armour Bonus	Maximum Dex Bonus	Armour Check Penalty	Arcane Spell Failure	Speed	Weight
Dapplescale	*	+1	-	-2	*	Full	-
Light dragon barding	1500 gp	+5	+1	-5	30%	2/3	180 lb.
Heavy dragon barding	7500 gp	+10	+0	-6	40%	2/3	500 lb.
Wing carapace	750 gp	+2	-	-2	10%	-	120 lb.

Weapons

Blundercone: A blundercone is a tough metal funnel designed to be held in the dragon's mouth. It is open at both ends. The blundercone is loaded with shrapnel or stones. When the dragon breathes, the breath causes the contents of the blundercone to explode outwards, filling a cone-shaped area with shards of flying metal.

The area of effect of the blundercone depends on the size of the dragon – see Dragon Breath Weapons in *Core Rulebook III*. The blundercone's damage depends on the breath weapon type of the dragon; it can only be used by dragons with fire or lightning breath weapons, and inflicts 1d4 points of damage for every dice of damage in the dragon's breath weapon (so an adult red dragon with a breath weapon of 12d10 would inflict 12d4 points of damage with a blundercone). Victims of the blundercone may

make a Reflex save for half damage (the DC for the save is the same as for the dragon's breath weapon). Damage from the blundercone is one-third piercing, one-third bludgeoning and one-third slashing.

When a blundercone is used, there is a 5% chance it ruptures. Half the damage from the blundercone is inflicted on those within its area of effect; the other half strikes the dragon (the dragon does not get a Reflex save for half damage).

As blundercones use rocks and scrap metal as ammunition, they cost nothing to reload.

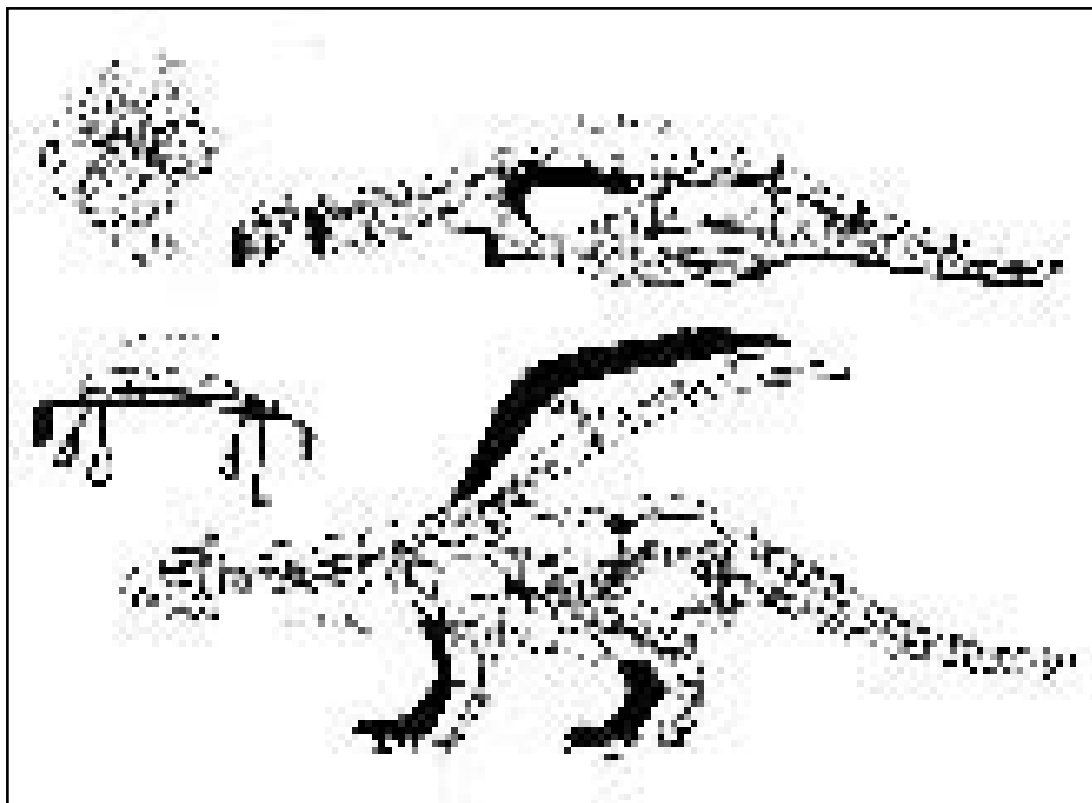
Draconic Glaive:

Polearms and lances are among the most lethal weapons used by dragonslayers; the draconic glaive turns the advantage of reach back

on the slayers. A draconic glaive is a massive iron shaft that flowers into a shining steel blade. The weapon is held in the dragon's forearms while on the ground. When flying, the dragon holds the glaive in one foreclaw and steadies the butt of the shaft with the matching hindclaw.

A Large or Huge glaive increases the dragon's reach by 5 feet; bigger glaives add 10 feet to the reach. If the glaive is used by a charging flying dragon, it inflicts double damage. Dragons cannot use a glaive to attack creatures within 10 feet.

While using a glaive, the dragon cannot make claw attacks with its front claws. The dragon may add its Strength bonus to the damage inflicted by the glaive.



Doombow: The doombow is essentially a dragon-mounted ballista. The dragon holds the bow in its four claws below its body while flying. The bow is drawn back using a chain attached to the dragon's tail. Ammunition for the bow is held strapped to the dragon's side, and it is a full-round action to reload a doombow. While holding a doombow, a dragon may not make claw or tail attacks.

The doombow inflicts a -5 penalty to the attack roll.

Foreclaw bow: A foreclaw bow is almost identical to an ordinary composite shortbow, only larger. Dragons are forced to use composite bows as no natural tree grows in the correct size and shape for their weapons. Foreclaw bows use the dragon's normal attack bonus.

Rock, dropped: A flying dragon can drop huge rocks on those below. It takes all four of the dragon's claws to carry the rock, and the dragon must make an attack roll to hit with the rock (which is a grenade-like weapon).

Tailblade: A tailblade is a sharp sword that straps to the end of the dragon's tail. This blade has the same effect as the Tail Spikes feat.

Wing razors: These blades are attached to the outer edge of the dragon's wings. They inflict an additional -2 penalty to the dragon's attack rolls when making a wing buffet attack, but increase the damage from a successful buffet by 1d8. Wing razors also inflict this damage if another dragon tries to grapple the wearer.

Wing whips: These dragon-sized whips are attached to the end of the dragon's wings or held in its wing-claws. With these weapons, a dragon can trip opponents, but not disarm them. The whips inflict subdual damage, but are not limited by the armour of enemies. The dragon may add half its Strength bonus to the damage inflicted by the whips.

Wyrmsword: A wyrmsword is a long blade resembling a bastard sword. It is held in the dragon's foreclaws. It can be used one-handed or two-handed. When used in a single claw, it suffers a -10 penalty to its attacks, but the dragon may add its Strength bonus to the damage. When used with two claws, the attack suffers only a -5 penalty, and the dragon may add one and a half times its Strength bonus to the damage.

Wyrmswords are usually stored on scabbards mounted in the centre of the dragon's back, or at the end of its tail.

Wyrmword, two-bladed: The single largest melee weapon in use on the Prime Material plane, the two-bladed wyrmword is a double-headed weapon, requiring the Two-weapon Fighting feats for fullest effect. It is a T-shaped weapon, designed to be held in the dragon's foreclaws and swung with its hindclaw. It therefore can only be used by a flying or hovering dragon. The two-bladed wyrmword inflicts no penalty on the dragon's attacks, but the dragon cannot make claw attacks while carrying the sword.

Armour

Dapplescale: A rather grotesque form of armour, dapplescale is constructed by replacing several of the dragon's own scales with grafted-on scales from another dragon. For example, a white dragon might have up to a fifth of its scales replaced with fire-resistance scales from a red dragon.

Dapplescale armour has a non-magical form of resistance appropriate to the dragon it came from, so the white dragon mentioned above would have Fire Resistance. Dapplescale armour only lasts until the dragon moults. The scales used can be fresh or

preserved – see Dragon Anatomy, page 93 for the cost of dragon scales.

Light barding: Light barding is mostly chain mail, with a few heavy metal plates protecting vulnerable areas of the dragon. Light barding does not protect the dragon's wings or upper limbs. A dragon may still fly while wearing light barding.

Heavy barding: Heavy barding is the draconic equivalent of full plate mail. Every inch of the dragon is protected by massive metal plates or heavy chain. The barding includes a huge mask that protects the dragon's face, articulated panels that guard the belly, and curved steel plates that covers the dragon flanks and wings. While wearing heavy barding, the dragon cannot fly or make wing buffet attacks, as the armour binds and covers its wings.

Wing carapace: A wing carapace is mounted on the dragon's back. When the dragon lands, it can slip its vulnerable wings inside the metal armour of the carapace. A dragon may not make wing buffets while using a carapace.





DRAGON ANATOMY

Forgive me, my lord, for this rambling and overlong preface to this essay. The writing of this document required much investigation and compromise. Finding a dragon carcass to dissect was a quest as great as that of any knight who went out to slay such a beast. The death of a dragon brings carrion eaters and grave robbers of all sorts, from alchemists to yuan-ti. Such an assembly leaves little space for a humble zoologist such as myself; still, I did manage to examine the bodies of two dragons, an immature white dragon and an adult blue (although the latter was a preserved curiosity in the seraglio of a caliph in the far south). I also interviewed the gold dragon Triestifix, and although he was evasive of my questions and irritated by the topic of discourse, his answers were extremely illuminating.

I also consulted the libraries and sages of the other races. The dwarves were greatly forthcoming on the evil and greed of dragonkind, as well as the best methods for killing them, and I was able to draw certain conclusions from these techniques. The elven scrolls, on the other hand, were remarkably silent on this topic (for that matter, so is the elvish language. That is why I write in the common tongue, instead of the elf-latin of scholars; elvish simply lacks the vocabulary of blood, bone and organ necessary to discuss anatomy). The lorebooks of the gnomes were the best secondary sources I could find, but also insisted that the nature of the dragon could not be found in autopsy or haruspicy. Every dragon is unique; they grow throughout their long, long lives, and their growth is determined more by the dragon's desires than by biology. Their form is in a state of magical flux, so two dragons hatched in the same clutch may grow up into adults that are physically very different. One, a warrior, may have horns and a spiny back; the other, a wizard-wyrm, has blood that sparkles with arcane energy and internal organs that channel magical forces.

The differences between two dragons of the same species are almost as great as those between one species and another. There is an almost unheard-of degree of variation within dragon-kind. I have endeavoured to identify the common elements that exist within all dragons, but I must emphasise that

an individual dragon may be quite different to what I describe here.

*Enough preamble. I remain, my lord, your most abjectly devoted servant and counsellor,
Ferau d'Eglac*

Overview

All common or 'true' dragons (the term is used to distinguish them from similar draconic creatures, such as wyverns) are huge reptilian creatures, measuring on average thirty to forty feet long, of which a little under two-thirds is tail and neck. Dragons are six-limbed, with a pair of bat-like wings sprouting from the upper portion of their forelimb shoulders. The extended wingspan of a dragon is one and a half times its length.

The Tail

We shall begin at the end, with the tip of the dragon's tail. The end of the tail is a heavy counterweight of bone. This counterweight develops as the dragon reaches adulthood, and is used to improve control over the lengthening tail, a vital necessity for flight. Two muscle groups on either side of the tail, referred to as the tail flanges, spread out when the dragon spreads its wings, creating a natural rudder. While dragons are capable of astonishing velocities, they must beat their wings furiously to achieve such speeds, and therefore cannot adjust their courses by altering the attitude of their wings.

The dragon's spine runs the length of the tail. The caudal vertebrae of the tail are circular save for a protrusion on top that juts up out of the flesh. In most dragons, this protrusion forms a bony ridge along the top of the tail; in others, the protrusion grows to five or six times normal size and becomes a spike. Smaller bones, called the zygapophyses, provide added support and articulation to the lower portion of the tail.

The underside of the tail is one of the most sensitive portions of the dragon, second only to the tongue (the dragon's 'hands' - the foreclaws - are heavily armoured and have little sense of touch). A dragon examining an object often brushes its tail over the surface, feeling every tiny crack and imperfection as a thrill in the tail. A sleeping

dragon constantly sweeps its tail over the coins and jewels of its hoard, counting them even as it slumbers. One of the quickest ways to infuriate a dragon (faster even, than stealing from it) is to grab the underside of the tail; it maddens them with tickling and irritation.

At the junction of the dragon's body and tail, there is a thick knot of nerves and ganglia, protected by a hemisphere of bone below the first caudal vertebra. This hindbrain guides the unconscious motions of the tail, and is the seat of the dragon's lower thoughts and emotions. (I theorise that the fore-brain of the dragon is conversely the seat of insight, philosophy, and rarefied thoughts, and that by lobotomising the hindbrain, the feral and destructive impulses of an evil dragon could be removed or at least mitigated.)

The two primary muscles that control the tail, the lateral gluteal muscles, are elongated triangles that run from half-way along the tail to anterior end of the dragon's hips. Another muscle, the dorsal gluteus, runs atop the spine from the end of the tail until linking with the dragon's wingmounts. The fourth muscle controlling gross articulation of the spine is the ventral gluteus, which runs splits in two just aft of the dragon's genitalia and runs a quarter of the way along the tail.

Elementally, the tail is aspected to the earth and magically 'grounds' the dragon, giving the race their legendary immunity to many forms of magic. Below each pair of the first twenty caudal vertebrae is a small arterial loop. The dragon's blood carries the energy of a spell away from the main body of the wyrm and dissipates it by channelling it into the appropriate arterial loop and letting the elemental earth/tail connection deaden the spell energy. The correspondences between arterial loop and school of spell are not exact, but seem to be: 1st and 2nd caudal vertebrae - enchantment, 3rd and 4th - illusion, 5th and 6th - transmutation, 7th and 8th - adjuration, 9th and 10th - unknown, 13th and 14th - evocation, 15th and 16th - conjuration, 17th and 18th, necromancy, 19th and 20th, divination. The presence of the loop beneath the ninth and tenth vertebrae suggest that there is an unknown school of magic that has yet to be discovered, or it may be a sort of arcane appendix left over from an earlier age.

Unmentionables the First

(At this point, I must insist that ladies and those of a delicate disposition should stop reading and skip onto the section entitled 'Hindlegs'.)

The dragon's anus is located just underneath the tail. Dragons make incredibly efficient use of their food, so they excrete only a little despite the vast amount of food they devour. A passage leads from the dragon's intestines to the anus. This passage is lined with small, wiry rods that distort any magical signature present in the dung, preventing it from being used as part of a sympathetic magic targeting the dragon. The dung does retain a significant elemental charge; white dragon dung is frosted and cold to the touch, while red and gold dragon waste is dusty and prone to combust. Experienced hunters must look for burn marks instead of a physical spoor when hunting a fire dragon.

This magical distortion does not remove the pungent scent of the spoor. Dragons usually bury their dung, although black dragon lairs are ringed with pestilent cesspits of exposed fitch, an arrangement the foul dragons find pleasant and amusing. (Silver and bronze dragons are said to appreciate human privies, and I speak from experience when I say that gold dragon lairs often include dwarf-crafted plumbing.)

Unmentionables the Second

On examining the preserved body of the blue dragon, I was struck that the beast had no identifiable genitalia. Given the near-legendary number of half-dragon crossbreeds, I could not believe that dragons are without organs of generation that are at least analogous to our own. I obviously could not investigate further in the caliph's seraglio (discussing the possibility that his preserved dragon is a eunuch might have put a painful idea into his mind with regards to my status in his court), but I noted the inconsistency.

The second dragon I dissected was a white dragon, slain by the barbarians of the glacier tribes. This young wyrm had not reached sexual maturity, but I was able to solve the mystery. The organs of generation of dragons are withdrawn inside the body, into a cavity called the cloaca, and the ventral gluteal muscle snaps shut over them,

drawing an especially thick set of protective scales into place.

Dragon genitalia are broadly similar to those of humans, although obviously considerably larger. Although dragons reproduce by laying eggs, they still copulate in the manner of mammals. One peculiar elven ballad describes the draconic act of union happening in mid-air, with two coming together vertically, and either hovering or feather falling for the duration of the act.

Due to the lack of subjects, I have not plumbed the mystery of the female dragon. I would surmise the existence of an egg sac in the hollow beneath the tail, where the eggs develop before being laid. A dragon carries a fertilised egg for approximately one month.

Dragons are magically interfertile with almost any creature thanks to their polymorph spells and abilities. The offspring of a dragon always exhibits some draconic traits. If the dragon sires a child, it is born in the usual manner of the mother race. If the dragon is the dam, then she will lay an egg containing the hybrid (if she carries the child in dragon form), or give birth to it (if she changes shape into a human). I suspect, but cannot prove, that the mother must remain in one shape or the other for the duration of the pregnancy. (Half-dragons are therefore far more likely to have a draconic father than mother.)

Hindlegs

The pelvis of the dragon is a wonder of skeletal engineering. A dragon is equally comfortable going on all fours, standing on its hind legs, and while flying, so its pelvis must be able to change how the legs fit. On either side of the pelvis is a wide plate of bone (the acetabular plate) that contains two ball-and-socket joints. When the dragon is sitting on its hind legs, the legs fit into the lower socket; when it goes on all fours, the hip-joint shifts to the upper socket. This gives the hindlegs great freedom of movement while still being able to bear the massive weight of the dragon.

The mighty thigh-bone is the single largest bone in the body, and is immensely strong. The white dragon corpse I examined had been hacked apart from barbarian raiders, all of them orc-blooded and

armed with enchanted axes that can slice through an ancient oak in a single blow – and the white's femur was not even scratched by their attacks.

The rear of the dragon's knee, where the femur meets the fibula and tibia bones, is protected by a massive horn-like spur. A smaller spur grows from the same joint on the foreleg; these spurs are used by dragons to cling unto cliffs and rock faces like tremendous bats. These spurs are also important when dragons fight in mid-air, as they guard the vulnerable muscles and tendons of the limb from being slashed by claw attacks.

The clawed foot of the dragon is referred to as the pes, and is comprised of three sets of bones; the tarsals, metatarsals, and phalanges. Most dragons have a four-toed foot, with claws at the end of the foot. Three of the four claws face forwards, the last one is set at an angle, and is opposable. Dragons lack fine articulation in their hind-claws, but can use them to pick up large objects such as cattle. A few dragons, notably the white, have three large claws like that of a bird. Two of the claws face forwards, the last is set in opposition. White dragons therefore walk on their claws, losing less heat to the ground.

The muscles that shift the dragon's leg from one ball socket to another also give the dragon the ability to make huge leaps that defy both gravity and the dragon's sheer mass.

Torso

The main body of the dragon contains all the vital organs and great muscles of the wyrm. The torso is shaped a little like a hump-backed barrel, as the massive wingmount rises out of the body like a mountain of bone and sinew. The dragon's spine splits in two at the seventeenth dorsal vertebrae; the dorsal spine supports the wingmount, while the ventral spine connects to the spreading ribcage beneath.

Digestion

Dragons have no less than five stomachs, linked by a web of intestines. Initially, I assumed that this was how dragons are able to sustain themselves on almost any substance, by progressively breaking it down a stage at a time in each successive stomach. However, the interactions are far more complex;

Four of the stomachs are essentially elemental Furnaces, capable of digesting elemental essences. The final, primary stomach is used for mundane food - meat, in the diet of most dragons. When a dragon feeds on stone, the rock's elemental energy is extracted by the dragon's earth stomach, then channelled through the intestinal web and fed into the primary stomach from where it fuels the dragon's life.

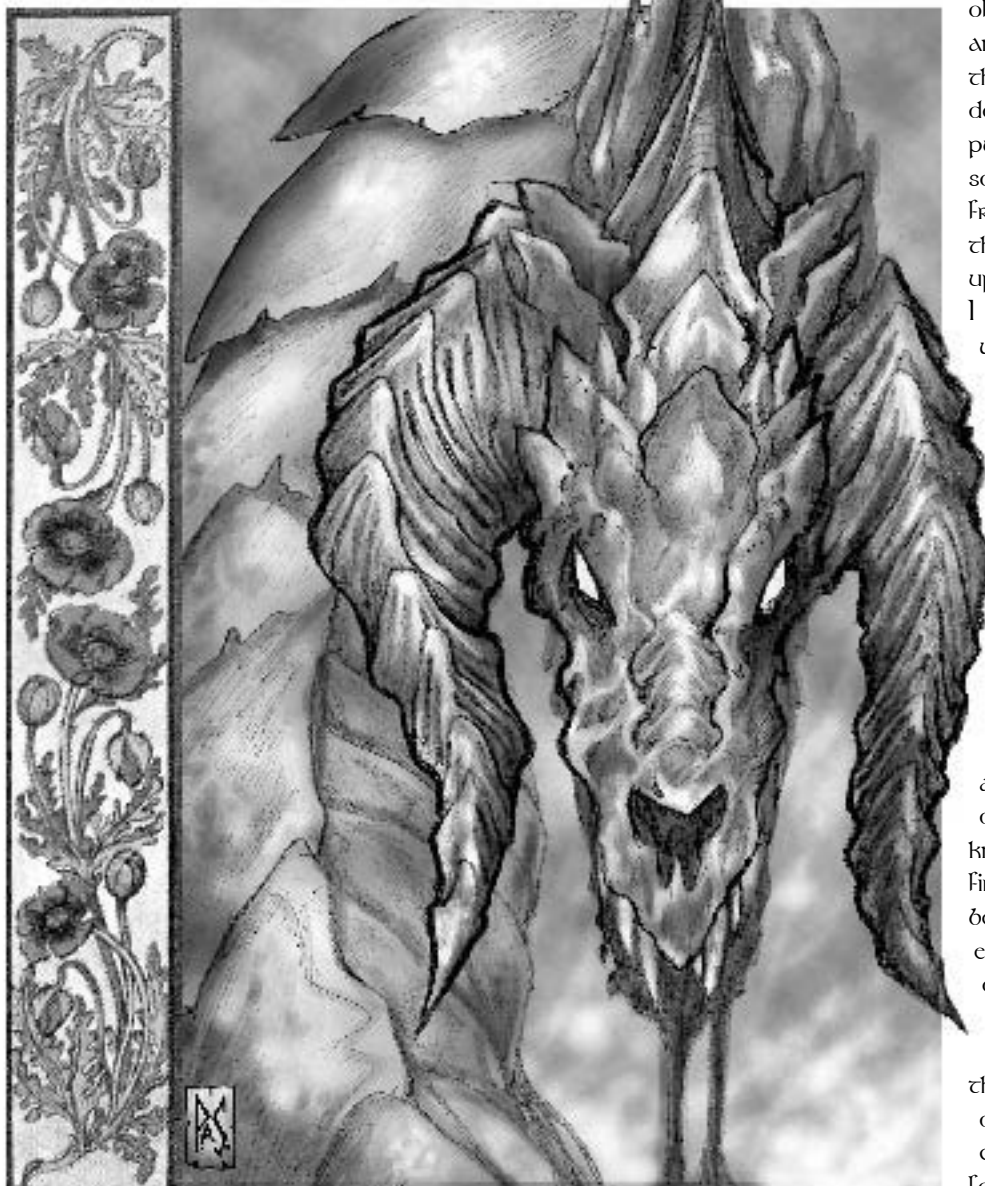
Although both the white and blue dragons I dissected had this complex alchemical furnace of a belly, neither the white nor the blue dragon is known for feeding on anything other than meat. Unusual diets are the province of the metallic dragons; the brass dragon feeds on the morning

dew (an elemental combination of Air and Water), the bronze on pearls (Water and Earth) and the copper on metal ores (purest Earth).

The purpose of this arrangement is three-fold; firstly, it permits a dragon to sustain itself on elemental essences in times when meat is scarce. Secondly, many of the innate supernatural abilities of dragons are fuelled not merely by the dragon's will, but by these elemental essences. The primary example is the dragon's infamous breath, which is an exhalation of these essences.

This aspect of the breath weapon initially mystified me. The white dragon's frost

breath is a mixture of elemental Air and Water, but the dragon's diet does not include pure elemental sources such as fresh springs or the zephyrs of the upper atmosphere. I suspect that the white's habit of burying its prey in snowdrifts and eating only frozen meat imbues the meal with some frost essence, but surely not enough to produce such a lethal breath. Furthermore, although the red dragon is well known to breath fire, it has never been observed eating sources of elemental fire. It must be concluded that the dragon's digestive system can transmute one form of elemental



essence into another, through the medium of the fifth stomach.

The world around us is a combination of all four elements; we are all Earth, Air, Fire and Water in varying degrees. The fifth stomach of the dragon, in concert with several other organs such as the liver and spleen, can somehow take a pure elemental essence, transmute it into an adulterated, mixed form of 'normal' matter, then extract an almost equal amount of another pure essence from the mixed form. A gold dragon may dine on pearls (again, Water and Earth), mix the pearls with a little mundane material, and extract from this a great deal of elemental Fire, which is then breached out in a great gout of flame. This is alchemy of the highest order; in the stomach of the dragon lies the philosopher's stone.

Circulatory

Blood must reach every extremity of the dragon, so the heart that pumps this blood must be mighty indeed. The heart of a dragon is a cathedral of muscle, a singularly powerful and untiring organ. Unlike the regular beat of human hearts, the dragon heart beats according to a distinct rhythm - every fifth beat is a notably stronger one, that forces blood in and out of the tail and wings.

The dragon's heart is the seat of its courage and fiery will. The dragon's mood is reflected in its blood and energy; a desolate dragon is physically heavier and slower, its blood is thicker, its scales duller. When the same dragon is angry, its heart beats faster and hotter, making its blood rush like a torrent through the channels of its veins. It rises from the earth like a thing of flame, and must drive its claws into the rock to keep from rising up off the ground. Its scales gleam, and shafts of light beam from cracks in its hide. The sages have long been divided on whether dragons are hot or cold-blooded creatures; I contend they are both, depending on the emotional cast of their heart.

Much of the dragon's power is channelled through the heart, and eating the heart of a wyrm is reputed to bestow supernatural gifts on the diner. This is, however, both unsanitary and unpleasant, so it is much better to use the heart as a magical component in a scientific arcane ritual.

Dragonsblood is a viscous, acidic liquid. Unlike normal blood, it does not coagulate - a dragon's wounds heal because the acid in the blood melts the scales bordering the injury, and as the non-fluid scales knit back together, they draw the wound closed. Spilled dragonsblood does not congeal until it mixes with a sufficient quantity of matter through corrosion that it is more solid than liquid. (Dragonsblood should therefore be held in glass containers, not metallic or clay vessels, lest it corrode its surroundings to the point of coagulation.) This lack of congealing qualities suggests that a mortal wound could be inflicted on a dragon by causing internal bleeding; without scales to melt, such internal injuries should never heal. Either dragons are forced to use magic to heal if the wounds go deeper than the surface, or else there is some other agent used to close internal wounds. (Many humans of noble lineage suffer from the disorder of hemophilia, where wounds fail to close without magical intercession. Perhaps this indicates that the royal blood is that of dragons.)

Dragonsblood has the quality of carrying elemental energies suspended within it; a white dragon's blood is suffused with elemental ice, while that of a red dragon carries fire. However, the elemental essences can be drawn off, leaving the pure dragon blood to be used to contain some other magic.

As is well known, blood is one of the four humours (the others being yellow and black bile, and phlegm). All these humours are cooked up in a creature's stomach before passing throughout the body by the medium of the blood. The ratios of these humours in an individual determine which of the four temperaments holds sway. Sanguine individuals are outgoing, adaptable, and excitable. Choleric, dominated by the yellow bile, are energetic, passionate and forceful. Those dominated by the phlegm are phlegmatics; calm, unresponsive, methodical. Finally, the soulful melancholics are dominated by black bile from the kidneys, and are dour and unchanging. Traditionally these four humours are associated with an element (air, fire, water and earth respectively). However, the dominant humour in a dragon does not always match the dominant element. Red dragons are classic choleric, which matches their fiery nature. However, gold dragons are also aligned to

elemental fire, but are in temperament much closer to the phlegmatic than the choleric. The complex elemental nature of dragons suggests that they have an extra four humours, which I dub the auran, ignan, aquan and terran humours. These humours are essentially a rarefied form of the mundane humours.

Now, note that the evil chromatic dragons are known to dine primarily on meat, which is digested in the fifth stomach, while the good metallic dragons eat elemental sources digested in the other four stomachs. All the evil dragons seem to display the classic behaviours of their temperament - slow, cunning, phlegmatic blacks; territorial, lawful, melancholic blues; acidic, quick, sanguine greens; and fiery choleric reds. White dragons flicker between the sanguine and phlegmatic moods. The metallic dragons, however, are by and large phlegmatic or sanguine despite their elemental natures. I theorise that the extra four humours (auran, ignan etc) are produced by the elementally-pure diets of the metallic dragons; these humours take precedence over the natural humours that dominate the metallics, and produce the unusual temperaments earlier noted.

(This raises an interesting possibility; could a chromatic dragon be 'redeemed' by feeding it on elemental essences, causing, say, its aquan humour to rise and become dominant? Could a red dragon become as phlegmatically even-tempered as a gold dragon if it dined on pearls alone?)

Pulmonary

The mighty lungs of the dragon heave like the bellows of a huge forge. The ribcage can flex considerably more than that of a human, allowing the lungs to expand by up to two-thirds their normal size in terms of great exertion. Along the length of the dragon's neck, there are small gaps between the scales, similar to the gills of a fish. These tiny gaps have sphincters to draw them open or shut as desired. A dragon can breath through these gaps, and certain dragons can take in air from other media in this fashion; black and green dragons can breath underwater, for example.

These slits also ensure that the dragon's long, vulnerable windpipe is redundant; if bruised or

broken, the dragon does not choke to death, but can continue to breath through these slits. The gaps do not connect directly to the lungs, but feed sustaining air directly into the body of the beast. The breathing slits cannot make up for the loss of the windpipe, as the furnaces of the dragon require far more air than the little slits can provide, but the dragon can endure until it heals.

As is well known, dragons have a very powerful breath. The muscles of the diaphragm are tied to those of the wingmount, allowing the dragon to use all of its strength to exhale if it breathes while on the ground. This provides a vital clue for those battling a dragon - if a grounded dragon draws back its wings, but shows no other sign of taking to the skies, it is about to pull its wings back down and used the whole muscular force of the wingmount in an exhalation.

Skeleton

Previous scholars have supposed that the bones of dragons are like those of birds; light and hollow. Nothing could be further from the truth; their bones are dense and quite solid, filled with hot marrow that turns to molten metal as the dragon ages. Dragon-bone gains its strength from this metal, which suffuses the bone. The bone of a silver dragon shimmers in the light; the bone of a black dragon, even after being polished, looks like aged oak, full of old growth and the strength of centuries.

The horns, ridges and claws that sprout from the wyrm's form are equally strong, but are coated in a natural protective veneer that regrows over time.

Breath

Uncovering the mechanism for the draconic breath weapon was one of my primary goals when I set out on my quest. Previous scholars have described a single fire gland or breath organ to be responsible. In actuality, there are no less than four separate components to the breath weapon.

The breath begins in the dragon's belly, where the elemental essences are drawn off from the dragon's stomach and concentrated in the blood. The first sign of a breath exhalation, then, is a flush of colour in the dragon's abdomen. The tail

tenses, and may move to brace the dragon against the backwash of the breath. The wings draw back.

A curious organ sits at the junction of the dragon's lungs. This organ, the aetheric gland, produces the aether that allows dragonblood to carry elemental essences in suspension. Just before the dragon breaths, the aetheric gland spasms and fills a cavity in the dragon's throat with aether. This is accompanied by a gurgling, retching sound in the upper part of the dragon's chest.

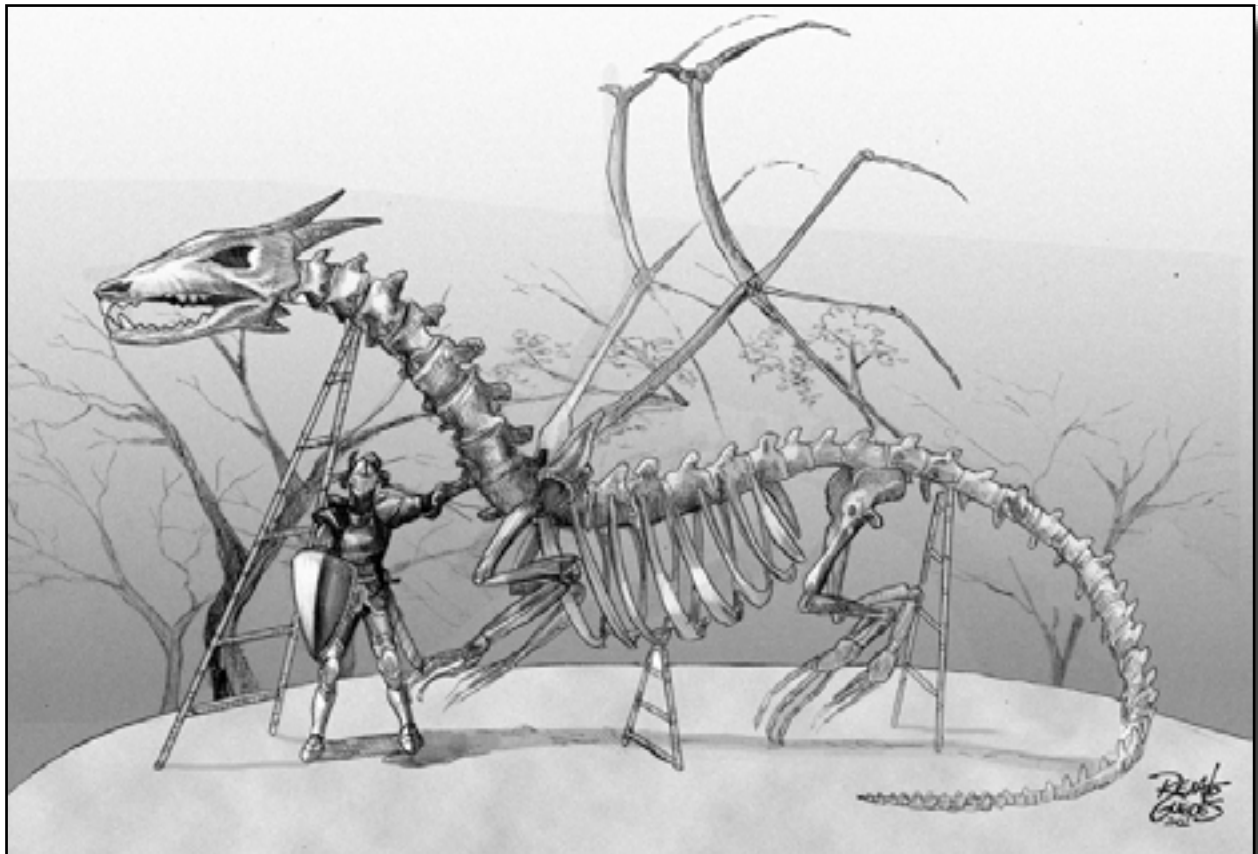
The elemental essences gather in two other glands, the fire glands, located atop the throat cavity. Those able to detect magic will note a sudden burst of energy as the essences suddenly leap from the fire glands to the gaseous aether. (Of course, anyone in position to observe such a thing is probably about to be annihilated by the breath.) The aether serves as a medium to carry the elemental essences. It should be noted that the essences are still mere potential; the dragon's throat is not filled with flame, it is filled with the elemental essence of flame.

The dragon exhales, and the charged aether is blown up the windpipe. The fourth component is a protrusion of bone at the back of the dragon's mouth. This detonates the elementally-charged breath as the aether cloud rushes past in. The breath weapon blasts from the dragon's mouth or nostrils.

The delay between breath weapons is rarely due to a lack of elemental essences, but is caused by the dragon needing to wait for the aetheric gland to recover from the exertion. This explains why dragons with two unrelated breath weapons (the gold dragon's fire and strength-sapping gas, for example) must still wait for a few heartbeats between breaching; if the only delay were due to the need to wait for one elemental essence to rejuvenate, the dragon could immediately breath with the other breath type, which is derived from a different element.

Wingmount

The wingmount is a large nexus of muscle and sinew where the dragon's neck and wings meet the body. Dragonriders are seated just forward of the



wingmount. It is the highest point of the dragon's back and the one of the three most vulnerable points on the dragon. A blade driven straight down into the centre of the wingmount, between the protective plates, will sever the tendons and nerves that bind the wings to the dragon's will and cripple the beast. (The other two critical weak spots are the hollow of the right breast, and the soft underside of the long neck.)

The wingmount is therefore a primary target when dragons are fighting. The first to claw or bite the other's wingmount will cripple the foe in the air, and then victory is almost assured. Dragon riders should keep careful watch on the condition of the wingmount, as it is vital to the dragon's health.

The neck muscles run under the upper scapula bones, the wing muscles are anchored to these bones. The dorsal branch of the spine connects to the upper scapulas at the 6th and 12th dorsal vertebrae.

Wings

The vast wings of the dragon are composed of a thin, bat-like arm that spreads out long spiny 'fingers' (referred to as 'spires' linked with a billowy membrane. In truth, the spires are hollow and divided into sections, each one smaller than the rest. When the dragon is at rest, the length of its wings is up to half that of the extent of the wings in flight. The sections of spires collapse in on each other, telescoping up in a cunning fashion and gathering in the membrane of the wing.

In most dragons, the inner edge of the wing is anchored along the bottom edge of the wingmount, although some breeds have wyvern-like wings that are entirely separated from the body. The former breed have five spans of membrane (four between the five spires, and the last between the fifth spire and the wingmount). The latter dragons have but four spans of membrane, and therefore a smaller surface area - they sacrifice speed for the enhanced agility of not having their wings tethered wholly to their bodies.

The membrane linking the spires is a semi-transparent scaly skin when the dragon is young. As the dragon ages, the membrane becomes darker and more opaque, matching the colour changes in

the rest of the dragon. However, unlike the hide of the main body of the dragon, the wing membrane is not replaced every time the dragon sheds its skin. A dragon's wing membrane develops first in the egg, and is then renewed only once or twice during the dragon's lifetime. Scars and injuries to the wing membrane last for centuries, and are one of the surest methods for identifying an individual dragon.

Forearms

The forearms of the dragon are between three-fifths and four-fifths the length of the hind legs. The fore-claws are almost as dextrous as a human hand, although the thick scales and armour-piercing claws are less sensitive than mortal flesh. Dragons rarely bother to use tools, relying first on sheer strength and magic to manipulate the world.

The most comfortable gait for a dragon running on all fours is a rather ungainly skip-canter. The dragon pulls its wingmount back as far as it can, putting some of the massive weight of the wings onto the sturdier hind legs. The dragon then pushes itself off the ground with its forelegs and takes three or four strides with its hind legs before falling forwards. It catches itself, takes another few steps on all fours, and then pushes up, beginning the cycle again. As much of the dragon's weight is concentrated on the forelimbs, it cannot run at high speed without resorting to this odd mode of running.

Neck

The long neck of the dragon is supported by the cervical vertebrae of the spine. The neck is very flexible, as each of the fifteen vertebrae can turn in an arc of up to 270 degrees. A dragon can theoretically twist its head around no less than eleven times, and Tristilix spoke of a sect of draconic mystics who use this as part of their meditative techniques.

The underside of the neck is soft and unarmoured, for when the dragon eats, it can swallow things whole like a snake. The dragon's gullet bulges obscenely, slowly working chunks of meat or even entire creatures down its long throat. Especially large items are dissolved or broken up in the throat cavity next to the breath glands using a

concentrated form of dragon's breath. (If a dragon could be induced to swallow a large object that is immune to its breath weapon - say, if a green dragon ate a large glass sphere wrapped in a disguise of meat - it would become lodged in the throat cavity and choke the dragon.)

At the anterior end of the neck is the bone protrusion that 'sparks' the breath weapon. When feeding, the dragon must withdraw this protrusion up into the back of its skull. A dragon therefore cannot breath immediately after feeding. The protrusion slides back into place with but a moment's thought, but this is a moment in which the dragon may be vulnerable.

Skull

The huge skull of the dragon is as long as a man is tall. Different breeds of dragons display great variety in skull decorations. Blue dragons, for example, have a single huge horn jutting from their snout, while others have a pair or even whole rack of horns growing from the back of their skulls and out from their eye-ridges. These eye-ridges are heavy horn growths along the rim of the prefrontal, frontal and post-frontal bones, and protect the dragon's eyes from injury.

The eyes of the dragon are most curious. At birth, the dragon's eyes are similar in appearance to those of other reptiles. As the dragon ages, the eye fills with more and more magical energy until it is a burning pool of liquid metal or blazing colour. When the dragon dies, however, this light slowly fades, returning the eye to its original appearance. The health and magical puissance of a dragon, then, can be ascertained by examining its eyes. When their fires are banked, the dragon is tired, weak, or sickly. When the dragon's eyes are full of light, the wyrm is full of life. Furthermore, when the dragon's spirit is absent - say, when it is dreaming in sleep, or travelling in an astral body - its eyes are dull. This is the best way to tell a sleeping dragon from one who is just pretending to sleep.

A second, lesser ridge runs from the eye-ridges down the length of the snout to protect the nostrils. Dragons have a keen sense of smell, and the scent receptors are protected by the inner nostril ridges from being seared by the breath

weapon. Dragons can also taste their air with their tongues.

The tongue of a dragon is the most sensitive and agile organ in its body. Dragon tongues are prehensile, able to pick up and examine objects through touch and taste. One curious art form of dragons is the making of carved spheres of sugar or rock salt. These spheres are marked with runes, the meaning of which changes with the taste.

Dragon teeth are all canines and incisors; their teeth are solely for gripping and tearing flesh. Dragons have two rows of teeth and both sets are on separate bones within the jaw, allowing the dragon to precisely control how much force is applied by its teeth. The magical properties of dragon teeth are well known, and ground teeth and horns are valued greatly by alchemists. (A practise I deplore; so many carcasses are lost to butchery and necromancy instead of science.)

The small ears are located just behind the eye-ridges. Despite their size, dragons have excellent hearing. The ears are supplemented by the dragon's ability to sense vibrations through its tail. Many dragons also have barbels or fins beneath their ears; these appendages sense both magical emanations and shifts in the wind.

Finally, the draconic brain is as convoluted and mysterious as that of any other creature. Locked within that organ, I believe, are the secrets of magic. It is from the language of dragons that wizardry is born; sorcery springs from their blood, and they claim to be the first children of the divinities. What wonders could be achieved if this knowledge could be extracted and translated into a comprehensible form? That, my lord, should be my next endeavour - if only the wealth necessary could be found.

Hide

The skin of a dragon is made up of three layers. The inner layer is a coating of fat and muscle that anchors the hide to the dragon's body. The next layer is a thick, rubbery substance that is about as strong as boiled leather. It is dry to the touch, and quite soft, but resists being cut.

On top of this third layer grow the massive scales that give the dragon its legendary toughness. These scales are divided into two sorts - overlapping and plate scales. Overlapping scales are found on the flanks and on the sides of the snout, neck and tail of the dragon, and are similar to scale mail. Plates, conversely, are huge sections of solid armour found on the head, limbs, and back of the dragon.

As a dragon grows, its scales grow too, but not as quickly. The dragon must therefore shed its skin several times before it reaches full growth. This moulting is a long, painful process, usually preceded by a long rest during which the dragon's new hide grows and solidifies beneath the old scales. The magical energies and earth essences that give dragonscales their strength sink down during the moulting process, infusing themselves into the new scales. A dragon's new hide therefore contains most of the scar-tissue toughness of the old hide, in addition to the vital strength of the fresh scales.

The plate scales have small gaps between them, to allow the plates to move and flex. These gaps are lined with tiny scales called skerries, which rise to the surface if one plate moves too far from its neighbour. The skerries fill the widened gap, protecting the dragon until the plate moves back into its position. An adult dragon has over four dozen distinct plates protecting its upper portions, ranging in size from that of a small buckler to a breastplate. The most important plates are the headplates (protecting the back and top of the head and cheekbones), the primary heartguard (ventral to the throat cavity at the base of the dragon's neck), the eight plates of the wingmount and the plates lining the dragon's back.

The underside of the dragon's neck and belly are not covered in scales, and are therefore comparatively weak. However, long years lying atop a hoard drives coins and gems into the soft underbelly where they catch in folds of skin, giving the dragon a form of chainmail. The throat has no such protection, but unless the dragon's head is completely severed, a gash in the throat may not prove lethal.

I trust this all meets your needs My Lord

Your Humble Servant

DRAGON CRAFT

The parts and organs of a dragon can be harvested and used to craft both mundane and magical items. *Encyclopaedia Arcane: Dragon Magic* has details on how the magical resonances of different dragon species can be awoken; this section will therefore concentrate on non-magical uses and properties that are common to all dragons.

The market prices for individual items depend on the size and type of the dragon. The formula is

Market Price=Dragon's Challenge Rating x Part Size x Component Price.

Challenge Rating takes into account the dragon's age and power.

Part Size: The size of a part is relative to the size of the dragon it was taken from. The size is a number of size categories lower than the dragon's size, with values ranging from 1 (Fine) to 9 (Colossal) and the size for each part is given in its description. Parts can be no larger than Fine, although some parts can be collected in larger-sized bundles, like a Diminutive sack of Fine teeth. The size of a part affects not only its final price, but also the kind of items that can be manufactured from it.

Size Values	
Size Category	Value
Fine	1
Diminutive	2
Tiny	3
Small	4
Medium	5
Large	6
Huge	7
Gargantuan	8
Colossal	9

Component Price: Listed below - it is the measure of how valuable a certain component is.

Component parts are more valuable than the whole parts containing them, as it takes skill and a strong stomach to correctly dissect a dragon's carcass. If players want to try their hand at this, instead of

Component Prices		
Part	Relative Size	Component Price
Whole parts		
Head	-3	1,200 gp
Neck	-2	600 gp
Torso	-1	2,000 gp
Hind Legs	-2	650 gp
Fore Legs	-3	650 gp
Paws	-4	250 gp
Tail	Same size	300 gp
Wings	Same size	100 gp
Components		
Blood	20 hp=1 pint	20 x Age Category
Bones	Same size	1,000 gp
Skull	-3	500 gp
Brain	-4	500 gp
Heart ²	-3	1,000 gp
Lungs ¹	-2	250 gp
Stomach ¹	-3	500 gp
Fire glands ²	-4	500 gp
Aether gland ²	-4	750 gp
Muscles/Sinews ¹	-1	200 gp
Hide ¹	Same size	800 gp
Claws	-4	60 gp
Wing Membrane ¹	-1	120 gp
Egg, broken	Wyrmling size -2	50 gp
Egg, unbroken	Wyrmling size	10,000 gp
Eye ²	-6	600 gp
Teeth	-6	60 gp
Tongue ¹	-4	300 gp
Ridges	-5	60 gp
Horns	-3	100 gp
Overlapping scale (single) ¹	-8	5 gp
Plate scale (single)	-3	50 gp

merely hauling the chopped-off whole parts to an expert, the character should make a Wilderness Lore check at a DC of 10+the dragon's Challenge Rating. If the check fails, reduce the market price of the dragon by 10% times the margin of failure.

Some dragon parts (those marked with a ¹ in the table above) lose 10% of their value each week unless cured. Curing a part requires a Craft (alchemy), Craft (leatherworking) or Profession (tanner) check at a DC of 10+the dragon's Challenge Rating. Only specific components can be preserved in this way, so a character must dissect a whole part before its components can be preserved.

Other items, those marked with a ², lose their value at a rate of 10% per hour as their potency leaks away. These items can be preserved using Craft (alchemy), but the DC to preserve the item is 20+the dragon's Challenge Rating. If the check is successful, the items lose their value at a rate of 10% per week instead of per hour.

Dragon Crafted Items

Any item created using dragon material is considered a masterwork item, but no extra cost is added on while crafting – i.e., if a character is crafting a dagger from a dragon's claw, calculate the cost of the item as if it were a normal dagger, but the final item is of masterwork quality. An item can be both dragoncraft and masterwork; the item's benefit is doubled.

Dragon Parts and Magic Items

One of the most common uses of dragon parts is in making magical items; the dragon's fading life force and used in place of the caster's. For every 5gp of the market cost of a dragon part, it can provide 1XP for the purposes of magical item creation. Different parts are usable for different items – some sample uses are described below, others are

in *Encyclopaedia Arcane: Dragon Magic*.

COMPONENTS

The following list of items and properties is hardly exhaustive – almost every part of a dragon could be used for *something*. These are merely the most common and generally useful items or uses that can be crafted from the body of a dragon.

Aether gland: This small bluish organ is located at the base of the dragon's throat cavity, but is also linked by a thick vein to the dragon's heart. It produces the magical substance of aether, which can carry a solution of elemental essences in the same way water can carry a solution of chemicals. A preserved aether gland contains a considerable quantity of concentrated aether, which can be extracted and used in alchemy and magical experiments. Aether can be used to pay for any item with elemental powers.

Aether can also carry magical spells. If a spell is cast into a stream of aether, it will travel along the stream as far as it can go before manifesting. Aether can therefore be used as a poor man's *project image*. A single aether gland contains enough aether to create a stream half an inch wide and 60 feet long.

Example use: Huge silver loops arch over and around the flying city of Kirralis. These loops are filled with aether, which carries elemental air from the clouds above the city to down below the flying platform. This shields the city from gravity (a product of earth) and permits it to keep sailing through the skies. The folk of Kirralis hunt dragons for their aether, and must maintain fleets of harpoon-equipped skyships and alchemical rendering plants to keep their city aloft.

Blood: Steaming and acidic, heavy with the seething elemental energies of the wyrm, dragon's blood is one of the most potent substances in the dragon's body. A dragon killed in combat is considered to

have lost a percentage of its blood equal to $1d6+1 \times 10\%$. 20 hit points worth of blood fills a pint flask.

Dragon's blood can be used in any sort of vitality or perception-enhancing potion. Potions made using dragon's blood are thick and foul-tasting, and seem to sink through the floor of the drinker's stomach and pool in his bones.

Using Alchemy (DC20+the age category of the dragon), dragon blood can be separated into three substances; the mundane blood that sinks to the bottom, the middle layer of clear, sparkling aether, and the elemental essences of the blood, which rise to the top. In some cases, (such as the elemental fire held in the blood of a red dragon) this causes an explosion (5 foot burst, damage equal to the breath damage of a wyrmling) unless the alchemist has some method for drawing off the essences safely; the acid or frost in the blood of other breeds can be skimmed off the surface with relative ease. The mundane blood has no magical properties, but the elemental essences and aether can be put to use.

Bathing in raw dragon's blood can imbue the bather with a fraction of the dragon's might, or merely melt skin from bone. 160 hit points are required to provide enough blood for a Medium character to bathe in (120 hp for a Small character, 240 hp for a Large). Only one character can benefit from a particular pool of blood, as the magic is absorbed by the first creature to bathe there.

Dragon's blood is dangerous, even if the dragon did not have the Acidic Blood feat. If the character bathes in the blood when it is hot and fresh, it inflicts damage equal to the dragon's normal breath weapon attack (the character may make a Fortitude save to halve the damage, at a DC equal to the usual DC for saves against the dragon's breath). After 1d10 minutes, the blood cools (or warms, in the case

Money and Maiming

If a party do bother to drag a dragon's body back to town and sell it for parts, they can make a huge amount of money. Remember to keep the gold piece limit of a community (see *Core Rulebook II*) in mind – unless the party go to a very rich town *and* work very hard to find buyers, they will only be able to realise a fraction of the 'true' value of their kill. For example, while an adult red dragon carcass may be theoretically worth in excess of 50,000 gold pieces, unless the characters can find a handy metropolis in need of a lot of dragon parts, they may only be able to sell it for a paltry few thousand.

Even a single dragon corpse can keep the alchemists and wizards stocked for years, so the Games Master can reduce prices to reflect the lack of demand if the party are getting too rich off dragon parts. Also, damage in battle can ruin sections of the dragon – if the wyrm is brought down with a *disintegrate* to the chest, the heart, lungs and other organs of the torso may be ruined.

Bathing in Dragon's Blood	
Bathing Roll	Effect
1-5	No effect.
6-10	Double the damage inflicted by the blood.
11-12	Character gains a permanent +1 natural armour bonus.
13-14	Character gains 5 points of resistance against the type of energy used by the dragon.
15-16	+1 inherent bonus to Charisma.
17-18	Character gains a permanent +1 natural armour bonus and a +1 resistance bonus to saves against dragon breath or dragon spells.
19-20	Character gains 10 points of resistance against the type of energy used by the dragon and a +1 resistance bonus to saves against dragon breath or dragon spells.
21-22	+2 inherent bonus to Charisma.
23-24	Character gains DR5/magic and a +1 resistance bonus to saves against dragon breath or dragon spells.
25-26	Character gains a permanent +2 natural armour bonus and a +2 resistance bonus to saves against dragon breath or dragon spells.
27-28	Character gains 20 points of resistance against the type of energy used by the dragon and a +2 resistance bonus to saves against dragon breath or dragon spells.
29-30	+2 inherent bonus to Constitution and Charisma.
31	Character gains DR10/magic and a +2 resistance bonus to saves against dragon breath or dragon spells.
32-33	The character is possessed by the spirit of the dragon, as per a ghost's <i>malevolence</i> ability.

B o n e s :
 Dragonbone is almost as light as hardwood, but stronger than steel. Unlike normal bone, dragonbone can be worked by a smith – it can be heated, then hammered into shape. It takes a master craftsman to use dragonbone in such a fashion, as something of the wyrm lingers in its bones. The bones of blue dragons spark and crackle when struck by a hammer, and the heat from burning red bones can melt an anvil.

The finest bones in a dragon are

of white dragon blood), inflicting only as much damage as a breath weapon attack of a wyrmling-age dragon (of the type whose blood lies smoking in a trough in the ground).

The effects of bathing depend on the age of the dragon – roll 1d20 and add the dragon's age category. If the character waited for the blood to cool, divide the result in two. Then, consult the following table.

Example use: The green dragon Amuerte offended the King Crowned With Briars, a powerful fae lord. The king impaled the dragon on a gargantuan magical thorn bush. The iron-hard thorns push between Amuerte's scales, spilling her blood in a million viridian rivulets that run down the bush's leaves and pool around its roots. Passing ants and beetles have bathed in the dragon's blood, becoming much stronger and tougher. Through possession and suggestion, Amuerte has manipulated a vast swarm of dragon-hardened beetles to make war upon the King Crowned With Briars.

used for making weapons. Even a crudely carved dragonbone dagger cuts like one honed by a master craftsman; a masterwork dragonbone blade seems to hunger for the blood of enemies, ripping through armour and flesh with equal rapacity. Up to 5 lb multiplied by the dragon's Age Category weight of weapons can be produced from a single dragon's bones. A young adult dragon, then, could provide the bones for a dragonbone greatsword (15 lb) and heavy lance (10 lb).

Armour – specifically, a breastplate, splint mail, half-plate or full-plate - can also be made from the bones of dragons, as can a shield.

Other, lesser bones are still valuable. Many magical staves and wands are made from a dragon's thigh or finger-bones, although making such items out of bone has little benefit unless the dragon's magical resonances are awoken. The light weight and high strength of dragon bone makes it ideal for vessels

such as ships or skyships, siege engines, palanquins or complex inventions.

Example use: Eight human kings have sat on a throne of dragonbone. Six have died childless, their vitality seeped into the dry bones that are strangely warm to the touch. One died insane, torn from his high seat by courtiers sick of bloody purges and cruel jests. The last is a great general, feared by his enemies and loved by his people. He sits back, his face hidden in the shadow of the huge skull that hangs above the bony throne, and he listens to the creaking words of the long-dead dragon.

Brain: A dragon's brain is a crenulated lump of grey matter, streaked (like so much of the wyrm) with the colours and tinctures of its hide. Dragons are older and wiser than other creatures, and their thoughts walk strange reptile labyrinths. The brain can be used to brew potions that allow access to the dreams of dragons (see page 202, Dragon Magic).

The brain of a dragon is unusually tough and retains enough vitality to be *animated* on its own using necromancy, allowing an unscrupulous mage to keep a dead dragon around as an advisor.

Example use: The lake at the Dreamspire is fed by hot underground springs. The tower in the centre of the lake is eternally shrouded in steam. The acolytes in the surrounding villages breed dragons, who are slaughtered and their skulls dumped in the lake. The hot waters boil the dragons' brains, infusing the mists with visions. The monks of the Dreamspire breath in these mists and then prophesy.

Claws: Dragonclaw daggers are wickedly curved and difficult to wield (-1 to hit), but are lethally sharp (+1 to damage). The claws of Colossal wyrms are large enough to be turned into scimitars with the same bonus to damage, but with no penalty to attacks.

Claws are often strung on a necklace and used as a talisman, to provide a reminder that despite their power, dragons can be slain. A character wearing a dragon claw talisman may retake a failed save against a dragon's Frightful Presence in the following round.

Example use: Dragonclaw daggers are popular among some sects of assassins. They enchant the daggers to draw forth the engrained memory of the dragon before killing their target. Divination spells

are misled into reporting that the dragon was responsible for the murder.

Egg, broken: Dragon eggs are remarkably unlovely and dull when first examined, but when polished and varnished, the subtle mineral veins and alien colours can be clearly seen. Ground dragon eggs can also be used in healing potions, as the egg is obviously full of life and vitality.

A dragon retains a mystical connection to its egg, even when the egg is broken into centuries-old shards. A dragon suffers a -2 insight penalty to all saving throws against spells cast by someone holding a piece of its birth-egg.

Example use: The location of the emperor's treasure hoard is recorded in only one place – on a dragon's egg. The whole egg is decorated with a painted map of the whole empire. Each piece contains a fragment of the map, and the location cannot be found without assembling most of the egg.

Egg, unbroken: If an unbroken egg can be hatched (see page 224), the wyrmling can be trained and tamed. Spellcasters can also drain off the potential of the unborn dragon, killing the infant and using its energies to create magical items or invoke powerful spells.

Example use: The Defender's Egg is a curious item to be found in the Fane of Time. It was created by a deranged cleric using a miracle spell. The miracle he invoked is that if the egg is ever broken, the dragon within will appear and defend the Fane. However, to fuel this miracle, he drained the life from the egg. The spirit of the dragon was sacrificed to summon itself at some future date.

No-one has yet broken the egg. Some theologians fear it will cause an unresolvable paradox.

Eye: If a dragon is killed while sleeping or resting, its eye will be dull and dark. If it is slain at the height of its fury, the eye will be filled with molten fire and the full grandeur of the dragon's spirit will be reflected in its depths. While an eye is valuable for use in scrying and divination spells no matter what its appearance, the eyes of dragon slain in combat are much more beautiful and sought after than those of a sleeping wyrm. Dragons' eyes are symbols of wisdom and majesty. They also retain a little of the spirit of the dragon, catching attention and arresting the gaze.

Example use: In the Temple of the Forge in the dwarf-lands, one of the chief relics is the Eye of the Colossus, which the smith-priests insist is the last remnant of the mighty colossal construct that once guarded the gates of the mountain. In truth, the eye comes from the fire dragon who destroyed, and was destroyed by, the Colossus. At the height of the ceremonies in the temple, the eye is brought close to the eternal flames of the force, and the heat from the fires makes the eye gleam brightly.

'It is a good omen', say the dwarves, but more and more the eye's gaze seems drawn more to the gold and jewels that decorate the high altar.

Fire glands: 'Fire' is often a misnomer – these glands concentrate and hold different elemental essences depending on the breed of dragon. Their use depends largely on the amount of essence stored within; if the dragon was about to loose its breath weapon, the swollen glands pulse with magic. If the dragon breathed just before being slain, the glands are flaccid and empty. (Reduce the market price of the glands by 15% per round of delay before the dragon would have been able to breath again; for example, if the dragon was going to breath in two rounds time, reduce the cost of the glands by 30%).

Fire glands are useful in alchemy, as their elemental essences can be extracted and used as fuel. A gland has as many points of essence as the maximum possible damage inflicted by the dragon's breath weapon, reduced by 15% per round of delay as above. These essences can be bled off slowly. Alternatively, if the glands are crushed, they explode and inflict damage equal to the dragon's breath weapon on everything with a 30 foot burst (normal Reflex save against the dragon's breath weapon DC for half damage).

A dying dragon's fire glands may be ruptured, causing the beast to explode. The percentage chance for this is equal to the dragon's hit point total when it is negative (for example, a dragon reduced to -23 hit points has a 23% chance of exploding). The Games Master should only roll to check for gland rupture once, in the round when the dragon is killed.

Example use: A white dragon's corpse is at the heart of the Icefall Glacier. In its death throes, its frost glands spewed elemental cold into a spring, freezing it. Over the intervening centuries, that first frost has never melted, thus forming the glacier. Unless the icy remnants of the glands are removed from the caverns deep within the glacier, Icefall will continue its slow, grinding march towards the fertile fields of the lowlands.

Heart: The seat of the dragon's strength, the heart is among the most valuable portions of the carcass. The heart can be used in any magical device that augments strength or will, or provide life and motive power for a golem. The heart can also be pulped and used as 30 hit points multiplied by the dragon's Age Category worth of blood (see dragon's blood, above).

Eating the roasted heart of a dragon grants supernatural powers, just like bathing in its blood. Doing so invites madness and death for all but the strongest characters. If a character eats the heart, he must make a Will save (DC20 + the dragon's Age Category) and a Fortitude save (same DC). If either save is failed, consult the following tables.

Madness	
Will Saved Failed By...	Effect
0-5	Character hallucinates wildly for 1d6 weeks.
6-10	As above, plus the character comes to believe he is the dragon.
11-15	As above, plus character is <i>feble-minded</i> and becomes aggressive.
16+	Character's mind is destroyed.

Heal, limited wish, miracle or wish will cure one of these afflictions (so a character who fails the Will save by 11 requires three curative spells to be restored to full sanity).

Fury	
Fortitude Saved Failed By...	Effect
0-5	Character enters bloodlust for 1d10 minutes, attacking random targets within sight until they are destroyed.
6-10	As above, plus the character rages (as a barbarian of equal level) for 3d6 hours.
11-15	As above, plus the character suffers 3d6 points of temporary Constitution damage when the rage ends.
16+	Character dies.

If neither save is failed, the character manages to absorb some of the dragon's strength through the heart. Roll 1d20 and add the dragon's age category.

Benefits of a Heartly Meal	
Heart-eating Roll	Effect
1-5	No effect.
6-10	Character gains a +1 inherent bonus to Strength.
11-12	Character gains a +1 inherent bonus to Constitution.
13-14	Character gains a permanent <i>speak with animals</i> ability.
15-16	Character gains a permanent <i>speak with dead</i> ability.
17-18	Character gains a permanent <i>truesight</i> ability.
19-20	Character gains access to the fragmented memories of the dragon.
21-22	Character gains a dragon breath ability, equal to that of a wyrmling-age dragon, usable three times per day.
23-24	Character gains a +2 inherent bonus to Strength.
25-26	Character gains a +2 inherent bonus to Constitution.
27-28	Character gains spell resistance equal to half that of the dragon.
29-30	Character gains a dragon breath ability, equal to that of a dragon whose age category is equal to 1/3 rd the character's level, usable three times per day.
31	Reroll twice and take both abilities.
32	Reroll three times and take all three abilities.

Example use: Mountains shattered and the skies bled fire and ash when the gold dragon Naixos fought with the red wyrm Dhauust. A cruel blow from the red dragon tore Naixos' wing asunder, and he fell. Dhauust descended on her fallen foe and devoured him whole, including Naixos' heart. The spirit of the slain gold dragon, bright and generous and true, overwhelmed her. Memories of heroism, of guidance, of aiding the long fight against evil suddenly filled Dhauust's mind. Buffeted and confused by the mind-shadows of Naixos, Dhauust decided to mend her ways and ally with the forces of good, but she cannot change her hide as easily as she can change her mind.

Hide: Dragonhide can be used to make masterwork-level armour. Masterwork hide armour can be made for a creature one size category than the dragon; masterwork banded mail for a creature two sizes smaller; half-plate for a creature three sizes smaller, and a masterwork breast plate or full plate for a creature four sizes smaller.

Hide can also be used to produce dragonleather. One suit of Medium leather armour can be made from the hide of a Large dragon; every extra size category of the dragon adds another suit of leather.

The hide is also halves the damage from the appropriate energy type for the purposes of protecting an item from energy damage. A hull lined with white dragon hide takes only one-eighth damage from the cold (cold damage to objects is one-quarter normal, and the dragon hide halves the damage again).

Example use: The Glass Desert is famous for the crackling lightning bolts that burst from the clear blue sky, searing the sand and melting it into exotic shapes of obsidian and glass. The desert nomads use blue dragonhide canopies to protect them when gathering obsidian (known as dragon-glass), which they fashion into tools and weapons.

Horns: The traditional use for dragon horns is making musical instruments – when hollowed out and carved into shape, the horns produce a deep, resonant, full-throated note that echoes from the sky. The long horns of the white dragon are especially valued, although the curving minor horns of green dragons have a surprisingly musical tone.

Example use: The gnomish city of Faledoragan is famed for its vast wealth. Ambitious and avaricious dragons are a constant nuisance, so the gnomish guards are well experienced in fighting off aerial assaults. The central watchtower has a rack of nine horns, made from the head-horns of slain dragons. Each horn has a distinctly different note, which tells the guards below what type of dragon to expect. If the red dragon horn is blown, the guards drink potions of fire resistance and ensure the water barrels are ready. If the blue horn sounds, they remember the lesson learned in the Very Big Mess of fifty years ago, and hastily remove the copper crests of their helmets.

Muscles/Sinews: Dragonbone bones are strung with the strong sinews of the wyrm; dragon sinews are also used to bind armour together. Sinews can also be used to fuel any sort of binding or containment magic.

The flesh of dragons is considered a rare delicacy in some cultures, but it can be poisonous unless prepared properly. A craft (cooking) check (DC20 + the dragon's Age Category) is required to remove the poisons and elemental essences that permeate the meat. If this check is failed, the diners must all make Fortitude checks (DC equal to the dragon's breath weapon) or take damage equal to a breath attack from a wyrmling dragon. Properly prepared dragonmeat has the same effect as a heroes' feast.

Example use: The lizardfolk shamans of the swamp can catch foul gases using charm-webs made of black dragon sinew. Sections of the swamp that would otherwise be tainted wastelands are made safe using this charms.

Overlapping scale (single): A single dragonscale can be used as an amulet or as decoration. Preserved, the scale will retain its lustre for centuries.

Example use: The alchemist Fluctibus recorded his insights in a dragon-scale code. Scales from a metallic dragon denoted which metal to use, while the colours of the chromatic scales each corresponded to a particular alchemical procedure, such as melting the metal or infusing it with magical energy. The secrets of the master alchemist are hidden in plain sight, in the glimmering colours of his dragon-scale robe.

Plate scale (single): The huge plate scales can be used to make armour or shields. When making dragonhide armour, the scales are trimmed and cut into shape, but entire scales can instead be strapped together to make half plate armour or a breastplate. Plate scale armour is masterwork armour, but the armour penalties are doubled because it is ill-fitting. However, the armour has a non-magical form of energy resistance, absorbing the first 5 points of energy damage that matches the scale type (cold for white dragon scales, fire for gold dragon scales etc) in any round.

Example use: The Tower Between often entertains guests from the elemental planes. A path lined with red dragon scales leads from the gate of fire to the banquet hall. Inside, fiery guests are served fine woods on platters of blackened bone and cups of fragrant, flammable oils in cups of horn. Truly, at the Tower Between the welcome is a warm one.

Ridges: The protective eye, neck and wing ridges that guard a dragon's vulnerable areas can be affixed to armour to create masterwork spikes. Eye ridges from a small or Medium dragon can be attached to a helmet, giving a +1 circumstance bonus to saving throws against Gaze attacks. Ground ridges can also fuel any sort of shielding or abjuration spell or effect.

Example use: The neck spines of black dragons are used as crowns by kobold chieftains, who believe that the spines will awaken the latent dragon blood in them.

Skull: The skull of a dragon can be mounted on a banner. This sight gives troops a +2 morale bonus to saves against fear. Dragon skulls can also be mounted on a golem and reinforced with dragon-sinew, giving the golem a bite attack equal to that of the dragon.

Example use: The skull of the great wyrm Waste is used as the drawbridge of Dunwater Keep. Visitors must walk into the dragon's mouth to enter the castle.

Stomach: A preserved dragon's stomach is a great boon to an alchemist, and provides a +5 circumstance bonus to Alchemy checks. The stomach is a natural reaction chamber, and the four subsidiary elemental stomachs can also be used in experiments. The stomach can be used to fuel any item using transmutation magic.

Example use: After centuries of being preyed upon by dragons, the wild halflings of the plains developed a theology that sees the dragon's digestion system as the gateway to the afterlife. A shaman's tomb contains an ancient relic of the halfling folk, but it can only be navigated using the intestines of a dragon as a map.

Teeth: In addition to being used to make weapons, or ground up to make potions or to power offensive magic items, dragon teeth can be sown on the ground. The teeth of a dragon spring up as animated human skeletons (as per the *animate dead* spell) if the sower spends 5 XP per tooth. Each tooth can only be used once. A dragon has a number of teeth equal to 36 plus five times its age category, although 1d6+1x10% of the teeth will be shattered and destroyed in a battle.

Example use: The Smiling Cat is a master thief whose mouth was smashed by a brutal guard many years ago. Now, the Cat has a fine smile made of transplanted dragon's teeth. Some say that his love for gold comes from his sharp new dentures, but he has twice chosen to filch replacement teeth instead of coins from a sleeping dragon.

Tongue: Dragons' tongues are surprisingly supple and soft beneath their protective outer layer. Their magic can be used in any item that enhances speech or charisma. The tongue is also edible, and extremely tasty.

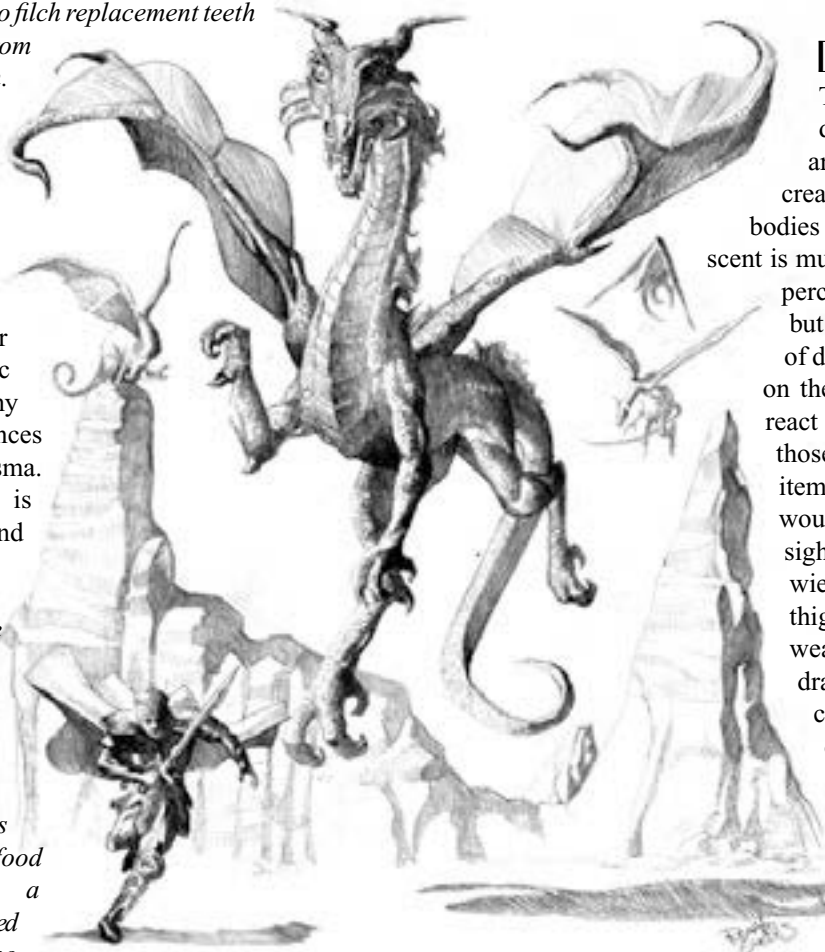
Example use: Due to the extreme sensitivity of dragons' tongues, the caliph of one tribe insists that all his food be placed on a necromatically animated tongue before he

tastes it. If the tongue recoils in horror from the food, it has detected either a poisoned dish, or one unfit for the royal palate.

Wing Membrane: The leather material of dragon wings is often made into a cloak or canopy. It is very stretchy and elastic – if the technology level of the campaign includes non-magical flight, wing membrane allows the creation of masterwork zeppelins or hot air balloons.

Wing membrane also aids in the creation of flying items.

Example use: The raiding vessel Invidious lost its sails in a storm. A black dragon saw the becalmed ship and attacked, but was brought down by a lucky shot. The dragon's body was recovered, and new sails made from its wings. However, when the wing caught the sails, the whole boat was lifted up into the skies. Since then, Invidious has sailed the skies, raiding villages and towns that never before fell victim to piracy by virtue of being a hundred miles inland.



Dragon taint

The stench of death hangs around items created from the bodies of dragons. The scent is much too faint to be perceived by mortals, but the keen senses of dragons can taste it on the wind. Dragons react negatively to those who carry such items, just as a human would blanche at the sight of an enemy wielding a human thigh-bone as a weapon (admittedly, dragons practise cannibalism and often make use of dragon-crafted items themselves, so this reaction stems more from the

suspicion and fear that those who carry items made from the flesh of dragons might be seeking fresh parts). Users of dragon-crafted items suffer a -5 inherent penalty to all Charisma checks when dealing with dragons, and the dragon's initial attitude is shifted one step worse on the Non-Player Character Initial Attitude table.

If the dragon notices (Spot check, DC17) that the items were taken from the corpse of an already-dead dragon, or from a dragon of an opposing alignment, or that the items are several hundred years old, it may assume that the bearers are not automatically dangerous, removing the penalty to Charisma checks and moving the initial attitude back towards normal. Dragons are always unsettled by mortals bearing dragon-crafted items, though, so those trying to make a good impression on a dragon should leave such items at home.

The Twist of the Tail

Dragon-crafted items are potent not merely because they are made from the ancient and indomitable stuff of dragons, but because they remember, however faintly, the nature of the wyrm. A dragonbone sword recalls, deep within its blade, what it felt like to cleave flesh with claws and teeth of surpassing sharpness, and it adjusts its cut in sympathy with these cellular memories. This memory can be a hindrance when a dragon-crafted item is used against a living dragon.

If the dragon-crafted item was made from the body of a dragon of the same alignment as the living dragon, it twists in the wielder's hand, inflicting a -1 circumstance penalty to attack rolls or skill checks. On the other hand, dragon-crafted items made from a dragon of opposing alignment seem to hunger for contact with the enemy, and give a +1 circumstance bonus to rolls targeting the enemy dragon.

More than a few dragons have had their revenge on rivals from beyond the grave.

HIT LOCATIONS AND CRITICAL HITS

D20 rules trade detail for the speed of abstraction in combat. Instead of determining exactly how and where the hero's sword chops through an unfortunate goblin, the system just applies damage to the goblin's meagre hit points and lets the Games

Master or player determine what form the blow took. No-one wants to waste time working out if the sword chopped off the goblin's head or merely hacked two-thirds of the way through its spine. The game just moves onto the next goblin, leaving the first one to die in an unmourned and indeterminate fashion.

This level of speed and abstraction is perfect for most fights, but dragons demand a more vivid, detailed system. A fight with a dragon should be as memorable and well-described as possible; it is usually the climactic battle or at least a major encounter. The following collection of optional rules offer more detail for combats involving dragons. Using these rules will slow the game down somewhat (the inevitable price of detail), but the added detail may be worth it for some groups.

Hit Locations

This system requires the Games Master to keep track of the dragon's current facing. Facing has no effect on the dragon's attacks, as it can twist around to snap at creatures behind it, claw with its hind legs, or turn with terrifying swiftness while on the ground. The dragon's facing determines which hit location chart is used when it is attacked.

Characters in front of the dragon use the 'front' chart (using a 90 degree arc in front of the dragon). Characters on either side of the dragon use the 'flank' chart, while characters behind the dragon use the 'rear' chart. Characters above the dragon (flying or falling) use the 'top' chart. A character crushed or pinned by the dragon, or who has run beneath the dragon's belly (provoking attacks of opportunity) uses the 'beneath' chart. Roll 1d20 and consult the Hit Location table to see where the blow falls on the dragon's body.

Reach

For the front and rear tables, characters with reach are able to reach higher on the dragon's body. Smaller characters are able only to stab at the upper parts of the dragon when the dragon snaps down at them. Apply the modifiers from the following table to the hit location roll:

Reach Modifiers	
Reach	Hit Location Modifier
0 feet	-2
5 feet	+0
10 feet	+4
15 feet	+6
20 feet	+8

Locations and Weaponry

Some weapons are much more effective than others when it comes to wounding parts of the dragon. A piercing weapon only makes tiny holes in the wide expanse of the dragon's wings, and bounces off the overlapping scales of the dragon's flanks – but punches deeply into the soft underbelly of the beast. A slashing weapon gets stuck on the fatty tissue and unexpected coils of the underbelly, but can tear huge gashes in the wings and flanks. A bludgeoning weapon cannot make much of an impact on small

Hit Locations			
Location	Front	Flank	Rear
0 or less	Foreleg (limb) <i>-s</i>	Foreleg (limb) <i>-s</i>	Tail <i>-b, +s</i>
1	Foreleg (claw) <i>+b, -p</i>	Head (face)	Tail <i>-b, +s</i>
2	Foreleg (limb) <i>-s</i>	Foreleg (limb) <i>-s</i>	Hindleg (limb) <i>-s</i>
3	Foreleg (limb) <i>-s</i>	Foreleg (claw) <i>+b</i>	Hindleg (limb) <i>-s</i>
4	Body (flank) <i>+s, -p</i>	Foreleg (limb) <i>-s</i>	Hindleg (limb) <i>-s</i>
5	Body (belly) <i>+p, -s</i>	Foreleg (limb) <i>-s</i>	Hindleg (claw) <i>+b</i>
6	Body (belly) <i>+p, -s</i>	Foreleg (limb) <i>-s</i>	Hindleg (limb) <i>-s</i>
7	Body (belly) <i>+p, -s</i>	Body (front shoulder) <i>-s</i>	Body (abdomen) <i>+b, +p</i>
8	Body (flank) <i>+s, -p</i>	Wing <i>+s, -p, -b</i>	Body (abdomen) <i>+b, +p</i>
9	Body (flank) <i>+s, -p</i>	Wing <i>+s, -p, -b</i>	Body (abdomen)
10	Body (shoulder) <i>-s</i>	Body (flank) <i>+s, -p</i>	Body (abdomen)
11	Body (shoulder) <i>-s</i>	Body (flank) <i>+s, -p</i>	Wing <i>+s, -p, -b</i>
12	Wing <i>+s, -p, -b</i>	Body (flank) <i>+s, -p</i>	Wing <i>+s, -p, -b</i>
13	Wing <i>+s, -p, -b</i>	Body (flank) <i>+s, -p</i>	Tail <i>-b, +s</i>
14	Neck <i>+s</i>	Body (abdomen) <i>+b, +p</i>	Tail <i>-b, +s</i>
15	Neck <i>+s</i>	Body (abdomen) <i>+b, +p</i>	Tail <i>-b, +s</i>
16	Neck <i>+s</i>	Hindleg (limb) <i>-s</i>	Tail <i>-b, +s</i>
17	Head (neckguard) <i>-s</i>	Hindleg (limb) <i>-s</i>	Tail <i>-b, +s</i>
18	Head (horns) <i>-s, +b</i>	Hindleg (limb) <i>-s</i>	Tail <i>-b, +s</i>
19	Head (maw) <i>-s, +p</i>	Hindleg (claw) <i>+b</i>	Body (abdomen)
20	Head (face)	Hindleg (limb) <i>-s</i>	Wing <i>+s, -p, -b</i>
21	Head (face)	Tail <i>-b, +s</i>	Wing <i>+s, -p, -b</i>
22	Head (horns) <i>-s, +b</i>	Tail <i>-b, +s</i>	Tail <i>-b, +s</i>
23	Neck <i>+s</i>	Roll again	Tail <i>-b, +s</i>
24	Neck <i>+s</i>	Roll again	Wing <i>+s, -p, -b</i>
25+	Wing <i>+s, -p, -b</i>	Roll again	Wing <i>+s, -p, -b</i>

Hit Locations, Continued		
Location	Above	Beneath
1	Head (face)	Head (face)
2	Head (horns) <i>-s, +b</i>	Head (maw) <i>-s, +p</i>
3	Head (neck guard) <i>-s</i>	Head (maw) <i>-s, +p</i>
4	Neck <i>+s</i>	Neck <i>+s</i>
5	Neck <i>+s</i>	Neck <i>+s</i>
6	Foreleg (limb) <i>-s</i>	Foreleg (limb) <i>-s</i>
7	Body (shoulder) <i>-s</i>	Foreleg (claw) <i>+b, -p</i>
8	Body (flank) <i>+s, -p</i>	Body (belly) <i>+p, -s</i>
9	Body (flank) <i>+s, -p</i>	Body (belly) <i>+p, -s</i>
10	Wing <i>+s, -p, -b</i>	Body (belly) <i>+p, -s</i>
11	Wing <i>+s, -p, -b</i>	Body (belly) <i>+p, -s</i>
12	Wing <i>+s, -p, -b</i>	Body (belly) <i>+p, -s</i>
13	Wing <i>+s, -p, -b</i>	Body (belly) <i>+p, -s</i>
14	Body (flank) <i>+s, -p</i>	Body (belly) <i>+p, -s</i>
15	Body (flank) <i>+s, -p</i>	Body (abdomen) <i>+b, +p</i>
16	Body (abdomen) <i>+b, +p</i>	Body (abdomen) <i>+b, +p</i>
17	Hindleg (limb) <i>-s</i>	Hindleg (limb) <i>-s</i>
18	Tail <i>-b, +s</i>	Hindleg (claw) <i>+b, -p</i>
19	Tail <i>-b, +s</i>	Tail <i>-b, +s</i>
20	Tail <i>-b, +s</i>	Tail <i>-b, +s</i>

scales, but can shatter claws and bony plates. Different locations give bonuses and penalties (+2 or -2) to different weapons (*b* stands for bludgeoning, *p* for piercing and *s* for slashing). The notation '+*b, -p*' means that bludgeoning weapons get a +2 bonus to the attack roll while piercing weapons get a -2 penalty. These modifiers can result in an attack missing where it would normally have struck, or vice versa.

Which leg?

If attacking from the left flank, any results that hit a leg strike the left leg. Right side attacks hit the right legs. For other attacks, roll a 1d6 (1-3=left leg, 4-6 equals right leg).

Called Shots

A character may accept a penalty to his attack roll to aim at a particular part of the dragon's body. For every -1 penalty applied to the attack, the player may shift the Hit Location result up or down by up to 2. For example, if the character accepts a -2 to his attack roll, he may turn a Hit Location roll of 10 into anything from a 6 to a 14.

Locations and Hit Points

Optionally, the Games Master can keep track of the individual hit points for the various portions of the dragon's body. Each section holds a fraction of the dragon's hit points, and once these hit points are gone, the section is destroyed. The dragon's total hit points are still tracked, and damage is subtracted from both the hit points of the damaged section and the total hit points. (For example, if the dragon takes 10 points of damage to its head, 10 points should be subtracted from the hit point total of the head *and* the dragon as a whole. The dragon can be killed by an accumulation of wounds on different parts of its body.)

Area effect spells apply their damage to the dragon's total hit points, not to the hit points of the body section struck. (This rule is to prevent wizards lopping the head off a dragon with an eerily well-placed *lightning bolt*. Optionally, the location hit can be rolled randomly, but this can lead to very quick deaths.)

Using this optional rule will make dragons more fragile. The Games Master should consider lowering their Challenge Rating by 1, or else giving them bonus hit points equal to their Challenge Rating multiplied by 15.

When a section loses all its hit points, it is destroyed. The percentage of hit points in each section are as follows:

Effects of Destruction

Head: Death, surprisingly.

Neck: Death.

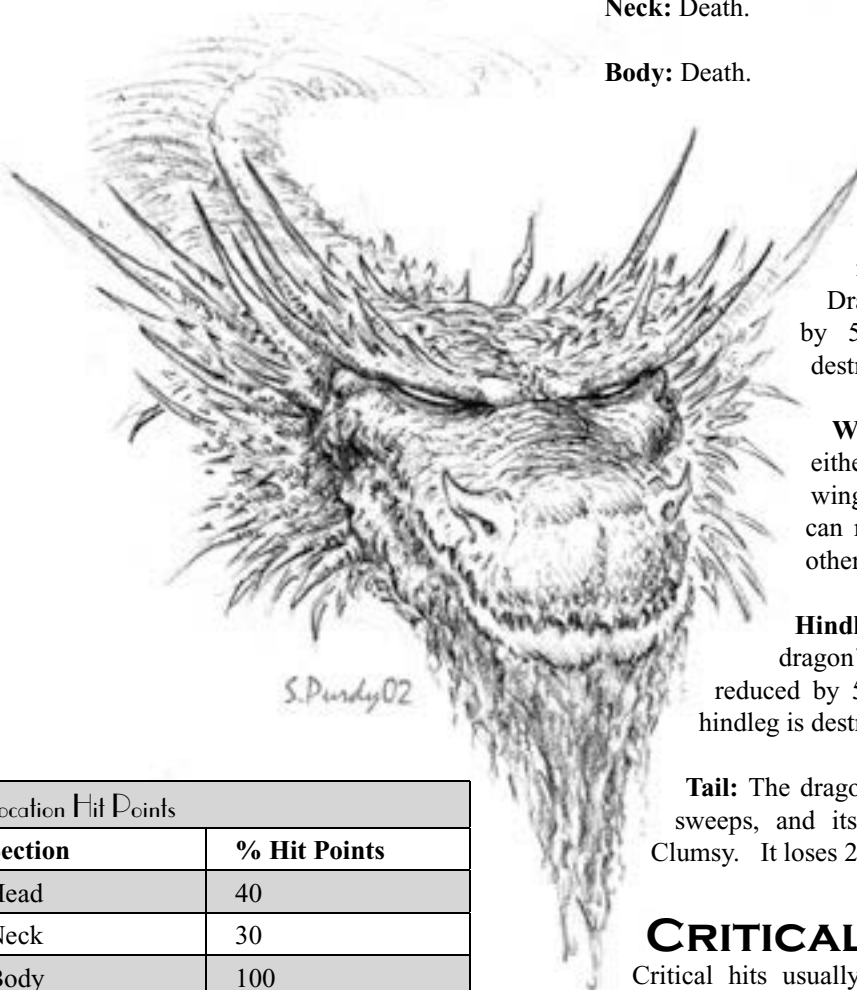
Body: Death.

Foreleg: The dragon cannot make claw attacks with that leg. The dragon loses 2d10 hit points per round due to blood loss. Dragon's movement is reduced by 50% if both forelegs are destroyed.

Wing: The dragon cannot fly if either wing is destroyed. If one wing is destroyed, the dragon can make wing buffets with the other wing.

Hindleg: As foreleg, but a dragon's ground movement is reduced by 50% and it cannot run if a hindleg is destroyed.

Tail: The dragon cannot make tail slaps or sweeps, and its manoeuvrability drops to Clumsy. It loses 2d10 hit points per round.



Location Hit Points	
Section	% Hit Points
Head	40
Neck	30
Body	100
Left Foreleg	25
Right Foreleg	25
Left Wing	20
Right Wing	20
Left Hindleg	40
Right Hindleg	40
Tail	30

Math Check

The hit point totals for the various body parts do indeed add up to much more than 100%. The overall hit points for the dragon measure the amount of damage needed to *kill* the dragon, which is not the same as completely destroying its body from nose to tail. However, the hit points for individual sections measure the amount of damage needed to *destroy* that section beyond recognition.

CRITICAL HITS

Critical hits usually just increase the damage from an attack, but they can also be exceptionally effective blows that reduce the dragon's abilities. If the Hit Location system is not being used, then the Games Master should pick the coolest and most fitting critical hit. These special effects are in addition to the normal damage inflicted by the critical hit.

Foreleg Critical Hits

Limb/Slashing: The character's blade slices deeply into the dragon's elbow, sending a gush of black, smoking blood running down the monster's arm. Multiply the damage from the attack by 5 – if the total is greater than the dragon's current hit points (or the hit points of the limb), the limb is severed.

Limb/Bludgeoning: The impact snaps the dragon's arm back, driving the elbow spike deep into the dragon's own stomach. The dragon drops anything

it was holding in its claw, and inflicts 1d6 damage plus its Strength bonus on itself.

Limb/Piercing: The character leaps atop the dragon's forearm for a moment and drives his weapon straight through the paw. If the dragon is not flying, the weapon impales the paw, pinning the dragon to the ground. The dragon cannot move unless the character removes the weapon, or the dragon pulls its paw free, which inflicts the weapon's normal damage plus the dragon's Strength bonus.

Claw/Slashing: The character inflicts a seemingly shallow cut on the dragon's paw, but the tendons of the claw are crippled. The dragon may no longer make Snatch attacks with that claw.

Claw/Bludgeoning: Snap! The impact shatters the dragon's claw. The dragon may still make slam attacks with that paw, but the damage is reduced to that of a wing buffet.

Claw/Piercing: The weapon deflects the dragon's claw. The dragon automatically misses its claw in the next round of combat.

Head Critical Hits

Face/Slashing: The dragon is scarred for life, as the weapon leaves a livid scar across the dragon's muzzle. Blood flows like a waterfall from its eye ridges, inflicting a -1 penalty to its attacks next round.

Face/Bludgeoning: The character's blow shatters the body ridge that guides the dragon's breath weapon. The dragon's breath weapon becomes a burst with a radius half that of a cone weapon for that age, centred on the dragon's head.

Face/Piercing: The dragon's eye is impaled. The dragon must make a Fortitude save equal to 10+the damage inflicted or die.

Horns/Slashing: The dragon's horn is shattered in a sudden spray of fragments. The dragon may no longer make gore attacks, if it previously could.

Horns/Bludgeoning: There is a sickening crack as a large part of the dragon's bony crown falls away from the beast's head, like a glacier of horn and flesh calving. Reduce the dragon's Armour Class by 2.

Horns/Piercing: Straight and true, the blow lands dead centre on the dragon's forehead. The dragon's Spell Resistance is halved next turn, due to the disruption to the dragon's concentration and mental processes.

Neckguard/Slashing: The decorative barbels and frills on the side of the dragon's head are neatly chopped off. The loss of these sensitive organs disrupts the dragon's blindsight ability for 2d10 rounds.

Neckguard/Bludgeoning: The dragon's head is smashed off to one side by the force of the blow. The dragon automatically misses any bite attacks made in the next round.

Neckguard/Piercing: The blow creeps in underneath the dragon's neck frills and comes dangerously close to its jugular vein. The dragon must make a Fortitude save against a DC equal to 10+the damage inflicted or die.

Maw/Slashing: The dragon's tongue is severed. It can no longer cast spells unless it has the Still Spell feat.

Maw/Bludgeoning: A rather odd expression crosses the dragon's face when the blow hits, and when it next opens its mouth, it reveals a mass of bloodied gums instead of row upon row of teeth. Half the dragon's teeth are knocked out, reducing damage from its Bite by half the dragon's Strength bonus.

Maw/Piercing: Daringly, the character thrusts his weapon deep into the dragon's mouth, impaling the soft upper palate beneath the brain. The dragon must make a Fortitude save against a DC equal to 10+the damage inflicted or die.

Neck Critical Hits

Neck/Slashing: The blow threatens to decapitate the dragon. Multiply the damage from the attack by 5 – if the total is greater than the dragon's current hit points (or the hit points of the neck), the neck is severed.

Neck/Bludgeoning: The dragon is winded, and counts as being staggered for the next 1d4 rounds.

Neck/Piercing: At first, it seems as though the attack had no great effect – but when the dragon next breathes, its eyes bulge as the breath weapon detonates against the small obstruction in its windpipe caused by the attack. The dragon’s next breath weapon attack has no effect other than stunning the dragon for one round.

Body Critical Hits

Abdomen/Slashing: The blow encourages the dragon’s intestines to pursue independent courses. The dragon suffers 1 point of damage for every five feet moved unless it applies healing magic to the wound.

Abdomen/Bludgeoning: The dolorous blow. The dragon is stunned for 1d6 rounds.

Abdomen/Piercing: The attack pierces the muscle controlling the dragon’s tail. It slaps wildly, making an involuntary tail sweep attack. The dragon must make a DC20 Balance check or fall prone.

Belly/Slashing: The attack cuts across the dragon’s soft underbelly, cutting a flap of skin open. Reduce the dragon’s armour class by 2.

Belly/Bludgeoning: The dragon is *nauseated* for one round. If the dragon can make a breath weapon attack, it does.

Belly/Piercing: The piercing weapon – a black arrow, perhaps, or a black sword – drives deep into the dragon’s breast, stabbing at its heart. The dragon must make a Fortitude save against a DC equal to 20+the damage inflicted or die in 1d4 rounds.

Flank/Slashing: The cut leaves a line of fire along the dragon’s side and inflicts 2 points of permanent Strength damage.

Flank/Bludgeoning: 1d4 of the dragon’s ribs are shattered, each inflicting 1 point of temporary Constitution damage.

Flank/Piercing: The attack hits one of the dragon’s internal organs. It suffers 1d8 points of bleeding damage every round until healed.

Shoulder/Slashing: The blow cleaves the dragon’s shoulder almost in two. Multiply the damage from the attack by 5 – if the total is greater than the dragon’s current hit points (or the hit points of the body), the limb is severed.

Shoulder/Bludgeoning: The dragon’s shoulder is broken. Any attacks with the limb now suffer an additional –5 penalty.

Shoulder/Piercing: The injury cuts into the base of the dragon’s neck, restricting its movement. The dragon can no longer make bite and claw attacks on the same target in the same round.

Wing Critical Hits

Wing/Slashing: A huge section of the dragon’s wing membrane is cut loose. The dragon may no longer fly.

Wing/Bludgeoning: The dragon’s wing is shattered. The dragon may no longer fly.

Wing/Piercing: The dragon’s wing is pinned back by an accurate blow to the wingmount. The dragon may not make wing buffets.

Hindleg Critical Hits

Limb/Slashing: The character’s blade slices deeply into the dragon’s knee, sending a gush of black, smoking blood running down the monster’s arm. Multiply the damage from the attack by 5 – if the total is greater than the dragon’s current hit points (or the hit points of the limb), the limb is severed.

Limb/Bludgeoning: The dragon is toppled and falls prone.

Limb/Piercing: The character leaps atop the dragon’s hindquarters for a moment and drives his weapon straight through the paw. If the dragon is not flying, the weapon impales the paw, pinning the dragon to the ground. The dragon cannot move unless the character removes the weapon, or the dragon pulls its paw free, which inflicts the weapon’s normal damage plus the dragon’s Strength bonus.



Claw/Slashing: The character inflicts a seemingly shallow cut on the dragon's paw, but the tendons of the claw are crippled. The dragon may no longer make Snatch attacks with that claw.

Claw/Bludgeoning: Snap! The impact shatters the dragon's claw. The dragon may still make slam attacks with that paw, but the damage is reduced to that of a wing buffet.

Claw/Piercing: The dragon steps on the weapon. Add the dragon's Strength bonus to the attack's damage.

Tail Critical Hits

Tail/Slashing: The blow cuts deeply into the tail. Multiply the damage from the attack by 5 – if the total is greater than the dragon's current hit points (or the hit points of the tail), the tail is severed.

Tail/Bludgeoning: Regardless of the damage inflicted, the attack catches the dragon's attention. The dragon focuses on attacking the character who smashed its tail to the exclusion of other goals for the next 1d4 rounds.

Tail/Piercing: The character leaps atop the dragon's tail for a moment and drives his weapon straight through the tail. If the dragon is not flying, the weapon impales the tail, pinning the dragon to the ground. The dragon cannot move unless the character removes the weapon, or the dragon pulls its tail free, which inflicts the weapon's normal damage plus the dragon's Strength bonus.

HOARDS

Dragons treasure gold about all things, save themselves.

Theories for why they do this abound. Perhaps...

- † Dragons draw power from the enchanting nature of gold. A man thinks of the wealth in a dragon's hoard, and a little of his spirit reaches out and is entrapped in a web of lust and greed around the gold. These spirit-fragments are devoured by the dragon's spirit as it dreams. The hoard, then, is the spiritual equivalent of a spider's web, catching fat greed-spirits for the dragon.
- † The soft underbelly of the dragon is its one weak spot. Its flanks are girded in overlapping armour scales, its body and claws in plates of steel-hard bone, but from beneath the dragon is comparatively vulnerable. By lying atop a pile of gold and treasure for centuries, its vast weight driving down like a sleeping mountain, the dragon embeds coins and gemstones into its belly, giving it a protective golden waistcoat. A wyrm could achieve the same result by lying on stones, or by wearing barding, but the vanity of dragons is legendary.
- † The vanity of dragons is matched only by their greed. Dragons desire gold because mortals do, the dragons want more of whatever others want. When humans forge great kingdoms, the wyrms rise up and carve out their own domains not because they want to rule over the land, but because the humans claim ownership of it. In far-off realms where wisdom is valued above gold or rubies, the dragons seek out lore and scholarship and are respected sages.
- † Despite their intelligence and power, dragons are essentially feral at heart. They lounge on their piles of gold like vast scaly cats, they hunt with the single-minded savagery of sharks, and they delight in shiny things like magpies. Dragons line their lairs with gold and jewels to attract a mate. Others suggest that the hoard is a symbol of the dragon's might and a challenge to all other races. The dragon, lying atop its stolen gold, is essentially declaring 'I have taken your wealth and demanded your children in tribute – none of you have the valour to face me or the skill to slay me'.
- † Dragons may simply be gathering wealth to fund their schemes. Many wyrms are accomplished sorcerers, and crafting items and making new spells is an expensive business. The hoard may be nothing more than the dragon's loose change, held in a lair more secure than any chest or coffer. Heroes who slay a dragon might find that its hoard is gone, spent on hiring mercenary armies or building a castle or rare supplies to make a new magical device.
- † Dragons feed on treasure. They lack teeth for chewing, so their food is pulped in their gizzard by swallowed coins. Gemstones dissolve in the dragon's stomach into elemental essences, while high-fibre tapestries, rugs and art keep the dragon's bowels regular. Pieces of armour are used as temporary bandages or replacements for lost scales. Swords are used as toothpicks and claw files.
- † With their long, long lives, dragons need distractions. The hoard is a hobby; every dragon is a connoisseur of art. They trade items like children trade shiny shells or churches trade relics. One dragon might have collection of jewelled chalices, or coins from the reign of some obscure, long-dead king, or erotic engravings.
- † Dragons might simply love gold for its lustre, for its beauty, for its golden light that sprays up in a thousand sunset-coloured sparks when it reflects the dragonfire.

Golden Armour

The underbelly of a dragon is soft and vulnerable. Its armour class is 10 points lower than the rest of the dragon's body, but only attacks from directly below strike the underbelly. However, the embedded coins and gems give the underbelly a form of cover. The amount of cover is measured as a percentage (like the miss chance given by concealment) – 1% per 200 gp of the dragon's hoard. Effects that ignore cover also bypass the dragon's golden armour.

Stealing from beneath a sleeping dragon

Even asleep, a dragon is aware of its hoard. It stirs at the slightest noise. A sleeping dragon may still make Listen checks, but at a –20 circumstance penalty. Removing items from the hoard without disturbing the dragon is extremely difficult. The character must make a Sleight of Hand check at a DC equal to the dragon's Wisdom. The roll is modified as follows:

Stealing Modifiers	
Situation	Sleight of Hand Modifier
Item is beneath dragon's body (most of treasure)	-2
Item is beneath dragon's head (choice treasure)	-6
Item is beneath dragon's tail (sword and large items)	-0
Item is beneath dragon's claw (eggs, magic items)	-8
Item is beneath dragon's wing (50% chance for any item)	Additional –2
Item's weight	-3 per lb. of weight

If the Sleight of Hand check fails, the dragon awakens. The character may slowly draw an item from the hoard instead of just picking it up by 'lifting' 1 lb of the item's weight per round. A separate check must be made each round until the item is freed.

Fighting Amid Gold

Characters can dive into a pile of gold, gaining one 'step' of cover per round of burrowing, to a maximum of nine-tenths cover. Running over a pile of gold requires a DC10 Balance check. If a character is looking for a particular item amid a treasure hoard, such as a magic sword or unique gem, it requires a Search check at a DC of 1 per 2,000gp value of the hoard.

Using damaging and destructive spells may destroy part of the hoard. If the hoard is struck by the spell (or breath weapon), use the amount of damage inflicted as a percentage chance that a particular item is hit, and apply damage as normal to the object. Furthermore, multiple the damage by two and remove that many coins from the hoard.

COUNTLESS PILES OF PRECIOUS THINGS

A dragon has triple the normal treasure for a creature of its Challenge Rating, and if that treasure is combined with the treasure allocated for the dragon's various guardian monsters and servants, the result is a vast pile of wealth. An adult red dragon lies on a bed worth 40,000 or more gold pieces.

The bulk of a dragon's hoard is in coins and minor items. A dragon begins its hoard by stealing the hoard of another dragon, or capturing the treasury of some kingdom or palace. Newer treasures are piled on top of older ones, so the lowest strata of the hoard is composed of the first items taken by the dragon. Fresh coins may be somewhat corroded if the dragon transported captured items using the *gullet of surprising capacity* spell.

The coins are shaped into a roughly kidney-shaped bed on which the dragon curls up. A smaller pillow of more valuable coins is located a few feet away from the bed. The most valuable items of the hoard – magical items, jewellery, the dragon's eggs if it has any – are kept nestled in the innermost part of the kidney. One of the dragon's claws rests on them, and the whole bed is shaded by the dragon's wings.

Items that are uncomfortable to lie upon, such as swords or armour, are pushed out to the edges of the hoard. Elder dragons (with armour classes greater than 20) are strong enough to ignore the pricks and points of blades, and sleep on regardless.

STOCKING THE HOARD

When stocking a dragon's treasure hoard, the simplest approach to take is to divide the total value of the hoard into three portions: coins, jewels, and magic items.

Coins

The type of coin depends on where the dragon's hoard came from – if the dragon raided the silver mines of the elf lords, it probably has more silver than gold in its bed. Coins present a special challenge to the characters; a third of the hoard is singularly inconvenient to transport. A third of a 40,000gp hoard is more than 250 pounds of coins, which is a heavy load for almost any character – and that assumes that the party has the requisite half-dozen or so sacks to be stuffed full of coins. A horse

The hard part was over. The dragon's gargantuan corpse lay behind them, foul ichor gushing from a dozen gaping wounds. The beast was dead, they had survived. Victory – glorious, unexpected, joyous victory. Isilmar surveyed the massive hoard of treasure he and his friends had captured. There was more wealth here in this one chamber than any of them – experienced adventurers all – had ever seen. Tharuz pawed through a pile of gemstones, his trademark dwarven stoicism blown away by gasps of avarice and joy.

'What are you going to do with your share, Tharuz?' asked Isilmar.

'Head home to the dwarflands, raise a castle, build a family. You?'

The ranger shrugged. 'I've heard that the Everwood is under attack from foresters. My share will pay for the help I need to stop them.'

The party's bard, Yari, raised a perfect eyebrow. 'You're not serious. You'd do far better investing your money in the Borderland Settlements. The Everwood will be gone in five years, but if you buy in now, you'd be a rich lord on the Borderland by then. It's what I'm going to do.'

'So the wealth of the dragon isn't enough for you, Yari?' said Isilmar angrily. 'You're going to get richer by helping merchant fools rip out the green heart of the world?'

'What, you're a druid now, Isilmar? Did we kill this dragon on ecological grounds?' The scorn in her voice was plain, and her hand now rested on the hilt of her still-bloodied rapier. To calm the situation, Tharuz shouted to Algernon the Arcane. 'Oy! Wizard! What about your share?'

'There are certain researches into the infernal realms that I can now afford to pursue' replied the mage.

Father Johan of the Order of Light looked up. 'Infernalism is not permitted by the church. Anyone who practices it is anathema, regardless of how rich they are.'

'You'd be surprised how far bribes can go' spat the wizard. The cleric raised his hammer. Energy crackled around the wizard's hands. Isilmar aimed an arrow at Yari's throat as she slipped into a fighting stance. The party's unity was leaking away faster than the dragon's blood.

In desperation, Tharuz leapt up onto a jewelled suit of golden armour and roared 'FRIENDS! Listen to yourselves! We are not enemies – we are allies, companions, brothers born in blood and fire! We passed through the dragon's gauntlet and slew the beast! This should be a time for celebration, not conflict!'

The moment passed. Johan, Yari and Isilmar lowered their weapons. Algernon let his blasting spell dissipate. Tharuz breathed a sigh of relief, then narrowed his eyes as Yari picked up a particularly magnificent gem from the hoard. 'You'd best be handing that relic back to the dwarflands, lass – namely me.' She scowled.

Suddenly, his axe was in his hands.

or other mouth could carry that gold, but getting a beast of burden up to the dragon's lair may be an adventure in itself.

Jewellery

Jewels and gemstones are much more portable than bulky coins; a gem worth 5,000 gp can be slipped into a pocket. Jewellery carries with it two problems. Firstly, converting it into cash is much more difficult – no-one in a village or small town

could buy that 5,000 gp gem for anything like its true value, so characters laden down with jewellery have to travel to the centres of civilisation to make good on their winnings. Secondly, unlike coins, jewellery tends to have a history. Twelve centuries beneath a dragon's foot has scraped the image of the long-dead dwarf king from face of his coins, making them into anonymous gold disks. However, age has not dimmed the beauty of the crown of the dwarf kingdoms, and the mountain folk have long memories. Characters who slay a dragon may be

Jewellery			
Roll	Value	Description	Plot
1	50 gp	An amber stone in a gold brooch, marked with ancient runes.	The brooch was taken from the barrow-grave of a warrior woman, who will haunt the character's dreams until it is returned.
2	100 gp	A roll of shimmering exotic silk. The silk is purple, but strands of gold and silver thread weave through the edges.	It was used to swaddle the freshly-laid eggs of the dragon's offspring, and a shard of egg is hidden in its folds. This shard can be used to work spells on the younger dragon.
3	200 gp	A silver ornamental stand for a crystal ball. The legs resemble coiling snakes with ruby eyes.	One of the legs has a secret compartment (Search DC25 to find), containing notes made while scrying by a long-dead mage.
4	400 gp	A necklace of tiny onyx beads. Some of the beads are larger than others.	The beads are prayer beads, and contain the rhythm for a long-lost chant of praise. They are worth 2,000gp to the right religion.
5	800 gp	Four matched gauntlets, made of a greenish metal that is warm to the touch.	The gauntlets are from another plane, and still resonate with the correct frequency to guide a <i>plane shift</i> spell.
6	1,000 gp	A bloodstone sphere the size of a child's head, marked with three small holes.	A jewelled ring, worth another 500 gp, is lodged inside one of the holes.
7	1,500 gp	A jewelled filigree headband attached to a lady's veil. The veil is torn and stained with makeup and tears.	The veil is tattered and torn, but on it is scrawled a farewell note written by a princess captured by the dragon. If it is returned to her family, the characters will be rewarded.
8	2,000 gp	A chessboard; the black squares are onyx, the white are moonstone. One of the black squares is missing.	The squares can be moved, as the whole board is a sliding-block puzzle. If solved (Disable Device, DC30), the board hinges open to reveal a secret compartment.
9	2,500 gp	A crude clay model of the dragon, studded with gems matching its scales. The artistry is comparable with that of a rather dull child.	A kobold tribe who worshipped the dragon made the model. The dragon kept it intact out of sentiment; if the party breaks it to get the gems, they earn the undying hatred of the kobolds.
10	3,000 gp	A halfling cooking kit, all inlaid with gold and silver. It is contained in a rosewood case with lots of compartments.	The spice rack contains exotic hallucinogenic spices from distant lands, and the merchant's guilds will desperately want to know where the spices came from.
11	4,000 gp	An orcish religious icon, made up of a human skull pieced by nine ornamental daggers. Each of the daggers bears a different symbol on the hilt.	This is actually an orcish treaty; each dagger represents a tribe. As long as all the daggers are embedded in the human skull, the orcs are bound to put aside their differences and work together. Breaking the skull breaks the treaty and provokes an orcish civil war.
12	5,000 gp	An elven meditation emerald; woodland scenes are engraved on each of its facets.	Looking into the smallest facet of the gem reveals a secret elven route into faerie.
13	6,000 gp	A dwarven facemask – the eyes are diamond, the face gold, and the beard silver. The face is calm in its repose.	This is the burial mask of a dwarf-king. Anyone looking through the eyes of the mask sees the inside of the king's tomb, which is now the home of ghouls ruled by a lich.
14	7,000 gp	A golden cup, studded with emeralds. The bowl rests atop a stem carved to resemble a muscular warrior in furs.	This the oath-cup of the barbarians; any oath sworn on it is utterly binding. With the cup, an unscrupulous trickster could entrap the barbarian hordes to do his bidding.

15	8,000 gp	A dinner-plate the size of a small shield, made from the shell of a turtle and inlaid with pearls.	The shell is part of the treasure of the king of the sea, and any ship carrying the plate will be sunk by the vengeful king.
16	10,000 gp	An ornamental breastplate, covered with engravings made with human skill. Its beauty is marred by a gash in one side.	The breastplate was once worn by a Solar. The gash marks where the Solar was stabbed by a demon-tainted blade. A residue of poison remains, which could be used to derive a cure.
17	15,000 gp	A crown made to resemble the mountain peaks of the dwarf-lands. A magnificent star-sapphire is set above the forehead.	The inner rim of the crown is engraved with the Nine Unspoken Words of the dwarven race. Any character who speaks one of these words becomes an enemy of the dwarves for life.
18	20,000 gp	A grail. This cup...or plate...or stone burns with its own glorious yet solemn light.	Only a paladin or cleric may touch the grail; other characters cannot quite seem to get a grip on it.
19	30,000 gp	A truestone, rarest of all gems.	Anyone who sees the gem must make a DC15 Will save or be consumed with greed.
20	50,000 gp	A mithril tiara, ringed with diamonds <i>ioun stones</i> .	It belongs to the Faerie Queen, and she wants it back...

contacted by the descendants of victims of the dragon, who want their ancestral heirlooms back.

Jewellery allows the players to make a quick buck, but also creates all sorts of plot hooks and complications that can be exploited by the Games Master at some later date. These plot hooks could also be attached to the magic items retrieved from the hoard, but taking hard-won magic items away is downright cruel to the players. Making non-magical but amazingly valuable jewellery the subject of a plot point is a much better option.

Magic Items

If the dragon is a young adult or older, it will have at least one magic item in its hoard that can heal it, even if this is no more potent than a *potion of cure serious wounds*. Dragons that can use clerical spells often have a scroll or three of *heal* hidden around their lair. Otherwise, if a dragon can use an item, it will. Rings can be worn on the dragon's claws, rods and wands gripped in teeth or slotted behind a horn. Items that cannot be used by the dragon are kept in the hoard, but are not especially treasured. Protective items such as *rings of protection* or a *cube of force* are especially popular, as are scrying devices and emergency escape routes like a scroll of *teleportation*. Offensively, dragons eschew most melee weapons (although a red dragon with a +3 *vorpal sword* and +4 *full plate of reflection* might willingly *polymorph* into human form to make use of them), but staves and wands are often used, especially ones that create the opposite effect to the dragon's breath (enemies hunting a white dragon

probably have lots of anti-cold *protection from elements* spells and effects, leaving them open to a blast from a *wand of fireballs* or *ring of shooting stars*).

Finally, at least one blue dragon is famed for dropping its *instant fortress* on enemies.

THE CURSE OF THE HOARD

A dragon lies atop its hoard for centuries. Over the decades, loose scales peel away and filter down through the golden strata. Blood scars and stains the jewels. The dragon's exhalations, pungent with the stench of sulphur and carrion, permeate the cavern. The beast's jealous spirit enwraps the gold, cursing it with greed.

Most mortal creatures, save perhaps the most unworldly, can fall victim to greed even over normal gold. The sight of the dragon's hoard, with its piled treasures beyond price or count, could inspire madness even without the long and evil custody of the dragon. The combination of the inherent greed of mortals, and the hateful spirit of the dragon that permeates and corrupts the hoard, produces the Curse of Dragongold.

In game terms, anyone who lays eyes on gold from a dragon's hoard must make a Will save or fall victim to the hoard. This is a Supernatural effect, and can be blocked by *protection from evil* and stopped by *remove curse*. (A *remove curse* will free one person

of the curse, or remove it from 500 gp worth of treasure per level of the caster). The DC for the Will save is determined by the amount of treasure seen, and modified as follows:

Curse Save Difficulties	
Treasure Seen	Will Save DC
1 gp	5
2-50 gp	8
51-500 gp	10
501-2,500 gp	12
2,501-10,000gp	15
10,001 gp+	20

Curse Save Modifiers	
Modifiers to the Curse	Modifier
Dragon's Age	+1/2 dragon's Age Category
Character is naturally greedy or generous	Up to +4 or -4, depending on the character's personality
The cursed item is given freely to the character	-4
The character is paid with the cursed item	+0
The character steals the cursed item	+4
The character has legal claim to the item	-4 if it is given to him; +4 if he has to obtain it in some other fashion or merely sees it
Per intervening owner between the dragon and the character	-2

The character's response to the curse is determined by how much the Will save was failed by.

Curse Effects		
Will Save Failed By...	Response	Curse Duration
1-5	The character will argue that he deserves more treasure, and become argumentative. He will dream of the treasure, but will not fight or steal unless provoked	1 week
6-10	The character will steal, but will not murder to get more treasures from the hoard	1 month.
11-15	The character will fight and kill to get more treasure from the hoard	Until cured
20	As above, but the character can sense who owns part from the hoard (as <i>detect evil</i> , but only detects treasure from the hoard)	Until cured

Some dragons produce curses with different effects. Curses include:

- † A leprosy-like disease that afflicts those who handle treasure from the hoard.
- † Recurring nightmares about the dragon that slowly sap the will of the victim.
- † A curse of misfortune that prevents the thief from enjoying his ill-gotten gains.
- † The thief is marked by a foul scent detectable only by dragons.
- † Anyone who touches the treasure is slowly driven mad and comes to believe that they are the dragon reborn.
- † Those afflicted by the curse become greedier and greedier; not for treasure from the hoard, but for wealth from any source at all. Each coin stolen from the dragon becomes the seed for a new hoard.

AGE ADVANCEMENT

As presented in *Core Rulebook III*, dragons have a unique system for advancing in size and Hit Dice. A dragon does not merely become bigger and stronger as it grows; it gains all sorts of new supernatural powers, its ability scores increase, its hide becomes tougher and its breath weapon more deadly. Usually, a dragon improves in all aspects equally as it ages. However, a dragon can emphasise one of its talents over the rest, gaining, for example, more powerful sorcery at the expense of brute strength.

This is not the same as the dragon gaining levels in the sorcerer class. One is a natural, instinctive growth of the dragon's innate abilities; the other requires the dragon to consciously develop its sorcerous powers. The dragon does not meditate or focus its soul, it instinctively draws on the power of the blood. It is a natural part of the dragon's growth process, and so

developing these powers also heightens the dragon's strength and other physical attributes.

When a dragon increases in age, it can apply any of several types of age advancement.

- † **Normal** age advancement is the form used in *Core Rulebook III*. The dragon's abilities all increase at the same rate.
- † **Combat** age advancement emphasises raw brute strength and attack damage over wit and magic.
- † **Learned** age advancement increases the dragon's skills and intelligence at the cost of muscle and sheer power.
- † **Charismatic** age advancement improves the dragon's famous powers of debate and wit.
- † **Arcane** age advancement improves the dragon's spellcasting abilities.
- † **Swift** age advancement improves the dragon's speed and agility.

† **Mystical** age advancement strengthens the dragon's ties to the spiritual plane, giving it more special abilities.

† **Tough** age advancement gives the dragon better armour and spell resistance.

† **Devastating** age advancement improves the dragon's breath weapon.

The chief advantage of this system is that it allows a Games Master to tailor a dragon for its role in the game without resorting to adding class levels. Dragons come as something of an 'all-in-one' package – they have excellent attacks, defences, saving throws, hit points, magic and special abilities. If the Games Master needs a dragon who is nothing but a fearsome combat machine, one that

Ability Score Progressions

Age	Very Poor	Poor	Standard	Good	Excellent	Superior	Maximum
Wyrmling	+0	+0	+0	+0	+0	+0	+2
Very Young	+0	+0	+0	+0	+0	+2	+2
Young	+0	+0	+0	+0	+0	+0	+2
Juvenile	+0	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2
Young Adult	+0	+0	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2
Adult	+0	+0	+0	+2	+2	+2	+2
Mature Adult	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2
Old	+0	+0	+0	+0	+0	+0	+2
Very Old	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2
Ancient	+0	+0	+0	+0	+2	+2	+2
Wurm	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2
Great Wurm	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2
Draco Invictus	+4	+4	+4	+4	+4	+4	+4
Totals	+12	+14	+16	+18	+20	+22	+28

scorns magic in favour of biting, clawing, rending and crushing, then he can either put fighter or barbarian class levels on a small dragon (which makes the dragon considerably weaker than its Challenge Rating indicates) or use a larger dragon (which has all sorts of arcane abilities that will never be used in the encounter). Instead, using the age advancement system, the dragon can be aged using the Combat and Devastating age types, giving it much more strength and combat ability while keeping it at the correct size and Challenge Rating.

Draco Invictus

The largest natural form of the common dragons is an age category termed *Draco Invictus*. These ancient wyrms have an array of abilities that go far beyond the powers of their younger kin. The Draco Invictus age category is described in *The Slayer's Guide to Dragons*.

AGING AND ABILITY SCORES

Each advancement type is basically a modification of standard advancement, increasing the rate of improvement of one aspect of the dragon. However, different breeds of dragon have different rates of improvement for their statistics. Silver dragons are naturally stronger than bronzes, so if both a silver

Strength Progressions							
Age	Very Poor	Poor	Standard	Good	Excellent	Superior	Maximum
Wyrmling	+0	+0	+0	+0	+0	+2	+2
Very Young	+0	+2	+2	+2	+4	+4	+4
Young	+2	+2	+2	+4	+4	+4	+4
Juvenile	+2	+2	+4	+4	+4	+4	+4
Young Adult	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+4
Adult	+2	+4	+4	+4	+4	+4	+4
Mature Adult	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2
Old	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+4
Very Old	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2
Ancient	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+4
Wyrm	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2
Great Wyrm	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+4
Draco Invictus	+4	+4	+4	+4	+4	+4	+4
Totals	24	30	34	36	38	40	48

dragon and a bronze dragon take the Combat age advancement, the silver's strength will increase more.

For ability scores other than Dexterity, there are seven rates of advancement.

Strength uses a different set of Progressions.

Finally, most dragons never increase their Dexterity – it stays at 10 throughout their lifetime. This is referred to as the Null progression, and is one step below Very Poor progression.

True Dragon Normal Progressions					
Dragon	Strength	Constitution	Intelligence	Wisdom	Charisma
Black	Standard	Good	Poor	Standard	Poor
Blue	Standard	Good	Standard	Standard	Standard
Green	Standard	Good	Standard	Standard	Standard
Red	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
White	Standard	Good	Standard	Very Poor	Standard
Brass	Standard	Good	Poor	Poor	Poor
Bronze	Standard	Good	Standard	Standard	Standard
Copper	Standard	Good	Poor	Poor	Poor
Gold	Superior	Superior	Superior	Superior	Superior
Silver	Superior	Superior	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent

Tweaks

The values in the Ability Score Progressions table are slightly tweaked from the values derived from *Core Rulebook III*. For example, a blue dragon gets a +2 to Intelligence when growing from Very Young to Young. According to the Ability Score Progressions table, a blue dragon uses Standard progression and would get this boost instead when moving from Juvenile to Young Adult. This is done to avoid a situation where moving to a higher Progression rate would actually decrease the ability score increase. It will not significantly affect a game, but explains why a dragon advanced using the Progressions here might be slightly different at some age categories to the same dragon in *Core Rulebook III*.

The common or ‘true’ dragons use the following progressions:

Aging and Toughness

When a dragon ages from one age category into another, it gains 3 Hit Dice and a +3 bonus to its natural armour class (or +4 HD and +3 natural armour when reaching the age of Draco Invictus). When a dragon reaches adulthood, it gains Spell Resistance, which increases at a different rate for different dragon species (see individual dragon entries for details).

Aging and Magic

Dragons are naturally magical creatures (see Dragon Magic, page 188) and their spell-casting abilities increase as they age. The values in the table are the increase in the dragon’s Caster Level as a sorcerer.

The common dragons have the following magical progressions. Dragons with a Good progression can cast cleric spells and those from 2 to 4 domains as well as arcane spells.

Common Dragon Magic Progressions	
Dragon	Strength
Black	Poor
Blue	Standard
Green	Standard
Red	Good
White	Very Poor
Brass	Good
Bronze	Good
Copper	Good
Gold	Good
Silver	Good

Dragons also gain a number of innate spell-like or supernatural abilities as they age. These special abilities are the manifestation of the dragon’s growing spiritual connection to the world and to the

underlying magic of creation. Each dragon type has a list of 10 special abilities unique to that species. As the dragon ages, it gains more and more of these special abilities. The dragon also develops a resistance to mundane injury, becoming much tougher and harder to kill.

The special abilities denoted by Roman numerals are described below.

Magic Progression							
Age	Very Poor	Poor	Standard	Good	Excellent	Superior	Maximum
Wyrmling	-	-	-	-	-	+1	+3
Very Young	-	-	-	-	+1	+2	+2
Young	-	-	-	+1	+2	+2	+2
Juvenile	-	-	+1	+2	+2	+2	+2
Young Adult	-	+1	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2
Adult	+1	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2
Mature Adult	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+3
Old	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+3
Very Old	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+3	+3
Ancient	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+3	+3
Wurm	+2	+2	+2	+2	+3	+3	+3
Great Wurm	+2	+2	+2	+2	+3	+3	+4
Draco Invictus	+2	+2	+2	+2	+3	+3	+4

Chromatic Dragon Special Ability Lists					
Ability	Black	Blue	Green	Red	White
I	Acid immunity	Electricity immunity	Acid immunity	Fire subtype	Cold subtype
II	Water breathing	Create/destroy water	Water breathing	<i>Locate object</i>	Icewalking
III	<i>Darkness</i>	<i>Sound imitation</i>	<i>Suggestion</i>	<i>Suggestion</i>	<i>Fog cloud</i>
IV	<i>Corrupt water</i>	<i>Ventriloquism</i>	<i>Plant growth</i>	<i>Find the Path</i>	<i>Gust of wind</i>
V	<i>Plant growth</i>	<i>Hallucinatory terrain</i>	<i>Dominate person</i>	<i>Discern location</i>	<i>Freezing fog</i>
VI	<i>Insect plague</i>	<i>Veil</i>	<i>Command plants</i>	<i>Scry*</i>	<i>Wall of ice</i>
VII	<i>Charm reptiles</i>	<i>Mirage arcana</i>	<i>Dream*</i>	<i>Mass suggestion*</i>	<i>Control weather</i>
VIII	<i>Unhallow*</i>	<i>Summon djinni*</i>	<i>Charm monster*</i>	<i>Charm monster*</i>	<i>Ice storm*</i>
IX	<i>Creeping doom*</i>	<i>Truesight*</i>	<i>Shamber*</i>	<i>Meteor swarm*</i>	<i>Storm of vengeance*</i>
X	Storm of wrath, swallow whole, death throes	Storm of wrath, swallow whole, death throes	Storm of wrath, swallow whole, death throes	Storm of wrath, swallow whole, death throes	Storm of wrath, swallow whole, death throes

If a dragon's age advancements happen to skip an ability (i.e., the dragon follows an advancement path that gives it abilities I, II and IV), it does not automatically get the missed ability later (the dragon can have 'gaps' in its ability roster).

Remember that a dragon uses its age category or its sorcerer caster level, whichever is higher, as the caster level for its spell-like abilities. The save DC, if needed, is 10 + the dragon's Charisma modifier + the spell level. Unless otherwise noted, the new

The common dragons progress in special abilities as follows:

Common Dragon Special Ability Progressions	
Dragon	Strength
Black	Standard
Blue	Standard
Green	Poor
Red	Very Poor
White	Standard
Brass	Standard
Bronze	Excellent
Copper	Poor
Gold	Good
Silver	Good

Most of the special abilities for each common type are described in *Core Rulebook III* (and in *the Slayer's Guide to Dragons* for the Draco Invictus abilities). New abilities (i.e., those obtained by taking the Mystical Age Advancement) are noted with a *.



Chromatic Dragon Special Ability Lists					
Ability	Black	Blue	Green	Red	White
I	Acid immunity	Electricity immunity	Acid immunity	Fire subtype	Cold subtype
II	Water breathing	Create/destroy water	Water breathing	<i>Locate object</i>	Icewalking
III	<i>Darkness</i>	<i>Sound imitation</i>	<i>Suggestion</i>	<i>Suggestion</i>	<i>Fog cloud</i>
IV	<i>Corrupt water</i>	<i>Ventriloquism</i>	<i>Plant growth</i>	<i>Find the Path</i>	<i>Gust of wind</i>
V	<i>Plant growth</i>	<i>Hallucinatory terrain</i>	<i>Dominate person</i>	<i>Discern location</i>	<i>Freezing fog</i>
VI	<i>Insect plague</i>	<i>Veil</i>	<i>Command plants</i>	<i>Scry*</i>	<i>Wall of ice</i>
VII	<i>Charm reptiles</i>	<i>Mirage arcana</i>	<i>Dream*</i>	<i>Mass suggestion*</i>	<i>Control weather</i>
VIII	<i>Unhallow*</i>	<i>Summon djinni*</i>	<i>Charm monster*</i>	<i>Charm monster*</i>	<i>Ice storm*</i>
IX	<i>Creeping doom*</i>	<i>Truesight*</i>	<i>Shamber*</i>	<i>Meteor swarm*</i>	<i>Storm of vengeance*</i>
X	Storm of wrath, swallow whole, death throes	Storm of wrath, swallow whole, death throes	Storm of wrath, swallow whole, death throes	Storm of wrath, swallow whole, death throes	Storm of wrath, swallow whole, death throes

Metallic Dragon Special Ability Lists					
Ability	Brass	Bronze	Copper	Gold	Silver
I	Fire subtype	Electricity immunity	Acid immunity	Fire subtype	Cold & acid immunity
II	Speak with animals	Water breathing	<i>Spider climb</i>	Water breathing	Cloudwalking
III	<i>Endure elements</i>	<i>Polymorph self</i>	<i>Stone shape</i>	<i>Polymorph self</i>	<i>Polymorph self</i>
IV	<i>Suggestion</i>	<i>Create food and water</i>	<i>Transmute rock to mud/mud to rock</i>	<i>Bless</i>	<i>Feather fall</i>
V	<i>Control winds</i>	<i>Fog cloud</i>	<i>Wall of stone</i>	<i>Luck bonus</i>	<i>Fog cloud</i>
VI	<i>Control weather</i>	<i>Detect thoughts</i>	<i>Move Earth</i>	<i>Geas/quest, detect gems</i>	<i>Control winds</i>
VII	<i>Summon djinni</i>	<i>Control water</i>	<i>Flesh to stone/stone to flesh*</i>	<i>Sunburst</i>	<i>Control weather</i>
VIII	<i>Mirage arcane*</i>	<i>Control weather</i>	<i>Statue*</i>	<i>Foresight</i>	<i>Reverse gravity</i>
IX	<i>Mind blank*</i>	<i>Storm of vengeance*</i>	<i>Reverse gravity*</i>	<i>Refuge*</i>	<i>Shapechange*</i>
X	Storm of wrath, swallow whole, death throes	Storm of wrath, swallow whole, death throes	Storm of wrath, swallow whole, death throes	Storm of wrath, swallow whole, death throes	Storm of wrath, swallow whole, death throes

abilities are identical to the spell of the same name, and usable once per day.

Dominate monster: As the spell, usable three times per day.

Mass charm: As the spell, usable three times per day.

Meteor storm: As the spell, usable once per day.

Summon djinni: As *summon monster VII*, but usable only to summon a djinni.

Truesight: As the spell, usable three times per day.

Aging and Breath

Dragons have a relatively simple breath progression. Each dragon type uses a different type of dice to determine damage, and the number of dice rolled

for damage starts at 2 dice (for wyrmlings) increases by 2 dice in each age category. (Some dragons have poor breath progression, starting at 1 die and increasing by 1 die in each age category).

Using Age Advancements

Each of the age advancements includes a set of shifts to the dragon's ability progressions, increasing or decreasing the rate at which the dragon's abilities increase. If an age advancement includes the shift 'Strength +3', this does not mean that the dragon's Strength ability score is increased by 3; it means to move three columns to the right on the Strength Progressions table, beginning from the dragon's usual progression rate. For example, Red dragons start with Good progression, while White dragons have Standard advancement. Applying a +3 shift to both dragons means that the Red dragon is using Maximum progression, while the white is using Superior progression. Similarly, applying a -1 shift to both dragons brings the Red to Standard progression and the White dragon down to Poor progression.

Progressions do not go below Very Poor or above Maximum.

Each progression also includes modifiers to the dragon's hit dice and armour class. A dragon usually gains 3 Hit Dice and +3 natural armour when it increases in age, but some progressions increase or decrease the Hit Dice and armour gained through aging.

The simplest way to use age advancements in a game is to take a dragon one or two age categories below the desired age category, and then use the new age advancements to bring the dragon up to the 'correct age'. If a party of adventures is hunting an adult white dragon, then the Games Master could start with a juvenile white and add two Arcane age advancements. Most white dragons are poor spellcasters, but this particular beast is unusually adept for its race.

Example: Starting with a juvenile white dragon, we apply the shifts for the Arcane age advancement to the white dragon's Young Adult and Adult age categories. The shift for Strength is a -2. White dragons have Standard Strength progression - a -2 shift to this gives our arcanist white dragon Very Poor strength advancement. Looking at the table,

we see that the dragon gains +4 instead of +6 to its Strength.

It has a -2 shift to Constitution, bringing it from Good to Poor progression. A white dragon normally gains +4 Constitution when aging from Juvenile to Adult, but this dragon does not.

It has a +2 shift to Intelligence, bringing it from Standard to Excellent progression, which gives it an added +4 instead of +2 to Intelligence.

White dragons have Very Poor Magical progression - the +2 shift brings it to Standard progression, which gives it a Caster Level of 5th level instead of 1st level at adulthood. It also gets a bonus Metamagic feat for having taken two Arcane age advancements.

Finally, the Arcane age advancement imposes a -2 shift to Special abilities. White dragons normally have a Standard Special Ability progression - a -2 brings this to Very Poor. Looking at the table, we see that this means that the dragon misses out on ability IV, which for white dragons is Gust of Wind.

So, the overall changes - +4 to Strength, +0 Constitution, +4 Intelligence, 5th level caster, a bonus Metamagic feat, and no Gust of Wind. Everything else is the same as a normal adult White. Our Adult White Dragon looks like this:

Adult White Dragon

Large Dragon (cold)

Hit Dice: 18d12+36 (153 hp)

Initiative: +0

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

AC: 26 (-1 size, +15 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 26

Base Attack Bonus/Grapple: +18/+27

Attack: Bite +22 melee (2d6+6)

Full Attack: Bite +22 melee (2d6+6), claws +17 melee (1d8+3)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. x 10 ft / 10 ft.

Special Attacks: Breath weapon, spells

Special Qualities: Icelwalking, fog cloud, damage resistance 5/+1, spell resistance 18, frightful presence

Saves: Fort +13, Ref +11, Will +11

Abilities: Str 21, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 10

Skills: Bluff +9, Concentration +19, Listen +18, Knowledge (arcane) +10, Search +19, Sense Motive +9, Spellcraft +19, Spot +18

Feats: Alertness, Combat Casting, Cleave, Extend Spell, Hover, Power Attack

Challenge Rating: 9

Alignment: Chaotic evil

More example dragons are described later in this chapter.

COMBAT AGE ADVANCEMENT

Dragons in especially dangerous regions or those bred for war are stronger and more ferocious than average. Their bodies are massively muscled, not sinuous and swift like other dragons. The great intellect of dragon-kind glimmers in their reptilian eyes, but it is almost overwhelmed by animal fury and sheer hate. These dragons quickly give in to rages and frenzied attacks when in combat, disdaining magic or even ranged attacks in favour of biting and clawing and tearing and devouring the succulent flesh of enemies.

Combat Progression Shifts	
Progression	Shift
Strength	+4
Dexterity	+0
Constitution	+2
Intelligence	-2
Wisdom	-2
Charisma	-2
Magic	-2
Special Abilities	+0

Hit Dice: +3

Natural Armour Bonus: +3

Special: A dragon with two or more Combat age advancements counts as being one Size higher for the purposes of determining damage from its physical attacks. A Huge dragon usually inflicts 2d8 damage with a bite; a Huge combat dragon inflicts 4d6 damage with a bite.

Combat Dragon Concepts

- † A feral dragon that was orphaned after its parents were slain by hunters. Its mother placed a *contingency*-triggered *teleport* on the infant, transporting it into the remote jungles, where it has grown up without the influence of draconic civilisation or culture.
- † The armies of a great empire capture and train dragons to use as mounts and assault troops. These war-beasts are bred for strength and destructive power, nothing else. They rely on their rider for guidance, and are easily confused when forced to make their own decisions.
- † An elemental terror, awoken by an earthquake or magical experiment gone wrong. The creature is relatively unintelligent, but has great strength and especially devastating breath weapon. Unless the monster is stopped soon, it will crush the great city by the bay...

LEARNED AGE ADVANCEMENT

With their long lives and high intelligence, dragons make excellent sages. The wealth of many dragons is not counted in gold and gems, but in scrolls and secrets. These dragons spend most of their waking hours studying or researching, and often adopt mortal guide for years at a time (few libraries are large enough to allow a dragon to browse comfortably). Physically, they tend to be spindly and a little nervous, with keen, intelligent eyes. Learned dragons live in notably safe regions, or in disguise. Often, they are protected by their kin – the runt of clutch of eggs often becomes a learned dragon, relying on its parents for protection.

Learned Progression Shifts	
Progression	Shift
Strength	-4
Dexterity	+0
Constitution	-2
Intelligence	+4
Wisdom	+2
Charisma	+0
Magic	+0
Special Abilities	+0

Hit Dice: +3

Natural Armour Bonus: +3

Special: Dragons usually get 6 skill points per Hit Die, and always spend one point per Hit Die on Listen, Spot and Search. Learned Dragons get 8 points per Hit Dice gained during a Learned age advancement, and always spend at least one point per Hit Dice on Listen, Spot, Search and two Knowledge or Craft skills. Spellcasting dragons with an Intelligence of 12 or higher have the Spellcraft skill for free at one rank per Hit Die for free, but can also buy more ranks with skill points.

Learned Dragon Concepts:

An ancient and wise sage, the Seer of the Mountains has resided in a deep, mist-cloaked cave for centuries. It is said that that Seer knows almost all that there is to know, and can illuminate the most troublesome conundrums. However, the Seer will only speak to those cunning enough to answer its riddles.

† The songs of the dwarves tell, time and time again, of dragons stealing their wealth and their halls. When the dwarves built the mountain-city of Marzind, they had their revenge. Under the mountain is a maze of passageways and chambers that wind endlessly through the rock, filled with traps and puzzles. The dragons descended on Marzind, as they always do, and the dwarves of Marzind are ash on the wind of centuries. However, the dragons have not yet penetrated the central treasury of Marzind. Generations of dragons have been hatched in the narrow tunnels, growing thinner and more cunning with each egg-clutch. The wyrms that coil through Marzind are sickly beasts, but they understand traps and locks better than any rogue.

† The dragon Gelund is as greedy and rapacious as any of his kin, but he lusts after books, not gold. He raids libraries for tomes of lore and stalks wizards for their spellbooks. Of late, he has taken to murdering sages, stealing their book collections, and then manipulating the sage's customers into bringing him yet more books.

CHARISMATIC AGE ADVANCEMENT

The loquacious speech of the wyrm is a danger on a par with its fearsome jaws or destructive magic. Claws and bites can tear the body and spells can scar the mind, but a dragon's words cut deep into an enemy's soul. Warriors who were physically capable of slaying their foe have been defeated because the dragon was able to insidiously break down their confidence, playing on their doubts and weaknesses and fears until they could take no more, and were lost.

Charismatic Progression Shifts	
Progression	Shift
Strength	-2
Dexterity	+0
Constitution	-2
Intelligence	+0
Wisdom	+2
Charisma	+4
Magic	+0
Special Abilities	-1

Hit Dice: +3

Natural Armour Bonus: +3

Special: A dragon gains a +2 insight bonus to all Bluff, Diplomacy, Innuendo and Sense Motive checks for every Charismatic age advancement it has.

Charismatic Dragon Concepts

1. Once, the dragon Ylithis cut a swathe of fire and death across the kingdom. Heroes managed to defeat her, but instead of killing her, she was brought back to the capital city in chains. For fifty years, she has been kept in the king's gardens – first as a prisoner, then as a curiosity, then as a pet, and now – secretly – as an advisor. Ylithis' chains keep her from flying and powerful geases and wards keep her from spellcasting, but her influence has grown year by year, and now the king listens to her above all others.
2. The dragons of the Green Mountains live in uneasy alliance with the goblin tribes.

The goblins are terrified of the wyrms, but the dragons know that if the goblins ever united, they would be overwhelmed by sheer numbers. The most successful dragons, then, are those who can win the trust and loyalty of the goblin tribes and turn them against rival dragons.

3. The copper dragon Verdigriel is a notorious trickster and con artiste, who pits his wit against the most insightful and fearsome marks of all – other dragons. Using a combination of *alter self* spells and his own innate wit and charm, he pretends to be a chromatic dragon, usually a deceitful green, and worms his way into the confidence of the evil wyrms. Once he has learned all he can of their dark plans, he sows seeds of chaos and sabotage and flees.

ARCANE AGE ADVANCEMENT

Magic as it is practised today began with the dragons. The language of spells is based on the High Draconic tongue, and even untutored dragons quickly surpass the wizards of other races. Sorcery is born from the hot blood of dragons; it is their heritage and their birthright. In some dragons, the power of sorcery is especially strong. Their blood

does not merely crackle with magic, it burns with it. They hatch with a spell on their lips and trace runes in the sky with the course of their passage.

Arcane Progression Shifts	
Progression	Shift
Strength	-2
Dexterity	+0
Constitution	-2
Intelligence	+2
Wisdom	+0
Charisma	+0
Magic	+4
Special Abilities	-2

Hit Dice: +3

Natural Armour Bonus: +3

Special: Arcane dragons gain a bonus metamagic feat for every two Arcane age advancements. This feat is in addition to the extra feat that the dragon gains every four Hit Dice.



Arcane Dragon Concepts

- † The wizard's academy of the Speaking Tower chooses its archmage through a series of magical duels. Anyone can enter, regardless of race or the precise nature of their powers. The ambitious young dragon Amerlac is a natural master of sorcery, and intends to become the archmage of the tower and claim it as his lair.
- † The tribes of the scrublands on the border of the desert call her the Rainmother, while the serpent people curse her as the Death That Laughs. The golden dragon Rebomis speaks the very language of the clouds, and she knows many spells to command and alter the weather. In her wake, the desert blooms with green life.

- † The red dragon Falkis Rych was grievously wounded by her rival, the bronze dragon Atamond. Her wings were torn from her shoulders and her claws broken at the base. Atamond left Falkis Rych live not out of mercy, but because he wished to see her suffer for her crimes. Trapped in her empty lair for decades, left with nothing but her will and her desire for revenge, Falkis Rych's power over magic has grown strong. Now she flies on wings of magic, and she dreams of speaking the words of power that will blast Atamond from the sky.



SWIFT AGE ADVANCEMENT

Some dragons are especially quick and agile. They tear across the sky like thunderbolts, and the wind of their passing is like a hurricane. These dragons often serve as scouts and messengers for their kin, but their agility also makes them deadly fighters and harriers. Few prey are fast enough to escape a swift dragon, and few archers accurate enough to bring one down.

Swift Progression Shifts	
Progression	Shift
Strength	-2
Dexterity	+2
Constitution	+2
Intelligence	+0
Wisdom	-2
Charisma	+0
Magic	-1
Special Abilities	-1

Hit Dice: +3

Natural Armour Bonus: +3

Special: The dragon's manoeuvrability is improved by one step, to a maximum of good manoeuvrability, for every two Swift age advancements it has. (The order of manoeuvrability is *clumsy, poor, average, good, perfect*). Furthermore, the dragon's flight speed is increased by 25 feet.

Swift Dragon Concepts

† The Peregrin Wyrn Cavael has no home or lair. He rides the winds of the upper reaches of the sky, eternally travelling. He chases the star of the dawn; each morning, he sights his quarry on the horizon, but can never quite reach her before she slips away. Some say the star is his mate; others claim it is a jewel stolen from his hoard.

† A riding dragon, the swiftest in the stables of the emperor. This dragon is used by the king's heralds to deliver messages that cannot be trusted even to *teleportation*. *Message* spells may go astray and *teleports*

diverted by magic, but the dragon always get through on time.

† The white dragon known only as Gale possesses a unique gift – he can eat winds and air elementals, adding their power to his own. To catch the wind, Gale has learned to fly faster than any other dragon.

MYSTICAL AGE ADVANCEMENT

Dragons have a deep natural connection to magic and to the land. They are incarnations of power and wonder. They are living connections between the mundane, physical realm of blood and stone and earth and life, and the spiritual realm of magic and elemental energies. This connection manifests in the power of sorcery, in the changes the presence of a dragon brings to the land – and in the natural spell-like and supernatural abilities of the dragon race.

Mystical Progression Shifts	
Progression	Shift
Strength	-2
Dexterity	+0
Constitution	+0
Intelligence	+0
Wisdom	+2
Charisma	+0
Magic	-1
Special Abilities	+2

Hit Dice: +3

Natural Armour Bonus: +3

Special: A Mystical dragon gains access to one Clerical domain of its choice.

Mystical Dragon Concepts

† Attacarnis is known as the dreaming dragon. This brass dragon is sleeping, but the power of his spirit is so great, it warps the land around him to reflect his dreams. When Attacarnis has good dreams, the landscape is pleasant and fertile; when nightmares trouble him, monsters crawl out of the ground to ravage and destroy. The locals send their best bards

into Attacarnis' lair to sing lullabies to him in the hopes of giving him pleasant dreams.

† The black dragon Guthclus was once as evil and chaotic as the rest of his kin. After a long period of ravaging, eating people and melting things with acid, Guthclus sank into the swamp to rest. While he slept, a monastery was built above him. The chanting and mantras of the monks woke the dragon, but instead attacking him, he chose to listen. For a decade now, Guthclus has eavesdropped on the monks as they train, and has learned much. He has heard everything, from the first lessons taught to new initiates to the ultimate secrets of the order, which are whispered only by a master on his deathbed to his best student. The dragon is now deeply aware of his own nature and that of the universe. He is humble, contemplative, and even lawful. Of course, Guthclus is still evil, and once his mystic power has grown enough, he will claim the monastery as a lair and turn the monks into his minions.

† Lady Anabel D'estan is a minor noble, who has risen quickly in the ranks of the military. Despite being a lady of gentle birth, she has won several jousts, and seems likely to be the youngest member of the Kingsguard in history. In truth, D'estan is a very young bronze dragon, only thirteen years old. She has run away from her parents' lair to indulge her love of combat, and has learned to *polymorph* her self years before bronzes normally master that trick.

TOUGH AGE ADVANCEMENT

Some dragons cling to life with all the strength and determination of their kind. Survival is their only goal, and they will pay any cost to continue their existences. Their scales grow thicker and stronger with age, their hides tougher, their wills more focussed on survival above all else. Many of these dragons dwell in locations too foul or dangerous for other, weaker dragons to claim, such as elemental vortices, tainted lands, or entrances to the under-realms.

Tough Progression Shifts	
Progression	Shift
Strength	+0
Dexterity	+0
Constitution	+4
Intelligence	-2
Wisdom	+2
Charisma	-4
Magic	-2
Special Abilities	+0

Hit Dice: +3

Natural Armour Bonus: +4

Special: For every Tough age advancement, the dragon gets a +1 bonus to Spell Resistance.

Tough Dragon Concepts

† Endrach is a white dragon who lairs in a region heavily populated with other dragons. He was never the wisest or fiercest of his kind, and his lair and hoard have been usurped three times in as many centuries. Now, Endrach dwells in a cavern of razor-sharp rocks and hot-water geysers, an unpleasant place even for a dragon, and he is determined that no-one will ever drive him from his home again.

† The Stoneworm was once a green dragon who dared to lair in the ruins of a cult temple. The cultists worshipped a bizarre elemental spirit that was offended by the dragon's insolence. Now the dragon's scales are dark stone, faintly mottled with green marble veins. As more and more of the Stoneworm petrifies, the elemental spirit is able to control more and more of the dragon's actions. One day, the dragon will succumb to the relentless grinding march of stone and become a statue, and the spirit will have a new host body. The dragon's vitality and will are very strong, and that day will be long in coming – but stone is patient.

† A gold dragon keeps watch over a portal to the lower planes, sealed long ago by the heroism of a party of adventurers. The seal on the

portal is cracked and weathered by age, and unless the binding spells are renewed within moments of failing, it will fail. The dragon cannot allow itself a moment's distraction, not even to sleep. It stands sentinel, unmoving, an eternal guardian until relieved by death or the sacrifice of another.

DEVASTATING AGE ADVANCEMENT

The bards sing songs of dragonfire, but it is common knowledge that different types of dragon have different breath weapons. The common element to all dragons is not fire, it is destruction. Even in the heart of the most gentle and caring silver dragon, the insatiable desire to rise up and wreak havoc is always there, always calling, always sounding the trumpets of war and chaos. Most dragons resist it, or give into it only rarely. Dragons who take this age advancement are consumed by the desire for destruction, and it comes spilling out over their jaws and consumes the world.

Devastating Progression Shifts	
Progression	Shift
Strength	+0
Dexterity	+0
Constitution	+2
Intelligence	-2
Wisdom	+0
Charisma	+0
Magic	+0
Special Abilities	-2

Hit Dice: +3

Natural Armour Bonus: +3

Special: For every Devastating age advancement, the dragon gets one bonus Breath feat or adds 2 dice to its breath weapon damage (1 die for dragons with Poor breath, such as White and Brass dragons).

Devastating Dragon Concepts

† Just as the dragon-armies breed Combat dragons for war, and Swift dragons to scout and carry messengers, they breed Devastating dragons as living artillery for

use in sieges. A single breath from one of these smoking monsters can blast through a wall or incinerate a regiment.

† The brass dragon Isinth once snacked upon a fire demon. The creature's essence became lodged in the dragon's throat, and now Isinth must exhale the building flames every few minutes or explode. Isinth's snoring is quite literally infernal.

† Chendrish, known as the mad dragon, was cursed by a fae wizard. The dragon believes he is constantly surrounded by the most frightful enemies. Chendrish is wreathed in green gas, as he blasts the empty spaces around him with his breath weapon to drive off these phantasmal foes.

Dragons of Needless Complexity

The age advancement system does require the Games Master to go through several tables to work out what modifiers are applied to a dragon's ability scores. The Games Master has to take the shifts for each age advancement, then apply those to the normal progression for the dragon, and then look the resulting progression up on one of several other tables. A valid question is, why not just note the modifiers to the ability scores in the age advancement description (like a monster template does) and cut out all the other tables?

Firstly, dragons age and develop at different rates. A +2 shift usually equates to a +2 modifier to the ability score, but not always. The tables are derived from *Core Rulebook III*, and are not quite so linear. Secondly, describing age advancements as templates would not easily handle changes to the dragon's special abilities.

That said – to save time when applying age advancements, you can just use the shifts directly, as modifiers to the dragon's ability scores. Ignore negative shifts, as ability scores never decrease when a dragon ages. Magic and special ability progression should be determined as normal. This system will generate slightly higher ability scores, so be careful when pitting dragons aged using this method against the player characters. It does work perfectly well for quickly adding some variation to a wandering dragon.

SAMPLE DRAGONS

The following dragons are examples of how variant age advancements can be used to create memorable and appropriate dragons without adding class levels. Each dragon includes a few notes on background, to show how a dragon's history can be reflected in the age advancements used.

Sklaroth the Destroyer Old Red Dragon

Background: The terror known as Sklaroth hatched half a millennium ago, in the ashen husk of a dormant volcano. His hatching was marked by dire portents, including gouts of black smoke from the volcano crater, an eclipse of the sun, and the shattering of seven swords as they were quenched by dwarven master-smiths. The dwarf-kingdoms knew that some terrible danger was coming and prepared for the onslaught, forging new weapons and sending out their best knights to seek out and destroy the prophesied threat.

Sklaroth devoured his siblings when he was a wyrmling. His mother encountered several of the dwarven knights and was severely wounded. When she crawled back to their lair, bleeding from a hundred injuries, Sklaroth attacked her mercilessly and slew her. Soon, he grew large enough to wage war on the dwarves. Where other dragons use cunning and guile, Sklaroth was driven entirely by rage. He cared little for their treasures, and was willing to bring the mountain down on top of the dwarves, burying them with their gold. For two decades, he brought fire and destruction to the dwarven kingdoms.

Then, Sklaroth perched atop the highest peak, and demanded that the dwarves give him tribute. Exhausted by years of war, the dwarves sent six caravans loaded with gold to Sklaroth's lair. What the dragon did not realise was that the dwarven rune-smiths had woven a binding spell into the tribute. When Sklaroth lay down on his new hoard, the spell caught him and trapped him. For two hundred years, the spell has held him – but the heat of the dragon's body is melting the gold beneath him, and soon the runes will be too distorted to hold the spell.



Advancements: Sklaroth is quite literally a combat monster – he uses the Combat age advancement from wyrmling on.

Sklaroth

Gargantuan Dragon (fire)

Hit Dice: 28d12+280 (462 hp)

Initiative: +0

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

AC: 33 (-4 size, +27 natural), touch 6, flat-footed 33

Base Attack Bonus/Grapple: +28/+57

Attack: Bite +43 melee (4d8+17)

Full Attack: Bite +43 melee (4d8+17), 2 claws +41 melee (4d6+8)

Space/Reach: 20 ft. x 40 ft / 15 ft.

Special Attacks: Breath weapon (16d10), spells (Caster level 7th)

Special Qualities: Damage resistance 10/+1, locate object, suggestion, spell resistance 24, frightful presence

Saves: Fort +26, Ref +16, Will +19

Abilities: Str 45, Dex 10, Con 31, Int 16, Wis 17, Cha 16

Skills: Bluff +17, Listen+30, Intimidate +30, Jump +47, Spot +30, Search +30, Sense Motive +17, Survival +30

Feats: Hover, Snatch, Multiattack, Quintilateral Rend, Flyby Attack, Power Attack.

Challenge Rating: 19

Alignment: Chaotic evil

Cyelvic

Adult Green Dragon

Background: Cyelvic dwells in a faery forest dominated by fey giants. The huge creatures build log cabins out of huge trees, cutting them down with flint axes. Despite their great strength and powerful magic, the giants are very foolish. The fey king dispatched a tribe of pixes to guide the giants. The sprites whispered good advice from amid the leaves, keeping the giants out of trouble.

When Cyelvic was a young dragon, she encountered one of the pixies. The dragon questioned the fey, and learned its purpose before making it into a tasty snack. Soon, a new voice spoke from amid the leaves. Hidden in the treetops, Cyelvic coiled around the branches and whispered advice to the giants. This advice was quite different to the previous advice the giants had heard. For one thing, the sprites never told the giants to raid the surrounding towns and conquer the kingdom.

Since then, Cyelvic has hunted down almost all the sprites, who are the one danger to her control over the giants. The few surviving sprites fight a guerrilla war of words with the dragon, sabotaging her conquests by giving the dumb giants conflicting orders. Cyelvic has turned to magic to find the sprites, and is *scrying* for them regularly. Two sprites have managed to convince one of the giants to leave the enchanted forest,

and the trio are in search of a hero able to defeat the dragon.

Advancements: Cyelvic uses normal advancement until she is Very Young, then takes two Charismatic and two Arcane advancements.

Huge Dragon

Hit Dice: 20d12+60 (190 hp)

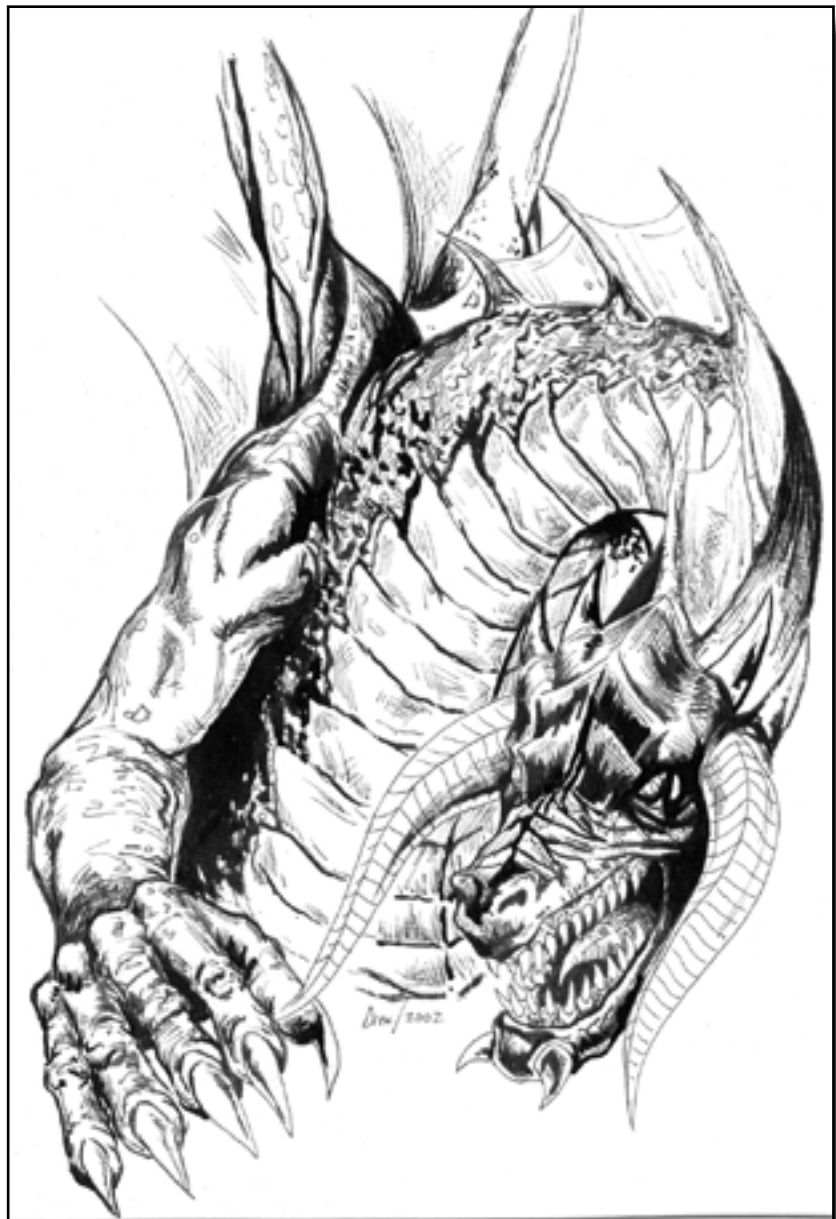
Initiative: +0

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

Armour Class: 27 (-2 size, +19 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 27

Base Attack Bonus/Grapple: +20/+32

Attack: Bite +31 melee (2d8+6)



Full Attack: Bite +31 melee (2d8+6), claws +26 melee (2d6+3)

Space/Reach: 10 ft. x 20 ft / 10 ft.

Special Attacks: Breath weapon (12d6), spells (Caster level 5th)

Special Qualities: Damage resistance 5/+1, acid immunity, water breathing, spell resistance 21, frightful presence

Saves: Fort +15, Ref +12, Will +15

Abilities: Str 23, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 16, Wis 17, Cha 18

Skills: Bluff +30, Diplomacy +30, Listen +23, Sense Motive +27, Hide +17, Spellcraft +23, Spot +23, Search +23

Feats: Beguiling Voice, Army, Silent Spell, Negotiator, Snatch

Challenge Rating: 12

Alignment: Chaotic evil



Blind Ijin

Juvenile Black Dragon

Background: The acid-etched armour of the deep dwarves is famed throughout the caverns below the world. Every plate of the armour is decorated with the finest, most beautiful etchings made by pouring tiny droplets of potent acid onto the steel. These etchings are not merely decorative – they are so fine that the dwarves can add far more runes to the surface than other techniques would allow.

The secret of the technique lies in the acid that is used. The dwarves captured an infant black dragon, and keep it chained in a chamber beneath their forges. The dragon has spent its whole life in darkness lit only by forge-light reflected off steel. The dwarves regularly ‘milk’ the dragon’s acid, collecting it in basins of crystal. Ijin is rewarded for producing more and stronger acid, so his breath weapon is far more destructive than that of other dragons of the same age. However, decades in the darkness have weakened Ijin’s mind and driven him mad.

Advancements: Ijin has three Devastating advancements.

Blind Ijin

Medium Dragon

Hit Dice: 13d12+60 (190 hp)

Initiative: +0

Speed: 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor), swim 40 ft

AC: 22 (+12 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 22

Base Attack Bonus/Grapple: +13/+16

Attack: Bite +19 melee (1d8+3)

Full Attack: Bite +19 melee (1d8+3), claws +14 melee (1d6+1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. x 5 ft / 5 ft.

Special Attacks: Breath weapon (14d4)

Special Qualities: Damage resistance 5/+1, acid immunity, water breathing

Saves: Fort +11, Ref +8, Will +8

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 10

Skills: Listen +16, Move Silently +15, Spot +16, Search +15, Survival +15

Feats: Quick Breath, Lingering Breath, Maximised Breath

Challenge Rating: 6

Alignment: Chaotic evil

Satalice the Golden

Mature Adult Gold Dragon

Background: The shining form of Satalice the Golden is a welcome sight in many cities and towns across the world. Most metallic dragons either hide themselves away from the lesser races, or else interact only behind the mask of a *polymorph* spell or other disguise. Satalice believes first and foremost in truth and honesty. She is incapable of lying in

any fashion, and cannot even change her shape to deceive others as dragons do.

Satalice flies from city to city, bringing joy and hope to the common folk. When a disaster strikes or evil rises, the Golden soon arrives. The 'Light of the Golden' drives back the darkness for the good of all. Satalice is allied with numerous good-aligned colleges of wizardry and religious orders, and can quickly assemble a force of heroes to deal with almost any challenge. Even races that are traditionally rivals, like some clans of elves and dwarves, are willing to work together under Satalice's wings.

It is her honesty that may be Satalice's downfall. Evil forces are well aware of the damage the dragon has done to their plans, and have devised a counter-scheme. The red dragon Demaros is observing Satalice through magic. Soon, she will have learned enough to disguise herself perfectly as the Golden. As everyone knows the Golden cannot lie, no-one will think to suspect the false Golden of being evil. Demaros' treachery may undo all the good Satalice has done unless she is uncovered and defeated.

Advancements: Satalice takes two Swift advancements, two Learned, and two Charismatic advancements.

Satalice the Golden

Huge Dragon (fire)

Hit Dice: 29d12+60 (190 hp)

Initiative: +2 (dex)

Speed: 60 ft., fly 250 ft. (average), swim 60 ft.

Armour Class: 25 (-2 size, +25 natural, +2 Dex), touch 10, flat-footed 23

Base Attack Bonus/Grapple: +29/+47

Attack: Bite +34 melee (2d8+10)

Full Attack: Bite +34 melee (2d8+10), claws +29 melee (2d6+5)

Space/Reach: 10 ft. x 20 ft/10 ft.



Special Attacks: Breath weapon (14d10), spells (Caster level 8)

Special Qualities: Damage resistance 10/+1, water breathing, bless, luck bonus

Saves: Fort +23, Ref +17, Will +21

Abilities: Str 31, Dex 14, Con 27, Int 22, Wis 23, Cha 20

Skills: Concentration +37, Listen +35, Diplomacy +34, Escape Artist +31, Gather Information +34, Jump +39, Knowledge (History), Knowledge (politics) +35, Scry +35, Sense Motive +35, Spellcraft +35, Spot +35, Search +35, Survival +35

Feats: Counterbreath, Hover, Wingover, Beguiling Voice, Quick Breath, Network

Challenge Rating: 18

Alignment: Lawful good

DRAGON FEATS

Dragons exhibit a vast array of physical quirks, from acidic blood and vicious horns to new forms of breath weapon. Dragons gain one feat as a hatchling, and gain another feat for every four hit dice they possess. Different age advancements or classes also give extra feats, and some dragon sub-species also have racial feats.

The feats are divided into Breath Feats, Physical Feats, and General Feats.

BREATH FEATS

Breath feats can be taken by any creature with a breath weapon. Some breath feats draw deeply on the dragon's internal energy reserves, forcing it to wait for longer before breathing again. This is referred to as a Breath Delay. A dragon must normally wait 1d4 rounds between breathing; a breath weapon that adds two rounds to the time between breaths means that the dragon must wait 1d4+2 rounds before breathing again. A creature that usually has no delay between breathing must wait 2 rounds. A creature does not have to employ a feat if it does not wish to.

Damaging Breath feats apply only to breath weapons that directly inflict hit point or ability damage or negative levels.

Accurate Breath (Breath)

The dragon's breath weapon is more difficult to dodge than average. By catching enemies in the centre of its breath, or attacking when they have no cover or room to dodge, it ensures that they feel the full brunt of its wrath.

Benefit: The DC for the Reflex save to take half damage is increased by 2.

Normal: The DC for the Reflex save is 10+ half the dragon's Hit Dice + the dragon's Constitution modifier.

Precise Breath (Breath)

The dragon can focus and precisely aim its breath weapon to target a single individual.

Prerequisites: Accurate Breath.

Benefit: The dragon may target a single 5 foot by 5 foot square within breath weapon range. That square

alone is struck by its breath weapon attack. Any creatures in that square take damage as normal.

Normal: Breath weapons damage everyone within their area of effect.

Quick Breath (Breath)

Gurgling noises and hissing jets of smoke signal the return of the dragon's breath.

Benefit: The delay between breath weapon attacks is reduced by one round.

Normal: After a breath attack, a dragon must wait 1d4 rounds before breathing again.

Improved Quick Breath (Breath)

The dragon launches blast after blast in quick succession.

Prerequisites: Quick Breath.

Benefit: The added delay between breath weapon attacks caused by some breath feats is halved. For example, if a dragon would normally have to wait 1d4+4 rounds before breathing again, this feat reduces the delay to 1d4+2. The reduced delay granted by the Quick Breath feat is applied after that granted by Improved Quick Breath.

Spell Weave (Breath)

The thunderous roar of the dragon as it breathes contains certain arcane phrases. Those struck by the breath weapon are also affected by a spell.

Prerequisites: Still Spell.

Benefit: The dragon can weave a spell into its breath weapon. The spell must be cast as the breath weapon is used, so the casting time for the spell cannot be anything other than 1 action. The spell affects its normal number of targets, but is limited to targets struck by the breath weapon. For example, a spell that affects only one person still only affects one person, and that person must be struck by the breath weapon. A spell that affects all creatures within 30 feet now only affects creatures within 30 feet and within the breath weapon's area of effect. If the spell allows a Reflex save, this save is subsumed into the normal save to avoid the breath weapon. For spells allowing Fortitude or Will saves, the character may make a Reflex save to take half damage from the breath *and* avoid the spell, and then, if the Reflex save failed, the appropriate save to resist the effects of the spell.

Using Spell Weave adds a breath delay of one round per level of the spell.

Normal: A dragon cannot cast a spell and breathe at the same time.

Improved Spell Weave (Breath, Metamagic)

The dragon channels the full energy of the spell through its breath weapon.

Prerequisites: Improved Spell Weave.

Benefit: When using Spell Weave, the area of effect of the spell is changed to be identical to that of the breath weapon. For example, if the spell normally affects a single individual, this feat causes the spell to affect everyone struck by the breath weapon. As with Spell Weave, characters who succeed in the Reflex save avoid the affects of the woven spell entirely.

A spell affected by Improved Spell Weave uses up a spell slot three levels higher than the spell's actual level, and using the feat adds a breath delay of three rounds.

Lingering Breath (Damaging Breath)

The dragon's breath sticks its victims and continues to do damage.

Benefit: Any creatures struck by the dragon's breath weapon are covered with a residue from the attack – sticky, burning jelly for fire attacks, a rime of thick frost for cold attacks, tingling bolts and sparks for electricity, etc. Those affected suffer one-fifth of the damage from the original breath in each successive round – for example, if a breath attack inflicted 100 damage, the lingering breath inflicts 20 damage per round afterwards. Characters can attempt to remove the lingering breath as if it were alchemist's fire (see *Core Rulebook I*). The damage from the lingering breath is of the same type as the original breath weapon.

Using lingering breath adds a breath delay of two rounds.

Aftermath (Damaging Breath)

The area blasted by the dragon's breath continues to suffer.

Prerequisites: Lingering Breath.

Benefit: Everything within the area of effect of the breath weapon is affected by a spell effect that lasts for one round per age category of the dragon. The spell effect varies depending on the type of breath weapon. For the purposes of saving throws or

dispelling, treat these spell effects as if they were cast by a cleric or sorcerer of a level equal to the dragon's Hit Dice.

After a fire attack, any metal objects are affected by a *heat metal* spell.

After an acid attack, a *stinking cloud* lingers, caused by the fumes from the acid.

After an electricity attack, the static charge causes a *daze* spell to strike any creature who touches any metal object.

After a cold attack, the whole area of effect is covered in a coating of ice, which functions like a *grease* spell.

For other breath weapons, the effect is similar to that of a spell of no higher than third level.

Furthermore, the ground within the area of effect is burnt and blighted, and will never again bring forth any sort of plants.

Extended Breath (Breath)

The dragon rears back its neck and strikes a distant target with its breath weapon.

Benefit: The length of a dragon's breath weapon increases by 60 feet (for lines) and 30 feet (for cones).

Using this feat adds a breath delay of one round.

Normal: The area of effect of a breath weapon is determined by the dragon's size.

Special: A cone is as high and wide as its length, so taking this feat enlarges the height and width of the cone weapon. A dragon may take this feat multiple times.

Maximised Breath (Breath)

The entirety of the dragon's massive body seems to brace itself against the torrent of devastating energy that erupts from its jaws.

Benefit: The damage from the dragon's breath weapon is maximised – all variable, numeric effects are set to their fullest amount. For example, a breath weapon that does 10d6 points of damage automatically inflicts 60 points of damage when maximised.

Using this feat adds a breath delay of five rounds.

Penetrating Breath (Damaging Breath)

Steel melts and stone shatters when blasted by the dragon's breath.

Benefit: The dragon's breath weapon is unaffected by the hardness of materials. Damage to objects is not reduced by the object's hardness. Objects still take half or quarter damage from most energy attacks (see *Core Rulebook I*).

Using Penetrating Breath adds a breath delay of one round.

Normal: Objects take half or quarter damage from most energy attacks, then subtract their hardness from the remaining damage.

Special: A dragon with both the Penetrating Breath and Precise Breath feats can use its breath to strike at a weapon or shield held by an enemy. The dragon must make a ranged touch attack on the enemy to do this.

Counterbreath (Damaging Breath)

Just before the dragon is struck by an attack, it launches a blast from its jaws, deflecting the attack.

Benefit: If the dragon is targeted by an energy attack (such as a *fireball*, or another dragon's breath weapon) that permits a Reflex save, and has a use of its own breath weapon available, it can use its own breath weapon as a defensive measure.

The dragon breathes on the incoming energy attack instead of making a Reflex save. The damage from the energy attack is reduced by half the damage from the dragon's breath weapon. If any damage from the energy attack is left over, the dragon suffers this damage. If any damage from the breath weapon is left over, apply it as if the dragon had breathed in the direction the energy attack came from.

For example, a 5th level wizard casts a 5d6 *lightning bolt* at a young red dragon. The red dragon uses Counterbreath. Both the wizard and the dragon roll damage – the *lightning bolt* would inflict 25 damage, while the breath weapon inflicts 40 damage. The breath damage is halved to 20, and subtracted from the *lightning bolt* damage, leaving 5 damage left over. The dragon takes 5 damage from the *lightning bolt*, and cannot save for half.

If the dragon's breath had inflicted 60 damage, it would have entirely overcome the fireball and struck everyone within the area of effect of its breath weapon with 5 points of fire damage (60 damage

halved is 30, minus the 25 points of *lightning bolt* damage, leaving 5).

Sustained Breath (Breath)

With a tremendous effort, the dragon maintains its breath weapon for much, much longer than normal. The fiery blast continues to pour from its jaws until the dragon chooses to cease its attack.

Benefit: The dragon can sustain its breath weapon from round to round. Every round on the dragon's action, before breath damage is applied, all creatures caught within the area of effect may make the usual Reflex save to avoid the breath. The first time the character successfully saves, the damage from the breath weapon is halved. The second time the character saves, he takes no further damage from the breath. Characters may continue to make saves and take damage in each successive round. Those with the evasion ability need make only one successful save to avoid all the damage.

The dragon cannot move, cast spells or attack while sustaining its breath.

Using Sustained Breath adds a breath delay equal to one round per round of Sustained Breath.

Normal: A dragon's breath attack lasts one action, so even characters who fail the Reflex save will not take damage from the breath weapon in later rounds.

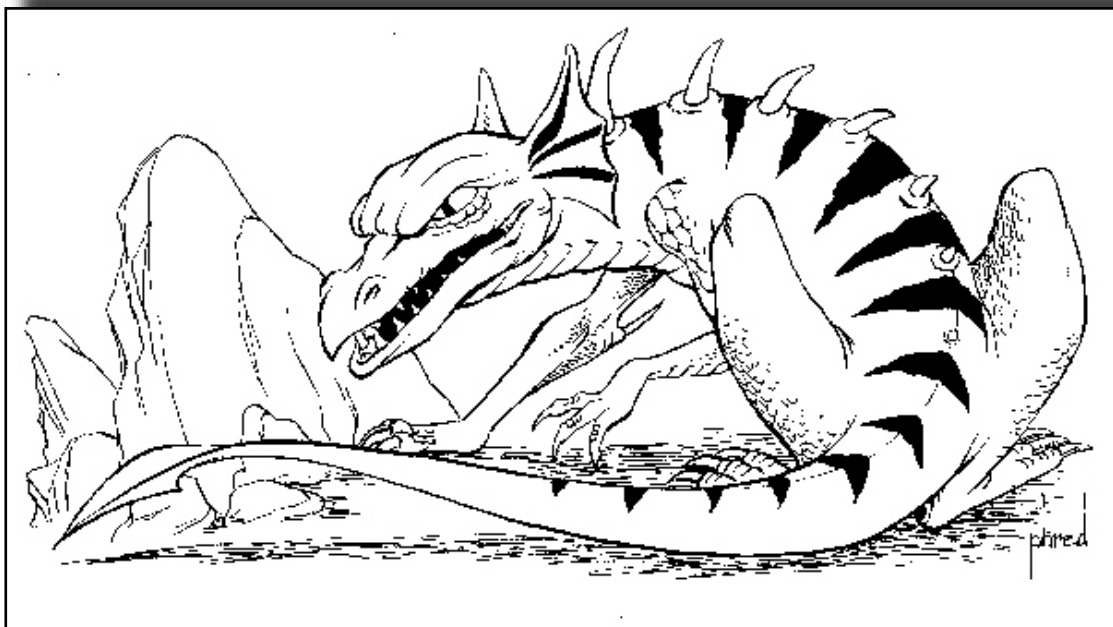
Pulsed Breath (Damaging Breath)

The dragon can use its breath weapon to fire several small blasts instead of one large one.

Prerequisites: Sustained Breath.

Benefit: The dragon may use its breath weapon up to four times in one round. The damage from each breath weapon is only a fraction of normal, as follows:

Pulsed Breath Weapon	
Number of Breath Weapon Attacks	Damage per Breath
1	Normal
2	One-third normal
3	One-quarter normal
4	One-fifth normal



The dragon can fire all of these breath weapons at the same target, or in different directions.

Using a pulsed breath weapon adds a breath delay of three rounds.

Special: A dragon can apply different breath weapon feats to each pulsed breath, or apply the feats to the breath as a whole.

Strafe (Breath)

The dragon inclines its head and breathes down as it flies, causing destruction and death in its wake.

Prerequisites: Sustained Breath.

Benefit: The dragon may only Strafe when making a normal flying move. Its breath weapon's area of effect is multiplied by its flight speed. For example, a line effect normally affects an area 5' by 5' by the length of the line. Using Strafe, the line effect strikes an area 5' by the dragon's movement by the length of the line.

Similarly, a cone effect using Strafe fills an area with height and width equal to the normal length of the line, and a length equal to the dragon's movement. Basically, it keeps breathing straight down as it flies.

Using Strafe adds a breath delay of one round.

Spit Breath (Breath)

Whipping its head around, the dragon spits a tiny clot of elemental forces. When this clot impacts on a solid object, it explodes.

Prerequisites: Accurate Breath, Extended Breath.

Benefit: Instead of making a normal breath weapon attack, the dragon may spit at a target. The maximum range of the spit in feet is equal to 50 times the dragon's age category (plus any extra range from Extended Breath feats). The spit is a grenade-like weapon.

When the spit lands, it creates a breath weapon burst attack with a radius equal to half the length of the dragon's breath weapon. This burst is otherwise identical to the dragon's normal breath weapon.

Using Spit Breath adds a breath delay of three rounds.

Arcing Breath (Breath)

The blue dragon's breath crackles and leaps from one target to another, leaving scorched corpses twitching as it passes.

Prerequisite: Line shaped breath weapon.

Benefit: The dragon's breath weapon behaves like a *chain lightning* spell. After striking its first target, the breath weapon can arc to as many secondary targets as the dragon's age category plus its caster level. Each secondary target takes half the number of dice of damage as the first target, and must be within 30 feet of the initial target.

Normal: The dragon's breath is a straight line, but everyone struck by it takes the full amount of damage.

Searing Breath (Damaging Breath)

The dragon's breath weapon burns through walls and magical defences with terrifying quickness.

Prerequisite: Penetrating Breath

Benefit: Damage from the breath weapon is increased by half again for the purposes of destroying magical walls and protective effects that absorb a certain amount of elemental damage, such as *endure elements*.

Build Breath (Damaging Breath)

The dragon coughs and chokes, as if something is caught in its throat. A terrible energy blast slowly gathers within the dragon until it is ready to lay waste to its surrounding.

Benefit: The dragon may choose to build its breath instead of using a breath weapon. For every round in which the dragon could have used its breath weapon, but did not, the damage for its next breath weapon attack increases by one die of the appropriate type. The dragon may not speak, cast spells, bite or otherwise open its mouth while building its breath. A dragon may build its breath for a maximum number of rounds equal to its Constitution modifier.

PHYSICAL FEATS

Physical feats are abilities based on the anatomy or innate magical qualities of the dragon. Dragons cannot acquire new physical feats after they reach the age of Young Adult.

Horns (Physical)

The dragon has a pair of magnificent horns rising from the rear of its skull, or a single wickedly sharp horn at the end of its snout.

Benefit: The dragon may make a special gore attack as a full-attack action. This attack uses the same dice for damage as the dragon's bite attack, but adds twice the dragon's Strength bonus to the damage.

Special: Dragons with this feat can inflict a great deal of damage on structures such as castle gates, towers, or city walls.

Acidic Blood (Physical)

The dragon's hot blood is charged with its elemental nature. Its wounds smoke and its wounds leave trails of molten devastation.

Benefit: Anyone who injures the dragon with a melee attack must immediately make a Reflex save (DC15) or take 2 dice of damage (the type of die is that used for the dragon's breath weapon – d4s

for white dragons, d10s for red dragons, etc). The type of damage is the same as the dragon's breath weapon if it is of an elemental type (fire, cold) etc or else is acidic.

Special: Attempts to track a wounded dragon that has the Acidic Blood feat have a +4 circumstance bonus.

Wingshield (Physical)

The dragon wraps its wings around itself, shielding its head and upper body from attack.

Prerequisites: Dragon must be winged.

Benefit: The dragon gains a +2 natural armour bonus to its armour class and Fortitude saving throws, as well as saves against gaze attacks. While protected by its wings, the dragon cannot fly (except by using magic).

Tail Spikes (Physical)

The dragon's tail is tipped with wickedly serrated spikes or a heavy bone bludgeon.

Prerequisites: Dragon must have a tail.

Benefit: The dragon's tail slap damage is increased by 2d6. The dragon may also now make a snatch attack with its tail on creatures three or more sizes smaller. The dragon cannot squeeze, but can hold or fling snatched enemies.

Special: If the dragon is large enough to have a tail sweep attack, the damage from this is also increased by 2d6.

Beguiling Voice (Physical)

The dragon's voice rumbles like an earthquake, but is also as musical and sweet as a honeyed harp. Its words are so eloquent and charming that the dragon could even make the last simile used seem poetic.

Benefit: If the dragon fails a Bluff or Diplomacy check, it can use its beguiling voice to succeed instead. The dragon is considered to have rolled exactly enough to just match the Difficulty Class of the check. For example, if the dragon has a Diplomacy skill of +10, and was attempting to make a DC 25 Diplomacy check, this feat would ensure that the dragon rolls at least a 15.

However, there are two drawbacks to this feat. Firstly, the dragon suffers a circumstance penalty to its next Bluff or Diplomacy check equal to the change required to succeed in the previous check. Going back to the example where the dragon needs a result of 15 to succeed, if it rolled a 5, this feat would increase the die result by 10 and impose a

–10 circumstance penalty. The dragon can continue to use this feat to succeed, acquiring bigger and bigger penalties, until the end of the conversation. Penalties accrued through this feat do not last after the end of a conversation.

The second drawback is that those beguiled by the dragon’s voice may be able to shake off its enchantment. After the conversation, characters are permitted to make a Wisdom check to see through the dragon’s lies. The DC for this Wisdom check is 20 minus the last circumstance penalty imposed by the feat. For example, if the dragon succeeded in making a Bluff check using this feat and ended with a circumstance penalty of –10, the DC to see through the lies is a 10 (initially at 20, -10 for the circumstance penalty).

Inner Fire (Physical)

When the dragon opens its jaws to speak – or bite – its mouth and throat are clearly illuminated by roaring flames deep within its chest. Waves of heat emanate from the dragon, making proximity to the beast painful or even lethal to lesser creatures.

Benefit: Anyone close to the dragon takes a certain amount of damage. The type of damage is the same as the dragon’s breath weapon (or fire damage for dragons without damaging breath weapons). The range and damage depend on the dragon’s age category.

Inner Fire Damage		
Age	Range	Damage
Wyrmling	2 ft.	1d4
Very Young	4 ft.	1d4
Young	6 ft.	1d4
Juvenile	8 ft.	1d4
Young Adult	10 ft.	1d6
Adult	12 ft.	1d6
Mature Adult	14 ft.	1d6
Old	16 ft.	1d8
Very Old	18 ft.	1d8
Ancient	20 ft.	1d10
Wyrm	22 ft.	1d10
Great Wyrm	24 ft.	1d12
Draco Invictus	26 ft.	1d12

Regeneration of the Worm (Physical)

The dragon, when cleaved in two, begins to knit itself back together. Black tendrils of gore and animated droplets of blood drag chunks of dragonmeat back together.

Prerequisite: Endurance, Great Fortitude.

Benefit: If the dragon is reduced below –10 hit points, it begins to regenerate at a rate of hit points per round equal to its age category until it is fully healed. This regeneration ability stops happening when the dragon reaches full hit points.

If acid or fire is applied to the dragon’s body (assuming it is not immune to the attack used), or the major chunks of the carcass are divided (requiring a Strength check at a DC equal to the dragon’s age category multiplied by 5) before the dragon reaches a positive hit point total, the regeneration ceases.

Special: The dragon is also immune to *vornal* effects.

Natural Saddle (Physical)

A small hollow in the dragon’s back, just forward of its wings, provides a comfortable and secure position for a rider.

Benefit: The natural saddle holds one Small or Medium character. That character gains a +4 circumstance bonus to any Ride checks, and also gains the benefits of a military saddle.

Special: As the dragon grows, more natural saddles form along its back. A Large dragon has one saddle, a Huge dragon has two saddles, a Gargantuan dragon has four and a Colossal dragon has eight.

Secondary Fire Gland (Physical)

After breathing, the sides of the dragon’s neck throb and bulge, and a new breath weapon attack builds quickly.

Benefit: The dragon can reduce the delay between breath weapon attacks by one round, i.e. 1d4-1 rounds. If the dragon uses this feat, it inflicts 2d10 points of damage on itself.

Normal: It takes 1d4 rounds for a dragon to restore its breath weapon after breathing.

Special: A dragon can take both Secondary Fire Gland and Quick Breath.

Spines (Physical)

Sharp bony spikes grow all along the dragon’s vertebrae, sprouting from its spine and tail.

Benefit: Anyone grappling with or climbing on the dragon automatically takes 1d4 damage plus half the dragon's Strength bonus. The dragon may also add this damage to a tail slap or tail sweep.

Wing Spurs (Physical)

Although most winged dragons have small claws at the tips of their bat-like wings, these claws are too weak to be put to use. Some dragons have unusually large and sharp claws on their wings, which make lethal and unexpected weapons.

Prerequisites: Dragon must be winged.

Benefit: The dragon's wing buffets inflict the same damage as the dragon's claw attacks.

Sinuus Neck (Physical)

The dragon's snake-like neck is flexible and fast. Flicker-quick, it lashes out and looses a blast from its breath weapon at an unexpected angle.

Benefit: The dragon's breath can originate from any point within its Reach, and can be fired in any direction. This allows the dragon to fire a line breath across its width and other such special attacks.

Normal: The dragon's breath weapon begins at the dragon's mouth, which is at the centre of the dragon's area.

GENERAL FEATS

These feats can be taken by a dragon at any age.

Improved Fling

The dragon can throw enemies that it has snatched with devastating force and accuracy.

Prerequisites: Snatch.

Benefit: The dragon can fling enemies at, well, other enemies. The dragon must make a ranged touch attack to hit with this attack; if successful, both characters take 1d8 points of damage per age category of the dragon. The range of this attack is 10' per age category. The target may make a Reflex save (DC15) to take half damage – the projectile has no such hope of evasion.

Normal: The dragon can fling enemies, but only inflicts 1d6 damage per age category and may not use enemies as projectiles.

Special: A dragon with Improved Fling can double the range of this attack if he does not make a tail slap or tail sweep attack this round.

Quintilateral Rend

In this vicious and lethal attack, the dragon grips an enemy in its mouth, digs its fore- and hind-claws into the victim's limbs, then tears the victim asunder in five directions simultaneously.

Prerequisites: Glide or Hover, Snatch, Multiattack.

Benefit: The dragon must have snatched an enemy up, and be flying to use this attack. The dragon must succeed with four claw attacks on the snatched enemy. If all four claw attacks hit, the victim must make a Fortitude save against a DC of 10 plus the total damage from the claw attacks or die. Quintilateral Rend counts as a coup de grace action.

Special: A dragon must be able to use all four claws to make this attack, so it must be gliding, hovering, or otherwise flying.

Fiery Glory

Perched atop the mountain, the dragon glories in the devastation it has wrought. Smoke wreathes it like the laurels of a victor, the dragonfire is a beacon to scavengers and carrion eaters. In this moment, the dragon is supreme and unassailable, a living god of terror and devastation.

Prerequisite: Frightful Presence.

Benefit: By demonstrating the sheer power of its breath weapon, the dragon inspires new, previously unsuspected, depths of terror. The dragon fires its breath into the air, or on a building, tree or other unliving target. For the next 1d4 rounds, the DC to resist the dragon's Frightful Presence is increased to half the damage inflicted by the breath weapon (if this is higher than the normal Will save DC).

Dragonfear

The mere shadow of the dragon provokes unreasoning fear in all those it falls upon.

Prerequisite: Frightful Presence.

Benefit: The DC for the Will save to resist the dragon's Frightful Presence is increased by 2.

Special: A dragon may take this feat multiple times.

Earthquake Purr

When lying on the ground or atop its hoard, the dragon can purr like a huge reptilian cat. This sets small stones to dancing and sends queasy shivers up and down the spines of all within range. It becomes intensely difficult to concentrate in the vicinity of the dragon.

Benefit: Anyone within a radius of 15 feet multiplied by the dragon's age category suffers a -2 morale penalty to all Bluff, Concentration, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Handle Animal, Intimidation, Knowledge, Listen, Perform or Sense Motive checks.

Glide

Spreading its wide wings, the dragon drifts along, suspended on the winds.

Prerequisites: Dragon must be winged.

Benefit: The dragon can glide at half its normal flying speed. While gliding, the dragon can make four claw attacks, a bite and a tail attack in the same round, or perform full-round actions while on the wing. A dragon can even sleep while gliding, so the dragon can stay aloft for days on end.

Rider Empathy

The dragon and its rider share a psychic bond. In combat, they move as one.

Prerequisite: Natural Saddle.

Benefit: Any creature mounted in a natural saddle on the dragon can communicate telepathically with the dragon. In addition to allowing silent communication between the two, the added unconscious co-ordination made possible by the bond allows either member of the pair to use each other's Reflex or Will saving throw bonuses.

Special: If a dragon has multiple Natural Saddles, it can communicate with all its riders, but can only share saving throws with a single rider.

Craft Scale

The dragon can create magical scales.

Prerequisite: Caster level 3rd.

Benefit: The dragon can make magical scales. These function like wondrous items – see *Core Rulebook I* and *II* for details on the Craft Wondrous Item feat and item creation.

ORGANISATION FEATS

The effect of these feats is detailed in *Servants of the Dragon* (page 23).

Dominion

The dragon rules over the land with an iron claw.

Benefit: The dragon controls a dominion.

Special: A dragon may take this feat more than once.

Network

A legion of spies and assassins watch from the shadows and report to the dragon.

Benefit: The dragon controls a network.

Special: A dragon may take this feat more than once.

Fiefdom

The dragon has carved out a kingdom for itself.

Benefit: The dragon controls a fiefdom.

Special: A dragon may take this feat more than once.

Army

A host of soldiers follow the dragon's banner.

Benefit: The dragon controls an army.

Special: A dragon may take this feat more than once.

Cult

The dragon is worshipped as a god.

Benefit: The dragon controls a cult.

Special: A dragon may take this feat more than once.

DRAGON DESIGN

Dragons are very different to any other creature in d20-based games. They have their own unique monster type and a set of special rules (even before adding in all the optional rules contained in this book). They are the only creature type, other than the player character races, to have specific age categories with distinct game effects. Players may talk about encountering ‘an ogre’ or ‘an aboleth’ in a game, but they refer to dragons by colour, age category, and (if the Games Master is doing a good job) by name in hushed and fearful tones.

This system is only used for designing true dragons, the fearsome monsters that get more and more powerful as they pass through a series of age categories. For dragonkin such as wyverns, dragon turtles, pseudodragons and other creatures that use the ‘Dragon’ monster type, just use the general creation guidelines given in *Core Rulebook III*.

Creating a new true dragon for a game therefore is not quite the same as creating a new monster. This chapter contains a point-based system for building new dragon species. Instead of creating a fully-grown dragon, this system creates a wyrmling and then adds age advancements on.

Creation Points

Creation points are used to measure the power of a new dragon species. The more creation points used, the more dangerous the dragon and the higher its Challenge Rating. More creation points can be bought by adding disadvantages and drawbacks to the dragon.

Concept

The basic dragons are already extremely flexible creatures that can be encountered in a wide variety of situations and environments. Rather than create an entirely new dragon species, it is possible to add class levels, prestige classes, hit dice or age advancements to alter a dragon for use in a game. It is not necessary to go through the whole dragon generation system if all that is desired is a slightly tougher red dragon – just put on a level or two of barbarian and let the dragon rage.

New dragons should have some distinct qualities to justify their existence. For example, none of the basic dragon types are suitable for use in a lot of dungeons. They are too big to fit down a lot of corridors, and wings are not much good if the ceiling is only 10 feet from the ground. So, an obvious new concept for a dragon might

be a ‘dungeon worm’, a smaller, more sinuous wingless dragon that snakes through caverns and passageways. This example is developed throughout this chapter.

Have a definite idea for what sort of dragon you are aiming for when using this system. Give your new monster a theme or a reason to exist, or else base it around some really cool concept or effect. Stacking abilities on a monster does not make it memorable no matter how tough it is, but come up with a good concept and you are halfway towards an excellent addition to the draconic menagerie.

How many Creation Points?

In the example, the dungeon worm is built using 80 creation points, putting it on a par with the white dragon. For reference, here are the creation point totals for the true dragons in *Core Rulebook III*.

True Dragon Creation Points			
Dragon			Total
Black	94	15	109
Blue	136	24	135
Green	103	24	127
Red	137	45	182
White	79	12	91
Brass	99	18	119
Bronze	129	33	162
Copper	101	15	116
Gold	170	72	242
Silver	139	63	202

CREATING A DRAGON

The steps for creating a new dragon species are:

1. Create the wyrmling
 - a) Ability scores
 - b) Initial Hit Dice
 - c) Shape & movement
 - d) Armour
 - e) Breath weapon
 - f) Special abilities
 - g) Feats
 - h) Challenge rating

2. Choose Progressions
 - a) Ability scores
 - b) Magic
 - c) Special abilities
 - d) Challenge rating

3. Generate grown dragons
4. Finishing touches
5. Eat adventurers, gather gold, sow havoc

THE WYRMLING

Dragon generation begins with the wyrmling, the newly hatched form of the dragon. Even in this comparatively weak and small form, the full growth and grandeur of the adult dragon can be glimpsed. Abilities and traits present in the hatchling are magnified by aging, so whatever the hatchling is good at, the adult dragon will be excellent in that same field. Strong hatchlings produce extremely strong adults.

Initial Ability Scores

A hatchling's ability scores all start at 8. Creation points can be spent to purchase higher stats, according to the following table. Taking scores below 8 gives more creation points back for other purposes.

Ability Score Costs			
Ability Score	Cost	Ability Score	Cost
1	-8	13	5
2	-7	14	6
3	-6	15	8
4	-5	16	10
5	-3	17	13
6	-2	18	16
7	-1	19	19
8	0	20	24
9	1	21	28
10	2	22	33
11	3	23	38
12	4	24	44

Our dungeon worm is not especially smart, wise, or charismatic, so we reduce its Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma down to 6 each, giving us 6 extra CPs. The worm needs to be strong and fast, so we spend 20 points to give it a beginning Strength and Dexterity of 16. Finally, we spent 5 points to give it a Constitution score of 13. Points spent so far: 19.

Initial Hit Dice

The initial hit dice of a dragon vary between 2 and 10 hit dice. The number of initial hit dice also determines the beginning size of the dragon.

Hit Dice Costs		
Initial Hit Dice	Cost	Size
2	10	T
3	20	T
4	30	T
5	40	S
6	50	S
7	60	M
8	70	M
9	80	M
10	90	M

2 Hit Dice seems plenty for our dungeon worm, so we spend 10 points here. Points spent so far: 29.

Shape and Movement

The true dragon is a four-legged, winged beast, but dragons of legend have been huge serpents, sea-monsters and even stranger creatures.

Limbs: The number of limbs possessed by a dragon determines what combination of attacks it can use. Choose any one of the following limb configurations:

- † **Serpents** have no limbs, and therefore have no claw attacks. A serpent can, however, make a constrict attack on a creature of equal size or smaller if it first succeeds in snatching the creature by making a successful bite attack. To constrict a foe, the dragon must make a grapple check; if successful, the constriction inflicts damage equal to the claw damage for a dragon of that size, plus 1.5 times the dragon's strength bonus. Being a serpent costs 0 points.
- † **Two-legged dragons** can make two claw attacks per round while flying, but not while on the ground. Being a two-legged dragon costs 5 points.
- † **Four-legged dragons** can make two claw attacks even while on the ground. Being a four-legged dragon costs 10 points.

The dungeon worm is obviously a serpent, so we spent 0 points here.

Walking speed: Dragons have a base movement of 40 feet per round. It can be increased, as follows:

Walking Speeds	
Speed	Cost
50	5
60	10
70	15

Wings: Having wings costs 5 points, plus points for manoeuvrability and speed.

Flying Speeds	
Speed	Cost
100 ft.	0
150 ft.	2
200 ft.	3
250 ft.	4
300 ft.	5

Manoeuvrability Costs	
Manoeuvrability	Cost
Average	3
Poor	0
Clumsy	-3

Other movement: Some dragons can burrow, swim or climb. These movement rates cost points, as follows:

Swimming/Burrowing/Other Movement	
Movement	Cost
30	3
40	4
50	5
60	6
70	7

Our dungeon worm stays at the base movement of 40 feet per round. We could add climbing, but magic can do it more cheaply. We spent no points here.

Heads: Two heads are clearly better than one. Each additional head may take a partial action every round in addition to the dragon’s normal action. A head may bite, cast a spell, talk, or use a breath weapon. Each head has a separate breath weapon – keep track of the 1d4 round delay between breathes separately for each head.

Additional heads cost 20 creation points each.

Tail: Almost every dragon has a tail, which can be used for slaps and sweeps. Having a tail costs 3 points.

Our serpent has no wings and only one head, but it does have a tail. Points spent so far: 32.

Hide: Most dragons have extremely tough, scaly skins. In most species, the only weak spot is the belly, and that is often girded in gold and gemstones trapped between scales. Other dragons have iridescent skin or thick fur instead of reptilian scales. Especially magical species might have a hide of invisible force containing the seething pure elemental energies of the dragon’s body.

Armour costs 3 points per +1 natural armour class bonus.

We spend nine points on hide, giving our dungeon worm a natural armour class bonus of +3. Points spent so far: 41.

Breath Weapon

Dragons may breath fire, poisonous gas, acid, or any of many other deadly substances. Wyrmling breath weapon damage is as follows:

Breath Weapon Costs	
Cost	Damage
1	1d4
2	1d6
3	1d8
4	2d4
5	1d10
6	1d12
7	2d6
8	2d8
9	2d10
10	2d12

Each breath weapon is shaped like a line or cone, the size of which depends on the size of the dragon. See *Core Rulebook III* for details.

Alternate Breath Weapon Shapes

Most breath weapons are lines or cones, but some dragons do spit their lethal breath in different shapes. Such shapes include clouds (suitable for gas-based breath weapons), goutts (short, wide jets) and explosions (similar to the effects of the Spit Breath feat). The following table summarises the areas of effect of these breaths.

Clouds and Goutts are as high as they are wide. Explosions are a 5 foot wide and high line up until they hit a target not entirely destroyed by the damage, or until the end of their range, whereupon they explode in a burst. The size of the burst is determined by its radius.

Some dragons have a breath weapon that does not inflict damage, but instead saps the victim's will, strength or some other ability. Find a spell that has a similar effect – this breath weapon costs 2 points per level of the spell. For example, silver dragons have a paralysing gas breath weapon, which costs 4 points (paralysing is a similar effect to *hold person*, which is a 2nd level spell). Dragons may have a breath weapon that combines two effects into a single attack, such as a negative energy blast that inflicts hit point damage and gives negative levels. Most effects have a caster level of 1d6 + the dragon's age category.

Dragons might breathe:

- † A gout of molten rock and volcanic gases (2d12 damage)
- † A beam of invisible force that shatters enemies like a hammer-blow (2d6 damage)
- † A cloud of elemental darkness that drains heat and life from those it touches (2d8 damage)
- † A blast of pure time that age and weathers anything caught in the blast (2d6 damage)
- † A sonic scream (2d4 damage)
- † A jet of scalding-hot salt water (2d6 damage)
- † A cloud of razor-sharp crystalline particles that slice through skin and clothing (2d8 damage)
- † A stream of abrasive sand (2d6 damage)

- † A blast of energy that causes whatever it touches to explode violently (2d10 damage)
- † A green cloud of foul micro-organisms that devour flesh (2d8 damage)
- † A jet of hot dust (2d4 damage)
- † A beam of Antimagic (as *Antimagic field*)
- † A cone of necromantic power that reanimates the dead (as *animate dead*)
- † An iridescent beam of rainbow energy (as *prismatic spray*)
- † A foul gout of pestilence (as *contagion*)
- † A cone of force that *dimension doors* or *dismisses* any creatures caught in the blast
- † A wave of energy that animates objects (as *animate objects*)
- † A cloud of will-sapping gas (as *mind fog*)
- † A stream of lethal poison (as *poison*)
- † A cone that transforms anyone caught in it into small animals (as *polymorph other*)

The dungeon worm needs a breath weapon that fits with its concept. After thinking about options like a breath weapon that fires a hail of coins (the worm eats treasure and spits it at enemies) or darkness (dungeons are full of shadows), the final breath weapon chosen is a spit of a vile liquid that burns like acid, then hardens into a stone-hard brownish resin. This breath weapon combines 2d6 points of acid damage (costing 7 points) with a hold person effect (costing 4 points) for a total of 11 points on the breath weapon. Points spent so far, 52.

Alternate Breath Weapon Shapes						
Dragon Size	Cloud		Gout		Explosions	
	Length	Width	Length	Width	Range	Radius
Tiny	5 ft.	5 ft.	15 ft.	10 ft.	20 ft.	5 ft.
Small	10 ft.	10 ft.	20 ft.	10 ft.	30 ft.	5 ft.
Medium	15 ft.	15 ft.	30 ft.	10 ft.	40 ft.	10 ft.
Large	25 ft.	20 ft.	40 ft.	15 ft.	50 ft.	20 ft.
Huge	35 ft.	25 ft.	50 ft.	15 ft.	60 ft.	25 ft.
Gargantuan	50 ft.	30 ft.	60 ft.	20 ft.	70 ft.	30 ft.
Colossal	75 ft.	35 ft.	70 ft.	30 ft.	80 ft.	30 ft.

Special Qualities

All dragons gain special abilities as they advance in age. These abilities are usually spell-like abilities drawn from the dragon's innate connection to magic, but dragons also gain damage resistance and other unique powers.

The first ability is always immunity to the dragon's primary breath weapon (this costs no points), and the second is usually a mode of transport for the dragon's natural habitat. After that, the other abilities are related to the basic concept of the dragon. For example, red dragons are hunters, so they can *locate object* and *discern location*. Their *suggestion* power is derived from the traditional persuasive voice of the dragon. Green dragon combine an even more beguiling voice (having both *suggestion* and *dominate person*).

A dragon gets 40 spell levels worth of powers for 'free'. Extra spell levels can be purchased at a cost of one point per spell level. Each power can be used once per day. Increasing the spell level by two adds another two uses per day.

A dragon must have a total of 10 special abilities (the tenth special ability is always the package of powers obtained when a dragon reaches the age of Draco Invictus). The scope of a dragon's powers increases at it ages, but special abilities gained at one age category are not automatically more powerful than those gained at a previous age category. The maximum spell level available for use as a special ability at each age category is equal to the age category+3 for abilities that affect only the dragon; and equal to the age category+2 for abilities that target other creatures or the surrounding area.

Wyrmlings usually begin with two powers, but this depends on what Special Ability progression is used – see below. Some of these special abilities – from VII on, usually – will only see play if the dragon uses the Mystical age advancement instead of the normal advancement – see Chapter 9, Age Advancement.

Our dungeon worm dwells in catacombs and tombs, which gives a huge range of potential abilities. The first is immunity to the dragon's breath weapon, in this case acid. The second ability is a permanent spider climb spell.



The worm lives in undead-haunted tombs and mazes, so it makes sense to have a few necromantic abilities. It can also manipulate its environment even without limbs, and can also control stone and elemental earth.

The catacomb worm's roster of special abilities ends up looking like this:

Dungeon Worm Abilities		
Rank	Ability	Point Cost
I	Acid immunity	0
II	Spider climb	2
III	Mage hand 5/day	0+4
IV	Knock 3/day	2+2
V	Animate dead 1/day	5
VI	Passwall 3/day	5+2
VII	Telekinesis 3/day	5+2
VIII	Death knell 3/day	2+2
IX	Statue	7
X	Draco Invictus Abilities	0

The total number of spell levels is 40, costing no points. So far, we have spent 52 points.

Feats & Unique Special Abilities

Dragons begin with a single feat. Dragons may purchase extra feats from the Dragon Feats chapter (page 141) or any other source of feats at a cost of 3 points each.

Other unique abilities may also be added to the dragon. Many examples are shown in New Dragons (page 158). These special abilities are not rated in points – their effect should be measured by playtesting.

Subtype

A dragon may have any subtype, usually one related to its breath weapon.

Challenge Rating

The challenge rating of the wyrmling is determined by the number of creation points used:

Wyrmling Challenge Ratings	Creation Points	Challenge Rating
0-40		1
41-80		2
81-130		3
131-165		4
166-190		5
191+		6

The dungeon worm cost a mere 52 points, giving it a challenge rating of 2.

Dungeon Worm Wyrmling

Tiny Dragon

Hit Dice: 2d12+2 (14 hp)

Initiative: +3 (dex)

Speed: 40 ft.

AC: 18 (+2 size, +3 natural, +3 dex), touch 15, flat-footed 15

Base Attack Bonus/Grapple: +2/-3

Attack: Bite +5 melee (1d4+5)

Full Attack: Bite +5 melee (1d4+5)

Space/Reach: 2 ½ ft. x 2 ½ ft /5 ft.

Special Attacks: Breath weapon (damage 2d6+paralysis)

Special Qualities: Acid immunity, *spider climb*

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +2

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 6, Wis 6, Cha 6.

Skills: Listen +4, Spot +4.

Feats: Alertness

Challenge Rating: 2

Alignment: Neutral evil

GROWTH

Dragons grow throughout their lives, becoming bigger and nastier with every passing century. The cute baby dragon that once entertained your grandparents with its amusing antics might be the one swallowing you whole today, and some day will be the one conquering the whole nation where your grandchildren dwell. The rate at which a dragon's abilities increase depends on what progressions are used.

Ability Score Progressions

The progressions for ability scores are given in chapter 9, Age Advancement. Dragons normally have Poor progression in all ability scores except Dexterity, but can purchase slower or faster progression as follows:

Ability Score Progression Costs	
Progression	Cost
Null	-6
Very Poor	-3
Poor	0
Standard	3
Good	6
Excellent	9
Superior	12

Dexterity progression begins at the null progression (i.e. the dragon gains no dexterity as it ages), but can be increased:

Dexterity Progression Costs	
Dexterity progression	Cost
Null	0
Very poor	6
Poor	9
Standard	12
Good	15

Magic Progression

Dragons begin at Poor magic progression, but again it can be increased.

Strength	Dexterity	Constitution	Intelligence	Wisdom	Charisma
Excellent	Very poor	Good	Standard	Good	Poor

Magic Progression Costs	
Progression	Cost
Very Poor	-3
Poor	0
Standard	3
Good	6
Excellent	9
Superior	12

Special Ability Progression

Special ability progression also begins at Poor, and costs the same amount to increase.

Special Ability Progression Costs	
Progression	Cost
Very Poor	-3
Poor	0
Standard	3
Good	6
Excellent	9
Superior	12

Our dungeon worm hatches as a fairly small beast, costing only 43 points, so we have another 17 points to buy progressions with. This means that young dungeon worms are weak for a dragon, but older worms will be very, very tough indeed.

As the worm lives in an environment where climbing and agility are useful, we spend 3 points to give it a Very Poor Dexterity progression. Its constriction attack's damage is based on Strength, so we give the worm an Excellent Strength progression, costing 9 points. So far, the worm seems like an unpleasant and uninspiring monster, so we leave its Charisma progression at Poor. We spend the remaining points buying Standard Intelligence and Magic progressions (3 points each), Good progressions for Constitution and Wisdom (6 points each) and Excellent special ability progression (9 points). Total spent: 30 points on advancements, for a total of 82 points.

The final progressions for the Dungeon Worm are shown above.

Magic	Special Abilities
Standard	Excellent

Breath Weapon

Most dragons add 2 dice on to their breath weapon damage at each age category. However, those dragons whose breath weapons inflict only a single die of damage increase breath weapon damage by only one die when they age.

The dungeon worm has a breath weapon that inflicts 2d6 points of damage, so its breath weapon will increase by 2 dice every age category.

Challenge Rating

The challenge rating of a dragon increases at a rate that depends on the number of points spent on buying progressions.

Challenge Rating Progression Thresholds	
Points Spent	Challenge Rating Increases
<20	Slow
20-35	Medium
35+	Fast

Challenge Rating Progressions			
Age Category	Slow	Medium	Fast
Very Young	+1	+1	+2
Young	+3	+3	+4
Juvenile	+5	+6	+6
Young Adult	+7	+9	+9
Adult	+9	+11	+11
Mature Adult	+12	+13	+14
Old	+14	+15	+16
Very Old	+16	+16	+17
Ancient	+17	+18	+19
Wyrm	+18	+20	+20
Great Wyrm	+19	+22	+24
Draco Invictus	+22	+25	+27

Dungeon Worms by Age											
Age	Size	Hit Dice (hp)	Armour Class	Base Attack /Grapple	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Breath Weapon (DC)	Fear DC	SR
Wyrmling	T	2d12 +2 (14 hp)	18 (+2 size, +3 natural, +3 dex)	+2/-3	+7	+3	+5	+2	2d6 (12)	-	-
Very Young	S	5d12+5 (37)	20 (+1 size, +6 natural, +3 dex)	+5/+6	+11	+5	+7	+4	4d6 (13)	-	-
Young	M	8d12+8 (54)	22 (+9 natural, +3 dex)	+8/+18	+15	+7	+9	+6	6d6 (15)	-	-
Juvenile	L	11d12+22 (93)	24 (-1 size, +12 natural, +4 dex)	+11/+24	+19	+9	+11	+7	8d6 (17)	-	-
Young Adult	L	14d12+42 (133)	29 (-1 size, +15 natural, +5 dex)	+14/+28	+23	+10	+14	+9	10d6 (20)	16	18
Adult	H	17d12+68 (178)	32 (-2 size, +18 natural, +6 dex)	+17/+37	+27	+14	+16	+11	12d6 (22)	17	20
Mature Adult	H	20d12+100 (230)	36 (-2 size, +21 natural, +7 dex)	+20/+41	+31	+17	+19	+14	14d6 (25)	20	22
Old	H	23d12+115 (264)	40 (-2 size, +24 natural, +8 dex)	+23/+45	+35	+18	+21	+16	16d6 (27)	21	24
Very Old	H	26d12+156 (325)	44 (-2 size, +27 natural, +9 dex)	+26/+47	+39	+21	+24	+15	18d6 (29)	24	25
Ancient	G	29d12+174 (362)	46 (-4 size, +30 natural, +10 dex)	+29/+55	+42	+22	+26	+20	20d6 (31)	25	27
Wurm	G	32d12+224 (432)	50 (-4 size, +33 natural, +11 dex)	+32/+46	+46	+26	+30	+24	22d6 (33)	28	29
Great wurm	G	35d12+280 (507)	54 (-4 size, +36 natural, +12 dex)	+35/+65	+50	+29	+33	+27	24d6 (35)	30	31
Draco Invictus	G	38d12+380 (627)	59 (-4 size, +39 natural, +14 dex)	+38/+70	+54	+31	+30	+28	26d6 (39)	34	34

GENERATE GROWN DRAGONS

Once the basic wyrmling is created, and the progressions for the dragon's abilities are determined, then all that remains is to apply the progressions to the wyrmling and work out what the dragon looks like at each successive age category.

At age category, the following changes are made:

- † The dragon gains 3 Hit Dice.
- † The dragon's natural armour class bonus increases by 3.
- † Its ability scores increase by the appropriate amount for their individual progressions.
- † It gains new special abilities from its special ability progression.
- † It gains new spellcaster levels from its magic progression.
- † Its breath weapon increases in damage. The Difficulty Class for the Fortitude save against the breath weapon is equal to $10 + \frac{1}{2}$ the dragon's hit dice total + the dragon's Constitution bonus.
- † Its challenge rating increases.
- † If the dragon is aged young adult or older, it gains a Frightful Presence. The Difficult Class to resist the Frightful presence is equal to $10 + \frac{1}{2}$ the dragon's hit dice total + the dragon's Charisma bonus.
- † If the dragon is aged young adult or older, it gains Spell Resistance, equal to its Challenge Rating + 7.
- † The size of a dragon increases as it grows. It grows one size per age category until it reaches Large size. It takes two age categories to grow through Large size, and then spends four age categories being Huge, four being Gargantuan, and any remaining age categories being Colossal.
- † The flight speed of a dragon increases by 50 feet every four age categories. Its manoeuvrability decreases by one step every four age categories, to a minimum of clumsy.

FINISHING TOUCHES

At this point, the new dragon species is almost complete. The special abilities possessed by a wyrmling are determined by looking at its special ability progression. Dragons usually have triple standard treasure, although some concepts might shy away from this. Alignment, habitat, organisation and other fields of information should be worked out from the concept.

For example, the finished dungeon worm is shown on the preceding and following table.

Dungeon Worm Abilities by Age											
Age	Speed	Initiative	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha	Special Abilities	Caster level	CR
Wyrmling	40 ft.	+3	16	16	13	6	6	6	Acid immunity, <i>spider climb</i> , <i>mage hand</i>	-	2
Very Young	40 ft.	+3	20	16	13	6	6	6		-	3
Young	40 ft.	+3	24	16	13	6	6	6	Knock	-	5
Juvenile	40 ft.	+4	28	18	15	8	8	6		1	8
Young Adult	40 ft.	+5	30	20	17	10	10	8	DR 5/+1	3	11
Adult	40 ft.	+6	34	22	19	12	12	8	<i>Animate dead</i>	5	13
Mature Adult	40 ft.	+7	36	24	21	14	14	10	DR 10/+2	7	15
Old	40 ft.	+8	38	26	21	14	16	10	Passwall	9	17
Very Old	40 ft.	+9	40	28	23	16	18	12	DR 15/+2	11	18
Ancient	40 ft.	+10	42	30	23	16	18	12	Telekinesis	13	20
Wyrm	40 ft.	+11	44	32	25	18	20	14	DR 20/+3	15	22
Great wyrm	40 ft.	+12	46	34	27	20	22	16	<i>Death knell</i>	17	24

NEW DRAGONS

All the dragons in this section were created using the rules in *Creating a New Dragon*, and notes on their design can be found in each entry. Not all of these dragons can be dropped into any campaign as easily as another monster. Dragons are important, even iconic, creatures, so the types of dragons used in a game should reflect the style and themes of that game. For example, a campaign where the Sin Dragons are the common type of dragons is completely different to one using the dragons in *Core Rulebook III*. The Sin Dragons, obviously, are designed to be the embodiment of sins and so are best suited to campaigns where temptation and moral quandaries are important – say, a low-magic game based on medieval theology mixed with Arthurian knights and questing. They are the perfect foe for a paladin in such a game. The planar dragons would be completely out of place in such a game, but fit perfectly into a high-magic game with a lot of portals and planar travel. Choose your dragons carefully, as they do more to define the game than any other monster.

Each dragon includes a list of abilities, from I to IX, in case the Games Master wishes to use the optional Age Advancement rules to give the dragons extra special abilities.

SIN DRAGONS

This family of dragons is based on the seven deadly sins. Dragons are a traditional symbol of evil and sin, so using this as a theme for a group of monsters makes sense. The iconic status of dragons means that players will accept this sort of heavy-handed symbol-mongering. None of these dragons have set habitats or lairs as they are not ‘normal’ creatures. They are evil spirits given form and flesh, the embodiment of sins.

All the Sin Dragons are shaped like true dragons, being winged and four-legged.

GROWTH

Unlike normal dragons, sin dragons do not grow naturally. They only grow when they can feed, and a sin dragon eats the spiritual by-products of sinning. Thus, a greed dragon grows when it manipulates people into being greedy, a pride dragon grows when it incites others to be prideful. The rate of growth depends on the needs of the campaign; if sin dragons are a common foe, then their growth rate should be fairly slow, so they do not overshadow other monsters. On the other hand, if the Games Master wants to run a scenario where the heroes have to race to prevent the sin dragon growing out of control, the dragon’s growth rate can be set to a much faster pace.

Sin Dragon Growth Rates			
	Category	Slow	Fast
1	Wyrmling	Major sin by important figure	Minor sin by important figure
2	Very Young	Minor sin by one other person	Minor sin by one other person
3	Young	Minor sin by dozen other people	Minor sin by two other person
4	Juvenile	Minor sin by fifty other people	Minor sin by five other people
5	Young Adult	Minor sin by hundred other people	Minor sin by ten other people
6	Adult	Major sin by one other person	Minor sin by twenty other people
7	Mature Adult	Major sin by dozen other people	Minor sin by fifty other people
8	Old	Major sin by fifty other people	Major sin by one other people
9	Very Old	Major sin by hundred other people	Major sin by two other people
10	Ancient	Mortal sin by one person	Major sin by five other people
11	Wyrm	Mortal sin by dozen people	Major sin by dozen other people
12	Great wyrm	Mortal sin by hundred or more people	Mortal sin by fifty or more people
13	Draco Invictus	Mortal sin by five hundred people	Mortal sin by one hundred people

The growth value for a wyrmling is the level of sin required to spawn a sin dragon. Sins committed by notably pious or important characters are far more nourishing than those of others – a paladin succumbing to lust is a banquet for a sin dragon, and counts as much as the sins of five normal people.

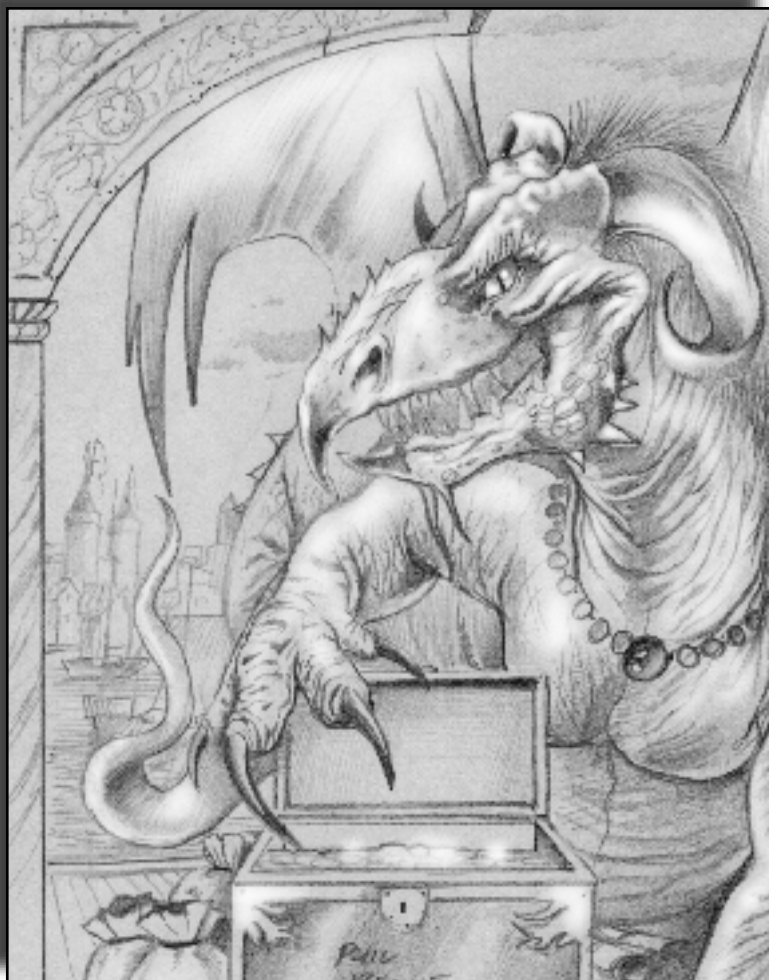
GREED

Greed dragons begin as nothing but a little wisp of avarice, a sinful thought that takes root in the soul of a host, usually a merchant or miser. The host discovers he has a strangely keen sense of gold and wealth, of the value of things. At first, this is a blessing, as the host's fortunes increase thanks to his enhanced bargaining abilities. A shadow takes up residence in his coffers, a shadow that grows thicker and fatter and stronger as the wealth piles up. One day, the host opens his treasure chest to discover a tiny dragon sitting there, perched atop the gold. The dragon continues to counsel the host, further increasing his fortune. With every coin added to the hoard, the dragon grows a little bit bigger and

Greed Dragon Abilities	
Rank	Ability
I	Death immunity
II	<i>Detect thoughts</i>
III	<i>Charm person</i>
IV	<i>Fox's cunning</i> 3/day
V	<i>Suggestion</i>
VI	<i>Lesser lairguard</i>
VII	<i>Mass suggestion</i>
VIII	<i>Dominate person</i>
IX	<i>Demand</i>
X	Draco Invictus Abilities

stronger. The dragon's whispering voice constantly suggests new business ventures and ways to squeeze more cash out of unfortunates, driving the host on to more and more wealth and deeper into madness. In the end, the host is nothing more than a shadow,

Greed Dragons by Age											
Age	Size	Hit Dice (hp)	AC	Base Attack/Grapple	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Breath Weapon (DC)	Fear DC	SR
Wyrmling	T	3d12 (19)	15 (+3 natural, +2 size), touch 12, flat-footed 15	+3/-5	+5	+3	+3	+1	2d6 (11)	-	-
Very Young	S	6d12 (39)	17 (+6 natural, +1 size), touch 11, flat-footed 17	+6/+3	+8	+5	+5	+3	4d6 (13)	-	-
Young	M	9d12 (58)	19 (+9 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 19	+9/+11	+11	+6	+6	+4	6d6 (14)	-	-
Juvenile	L	12d12+12 (90)	21 (+12 natural, -1 size), touch 9, flat-footed 21	+12/+20	+15	+9	+8	+7	8d6 (17)	-	-
Young Adult	L	15d12+30 (127)	24 (+15 natural, -1 size), touch 9, flat-footed 24	+15/+25	+19	+11	+9	+9	10d6 (19)	19	17
Adult	H	18d12+54 (171)	26 (+18 natural, -2 size), touch 8, flat-footed 26	+18/+33	+23	+14	+11	+11	12d6 (22)	22	19
Mature Adult	H	21d12+84 (220)	29 (+21 natural, -2 size), touch 8, flat-footed 29	+21/+37	+27	+16	+12	+13	14d6 (24)	24	21
Old	H	24d12+96 (252)	32 (+24 natural, -2 size), touch 8, flat-footed 32	+24/+41	+31	+18	+14	+15	18d6 (26)	26	23
Very Old	H	27d12+135 (310)	35 (+27 natural, -2 size), touch 8, flat-footed 35	+27/+45	+35	+20	+15	+17	20d6 (29)	29	24
Ancient	G	30d12+180 (375)	36 (+30 natural, -4 size)	+30/+53	+37	+23	+17	+19	22d6 (31)	31	26
Wyrm	G	33d12+231 (445)	39 (+33 natural, -4 size), touch 6, flat-footed 39	+33/+57	+41	+25	+18	+21	24d6 (33)	33	27
Great wyrm	G	36d12+288 (552)	42 (+36 natural, -4 size), touch 6, flat-footed 42	+36/+61	+45	+28	+20	+24	26d6 (36)	36	30
Draco Invictus	G	39d12+390 (643)	45 (+39 natural, -4 size), touch 6, flat-footed 45	+39/+66	+50	+31	+21	+27	28d6 (39)	39	33



A fully grown greed dragon is corpulent and smug-looking beast, with a luxuriant mane of fur that resembles finest ermine. Their scales shimmer like gold and silver, and their eyes and teeth gleam like precious stones. The size and strength of the dragon is directly dependant on the size of its hoard. The richer a greed dragon gets, the more powerful it is. After consuming its first host, a greed dragon usually worms its way into the heart of the nearest merchant’s guild or bank, although rich nobles and clerics may also be approached by the wyrm in human guise. The dragon prefers to work through intermediaries and gain more wealth through corruption, but will resort to brute force if necessary. Greed dragons have supernaturally keen business minds, but their advice always leads to suffering as a byproduct of profit.

Combat

Greed dragons avoid direct combat where possible, preferring to bribe or corrupt enemies using their array of mind-affecting abilities and spells. When forced to fight, the fat monsters are careful not to damage the weapons and equipment of their foes, preferring to salvage what wealth they can from the corpses before greedily devouring them. Greed dragons are especially fond of magical devices and spells.

a wisp of avarice wrapped in skin and bones, a poor meal for the dragon that now dwells in the host’s home.

Greed Dragon Abilities by Age										
Age	Speed	Initiative	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha	Special Abilities	Caster level
Wyrmling	40 ft., Fly 100 ft. (average)	+0	11	10	11	8	6	10	Death Immunity, Detect Thoughts	-
Very Young	40 ft., Fly 100 ft. (average)	+0	13	10	11	8	6	10		-
Young	40 ft., Fly 100 ft. (average)	+0	15	10	11	8	6	10		-
Juvenile	40 ft., Fly 150 ft. (poor)	+0	19	10	13	10	8	12	Charm person	1 st
Young Adult	40 ft., Fly 150 ft. (poor)	+0	21	10	15	12	10	14	DR 5/magic	3 rd
Adult	40 ft., Fly 150 ft. (poor)	+0	25	10	17	12	10	16	Fox’s cunning	5 th
Mature Adult	40 ft., Fly 150 ft. (poor)	+0	27	10	19	14	12	18	DR 10/magic	7 th
Old	40 ft., Fly 200 ft. (clumsy)	+0	29	10	19	14	12	18	Suggestion	9 th
Very Old	40 ft., Fly 200 ft. (clumsy)	+0	31	10	21	16	14	20	DR 15/magic	11 th
Ancient	40 ft., Fly 200 ft. (clumsy)	+0	33	10	23	16	14	22	Lesser Lairguard	13 th
Wyrm	40 ft., Fly 200 ft. (clumsy)	+0	35	10	25	18	16	24	DR 20/magic	15 th
Great wyrm	40 ft., Fly 250 ft. (clumsy)	+0	37	10	27	20	18	26	Mass suggestion	17 th
Draco Invictus	40 ft., Fly 250 ft. (clumsy)	+0	41	10	31	24	22	30	DR 25/magic, Draco Invictus Abilities	19 th

Breath Weapon (Su): Greed dragons breathe a noxious cone of life-sapping energy. Victims of the breath weapon feel their strength fading and their vitality been measured out and taxed away, each heartbeat becomes nothing more than a commodity to be bought and sold.

Death Immunity (Su): Greed dragons are immune to death effects, as if permanently protected by a *death ward*.

Wealth-linked Hit Points (Su): As long as the greed dragon has money in its hoard, it has a variant of the Fast Healing ability. If reduced below 0 hit points, the dragon will begin to regain hit points at a rate of 1 per round. It will heal back up to a certain amount of hit points that depends on the size of its hoard. The maximum number of hit points that the dragon can reach using this ability is the value of its hoard divided by its age category multiplied by 100. For example, a wyrmling greed dragon with a 1,000 gp hoard can reach $(1,000/1*100)=10$ hit points per hit dice. An old green dragon with a hoard of 84,000 gp could reach 105 hit points using Fast Healing. If a character claims the hoard as his own (through theft or conquest) while the dragon is unable to stop him, the dragon cannot use this ability to recover from death.

Spell-like abilities (Sp): At will – *detect thoughts*. 1/day – *charm person*, *suggestion*, *lesser airguard*. 3/day – *fox's cunning*.

Skills: Appraise, Bluff and Sense Motive are all class skills for greed dragons. They have a +6 racial bonus to any skill checks made when bargaining or cheating in business deals.

Greed Dragon Dragon (Sin)

Environment: Urban

Organisation: Solitary

Challenge Ratings: Wyrmling 1; very young 2; young 4; juvenile 7; young adult 10; adult 12; mature adult 14; old 16; very old 17; ancient 19; wyrm 21; great wyrm 23, draco invictus 26

Treasure: Triple standard

Alignment: Always neutral evil

Creation

Wyrming: 63.

Advancements: 33; All Standard except Null Dexterity, Excellent Constitution and Charisma.

Total: 51.

SLOTH

Dragons of Sloth have hides of lead, and move with surpassing slowness. Their joints creak as they crawl, and for a dragon to lift its head seems a titanic effort. Their forelimbs are covered with a thick padding of matted fur, a natural pillow for the dragon's sleepy head. While all dragons like to sleep, sloth dragons seem to have made an art of it.

In truth, they have made of a meal of it. Sloth dragons feed off the death of potential. If a man chooses to laze away the day instead of working hard, the dragon can feed on the rot of all that would have been accomplished in that day. If an intelligent



young woman accepts an easy life as a chattel of her husband instead of using her gifts, that is a rich meal for the sloth dragon. If an adventurer, a hero of great potential and destiny, gives up the adventuring life for one of safety and slumber, then the dragon feasts.

Sloth dragons spend most of their lives in the dreamworld, spying on the dreams of mortals. A sloth dragon can devour a human's dreams night after night, so that sleep does the human no good, and he awakes just as tired as he was when he went to bed. After a few weeks of this, most humans are unable to resist the commands the sloth dragon sends in nightmares. The dragon then looks for dreams that might lead to something great being accomplished and uses its sleep-deprived servants to manipulate events and make the fulfilment of these dreams seem much harder, even impossible. When the dreamer gives him and succumbs to sloth, the dragon can feed.

Combat

Effort...the mere *thought* of combat sends shivers of horror through the body of the sloth dragon. Getting up, clawing people, having to *breathe*...unthinkable. Sloth dragons only fight when under direct attack. They infinitely prefer to have their servants fight for them, or better yet, not to fight at all. Why not just lie down and rest, lie down and sleep, let the fatigue wash over you, let it all drift away...

When forced to fight, sloth dragons slowly hammer at their opponents with dull, heavy slams, preferring to use tail slaps and wing buffets when they can.

Breath Weapon (Su): The breath weapon of a sloth dragon is a line of enervation that makes its targets exhausted. Those struck by the breath weapon suffer the effects of both a *slow* spell and a *ray of exhaustion*.

Sleepy Head (Su): Sloth dragons suffer a -4 penalty to initiative, and a -10 penalty to any attempts to wake up.

Sloth Dragons by Age												
Age	Size	Hit Dice (hp)	AC	Base Attack/ Grapple	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Breath Weapon (DC)	Fear DC	SR	
Wyrmling	T	3d12 (19)	15 (+4 natural, +2 size, -1 Dex), touch 11, flat-footed 15	+3/-5	+5	+3	+2	+3	-(11)	-	-	
Very Young	S	6d12 (39)	17 (+7 natural, +1 size, -1 Dex), touch 10, flat-footed 17	+6/+3	+8	+5	+4	+5	-(13)	-	-	
Young	M	9d12 (58)	19 (+10 natural, -1 Dex), touch 9, flat-footed 19	+9/+2	+11	+6	+5	+6	-(14)	-	-	
Juvenile	L	12d12 (78)	21 (+13 natural, -1 size, -1 Dex), touch 8, flat-footed 21	+12/+20	+15	+8	+7	+8	-(17)	-	-	
Young Adult	L	15d12+15 (112)	24 (+16 natural, -1 size, -1 Dex), touch 8, flat-footed 24	+15/24	+19	+10	+8	+10	-(19)	19	18	
Adult	H	18d12+36 (153)	26 (+19 natural, -2 size, -1 Dex), touch 7, flat-footed 26	+18/+33	+23	+13	+10	+13	-(22)	22	20	
Mature Adult	H	21d12+42 (178)	29 (+22 natural, -2 size, -1 Dex), touch 7, flat-footed 29	+21/+37	+27	+14	+11	+15	-(24)	24	22	
Old	H	24d12+72 (228)	32 (+25 natural, -2 size, -1 Dex), touch 7, flat-footed 32	+24/+41	+31	+17	+13	+18	-(26)	26	24	
Very Old	H	27d12+81 (256)	35 (+28 natural, -2 size, -1 Dex), touch 7, flat-footed 35	+27/+45	+35	+18	+14	+19	-(29)	29	25	
Ancient	G	30d12+120 (315)	36 (+31 natural, -4 size, -1 Dex), touch 5, flat-footed 36	+30/+53	+37	+21	+16	+22	-(31)	31	27	
Wurm	G	33d12+132 (346)	39 (+34 natural, -4 size, -1 Dex), touch 5, flat-footed 39	+33/+57	+41	+22	+17	+23	-(33)	33	28	
Great wurm	G	36d12+180 (414)	42 (+37 natural, -4 size, -1 Dex), touch 5, flat-footed 42	+36/+61	+45	+25	+19	+26	-(34)	33	31	
Draco Invictus	G	39d12+273 (526)	(+40 natural, -4 size, -1 Dex), touch 5, flat-footed 40	+39/+66	+50	+28	+20	+29	-(36)	37	34	

Sloth Dragon Abilities By Age										
Age	Speed	Initiative	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha	Special Abilities	Caster level
Wyrmling	40 ft., Fly 100 ft. (poor)	-1	11	8	11	11	11	11	<i>Dream, Detect Thoughts</i>	-
Very Young	40 ft., Fly 100 ft. (poor)	-1	13	8	11	11	11	11		-
Young	40 ft., Fly 100 ft. (poor)	-1	15	8	11	11	11	11		1 st
Juvenile	40 ft., Fly 150 ft. (poor)	-1	19	8	11	11	11	11	<i>Sleep</i>	3 rd
Young Adult	40 ft., Fly 150 ft. (clumsy)	-1	21	8	13	13	13	13	DR 5/magic	5 th
Adult	40 ft., Fly 150 ft. (clumsy)	-1	25	8	15	15	15	15	<i>Deep Slumber</i>	7 th
Mature Adult	40 ft., Fly 150 ft. (clumsy)	-1	27	8	15	17	17	17	DR 10/magic	9 th
Old	40 ft., Fly 200 ft. (clumsy)	-1	29	8	17	19	19	19	<i>Nightmare</i>	11 th
Very Old	40 ft., Fly 200 ft. (clumsy)	-1	31	8	17	19	19	19	DR 15/magic	13 th
Ancient	40 ft., Fly 200 ft. (clumsy)	-1	33	8	19	21	21	21	<i>Crushing Despair</i>	15 th
Wurm	40 ft., Fly 200 ft. (clumsy)	-1	35	8	19	21	21	21	DR 20/magic	17 th
Great wurm	40 ft., Fly 250 ft. (clumsy)	-1	37	8	21	23	23	23	<i>Limited wish</i>	19 th

Dream (Su): While sleeping sloth dragons can cast *dream* at will as a sorcerer of level 10 plus the dragon's age category. The range of this ability is twice the dragon's age category squared in miles.

Spell-like abilities (Sp): At will – *detect thoughts, dream*. 1/day – *deep slumber, nightmare, crushing despair*. 3/day – *sleep*.

Limited Wish (Sp): A great wurm sloth dragon can use *limited wish* three times per day, but only to make dreams come true.

Skills: Bluff, Perform and Sense Motive are class skills for sloth dragons.

Sloth Dragon Abilities	
Rank	Ability
I	<i>Dream</i>
II	<i>Detect Thoughts</i>
III	<i>Sleep</i> 3/day
IV	<i>Deep slumber</i>
V	<i>Nightmare</i>
VI	<i>Crushing despair</i>
VII	<i>Limited wish</i>
VIII	<i>Waves of fatigue</i>
IX	<i>Mind fog</i>
X	Draco Invictus Abilities

Sloth Dragon Dragon (Sin)

Environment: Any

Organisation: Solitary

Challenge Ratings: Wyrmling 2; very young 3; young 5; juvenile 8; young adult 11; adult 13; mature adult 15; old 17; very old 18; ancient 20; wurm 22; great wurm 24, draco invictus 27

Treasure: Triple standard

Alignment: Always neutral evil

Creation

Wyrming: 79.

Advancements: 33; All Standard except Null Dexterity, Good Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma and Magic.

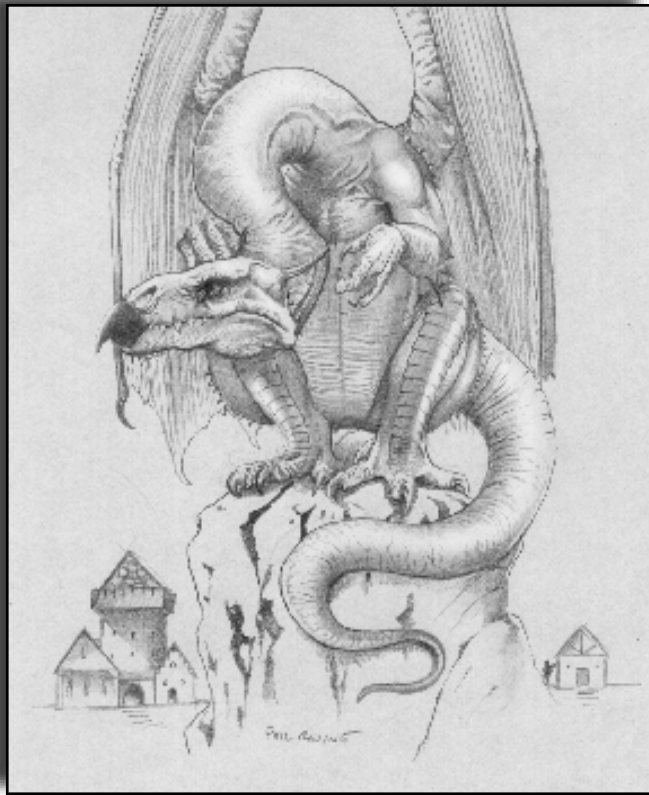
Total: 112.

ENVY

Dragons of envy are accomplished shapeshifters. Most dragons learn to take another form at some point during their long lives, but envy dragons can change before they are even hatched. Like cuckoos, the eggs of envy dragons appear in the nests of other avians. The envy egg alters to mimic the size and shape of the other eggs, and when the envy dragon is born, it resembles a thin and sickly version of its adoptive siblings. The one trait that always gives an envy dragon away is its eyes, which are brilliant green in every form.

If an envy dragon sees that another creature has something – an item, a talent, an aspect of appearance, anything - that it does not, the dragon becomes consumed with jealousy. It schemes until it is in a position to devour a sample of that object of desire; for example, if an envy dragon becomes

NEW DRAGONS



obsessed with a wizard's mastery of the arcane arts, the dragon tries to snatch a bite of the wizard's spellbook or familiar. Once this is done, the envy dragon can *shapechange* into a duplicate of the holder of the object of desire, copying the object of desire perfectly. The dragon then works to ruin the other so that only the dragon has the object of jealousy. To continue the example, the dragon would transform into the wizard, gaining even the wizard's spellcasting abilities. It would then use the copied magic to kill the wizard or otherwise rob him of his ability to use magic.

Envy dragons quickly grow bored and move onto their next fancy, leaving broken lives and broken bodies in their wake. If an envy dragon is identified and bound by its name, it can be compelled to stand and fight; if not stopped, the dragon continues to flit from form to form and from obsession to obsession, growing larger and more insatiable every time.

Envy Dragons by Age

Age	Size	Hit Dice (hp)	AC	Base Attack/Grapple	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Breath Weapon (DC)	Fear DC	SR
Wyrmling	T	4d12 (26)	17 (+5 natural, +2 size), touch 12, flat-footed 17	+4/-4	+6	+4	+4	+5	2d6 (12)	-	-
Very Young	S	7d12 (45)	19 (+8 natural, +1 size), touch 11, flat-footed 19	+7/+4	+9	+5	+5	+6	4d6 (13)	-	-
Young	M	10d12 (65)	21 (+11 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 21	+10/+13	+13	+7	+7	+8	6d6 (15)	-	-
Juvenile	L	13d12+13 (97)	23 (+14 natural, -1 size), touch 9, flat-footed 23	+13/+22	+17	+9	+8	+10	8d6 (17)	-	-
Young Adult	L	16d12+16 (120)	26 (+17 natural, -1 size), touch 9, flat-footed 26	+16/+26	+21	+11	+10	+13	10d6 (19)	21	18
Adult	H	19d12+19 (142)	28 (+20 natural, -2 size), touch 8, flat-footed 28	+19/+35	+25	+12	+11	+14	12d6 (20)	22	20
Mature Adult	H	22d12+44 (187)	32 (+23 natural, -2 size, +1 Dex), touch 9, flat-footed 31	+22/+39	+29	+15	+14	+17	14d6 (23)	25	22
Old	H	25d12+50 (212)	35 (+26 natural, -2 size, +1 Dex), touch 9, flat-footed 34	+25/+43	+33	+16	+15	+18	16d6 (24)	26	24
Very Old	H	28d12+84 (266)	39 (+29 natural, -2 size, +2 Dex), touch 10, flat-footed 37	+28/+47	+37	+19	+18	+21	18d6 (27)	29	25
Ancient	G	31d12+93 (294)	40 (+32 natural, -4 size, +2 Dex), touch 8, flat-footed 38	+31/+55	+39	+20	+19	+22	20d6 (28)	30	27
Wurm	G	34d12+136 (357)	44 (+35 natural, -4 size, +3 Dex), touch 9, flat-footed 41	+34/+59	+43	+23	+22	+25	22d6 (31)	33	28
Great wurm	G	37d12+185 (425)	48 (+38 natural, -4 size, +4 Dex), touch 10, flat-footed 44	+37/+63	+47	+25	+24	+27	24d6 (33)	35	31
Draco Invictus	G	40d12+280 (540)	53 (+41 natural, -4 size, +6 Dex), touch 12, flat-footed 47	+40/+67	+52	+29	+28	+31	26d6 (37)	39	34

Envy Dragon Abilities by Age										
Age	Speed	Initiative	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha	Special Abilities	Caster level
Wyrmling	40 ft., Fly 100 ft. (average)	+0	11	11	11	13	13	13	Shapechange, Detect Thoughts	-
Very Young	40 ft., Fly 100 ft. (average)	+0	13	11	11	13	13	13		-
Young	40 ft., Fly 100 ft. (average)	+0	17	11	11	13	13	13		-
Juvenile	40 ft., Fly 150 ft. (poor)	+0	21	11	13	15	15	15	<i>Message</i>	1 st
Young Adult	40 ft., Fly 150 ft. (poor)	+0	23	11	13	17	17	17	DR 5/magic	3 rd
Adult	40 ft., Fly 150 ft. (poor)	+0	27	11	13	17	17	17	<i>Charm monster</i>	5 th
Mature Adult	40 ft., Fly 150 ft. (poor)	+1	29	13	15	19	19	19	DR 10/magic	7 th
Old	40 ft., Fly 200 ft. (clumsy)	+1	31	13	15	19	19	19	<i>Arcane sight</i>	9 th
Very Old	40 ft., Fly 200 ft. (clumsy)	+2	33	15	17	21	21	21	DR 15/magic	11 th
Ancient	40 ft., Fly 200 ft. (clumsy)	+2	35	15	17	21	21	21	<i>Discern location</i>	13 th
Wurm	40 ft., Fly 200 ft. (clumsy)	+3	37	17	19	23	23	23	DR 20/magic	15 th
Great wurm	40 ft., Fly 250 ft. (clumsy)	+4	39	19	21	25	25	25	<i>Bigsby's grasping hand</i>	17 th
Draco Invictus	40 ft., Fly 250 ft. (clumsy)	+6	43	23	25	29	29	29	DR 25/magic, Draco Invictus Abilities	19 th

Combat

The vicious dragons of envy prefer to fight using their stolen objects of desire when they can, so dragons obsessed with magic fight using spells, while dragons obsessed with, say, swordplay might transform itself into human form and duel its enemies. When a dragon's object of desire is not useful in combat, or when the dragon is bound by its name, it attacks with its teeth and claws, targeting the best and strongest of its enemies first. When it can, it copies abilities after tasting them.

Breath Weapon (Su): The breath weapon of an envy dragon is a cone of green energy that inflicts hideous agony on anyone caught in it.

Shapechange (Su): If an envy dragon tastes its object of desire, it can *shapechange* at will into the holder of that object of desire. This ability is identical to a *shapechange* spell, except the dragon can take on the abilities of a unique creature. The dragon can only adopt one alternate form, but can change this form by tasting another object of desire.

If anyone calls the dragon by its true name, it automatically returns to its natural form and cannot shapechange again using this ability for one day.

Spell-like abilities (Sp): At will – *detect thoughts*, *arcane sight*. 1/day – *charm monster*, *discern location* (object of desire only), *bigsby's grasping hand*. 3/day – *message*.

Skills: Appraise, Disguise and Sleight of Hand are class skills for envy dragons.

Envy Dragon Abilities	
Rank	Ability
I	<i>Shapechange</i>
II	<i>Detect Thoughts</i>
III	<i>Message</i> 3/day
IV	<i>Charm monster</i>
V	<i>Arcane sight</i>
VI	<i>Discern location</i>
VII	<i>Bigsby's grasping hand</i>
VIII	<i>Greater arcane sight</i>
IX	<i>Antipathy</i>
X	Draco Invictus Abilities

Envy Dragon

Dragon (Sin)

Environment: Any

Organisation: Solitary

Challenge Ratings: Wyrmling 2; very young 3; young 5; juvenile 8; young adult 11; adult 13; mature adult 15; old 17; very old 18; ancient 20; wurm 22; great wurm 24, draco invictus 27

Treasure: Triple standard

Alignment: Always neutral evil

Creation

Wyrming: 98.

Advancements: 21; All Standard except Very Poor Dexterity, Good Strength, Poor Constitution.

Total: 125.

PRIDE

Of all the dragons of sin, the pride dragons are the most straightforward. They are paragons of the draconic form – none of the other sin dragons are larger, or stronger, or more deadly. The dragons of pride seem to have no cunning or subtle methods of attack; they swoop from the sky, breathing gouts of flame and snatching up unfortunate victims to be devoured. They are especially drawn to important people and places; nothing pleases a pride dragon more than carrying off a beautiful princess or destroying a cathedral that is the crowning glory of a whole city.

Pride dragons often roost either in the ruins they create, or else in mountains with human civilisation nearby. Unlike other dragons, they *want* to be found and challenged. Pride dragons feed on overweening pride. When a knight rides out, clad in shining armour, carrying a shining lance, bedecked with blessings and favours and secure in the belief that he shall carry home the dragon's head, the dragon scents the knight's pride. If the knight is slain by the dragon, the dragon devours that misplaced pride and grows larger still. (Should the dragon, in its pride, overestimate its own strength and lose to the knight, newborn dragons may be spawned from the decaying pride of the fallen parent.)

Pride Dragon Abilities											
Age	Size	Hit Dice (hp)	AC	Base Attack/ Grapple	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Breath Weapon (DC)	Fear DC	SR
Wyrmling	S	5d12+10	16 (+5 natural, +1 size), touch 11, flat-footed 16	+5/+4	+9	+6	+4	+3	2d10 (13)	-	-
Very Young	M	8d12+16	18 (+8 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 18	+8/+14	+13	+8	+6	+5	4d10 (16)	-	-
Young	L	11d12+22	20 (+11 natural, -1 size), touch 9, flat-footed 20	+11/+22	+17	+9	+7	+8	6d10 (17)	-	-
Juvenile	L	14d12+42	23 (+14 natural, -1 size), touch 9, flat-footed 23	+14/+27	+22	+12	+9	+9	8d10 (20)	-	-
Young Adult	H	17d12+68	25 (+17 natural, -2 size), touch 8, flat-footed 25	+17/+35	+25	+14	+10	+11	10d10 (22)	19	19
Adult	H	20d12+100	28 (+20 natural, -2 size), touch 8, flat-footed 28	+20/+40	+30	+17	+12	+14	12d10 (25)	22	21
Mature Adult	H	23d12+138	31 (+23 natural, -2 size), touch 8, flat-footed 31	+23/+44	+34	+19	+13	+16	14d10 (28)	24	23
Old	H	26d12+156	34 (+26 natural, -2 size), touch 8, flat-footed 34	+26/+48	+38	+21	+15	+18	16d10 (28)	26	25
Very Old	G	29d12+203	37 (+29 natural, -4 size), touch 6, flat-footed 37	+29/+56	+40	+23	+16	+20	18d10 (31)	29	26
Ancient	G	32d12+256	38 (+32 natural, -4 size), touch 6, flat-footed 38	+32/+61	+44	+26	+18	+22	20d10(34)	32	28
Wurm	G	35d12+315	41 (+35 natural, -4 size), touch 6, flat-footed 41	+35/+61	+48	+28	+19	+24	22d10 (36)	34	29
Great wurm	G	38d12+380	44 (+38 natural, -4 size), touch 6, flat-footed 44	+38/+68	+52	+31	+21	+27	24d10 (39)	37	32
Draco Invictus	C	41d12+492	43 (+41 natural, -8 size), touch 2, flat-footed 41	+41/+77	+53	+34	+22	+30	26d10 (42)	41	35

Combat

Pride dragons goad their opponents with insults; slightly injuring their foe's pride is the same as the dragon inflicting a small claw wound and smelling the blood. It excites the dragon and makes it hungry for the kill. They are deadly fighters, fond of grand, dramatic gestures and sudden, crippling attacks and preferring to kill their opponent with a single devastating blow. They favour feats such as Power Attack, but always begin the battle with a blast from their fiery breath weapon.

If the battle turns against them, the pride dragon turns to nasty tricks. They prefer to choose their battlegrounds so they can seed the area with traps and ambushers. There is no depth to which pride dragons will not stoop; they exist to bring forth the pride of others, and have no honour or pride of their own.

Breath Weapon (Su): Pride dragons can breathe a cone of hot, golden-red flames.

Call to Challenge (Su): A character who would normally be shaken by the dragon's Fearful Presence instead becomes obsessed with slaying the dragon, and is filled with the proud conviction that he is destined to be the one who defeats the monster. This functions as a *geas* spell that expires after 4d6 days.



Spell-like abilities (Sp): 1/day – *sympathetic vibration, demand*. 2/day – *transmute rock to mud or mud to rock*. 3/day – *true strike, eagle's splendour*.

Skills: Bluff, Craft and Perform are class skills for pride dragons.

Pride Dragon Abilities by Age										
Age	Speed	Initiative	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha	Special Abilities	Caster level
Wyrmling	40 ft., Fly 100 ft. (average)	+0	17	10	15	11	9	11	Call to Challenge, Immunity to Fire	-
Very Young	40 ft., Fly 100 ft. (average)	+0	21	10	15	11	9	11		-
Young	40 ft., Fly 100 ft. (average)	+0	25	10	15	11	9	11		-
Juvenile	40 ft., Fly 150 ft. (poor)	+0	29	10	17	13	11	13	<i>True Strike</i>	-
Young Adult	40 ft., Fly 150 ft. (poor)	+0	31	10	19	15	13	15	DR 5/magic	-
Adult	40 ft., Fly 150 ft. (poor)	+0	35	10	21	17	15	17	<i>Eagle's Splendor</i>	1 st
Mature Adult	40 ft., Fly 150 ft. (poor)	+0	37	10	23	19	17	19	DR 10/magic	3 rd
Old	40 ft., Fly 200 ft. (clumsy)	+0	39	10	23	19	17	19	<i>Transmute rock to mud</i>	5 th
Very Old	40 ft., Fly 200 ft. (clumsy)	+0	41	10	25	21	19	21	DR 15/magic	7 th
Ancient	40 ft., Fly 200 ft. (clumsy)	+0	43	10	27	21	19	23	<i>Sympathetic vibration</i>	9 th
Wyrm	40 ft., Fly 200 ft. (clumsy)	+0	45	10	29	23	21	25	DR 20/magic	11 th
Great wyrm	40 ft., Fly 250 ft. (clumsy)	+0	47	10	31	25	23	27	<i>Demand</i>	13 th
Draco Invictus	40 ft., Fly 250 ft. (clumsy)	+0	51	10	35	29	27	31	DR 25/magic, Draco Invictus abilities	15 th

Pride Dragon Abilities	
Rank	Ability
I	Call to Challenge
II	Immunity to fire
III	<i>True strike</i> 3/day
IV	<i>Eagle's Splendour</i> 3/day
V	<i>Transmute rock to mud</i> 2/day
VI	<i>Sympathetic vibration</i>
VII	<i>Demand</i>
VIII	<i>Greater invisibility</i>
IX	<i>Sympathy</i>
X	Draco Invictus Abilities

Pride Dragon

Dragon (Sin)

Environment: Any

Organisation: Solitary

Challenge Ratings: Wyrmling 3; very young 4; young 6; juvenile 7; young adult 12; adult 14; mature adult 16; old 18; very old 19; ancient 21; wyrm 23; great wyrm 25, draco invictus 28

Treasure: Triple standard

Alignment: Always chaotic evil

Creation

Wyrming: 115.

Advancements: 33; All Standard except Null Dexterity, Excellent Strength and Charisma, Good Intelligence and Wisdom, Very Poor Magic.

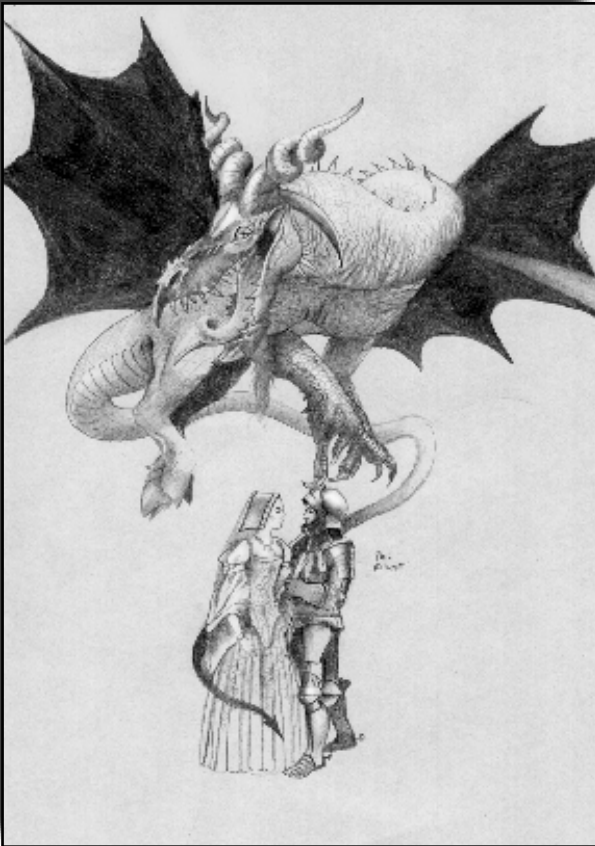
Total: 148.

LUST

The first sign thing noticed about lust dragons is the heat. Waves of intense dead heat radiate from the scaly flanks of the creatures. They lounge languidly, like cats, and their eyes follow every movement their victims make. The rhythm of the dragon's breath is always slightly faster than a human's heartbeat, so the panting of the dragon acts like a fast beat, driving the heart rate and head of listeners higher, harder and faster. Young lust dragons are thin and almost ephemeral creatures, with wings like silk and soft pale skin. As they grow, their bodies flush blood-red and their wings turn black and leathery.

These dragons behave like gigantic, remorseless, leathery Cupids. They encourage lust and sexual desire, especially where it is inappropriate or ill-

Lust Dragons by Age												
Age	Size	Hit Dice (hp)	AC	Base Attack/ Grapple	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Breath Weapon (DC)	Fear DC	SR	
Wyrmling	T	3d12+6 (25)	16 (+5 natural, +2 size), touch 12, flat-footed 16	+3/-4	+5	+5	+3	+4	2d6 (13)	-	-	
Very Young	S	6d12+12 (51)	18 (+8 natural, +1 size), touch 11, flat-footed 18	+6/+0	+9	+7	+5	+6	4d6 (15)	-	-	
Young	M	9d12+18 (76)	20 (+11 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 20	+9/+12	+12	+8	+6	+7	6d6 (16)	-	-	
Juvenile	L	12d12+36 (114)	23 (+14 natural, -1 size), touch 9, flat-footed 23	+12/+21	+15	+11	+8	+10	8d6 (19)	-	-	
Young Adult	L	15d12+60 (157)	25 (+17 natural, -1 size), touch 9, flat-footed 25	+15/+25	+19	+13	+9	+12	10d6 (21)	21	19	
Adult	H	18d12+90 (207)	28 (+20 natural, -2 size), touch 8, flat-footed 28	+18/+34	+24	+16	+11	+14	12d6 (24)	24	21	
Mature Adult	H	21d12+126 (262)	31 (+23 natural, -2 size), touch 8, flat-footed 31	+21/+38	+28	+18	+12	+16	14d6 (27)	26	24	
Old	H	24d12+144 (300)	34 (+26 natural, -2 size), touch 8, flat-footed 34	+24/+42	+32	+20	+14	+18	16d6 (28)	28	26	
Very Old	H	27d12+189 (364)	37 (+29 natural, -2 size), touch 8, flat-footed 37	+27/+46	+36	+22	+15	+20	18d6 (30)	30	27	
Ancient	G	30d12+210 (405)	38 (+32 natural, -4 size), touch 6, flat-footed 38	+30/+54	+38	+24	+17	+22	20d6 (32)	33	29	
Wyrm	G	33d12+264 (478)	41 (+35 natural, -4 size), touch 6, flat-footed 41	+33/+58	+42	+26	+18	+24	22d6 (34)	35	30	
Great wyrm	G	36d12+324 (558)	44 (+38 natural, -4 size), touch 6, flat-footed 44	+36/+62	+46	+28	+20	+27	24d6 (37)	38	34	
Draco Invictus	G	39d12+429 (682)	47 (+41 natural, -4 size), touch 6, flat-footed 47	+39/+67	+52	+32	+21	+30	26d6 (40)	41	37	



considered. Lust dragons commonly attack and threaten certain death, just to force two people into a situation where the sense of impending doom overwhelms inhibitions and morals. They devour clerics and moralisers who preach out against licentious behaviour, and claw open chastity belts with the greatest gentleness and care. Lust dragons

consort with satyrs and fey to lure mortal youths astray into wild dances of abandon.

Despite this behaviour, lust dragons care nothing for joy. They foster desire and longing solely for their own purposes – if any children are born of a sexual act brought about by the lust dragon, the child is a half-dragon offspring of the dragon.

Combat

Lust dragons use their abilities to prepare for battle, keeping tabs on potential enemies by *scrying*, then playing on weaknesses and divisions within the attacking forces. They prefer to fight using magic and trickery instead of direct assault.

As lust dragons often have numerous half-dragon spawn, they use these offspring as lieutenants or even cannon fodder in battle. After all, people are always willing to create more children.

Breath Weapon (Su): The breath of a lust dragon is a cone of hot air, heavy and scented. It can be used to strip off clothing without harming the flesh beneath (inflicting damage only on weapons and equipment), but the dragon can also choose to melt flesh with the heat of the blast.

Inner Fire (Su): Lust dragons automatically have the Inner Fire physical feat for free (see page 146).

Spell-like abilities (Sp): 1/day – *greater teleport*
3/day – *scrying*, *mind fog*.

Lust Dragon Abilities by Age										
Age	Speed	Initiative	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha	Special Abilities	Caster level
Wyrmling	40 ft., Fly 100 ft. (average)	+0	13	10	14	13	13	13	Sire offspring, Immunity to heat, Charm person	-
Very Young	40 ft., Fly 100 ft. (average)	+0	15	10	14	13	13	15		-
Young	40 ft., Fly 100 ft. (average)	+0	17	10	14	13	13	15	<i>Eagle's splendor</i>	-
Juvenile	40 ft., Fly 150 ft. (poor)	+0	21	10	16	15	15	17	DR 5/magic	1 st
Young Adult	40 ft., Fly 150 ft. (poor)	+0	23	10	18	17	17	19	<i>Scrying</i> 3/day	3 rd
Adult	40 ft., Fly 150 ft. (poor)	+0	27	10	20	19	17	21	DR 10/magic	5 th
Mature Adult	40 ft., Fly 150 ft. (poor)	+0	29	10	22	21	19	23	<i>Charm monster</i>	7 th
Old	40 ft., Fly 200 ft. (clumsy)	+0	31	10	22	21	19	23	DR 15/magic	9 th
Very Old	40 ft., Fly 200 ft. (clumsy)	+0	33	10	24	23	21	25	<i>Greater teleport</i>	11 th
Ancient	40 ft., Fly 200 ft. (clumsy)	+0	35	10	24	23	21	27	DR 20/magic	13 th
Wyrm	40 ft., Fly 200 ft. (clumsy)	+0	37	10	26	25	23	29	<i>Mind fog</i>	15 th
Great wyrm	40 ft., Fly 250 ft. (clumsy)	+0	39	10	28	27	25	31	DR 25/magic	17 th
Draco Invictus	40 ft., Fly 250 ft. (clumsy)	+0	43	10	32	31	29	35	Draco Invictus Abilities	19 th

Enchantments of the Dragon (Sp): Lust dragons can cast any of several spells with a range of Long. The dragon can choose to who the *charm* effect falls upon; for example, if the dragon casts *charm person* on a princess, he can choose that the princess feels affection for a stableboy instead of the caster of the charm spell, i.e. the dragon. The spells usable with this ability are *charm person*, *eagle's splendour*, *invisibility* and *charm monster*. Each of these abilities can be used three times per day once the dragon is old enough to acquire them.

Sire Offspring (Su): Any children brought about by the dragon's actions are half-dragons.

Skills: Bluff, Perform and Sense Motive are class skills for lust dragons.

Lust Dragon Abilities	
Rank	Ability
I	Sire offspring
II	Immunity to heat
III	<i>Charm person</i> 3/day
IV	<i>Eagle's splendour</i> 3/day
V	<i>Invisibility</i> 3/day
VI	<i>Scrying</i> 3/day
VII	<i>Charm monster</i> 3/day
VIII	<i>Greater teleport</i>
IX	<i>Mind fog</i> 3/day
X	Draco Invictus Abilities

Lust Dragon
Dragon (Sin)

Environment: Any

Organisation: Solitary

Challenge Ratings: Wyrmling 3; very young 5; young 7; juvenile 9; young adult 12; adult 14; mature adult 17; old 19; very old 20; ancient 22; wurm 23; great wurm 27, draco invictus 30

Treasure: Triple standard

Alignment: Always chaotic evil

Creation

Wyrming: 85.

Advancements: 45; All Standard except Superior Charisma, Good Intelligence and Constitution, Superior Special Abilities.

Total: 130.

GLUTTONY

Dragons of gluttony begin as painfully thin creatures, resembling an animated fish skeleton that mewls pathetically, like a starving cat. Bring it food, however, and it refuses to eat. Something in its plaintive voice and pleading eyes compel those who pity it to bring more and more food, in the hopes that some delicacy or dish will be acceptable to the poor creature. Eventually, the gluttony wyrmling sits shivering on a table piled high with every possible food, touching none of it.

Eventually, one of the onlookers succumbs to their own hunger and begins to feast, gorging on every scrap of rich food that was offered to the gluttony dragon. When the huge meal is over, the dragon is just as fat and sated as any of the diners. A full-grown gluttony dragon is grotesquely obese, with rolls of fat pushing out from behind every greasy scale. Its central mouth overflows with teeth and drool, and it has subsidiary mouths in its cheeks to eat more sins.

The presence of a gluttony dragon can be a blessing at first, for their magic makes crops grow faster and



Gluttony Dragons by Age												
Age	Size	Hit Dice (hp)	AC	Base Attack/ Grapple	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Breath Weapon (DC)	Fear DC	SR	
Wymling	S	5d12+10 (42)	15 (+6 natural, +1 size, -2 Dex), touch 9, flat-footed 15	+5/+3	+8	+6	+2	+3	2d6 (14)	-	-	
Very Young	M	8d12+16 (68)	17 (+9 natural, -2 Dex), touch 8, flat-footed 17	+8/+11	+12	+8	+4	+5	4d6 (16)	-	-	
Young	L	11d12+22 (93)	19 (+12 natural, -1 size, -2 Dex), touch 7, flat-footed 19	+11/+19	+14	+9	+5	+6	6d6 (17)	-	-	
Juvenile	L	14d12+28 (119)	22 (+15 natural, -1 size, -2 Dex), touch 7, flat-footed 22	+14/+24	+19	+11	+7	+8	8d6 (19)	-	-	
Young Adult	H	17d12+51 (161)	24 (+18 natural, -2 size, -2 Dex), touch 6, flat-footed 24	+17/+32	+22	+13	+8	+10	10d6 (21)	18	19	
Adult	H	20d12+80 (210)	27 (+21 natural, -2 size, -2 Dex), touch 6, flat-footed 27	+20/+37	+27	+16	+10	+13	12d6 (24)	21	21	
Mature Adult	H	23d12+92 (241)	30 (+24 natural, -2 size, -2 Dex), touch 6, flat-footed 30	+23/+41	+30	+17	+11	+14	14d6 (27)	23	23	
Old	H	26d12+130 (299)	33 (+27 natural, -2 size, -2 Dex), touch 6, flat-footed 33	+26/+45	+34	+20	+13	+17	16d6 (28)	25	25	
Very Old	G	29d12+145 (333)	34 (+30 natural, -4 size, -2 Dex), touch 4, flat-footed 34	+29/+53	+37	+21	+14	+18	18d6 (29)	26	26	
Ancient	G	32d12+192 (400)	37 (+33 natural, -4 size, -2 Dex), touch 4, flat-footed 37	+32/+57	+41	+24	+16	+21	20d6 (31)	29	28	
Wyrm	G	35d12+210 (437)	40 (+36 natural, -4 size, -2 Dex), touch 4, flat-footed 40	+35/+61	+45	+26	+17	+22	22d6 (34)	30	30	
Great wyrm	G	38d12+266 (513)	43 (+39 natural, -4 size, -2 Dex), touch 4, flat-footed 43	+38/+65	+49	+28	+19	+25	24d6 (36)	33	32	
Draco Invictus	C	41d12+369 (635)	42 (+42 natural, -8 size, -2 size), touch 0, flat-footed 42	+41/+74	+54	+31	+20	+28	26d6 (39)	36	35	

animals wax fatter. However, the food produced by this magic is never quite filling enough to satisfy.

Combat

Gluttony dragons have a simple approach to combat – they eat people. The massive maw of the gluttony dragon distends and widens horribly, allowing the dragon to swallow creatures almost as big as itself. The dragon derives no nourishment from eating people, as it feeds on sin instead of flesh, but it has an inexhaustible capacity for devouring other people. The massive bulk of the gluttony dragon is an easy mark to hit, but inflicting serious injury

on the monster is difficult due to its sheer size and obesity.

Breath Weapon (Su): The breath weapon of a gluttony dragon is a cone-shaped spray of acid bile, containing chunks of half-digested foods.

Improved Grab (Ex): If the dragon hits a smaller creature with its bite attack, it may immediately attempt to grab hold of the creature by making a grapple check.

Swallow Whole (Ex): If a gluttony dragon grabs hold of an enemy using its bite, it may make a second grapple check to swallow the enemy. The enemy takes bite damage in the round during which it is swallowed, and every round thereafter takes damage equal to the dragon's breath weapon. A character can cut his way free by inflicting 20 points of damage per age category of the dragon on the inside of the dragon's gullet. The gullet has an Armour Class of 10+1/2 its natural armour bonus.

Spell-like abilities (Sp): 1/day – *unseen servant*, *slow*, *insect plague* 3/day – *grease*.

Fool's Feast (Sp): This ability functions like the spell *heroes' feast*, and appears to be identical, giving the diner's extra hit points, a morale bonus and the other benefits of the spell. However, whenever those who ate the food enter combat, all the bonuses become penalties. A gluttony dragon can cast *fool's feast* once per day.

Feast of Famine (Su): The area around the gluttony dragon is blessed with fertile fields and record harvests (if rural) or laden shelves and well-stocked stores (if urban). However, the nourishment value of the food is decreased to one-third normal. The range of this ability in miles is twice the dragon's age category in miles, squared.

Skills: Bluff, Craft (cooking), Diplomacy are class skills for gluttony dragons.

Gluttony Dragon Abilities	
Rank	Ability
I	Feast of famine
II	Immunity to acid
III	<i>Grease</i> 3/day
IV	<i>Unseen servant</i>
V	<i>Slow</i>
VI	Fool's feast
VII	<i>Insect plague</i>
VIII	<i>Creeping doom</i>
IX	<i>Blight</i>
X	Draco Invictus Abilities

Gluttony Dragon Dragon (Sin)

Environment: Any

Organisation: Solitary

Challenge Ratings: Wyrmling 3; very young 4; young 6; juvenile 9; young adult 12; adult 14; mature adult 16; old 18; very old 19; ancient 21; wyrm 23; great wyrm 25, draco invictus 28

Treasure: Triple standard

Alignment: Always neutral evil

Creation

Wyrming: 110.

Advancements: 21. All Standard advancements except Null Dexterity.

Total: 131.

Gluttony Dragon Abilities by Age										
Age	Speed	Initiative	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha	Special Abilities	Caster level
Wyrmling	40 ft., Fly 100 ft. (clumsy)	-2	15	6	15	9	9	9	Feast of Famine, Immunity to Acid	-
Very Young	40 ft., Fly 100 ft. (clumsy)	-2	17	6	15	9	9	9		-
Young	40 ft., Fly 100 ft. (clumsy)	-2	19	6	15	9	9	9		-
Juvenile	40 ft., Fly 100 ft. (clumsy)	-2	23	6	15	9	9	9	<i>Grease</i>	1 st
Young Adult	40 ft., Fly 150 ft. (clumsy)	-2	25	6	17	11	11	11	DR 5/magic	3 rd
Adult	40 ft., Fly 150 ft. (clumsy)	-2	29	6	19	13	13	13	<i>Unseen servant</i>	5 th
Mature Adult	40 ft., Fly 150 ft. (clumsy)	-2	31	6	19	13	13	13	DR 10/magic	7 th
Old	40 ft., Fly 150 ft. (clumsy)	-2	33	6	21	15	15	15	<i>Slow</i>	9 th
Very Old	40 ft., Fly 200 ft. (clumsy)	-2	35	6	21	15	15	15	DR 15/magic	11 th
Ancient	40 ft., Fly 200 ft. (clumsy)	-2	37	6	23	17	17	17	Fool's Feast	13 th
Wyrm	40 ft., Fly 200 ft. (clumsy)	-2	39	6	23	17	17	17	DR 20/magic	15 th
Great wyrm	40 ft., Fly 200 ft. (clumsy)	-2	41	6	25	19	19	19	Insect Plague	17 th
Draco invictus	40 ft., Fly 250 ft., (clumsy)	-2	45	6	29	23	23	23	DR 25/Magic, Draco Invictus Abilities	19 th

WRATH

Dragons of wrath are the most vicious and destructive of the sin dragons. While pride dragons inspire heroism and hope along with pride, and envy dragons limit their malice to a single object of desire at a time, wrath dragons simply destroy. They can only feed on unjustified or excessive anger and hatred, but for ten people who feel justifiable anger towards the dragon's actions, there will be one who lets all his other frustrations and furies explode in the wake of the dragon's attack. They take great joy in all forms of cruelty and in despoiling all that is good and pure.

A young wrath dragon is a pale, translucent thing. Images seem to flicker within it, half-glimpsed shapes that promise destruction and horror dance across its gossamer wings. As the dragon ages and causes devastation and sorrow, its scales blacken as though burnt. Its form twists and warps, transforming it into a hideous monster. The images of destruction push to the surface, their shapes are solidified in hardened dragonscale. A full-grown wrath dragon is a black monster whose skin is a

living account of all the atrocities it has committed. They nest in whatever cave or ruin that takes their fancy, but decorate their lair with trophies of pain and degradation.

It wants to be hated. It feeds off hate.

Combat

Wrath dragons try to humiliate or even torture their opponents. One of their favoured tactics is to grab a wizard's familiar or other non-threatening but valued companion and fly off with it. (Princesses are the classic victim of this stratagem.) The key is forcing the enemy to hate, creating boiling emotional clouds of wrath that the dragon can devour.

The dragons use *whispering winds* to taunt enemies and satirical *baleful polymorphs* to mock them. *Wind wall* and *control weather* are used to divide and slow attackers.

Breath Weapon (Su): The breath weapon of a wrath dragon is a cone of fire.

Wrath Dragons by Age												
Age	Size	Hit Dice (hp)	AC	Base Attack/ Grapple	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Breath Weapon (DC)	Fear DC	SR	
Wyrmling	T	4d12+4 (30)	16 (+4 natural, +2 size), touch 12, flat-footed 16	+4/-3	+7	+5	+4	+4	2d10 (13)	-	-	
Very Young	S	7d12+7 (52)	18 (+7 natural, +1 size), touch 11, flat-footed 18	+7/+5	+10	+6	+5	+5	4d10 (15)	-	-	
Young	M	10d12+10 (75)	20 (+10 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 20	+10/+14	+14	+8	+7	+7	6d10 (16)	-	-	
Juvenile	L	13d12+26 (110)	22 (+13 natural, -1 size), touch 9, flat-footed 22	+13/+23	+18	+10	+8	+9	8d10 (17)	-	-	
Young Adult	L	16d12+32 (136)	25 (+16 natural, -1 size), touch 9, flat-footed 25	+16/+27	+22	+12	+10	+12	10d10 (20)	20	19	
Adult	H	19d12+57 (180)	28 (+19 natural, -2 size), touch 8, flat-footed 28	+19/+36	+26	+14	+11	+13	12d10 (22)	21	21	
Mature Adult	H	22d12+88 (231)	31 (+22 natural, -2 size), touch 8, flat-footed 31	+22/+40	+30	+17	+13	+16	14d10 (25)	24	23	
Old	H	25d12+100 (262)	34 (+25 natural, -2 size), touch 8, flat-footed 34	+25/+44	+34	+19	+14	+17	16d10 (26)	25	25	
Very Old	H	28d12+140 (322)	36 (+28 natural, -2 size), touch 8, flat-footed 36	+28/+48	+38	+21	+16	+20	18d10 (29)	28	26	
Ancient	G	31d12+155 (356)	37 (+31 natural, -4 size), touch 6, flat-footed 37	+31/+56	+40	+22	+17	+21	20d10 (30)	29	28	
Wurm	G	34d12+204 (425)	40 (+34 natural, -4 size), touch 6, flat-footed 40	+34/+60	+44	+25	+19	+25	22d10 (33)	32	30	
Great wurm	G	37d12+259 (499)	43 (+37 natural, -4 size), touch 6, flat-footed 43	+37/+65	+48	+27	+20	+26	24d10 (35)	34	32	
Draco Invictus	G	40d12+360 (620)	46 (+40 natural, -4 size), touch 6, flat-footed 46	+40/+69	+52	+30	+22	+30	26d10 (39)	38	35	

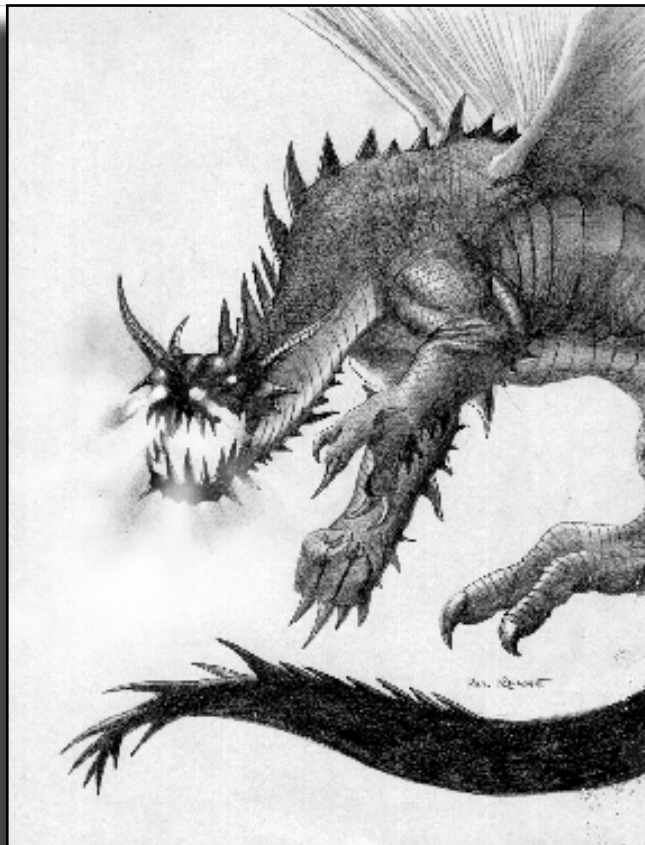
NEW DRAGONS

Wrath Dragon Abilities by Age										
Age	Speed	Initiative	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha	Special Abilities	Caster level
Wyrmling	40 ft., Fly 100 ft. (clumsy)	+0	13	10	13	12	10	10	Strength of Wrath, Immunity to Fire	-
Very Young	40 ft., Fly 100 ft. (clumsy)	+0	15	10	13	12	10	10		-
Young	40 ft., Fly 100 ft. (clumsy)	+0	19	10	13	12	10	10		-
Juvenile	40 ft., Fly 100 ft. (clumsy)	+0	23	10	15	14	12	12	<i>Whispering wind</i>	1 st
Young Adult	40 ft., Fly 150 ft. (clumsy)	+0	25	10	17	16	14	14	DR 5/magic	3 rd
Adult	40 ft., Fly 150 ft. (clumsy)	+0	29	10	17	18	14	14	<i>Wind wall</i>	5 th
Mature Adult	40 ft., Fly 150 ft. (clumsy)	+0	31	10	19	20	16	16	DR 10/magic	7 th
Old	40 ft., Fly 150 ft. (clumsy)	+0	33	10	19	20	16	16	<i>Baleful polymorph</i>	9 th
Very Old	40 ft., Fly 200 ft. (clumsy)	+0	35	10	21	22	18	18	DR 15/magic	11 th
Ancient	40 ft., Fly 200 ft. (clumsy)	+0	37	10	21	22	18	18	<i>Control weather</i>	13 th
Wyrm	40 ft., Fly 200 ft. (clumsy)	+0	39	10	23	24	20	20	DR 20/magic	15 th
Great wyrm	40 ft., Fly 200 ft. (clumsy)	+0	41	10	25	26	22	22	<i>Evar's black tentacles</i>	17 th
Draco Invictus	40 ft., Fly 250 ft. (clumsy)	+0	45	10	29	30	26	26	DR 25/magic, Draco Invictus abilities	19 th

Spell-like abilities (Sp): 1/day – *wind wall, control weather, evar's black tentacles* 3/day – *whispering wind, baleful polymorph.*

Strength of Wrath (Su): Whenever a enemy in combat with the dragon uses a Rage ability, the wrath dragon gains the same bonuses as the enemy for the duration of the rage. The dragon does not suffer any penalties when the rage ends.

Skills: Bluff, Intimidate and Sense Motive are class skills for wrath dragons.



Wrath Dragon Abilities	
Rank	Ability
I	Strength of Wrath
II	Immunity to fire
III	<i>Whispering wind</i> 3/day
IV	<i>Wind wall</i>
V	<i>Baleful polymorph</i> 3/day
VI	<i>Control weather</i>
VII	<i>Evar's black tentacles</i>
VIII	<i>Enervation</i>
IX	<i>Horrid wilting</i>
X	Draco Invictus Abilities

Wrath Dragon
Dragon (Sin)
Environment: Any
Organisation: Solitary

Challenge Ratings: Wyrmling 3; very young 4; young 6; juvenile 9; young adult 12; adult 14; mature adult 16; old 18; very old 19; ancient 21; wyrm 23; great wyrm 25, draco invictus 28

Treasure: Triple standard

Alignment: Always chaotic evil

Creation

Wyrming: 93.

Advancements: 27. All Standard advancements except Null Dexterity, Good Strength and Intelligence.

Total: 74.

TAMED DRAGONS

The ‘true’ dragons presented in *Core Rulebook III* are all of at least human intelligence, and most grow to be far more intelligent and wise than any human. While this fits perfectly with some myths about dragon-kind, it does make it more difficult to include dragon-riders in a game – after all, the dragon is usually smarter than its rider. The two dragon species in this section are both much closer to animals than other dragons and can be kept like falcons or hounds in a castle’s menagerie.

Tamed dragons resemble wyverns – they have but two legs, but are winged.

Keeping Tamed Dragons

If using the rules for raising dragons on page 217, riding and war dragons do not require Diplomacy checks to convince them to serve because they are unintelligent beasts. Tamed dragons are treated like prized warhorses. A king or exceedingly rich lord might have a stable of dragons and give a single wyrm to an especially favoured knight or other vassal. A trained riding dragon (of Juvenile age) costs 20,000 gp at least. A war dragon costs 50,000gp, assuming one is even for sale.

Aging

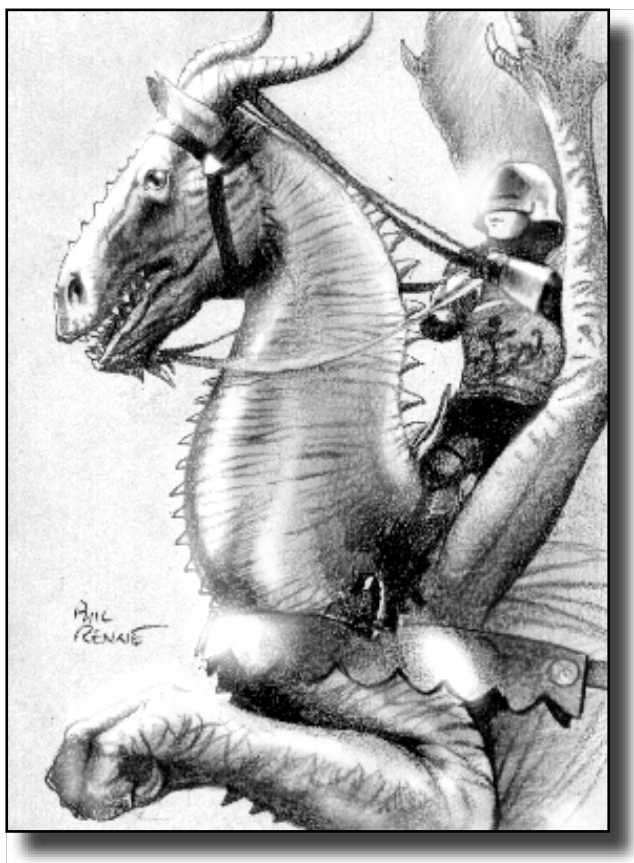
Tamed dragons live for a relatively short time compared to their wild kin. Furthermore, they do not reach the same vast size, although this is perhaps a blessing. It is hard enough to stable a Large dragon; a Colossal dragon would doubtless demand its own castle.

Tamed Dragon Growth Rate	
Age	Years
Wyrmling	<1
Very Young	1-3
Young	4-10
Juvenile	11-20
Young Adult	21-30
Adult	31-50
Mature Adult	51-80
Old	81-100

RIDING DRAGON

Riding dragons are small, lean wyrms with especially large and powerful wings. Their hides are dun-coloured and scaly. Their heads are somewhat more equine than those of other dragons and their eyes are brown and wild. As the dragon grows, a natural saddle forms between the spines on its back for its rider. The dragons can be ‘fire-gelded’ by surgically removing the glands that produce their fiery breath. This makes the dragon docile, but also less powerful.

Riding dragons are steered using a complex bridle that tugs on the horns and barbels on the sides of the dragon’s head. They are kept by a dragoner, who



Riding Dragons by Age												
Age	Size	Hit Dice (hp)	AC	Base Attack/Grapple	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Breath Weapon (DC)	Fear DC	SR	
Wyrmling	T	1d12+1 (8)	16 (+3 natural, +2 size), touch 12, flat-footed 16	+1/-9	+1	+3	+2	-2	1d6 (11)	-	-	
Very Young	S	4d12+4 (30)	18 (+6 natural, +1 size), touch 11, flat-footed 18	+4/-1	+4	+5	+4	+0	2d6 (13)	-	-	
Young	M	7d12+7 (52)	20 (+9 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 20	+7/+7	+7	+7	+6	+2	3d6 (14)	-	-	
Juvenile	L	10d12+20 (85)	22 (+12 natural, -1 size), touch 9, flat-footed 22	+10/+16	+11	+9	+7	+3	4d6 (17)	-	-	
Young Adult	L	13d12+39 (84)	25 (+15 natural, -1 size), touch 9, flat-footed 25	+13/+21	+15	+12	+9	+5	5d6 (19)	14	15	
Adult	H	16d12+48 (152)	28 (+18 natural, -2 size), touch 8, flat-footed 28	+16/+29	+21	+13	+10	+6	6d6 (21)	16	17	
Mature Adult	H	19d12+76 (199)	31 (+21 natural, -2 size), touch 8, flat-footed 31	+19/+33	+25	+16	+12	+8	7d6 (23)	18	20	
Old	H	22d12+88 (231)	34 (+24 natural, -2 size), touch 8, flat-footed 34	+22/+37	+27	+17	+13	+9	8d6 (25)	20	22	

fulfills duties similar to a falconer or stable-master, but his charges are much more dangerous and more valuable. Riding dragons are the swiftest and strongest of steeds, but their loyalty is less certain; if the dragon is not kept well fed, it can turn on its rider. There are tales of bonds of true friendship between dragon and rider, but such noble spirits are rare.

Combat

Left to their own devices, the dragons bite and claw ferociously. They prefer horseflesh and mutton above all else, but will eat almost any charred meat. A rider can guide his dragon's attacks as he would another mount, directing its breath weapon at one target while having it claw at another. Knightly

charges and jousts are possible from the back of a riding dragon.

Riding dragons have limited magical abilities that they use instinctively to defend themselves.

Breath Weapon (Su): The breath weapon of a riding dragon is a thin line of fire.

Scent (Ex): Riding dragons have the Scent ability.

Natural Saddle (Ex): Riding dragons always have the Natural Saddle feat (see page 146).

Spell-like abilities (Sp): 2/day – *expeditious retreat*
3/day – *bear's endurance*, *cat's grace*, *bull's strength*.

Skills: Climb, Jump and Survival are class skills for riding dragons.

Riding Dragon Abilities by Age											
Age	Speed	Initiative	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha	Special Abilities	Caster level	
Wyrmling	40 ft., Fly 200 ft. (average)	+0	6	10	12	2	2	3	Scent, Immunity to Fire	-	
Very Young	40 ft., Fly 200 ft. (average)	+0	8	10	12	2	2	3		-	
Young	40 ft., Fly 200 ft. (average)	+0	10	10	12	2	2	3		-	
Juvenile	40 ft., Fly 200 ft. (average)	+0	14	10	14	2	2	5	<i>Expeditious retreat</i>	-	
Young Adult	40 ft., Fly 250 ft. (poor)	+0	16	10	16	2	2	7	DR 5/magic	-	
Adult	40 ft., Fly 250 ft. (poor)	+0	20	10	16	2	2	7	<i>Bear's endurance</i>	1 st	
Mature Adult	40 ft., Fly 250 ft. (poor)	+0	22	10	18	4	4	9	DR 10/magic	3 rd	
Old	40 ft., Fly 250 ft. (poor)	+0	24	10	18	4	4	9	<i>Cat's grace</i>	5 th	

War Dragons by Age												
Age	Size	Hit Dice (hp)	AC	Base Attack/ Grapple	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Breath Weapon (DC)	Fear DC	SR	
Wyrmling	T	2d12+2 (15)	16 (+3 natural, +2 size), touch 12, flat-footed 16	+2/-7	+3	+4	+3	-1	1d6 (12)	-	-	
Very Young	S	5d12+5 (37)	18 (+6 natural, +1 size), touch 11, flat-footed 18	+5/+1	+6	+6	+5	+1	2d6 (13)	-	-	
Young	M	8d12+8 (60)	20 (+9 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 20	+8/+10	+10	+8	+7	+3	3d6 (15)	-	-	
Juvenile	L	11d12+22 (93)	22 (+12 natural, -1 size), touch 9, flat-footed 22	+11/+18	+14	+10	+8	+4	4d6 (17)	-	-	
Young Adult	L	14d12+42 (133)	25 (+15 natural, -1 size), touch 9, flat-footed 25	+14/+23	+18	+13	+10	+6	5d6 (20)	15	15	
Adult	H	17d12+68 (178)	28 (+18 natural, -2 size), touch 8, flat-footed 28	+17/+32	+22	+14	+11	+7	6d6 (21)	16	17	
Mature Adult	H	20d12+100 (230)	31 (+21 natural, -2 size), touch 8, flat-footed 31	+20/+36	+26	+17	+13	+10	7d6 (24)	19	20	
Old	H	23d12+115 (264)	34 (+24 natural, -2 size), touch 8, flat-footed 34	+23/+40	+30	+18	+14	+11	8d6 (25)	20	22	

Riding Dragon Abilities	
Rank	Ability
I	Scant
II	Immunity to fire
III	<i>Expeditious Retreat</i> 3/day
IV	<i>Bear's Endurance</i> 2/day
V	<i>Cat's Grace</i> 2/day
VI	<i>Bull's Strength</i> 2/day
VII	<i>Heroism</i>
VIII	<i>Endure Elements</i>
IX	<i>Stoneskin</i>
X	Draco Invictus Abilities

Riding Dragon

Dragon

Environment: Any

Organisation: Solitary, Clutch (1d4+1), Pair (2) or Stable (6+3d4)

Challenge Ratings: Wyrmling 1; very young 2; young 4; juvenile 6; young adult 8; adult 10; mature adult 13; old 15

Treasure: None

Alignment: Usually neutral

Creation

Wyrming: 15

Advancements: 12. All Standard advancements except Null Dexterity, Very Poor Intelligence, Wisdom, Magic.

Total: 37.

Note that a riding dragon cannot normally use its sorcerer levels due to its low Charisma score.

WAR DRAGON

Especially strong and aggressive dragon hatchlings are removed and reared separately as war dragons. They are fed on a diet of red meat and firestone, which makes them grow bigger and stronger than normal riding dragons. Their breath weapon glands are not removed, but are instead exercised regularly and carefully tended. By the time a war dragon reaches its full growth, its hide is soot-black due to all of the ash ground into its brown scales, and its eyes are fiery-red and bloodshot.

War dragons are living siege engines. Too big to be ridden comfortably, they are usually magically bound and commanded using *whispering winds* or *geases*. A single war dragon can shatter whole formations of footmen by its mere presence before

War Dragon Abilities by Age										
Age	Speed	Initiative	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha	Special Abilities	Caster level
Wyrmling	40 ft., Fly 200 ft. (average)	+0	8	10	12	2	2	3	Rage, Immunity to Fire	-
Very Young	40 ft., Fly 200 ft. (average)	+0	10	10	12	2	2	3		-
Young	40 ft., Fly 200 ft. (average)	+0	14	10	12	2	2	3		-
Juvenile	40 ft., Fly 200 ft. (average)	+0	18	10	14	2	2	5	<i>Bull's strength</i>	-
Young Adult	40 ft., Fly 250 ft. (poor)	+0	20	10	16	2	2	7	DR 5/magic	-
Adult	40 ft., Fly 250 ft. (poor)	+0	24	10	18	2	2	7	<i>Bear's Endurance</i>	1 st
Mature Adult	40 ft., Fly 250 ft. (poor)	+0	26	10	20	4	4	9	DR 10/magic	3 rd
Old	40 ft., Fly 250 ft. (poor)	+0	28	10	20	4	4	9	<i>Cat's grace</i>	5 th

Note that a war dragon cannot normally use its sorcerer levels due to its low Charisma score.

smashing though a legion of armoured knights and tearing down a castle wall.

Training a war dragon is difficult, as the beasts are stubborn and vicious – apply a –4 penalty to all Handle Animal checks made on the war dragon.

Combat

War dragons are creatures of pure rage and destructive power. They are trained to use their breath weapon attacks to disrupt the lines of enemy troops before swooping down and destroying knights, siege engines and other important targets. They rarely carry riders, but some are pressed into use as troop transports, carrying large numbers of

soldiers over the battlefield to land amid the enemy's rearguard or atop the walls of a fortress.

Breath Weapon (Su): The breath weapon of a war dragon is a cone of fire.

Rage (Ex): A war dragon can *rage* as a barbarian of equal level to its age category once per day.

Spell-like abilities (Sp): 1/day – *stoneskin, heroism*
3/day – *bear's endurance, cat's grace, bull's strength.*

Skills: Climb, Jump and Survival are class skills for war dragons.



War Dragon Abilities	
Rank	Ability
I	Rage
II	Immunity to fire
III	<i>Bull's Strength</i> 2/day
IV	<i>Bear's Endurance</i> 2/day
V	<i>Cat's Grace</i> 2/day
VI	<i>Stoneskin</i>
VII	<i>Heroism</i>
VIII	<i>Control Weather</i>
IX	<i>Meteor Storm</i>
X	Draco Invictus Abilities

War Dragon

Environment: Any

Organisation: Solitary, Clutch (1d4+1), Pair (2) or Stable (6+3d4)

Challenge Ratings: Wyrmling 2; very young 3; young 5; juvenile 7; young adult 9; adult 11; mature adult 14; old 16

Treasure: None

Alignment: Usually neutral

Creation

Wyrmimg: 48

Advancements: 18. All Standard advancements except Null Dexterity, Very Poor Intelligence, Wisdom, Magic, Good Strength and Constitution.

Total: 66.

CLASSIC DRAGONS

These dragons are suitable for use in a low-fantasy campaign, modelled on actual history. While they are almost as powerful as true dragons, their influence is considerably more limited. The Lambton Worm is based on legendary and historical accounts. The Swamp Dragon is that most unlikely thing, a plausible dragon. Finally, the Heraldic dragon turns the draconic symbol of a nation or dynasty into a reality.

LAMBTON WORM

*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.*

The Lambton Worm is a horror born of a dark well. When found, it was nothing more than an ordinary if ugly worm. A young noble threw the worm into the well, where it grew and grew. Now it is large enough to wrap itself seven times around the largest hill, and wreaks havoc on the countryside. It lairs in the well where it grew, or in the nearest body of water if it can no longer crawl back into the well.

The worm grows exceedingly quickly, at the rate of one age category every year. It is a wingless serpent.

Combat

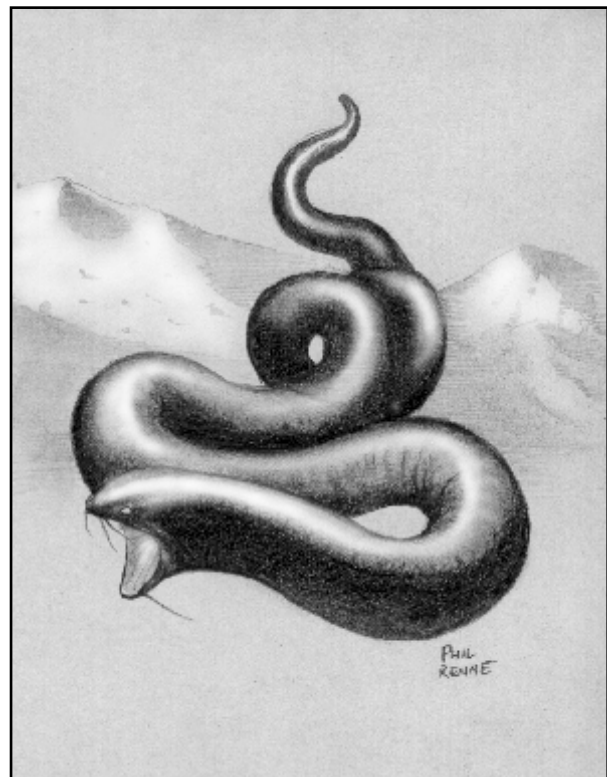
The Lambton Worm is not an especially clever foe. It has the ability to drain the milk from cows, but this is unlikely to threaten most characters. The worm attacks by wrapping itself around enemies and crushing them to death in its slimy coils. Sages therefore advise forging a suit of armour all covered in blades that the worm might cut itself into many segments when it attacks.

The worm is very difficult to kill – when chopped in two, the sections join together and soon it is good as when it first crawled out of the well. Some suggest fighting the worm in the river, so the current might wash the sections away; others advocate the use of the bladed armour coupled with a little heroism.

Breath Weapon (Su): The Worm can breathe a line of poison, which deals 1d10 points of temporary Constitution damage to anyone struck by it.

Improved Grab: All Lambton Worms have the Improved Grab feat.

Constrict (Ex): If the worm makes a successful grapple check, it can begin to crush an opponent inflicting damage equal to a claw attack for a dragon of its size plus one and a half times its Strength bonus.



NEW DRAGONS

Lambton Worms by Age												
Age	Size	Hit Dice (hp)	AC	Base Attack/ Grapple	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Breath Weapon (DC)	Fear DC	SR	
Wyrmling	T	1d12+1 (8)	16 (+4 natural, +2 size), touch 12, flat-footed 16	+1/-10	+0	+3	+2	-2	- (11)	-	-	
Very Young	S	4d12+4 (30)	18 (+7 natural, +1 size), touch 11, flat-footed 18	+4/-2	+3	+5	+4	+0	- (13)	-	-	
Young	M	7d12+7 (52)	20 (+10 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 20	+7/+7	+7	+6	+5	+1	- (14)	-	-	
Juvenile	L	10d12+20 (85)	22 (+13 natural, -1 size), touch 9, flat-footed 22	+10/+16	+11	+9	+7	+3	- (17)	-	-	
Young Adult	L	13d12+39 (123)	25 (+16 natural, -1 size), touch 9, flat-footed 25	+13/+20	+15	+11	+8	+4	- (19)	20	15	
Adult	H	16d12+64 (168)	27 (+19 natural, -2 size), touch 8, flat-footed 28	+16/+29	+19	+14	+10	+6	- (22)	21	17	
Mature Adult	H	19d12+95 (218)	30 (+22 natural, -2 size), touch 8, flat-footed 30	+19/+33	+23	+16	+11	+8	- (24)	24	20	
Old	H	22d12+110 (253)	33 (+25 natural, -2 size), touch 8, flat-footed 33	+22/+37	+27	+18	+13	+10	- (26)	25	22	
Very Old	H	25d12+150 (312)	36 (+28 natural, -2 size), touch 8, flat-footed 36	+25/+41	+31	+20	+14	+12	- (27)	28	24	
Ancient	G	28d12+168 (350)	37 (+31 natural, -4 size), touch 6, flat-footed 37	+28/+49	+33	+22	+16	+14	- (30)	29	25	
Wyrm	G	31d12+217 (418)	40 (+34 natural, -4 size), touch 6, flat-footed 40	+31/+53	+37	+24	+17	+16	- (32)	32	26	
Great wyrm	G	34d12+272 (493)	43 (+37 natural, -4 size), touch 6, flat-footed 43	+34/+57	+41	+27	+19	+19	- (35)	34	27	
Draco Invictus	G	37d12+333 (573)	46 (+40 natural, -4 size), touch 6, flat-footed 46	+37/+61	+46	+29	+20	+22	- (37)	38	30	

Lambton Worm Abilities by Age											
Age	Speed	Initiative	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha	Special Abilities	Caster level	
Wyrmling	40 ft., Swim 40 ft., Burrow 40 ft.	+0	4	10	13	2	2	3	Water Walking, Immunity to Poison	-	
Very Young	40 ft., Swim 40 ft., Burrow 40 ft.	+0	6	10	13	2	2	3		-	
Young	40 ft., Swim 40 ft., Burrow 40 ft.	+0	10	10	13	2	2	3		-	
Juvenile	40 ft., Swim 40 ft., Burrow 40 ft.	+0	14	10	15	2	2	5	<i>Desecrate</i>		
Young Adult	40 ft., Swim 40 ft., Burrow 40 ft.	+0	16	10	17	2	2	7	DR 5/magic	1 st	
Adult	40 ft., Swim 40 ft., Burrow 40 ft.	+0	20	10	19	2	2	7	<i>Fear</i> 3/day	3 rd	
Mature Adult	40 ft., Swim 40 ft., Burrow 40 ft.	+0	22	10	21	4	4	9	DR 10/magic	5 th	
Old	40 ft., Swim 40 ft., Burrow 40 ft.	+0	24	10	21	4	4	9	<i>Blight</i>	7 th	
Very Old	40 ft., Swim 40 ft., Burrow 40 ft.	+0	26	10	23	6	6	11	DR 15/magic	9 th	
Ancient	40 ft., Swim 40 ft., Burrow 40 ft.	+0	28	10	23	6	6	11	<i>Evar's black tentacles</i>	11 th	
Wyrm	40 ft., Swim 40 ft., Burrow 40 ft.	+0	30	10	25	8	8	13	DR 20/magic	13 th	
Great wyrm	40 ft., Swim 40 ft., Burrow 40 ft.	+0	32	10	27	10	10	15	<i>Control water</i> 3/day	15 th	
Draco Invictus	40 ft., Swim 40 ft., Burrow 40 ft.	+0	36	10	29	14	14	19	DR 25/magic, Draco Invictus abilities	17 th	

Regeneration of the Worm: All Lambton Worms have the Regeneration of the Worm Feat.

Skills: Hide, Move Silently and Swim are class skills for Lambton Worms. They have a +8 racial bonus to Swim checks.

Lambton Worm Abilities	
Rank	Ability
I	Water walking
II	Immunity to poison
III	<i>Desecrate</i>
IV	<i>Fear 3/day</i>
V	<i>Blight</i>
VI	<i>Evar's black tentacles</i>
VII	<i>Control water 3/day</i>
VIII	<i>Control weather</i>
IX	<i>Protection from spells</i>
X	Draco Invictus Abilities

Lambton Worm

Dragon

Environment: Temperate plains and lakes

Organisation: Solitary

Challenge Ratings: Wyrmling 1; very young 2; young 4; juvenile 6; young adult 8; adult 10; mature adult 13; old 15; very old 17; ancient 18; wyrm 19; great wyrm 20, draco invictus 23.

Treasure: None.

Alignment: Always neutral evil.

Creation

Wyrming: 37.

Advancements: 18. All Standard advancements except Null Dexterity, Very Poor Intelligence, Wisdom, Magic, Good Strength and Constitution.

Total: 55.

SWAMP DRAGON

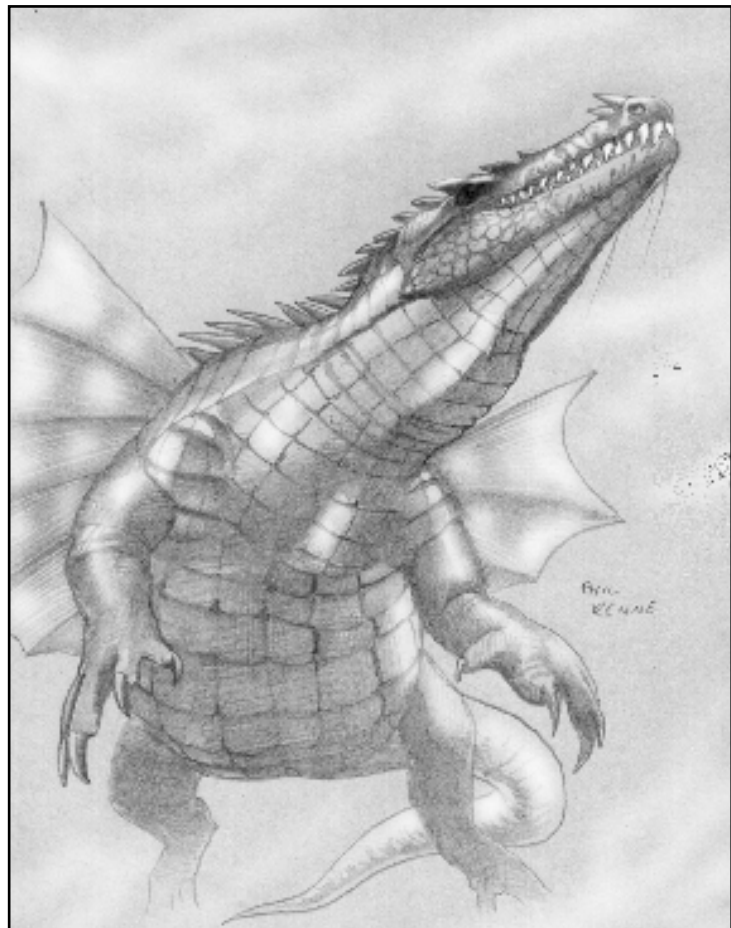
The swamp dragon is an unfortunate survivor of evolution. Through millions of years, it clung to its ecological niche with stupid tenacity. It resembles an inflated crocodile, perhaps, with a strong strain of sea-horse in its muddy blood. A pair of tiny wings sprout from its back, much too small to actually

lift the dragon's bulk. The swamp dragon has the curious property of being able to generate swamp gas within its body and store it in gas bladders along its flanks. When bloated by a sufficient quantity of gas, it floats. By furiously flapping those ludicrous wings, it can even fly in an ungainly fashion. The stench of the dragon wafts across the marsh, as if a flock of rotten eggs had hurled themselves futilely against the gates of heaven.

The dragon can expel the gases in its bladder, causing an even worse smell, an embarrassing noise, and a gout of flame. It uses this to burn clouds of insects and low-flying birds from the air. The swamp dragon lives on such fare, as well as carrion. Of late, the dragons have taken to scavenging food from middens and rubbish tips.

Combat

If attacked, the swamp dragon tries to fly out of reach of its assailants. Its skin is tough enough to repel most arrows, so it can flap feebly up and burn enemies to death with its breath. If wounded, it empties all but one of its gas bladders, creating a



cloud of poisonous gas. It flops back down into the mud and either tries to hide or to chew the legs off anyone nearby, depending on the circumstances.

Stench (Ex): Anyone coming within 20 feet of a swamp dragon must make a Fortitude save (DC 10) or be sickened.

Swamp Gas (Ex): A swamp dragon's gas bladders keep it aloft, but it can also expel this gas to create a poisonous cloud. This cloud fills an area 20 feet in height and 20 feet in radius around the dragon (or below it if it is flying). The dragon falls to the ground 1d4 rounds after expelling the gas.

Anyone caught within the gas field must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or be nauseated for 1d6 rounds. Furthermore, the gas is flammable – if exposed to any flame, it detonates, inflicting 5d6 points of damage on anyone within the gas (Reflex save, DC 15 for half damage).

Breath weapon (ex): The swamp dragon can breath a gout of flame 30 feet long and 10 feet wide. Anyone caught in the blast is dealt 3d6 points of fire damage. The dragon may breath once every 1d4 rounds.

Vulnerable to Fire (Ex): If the swamp dragon is struck by a *flaming* weapon or other fire attack, it must succeed at a Fortitude check (DC equal to 10+ the damage inflicted) or explode (as per a swamp gas explosion) in 1d4 rounds.

Swamp Dragon
 Large Dragon
Hit Dice: 5d12+15 (hp).
Initiative: -2 (Dex)
Speed: 20 ft., Fly 40 ft. (clumsy)
Armour Class: 15 (-2 dex, -1 size, +8 natural), touch 7, flat-footed 15.
Base Attack/Grapple: +5/+12
Attack: Bite +8 melee (2d6+5).

Full Attack: Bite +8 melee (2d6+5), two claws +3 melee (1d8+3)

Space/Reach: 10 ft. x 10 ft /5 ft.

Special Attacks: Breath Weapon

Special Qualities: Vulnerable to Fire, Swamp Gas.

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +2, Will +0.

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 6, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 2, Cha 3.

Skills: Listen +4, Jump +10, Spot +4.

Feats: Hover, Great Fortitude

Climate/Terrain: Warm or temperate marsh.

Organisation: Solitary or clutch (2-4).

Challenge Rating: 4.

Treasure: None.

Alignment: Usually neutral.

Advancement: 6-8 HD (Large-size)

HERALDIC DRAGON

The heraldic dragon is the incarnation of a people and their land. If they dwell in the mountains, the heraldic dragon has scales of slate and is wreathed in heather and mist. If they dwell in the plains, the dragon's wings are wide as the sky and it wriggles down the meandering rivers. Its voice is their voice, its blood is their blood, its strength is their strength – and when they are weak, so too is the dragon. If the people deny the old traditions and act without honour, the dragon sickens.

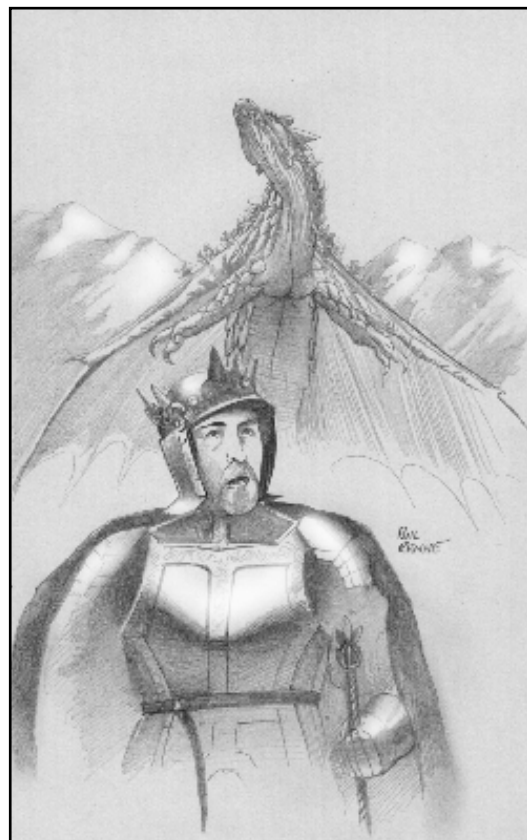
Heraldic Dragon Size Determination	
Age Bonus	Condition
The Land	
+0	The land is polluted and despoiled.
+1	The land is full of farms and towns.
+2	The land is healthy.
+3	The land is healthy, with proper sections of wilderness.
The People	
+0	The people are cowardly, dishonourable merchants.
+1	The people are humble farmers with the souls of sheep.
+2	The people remember the old ways, but lack the fire of their ancestors.
+3	The people are just as honourable and faithful as their ancestors.
The Faith	
+0	The people worship strange gods, and the druids are feared and hunted.
+1	The druids have a few shrines and groves in the wilderness, but are marginalised.
+2	The druids are pre-eminent among the people, and a Grand Druid is present.
The King	
+0	There is no king.
+1	The king is dishonourable, and knows nothing of tradition.
+2	The king is old and sick, or young and foolish.
+3	The king is strong, but knows nothing of tradition.
+4	The king is like unto a warrior of old.
+5	The king is like unto a warrior of old, and is blessed and consecrated by the Grant Druid in the ancient fashion.

Heraldic Dragons by Age												
Age	Size	Hit Dice (hp)	AC	Base Attack/Grapple	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Breath Weapon (DC)	Fear DC	SR	
Wyrmling	M	7d12+21 (136)	15 (+5 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 15	+7/+10	+10	+8	+5	+6	2d10 (16)	-	-	
Very Young	L	10d12+30 (95)	17 (+8 natural, -1 size), touch 9, flat-footed 17	+10/+19	+14	+10	+7	+8	4d10 (18)	-	-	
Young	L	13d12+39 (123)	20 (+11 natural, -1 size), touch 9, flat-footed 20	+13/+24	+19	+11	+8	+9	6d10 (19)	-	-	
Juvenile	H	16d12+64 (168)	22 (+14 natural, -2 size), touch 8, flat-footed 22	+16/+32	+23	+14	+10	+12	8d10 (22)	-	-	
Young Adult	H	19d12+95 (188)	25 (+17 natural, -2 size), touch 8, flat-footed 25	+19/+37	+27	+16	+11	+14	10d10 (24)	20	20	
Adult	H	22d12+132 (275)	28 (+20 natural, -2 size), touch 8, flat-footed 28	+22/+42	+32	+19	+13	+17	12d10 (27)	21	22	
Mature Adult	H	25d12+175 (337)	31 (+23 natural, -2 size), touch 8, flat-footed 31	+25/+46	+36	+21	+14	+19	14d10 (29)	24	25	
Old	G	28d12+196 (378)	32 (+26 natural, -4 size), touch 6, flat-footed 32	+28/+54	+38	+24	+16	+21	16d10 (31)	25	27	
Very Old	G	31d12+248 (449)	35 (+29 natural, -4 size), touch 6, flat-footed 35	+31/+58	+42	+25	+17	+23	18d10 (33)	28	28	
Ancient	G	34d12+306 (527)	38 (+32 natural, -4 size), touch 6, flat-footed 38	+34/+62	+46	+28	+19	+26	20d10 (36)	29	30	
Wyrm	G	37d12+370 (610)	41 (+35 natural, -4 size), touch 6, flat-footed 41	+37/+67	+50	+30	+20	+28	22d10 (38)	32	31	
Great wyrm	C	40d12+440 (700)	40 (+38 natural, -8 size), touch 2, flat-footed 40	+40/+74	+50	+33	+22	+31	24d10 (41)	34	35	
Draco Invictus	C	43d12+559 (838)	43 (+41 natural, -8 size), touch 2, flat-footed 43	+43/+79	+55	+36	+23	+34	26d10 (44)	38	38	

The kingship carries with it the duty of being master of the dragon. The heraldic dragon is summoned by the king's command, and fights the enemies of the people in his name. If the king is unworthy, the dragon may be weak, or hateful and malign, or even refuse to serve. The strength of the dragon is determined by adding up each of the following modifiers to calculate its age category.

The king can summon the heraldic dragon in time of need, by calling its name aloud at certain ancient holy sites. The king must make a Charisma check, with a DC equal to 10+the dragon's effective age category. This roll should be modified depending on the needs of the kingdom and the status of the king. The heraldic dragon may be summoned only once in a king's reign, and it serves for a year and a day.

Heraldic dragons accompany armies into battle. The presence of such a powerful creature can turn back an invasion and rallies the people. When two nations clash, both might summon their heraldic dragons and the wyrms wrestle on the battlefield, the war decided in a struggle of breath and claw.



Heraldic Dragon Abilities by Age										
Age	Speed	Initiative	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha	Special Abilities	Caster level
Wyrmling	60 ft., Fly 100 ft (poor)	+0	16	10	16	12	12	14	Inspire, Immunity to Fire, <i>shield other</i>	-
Very Young	60 ft., Fly 100 ft (poor)	+0	20	10	16	12	12	14		1 st
Young	60 ft., Fly 100 ft (poor)	+0	24	10	16	12	12	14	<i>Bless 3/day</i>	3 rd
Juvenile	60 ft., Fly 100 ft (poor)	+0	28	10	18	14	14	16		5 th
Young Adult	60 ft., Fly 150 ft (clumsy)	+0	30	10	20	16	16	18	DR 5/magic	7 th
Adult	60 ft., Fly 150 ft (clumsy)	+0	34	10	22	18	18	20	<i>Hallucinatory terrain</i>	9 th
Mature Adult	60 ft., Fly 150 ft (clumsy)	+0	36	10	24	20	20	22	DR 10/magic	11 th
Old	60 ft., Fly 150 ft (clumsy)	+0	38	10	24	20	20	22	<i>Mass bull's strength 3/day</i>	13 th
Very Old	60 ft., Fly 200 ft (clumsy)	+0	40	10	26	22	22	24	DR 15/magic	15 th
Ancient	60 ft., Fly 200 ft (clumsy)	+0	42	10	28	24	24	26	<i>Mass cure serious wounds 3/day</i>	17 th
Wyrm	60 ft., Fly 200 ft (clumsy)	+0	44	10	30	26	26	28	DR 20/magic	19 th
Great wyrm	60 ft., Fly 200 ft (clumsy)	+0	46	10	32	28	28	30	<i>Move earth</i>	21 st

Combat

Heraldic dragons are spirits summoned for war, so all their abilities are useful on the battlefield. The dragon fights fearlessly, concentrating their attacks on the heroes and champions of the opposition. When the dragon can, it uses its powers to bless its allies, but its tremendous might is usually needed elsewhere on the field. The dragon is the perfect soldier, honourable and self-sacrificing to the last. Its *shield other* ability is always used to protect important allies, such as the king.

Breath Weapon (Su): The breath weapon of a heraldic dragon is a searing line of force.

Inspire (Ex): All troops allied to a heraldic dragon gain a morale bonus to all attacks, skill checks, and Will saves against fear equal to one-quarter of the dragon's age category, rounded down.

Skills: Heal, Knowledge (history) and Knowledge (nobility and royalty) are class skills for heraldic dragons.

Heraldic Dragon Abilities	
Rank	Ability
I	Inspiration
II	Immunity to fire
III	<i>Shield other 3/day</i>
IV	<i>Bless 3/day</i>
V	<i>Hallucinatory Terrain</i>
VI	<i>Mass bull's strength 3/day</i>
VII	<i>Mass cure serious wounds 3/day</i>
VIII	<i>Move earth</i>
IX	<i>Greater shout</i>
X	Draco Invictus Abilities

Heraldic Dragon

Dragon (Spirit)

Environment: Any.

Organisation: Solitary

Challenge Ratings: Wyrmling 4; very young 6; young 8; juvenile 10; young adult 13; adult 15; mature adult 18; old 20; very old 21; ancient 23; wyrm 24; great wyrm 28, draco invictus 31.

Treasure: None.

Alignment: Always the same alignment as the ethos of the kingdom, usually lawful good.

Creation

Wyrming: 158.

Advancements: 63. All Excellent advancements except Null Dexterity.

Total: 221.

DRACONIC OUTSIDERS

There are dragons on all the planes of reality. Elemental dragons swim through the stone of the Plane of Earth and breath cones of vacuum on the Fire Plane. Other dragons are servants of the gods, or are free-willed denizens of the strange places on the borderlands of the multiverse. In a game involving plane travel, these dragons may play a greater role than the parochial wyrms of the Prime Material plane.

PLANAR DRAGONS

A planar dragon is a winged serpent, shimmering like a creature of spun glass and crystal. It embodies the shifting relationships of the planes – when it flies near the Elemental Plant of Fire, its wings glow red like flames and its breath stinks of sulphur. When a deity is near, the dragon is filled with a divine glow. Should the dragon descend to close to the negative or infernal planes, its spirit will blacken faster than its scales. The planar dragons are ever-changing, their mood and morality entirely dependant on its location.

Planar dragons roost in neutral territory, where their minds are relatively clear of perturbation. They are known as canny merchants and traders, and willingly swap treasure from their hoards in exchange for magical items, especially wondrous devices. They have a special love for puzzles and curios. Planar dragons would make excellent guides, if it were not for their habit of picking up the alignment of the local plane. A planar dragon can fly its passengers into the most heavily guarded regions of the



demonic realms, but they have to then deal with the dragon mimicking the evil of the plane.

Some dragons use talismans containing infinitesimal *gates* to one plane or another, to preserve some alignment or appearance they particularly like.

Combat

Planar dragons are cunning opponents. Their astonishing ability to *plane shift* almost at will could be used as an almost infallible method of escape, but the dragons use it offensively. A planar dragon might retreat to another plane where time flows faster, prepare itself with defensive spells, then

NEW DRAGONS

Planar Dragons by Age												
Age	Size	Hit Dice (hp)	AC	Base Attack/ Grapple	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Breath Weapon (DC)	Fear DC	SR	
Wyrmling	S	5d12+10	16 (+5 natural, +1 size), touch 11, flat-footed 16	+5/+0	+5	+6	+4	+3	-(16)	-	-	
Very Young	M	8d12+16	18 (+8 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 18	+8/+8	+8	+8	+6	+5	-(18)	-	-	
Young	L	11d12+22	20 (+11 natural, -1 size), touch 9, flat-footed 20	+11/+16	+11	+9	+7	+6	-(19)	-	-	
Juvenile	L	14d12+42	23 (+14 natural, -1 size), touch 9, flat-footed 23	+14/+21	+16	+12	+9	+9	-(22)	-	-	
Young Adult	H	17d12+68	25 (+17 natural, -2 size), touch 8, flat-footed 25	+17/+29	+19	+14	+10	+11	-(24)	20	15	
Adult	H	20d12+100	28 (+20 natural, -2 size), touch 8, flat-footed 28	+20/+34	+24	+17	+12	+13	-(27)	21	17	
Mature Adult	H	23d12+138	31 (+23 natural, -2 size), touch 8, flat-footed 31	+23/+38	+28	+19	+13	+15	-(29)	24	20	
Old	H	26d12+156	34 (+26 natural, -2 size), touch 8, flat-footed 34	+26/+42	+32	+21	+15	+17	-(31)	25	22	
Very Old	G	29d12+203	37 (+29 natural, -4 size), touch 6, flat-footed 37	+29/+50	+34	+23	+16	+19	-(33)	28	24	
Ancient	G	32d12+256	38 (+32 natural, -4 size), touch 6, flat-footed 38	+32/+54	+38	+26	+18	+21	-(36)	29	25	
Wurm	G	35d12+315	41 (+35 natural, -4 size), touch 6, flat-footed 41	+35/+58	+42	+28	+19	+23	-(38)	32	26	
Great wurm	G	38d12+380	44 (+38 natural, -4 size), touch 6, flat-footed 44	+38/+62	+46	+31	+21	+26	-(41)	34	27	
Draco Invictus	C	41d12+492	43 (+41 natural, -8 size), touch 2, flat-footed 43	+41/+71	+51	+34	+22	+29	-(44)	38	30	

return. The dragon then grabs opponents one by one and dumps the tougher foes in obscure corners of the multiverse. When pressed, older planar dragons have a variety of evocations at their disposal and they are adept at picking the right blast to penetrate an opponent's defences.

Breath Weapon (Su): The breath weapon of a planar dragon is a cone that traps those it touches in a *dimensional anchor* or else *plane shifts* them to a random plane. The dragon can use its *plane shift* breath to remove its *dimensional anchors*.

Adaptation (Su): 1d4 minutes after arriving in a new plane, the planar dragon begins to acquire its qualities. If the plane is especially strong in one

element or another, the dragon becomes a creature of the appropriate subtype. It also adopts the alignment of the plane, if the plane is aligned in such a manner. The dragon can resist these changes by making a Will save every minute, at a DC equal to 10 + the number of minutes since it arrived on the plane.

Plane Shift (Su): Once the planar dragon reaches AGE, it may *plane shift*, as the spell, as part of a flying move action. It must fly at least 30 feet to shift.

Skills: Bluff, Knowledge (arcana) and Knowledge (the Planes) are class skills for planar dragons.

Planar Dragon Abilities by Age										
Age	Speed	Initiative	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha	Special Abilities	Caster level
Wyrmling	60 ft., Fly 100 ft. (poor)	+0	8	10	12	14	8	14	Adaptation, <i>See invisibility</i>	-
Very Young	60 ft., Fly 100 ft. (poor)	+0	10	10	12	16	8	14		1 st
Young	60 ft., Fly 100 ft. (poor)	+0	12	10	12	16	8	14	<i>Plane shift</i>	3 rd
Juvenile	60 ft., Fly 100 ft. (poor)	+0	16	10	14	18	10	16		5 th
Young Adult	60 ft., Fly 150 ft. (clumsy)	+0	18	10	16	20	12	18	DR 5/magic	7 th
Adult	60 ft., Fly 150 ft. (clumsy)	+0	22	10	16	22	12	18	<i>Rainbow pattern</i>	9 th
Mature Adult	60 ft., Fly 150 ft. (clumsy)	+0	24	10	18	24	14	20	DR 10/magic	11 th
Old	60 ft., Fly 150 ft. (clumsy)	+0	26	10	18	24	14	20	<i>Tongues</i>	13 th
Very Old	60 ft., Fly 200 ft. (clumsy)	+0	28	10	20	26	16	22	DR 15/magic	15 th
Ancient	60 ft., Fly 200 ft. (clumsy)	+0	30	10	20	28	16	22	<i>Chain lightning</i>	17 th
Wurm	60 ft., Fly 200 ft. (clumsy)	+0	32	10	22	30	18	24	DR 20/magic	19 th
Great wurm	60 ft., Fly 200 ft. (clumsy)	+0	34	10	24	32	20	26	<i>Shout</i>	21 st
Draco Invictus	60 ft., Fly 250 ft. (clumsy)	+0	38	10	28	36	24	30	DR 25/magic, Draco Invictus abilities	24 th

Planar Dragon Abilities	
Rank	Ability
I	Adaptation
II	<i>See invisibility</i>
III	<i>Plane shift</i>
IV	<i>Rainbow pattern</i> 3/day
V	<i>Tongues</i>
VI	<i>Chain lightning</i> 3/day
VII	<i>Shout</i>
VIII	<i>Acid fog</i>
IX	<i>Greater shout</i>
X	Draco Invictus Abilities

Planar Dragon

Dragon (Varies, Outsider)

Environment: The planes

Organisation: Solitary, mated pair, mated pair & clutch (2-5) or gathering (6-15)

Challenge Ratings: Wyrmling 3; very young 5; young 7; juvenile 9; young adult 12; adult 14; mature adult 17; old 19; very old 20; ancient 22; wurm 23; great wurm 27, draco invictus 30.

Treasure: None

Alignment: Varies depending on its surroundings, often chaotic neutral

Creation

Wyrming: 96.

Advancements: 39. All Standard advancements except Null Dexterity, Superior Intelligence and Magic.

Total: 135.

DRAGON MAGIC

Dragons are not truly wizards or sorcerers. Their magic wells up from the deep core of their being, a product of the magical nature. Like a sorcerer, their power comes from within; they do not need to slowly and methodically prepare a clumsy ritual to draw power from the world, but can call up the thrashing arcane energy awash in their blood and channel it into a spell. Unlike a sorcerer, however, a dragon understands every syllable and gesture, every word of power and arcane element. The spell of a dragon is not a blind, instinctive spasm of spellcasting, but is as carefully designed and controlled as that of any wizard.

The intermediary step between the arcane potential of the dragon's nature and the actual spell effect itself is the ancient language of the dragons, High Draconic. This language is instinctively understood by all dragons before they hatch from the egg, and new words and subtleties of grammar come to them as they age. High Draconic is a language inherent in the fabric of creation; the same words are spoken in every land and on every plane (although there are planar dialects – these dialects are different because the nature of space and time is different on the planes). The draconic language spoken by lizardmen and kobolds and some human scholars is a poor degenerate reflection of the high tongue.

Elven and human scholars long ago managed to copy some of the phrases spoken by dragons in High Draconic, which provided the seeds for many schools of mortal magic. In the long millennia since then, dragon magic and mortal magic have diverged but the underlying principles remain the same.

Sorcerers and Dragons

While not every sorcerer is descended (however remotely) from dragons, some of the tales are true. Dragons are slow to magically innovate; their minds are careful, precise, coldly reptilian, and not especially creative. By siring sorcerers, they hoped to use the quicker minds of mammals as tools to discover new spells and intricacies of High Draconic. This plan failed – the sorcerers lacked the innate understanding of High Draconic that dragons have, so their spells were almost nonsensical knots of language that worked without rhyme or reason. From the dragon's perspective, sorcerers are idiot savants, able to work magic but unable to explain the combination of words and phrases they used to cast the spell.



Spellcasting

For the most part, dragons cast spells in the same way mortals do. Most somatic gestures are made with the dragon's foreclaws, although some spells do make use of the dragon's wings and tail, tracing four symbols in the air at once. Dragon verbalisations are always in High Draconic, a language that is simultaneously hissing and serpentine, but also sounds like the rumblings of an earthquake, or possibly a large choir who have been buried alive.

Dragons do not need to prepare spells, but only know a limited number of spells (mechanically, they are sorcerers). Unlike sorcerers, dragons understand their spells, and can learn new ones easily. A dragon can slowly unpick the memorised rote of gestures and words that make up the spell in its mind, freeing up the space for another spell. (In game terms, a dragon is restricted in the number of spells it knows, just like a sorcerer, but can replace one spell with another – this takes two days per level of the spell, minus the dragon's age category. If the time is less than one day, the dragon can 'swap out a spell' in one hour.)

A Draconic Primer, continued...

Akrc: Magic.

Akr': Blood.

Akr'c: Speech.

Myisyn na-akr'c: Literally, 'the speech of the dumb' – a derogatory term for wizards.

The'is hyc drac'syn akrc': Literally, 'the gift of sight to the blind gone unused' – a derogatory term for sorcerers.

Dei'ak'ahiss: Literally, 'the mewling of shadows' – a derogatory term for clerics.

Dei'ak'ypyrem: Literally, 'the green ashes' – a derogatory term for druids.

Dra'akrc'ash: Literally, 'that which is'. A term used to describe the magic of dragons.

High Draconic

Dragons can use High Draconic to alter their spells even in the act of casting, modifying it using metamagical techniques. By making a Spellcraft check (DC 15 + spell level + the metamagic feat's level cost), the dragon can add any one metamagic feat to a spell as a free action. If the check is failed, the spell is not lost, but is not cast this round either.

High Draconic can also be used to compose spells extemporaneously (or, as younger dragons say, on

the fly). Most spells are the product of long months of meditation and composition, as the dragon rolls the resonant syllables around its fang-filled mouth, searching for the perfect balance between word and thought and gesture that will channel the dragon's might through interlocking arcane configurations out into the world. A dragon can eschew all this preparation and just command the world directly in High Draconic. A dragon can create any spell effect it desires, even one that is not produced by any commonly known spell. This takes up a spell slot two levels higher than it should, as spells created without research or preparation are much less efficient than carefully designed ones.

Example: A green dragon wishes to melt a pile of rocks to seal a pesky bunch of adventurers in a cave. This sounds like an effect on par with fabricate, a 5th level spell. The dragon does not know fabricate, but it knows enough High Draconic to command the rocks to melt and reseal. It can use a 7th level spell slot to create this effect on the fly.

Most dragons carefully choose their spells, preparing for every foreseeable eventuality so they do not need to waste their energies so inefficiently – but situations change, so they must sometimes use spontaneous magics like this.

Finally, dragons can also communicate in High Draconic, and their conversations are largely incomprehensible even to those who know the common Draconic language. Only an arcane spellcaster who speaks Draconic can follow a conversation in High Draconic. Dragons are the only creatures who can comfortably lie in the language (as the language is derived from the fundamentally nature of reality, most creatures cannot lie in High Draconic any more than they can walk through walls or resist gravity; all three are simply impossible interactions of mental desire and physical matter), so they prefer to use it for negotiation where they can.

Mortals and High Draconic

See *Encyclopaedia Arcane: Dragon Magic* for details on how characters can learn High Draconic and use it to modify their spells.

NEW SPELLS

Some of these spells are only used by dragons in their natural form, and are marked with the Dracoform descriptor. These can be learned by mortal characters, but are unlikely to be of use unless the mortal has scales, wings, a tail or whatever body part the spell works upon. Other spells can only be used by dragons. These have the [Dragon] descriptor, and cannot be used by mortals under other circumstances.

The remaining spells can be cast by anyone who can cast spells of that level.

Scale Scan

Divination [Dracoform]

Level: Sor/Wiz 0

Components: V, S

Casting time: 1 action

Range: Personal

Target: The dragon

Duration: Instantaneous

The spell sends a green flicker of light dancing over all of the dragon's body. The spell detects any scales that are weak, damaged, diseased, or missing. As a side effect, it also detects any small foreign items lodged in the dragon's scales. A dragon uses this spell regularly to ensure that all of its hide, even those hard-to-reach places, is whole and healthy.

Power Word: Kneel

Conjuration (Creation)

Level: Brd 2, Clr 3, Sor/Wiz 2

Components: V

Casting time: 1 action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One or more creatures within a 15 ft.-radius sphere

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes

Any creatures affected by this spell are forced to their knees by a sudden hammer-blow of force. The distance covered in their next move is halved.

Power Word: Insolence!

Conjuration (Creation) [Dragon]

Level: Clr 8, Sor/Wiz 8

Components: V

Casting time: 1 action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Effect: Any attackers within range

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Reflex or Special

Spell Resistance: No

This mighty spell draws on the dragon's own outrage at being attacked – how *dare* lesser beings even *think* of taking up arms or spells against so glorious and noble a creature as a dragon? It affects all spells and attacks suffered by the dragon since its last action, stripping them off the dragon's body and hurling them back at the attackers. There is a sudden explosion of sound, centred on the dragon, that carries the spells and injuries off the dragon and throws them at those who caused them. When the sonic bubble of the spell collapses back on itself, any spells or injuries that did not 'stick' fall back onto the dragon.

Any spells that specifically targeted the dragon are turned on their caster. (Area effect spells, even those centred on the dragon, are unaffected). The caster is targeted by the spell as if the dragon had cast it. If the caster makes his save against the spell, the spell returns and strikes the dragon again. If the caster fails his save, the spell now affects him instead of the dragon. (If the spell only had a duration of one round or less, it does not affect the dragon again, but will strike the caster with full force if the save is failed.)

Any injuries inflicted on the dragon by melee or missile attacks fly off and strike at those who inflicted them. The character(s) who struck the dragon must make a Reflex save against this spell. If the save is failed, the injury affects the character instead of the dragon. If the character succeeds, the injury falls back and returns to the dragon.

Power Word: Fool!

Conjuration (Creation)

Level: Brd 4, Sor/Wiz 4

Components: V

Casting time: 1 action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One or more creatures within a 15 ft.-radius sphere

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell may only be cast on those employed by the dragon, or who have sworn loyalty to it. This spell is used as punishment for failure – when the dragon shouts 'FOOL' in anger, the targets suffer agonising

pain inflicting 2d12 points of subdual damage per age category of the dragon. Furthermore, they suffer a permanent -1 penalty to Will or Fortitude saving throws against spells or effects cast by the dragon.

Power Word: (Dragon's Name)
Evocation [Dragon, Language-dependant]

Level: Sor/Wiz 2, Draconic 2

Components: V

Casting time: 1 action

Range: Personal

Area: 15 ft.-radius circle centred on the caster.

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes

Uttering the name of a dragon can have dire consequences. This potent spell is entrusted to the servants of a dragon. When cast, the spell alerts the dragon. It creates an effect identical to *clairaudience* for one round, allowing the dragon to hear whatever is spoken within the area of effect. The dragon knows exactly where the spell was cast (and can use this knowledge to guide a *teleport*). If the dragon was sleeping, there is a 2% chance per level of the caster that this spell wakes the dragon.

Although this spell is a Dragon spell, it can be cast by non-dragons. The Dragon descriptor refers to the fact that dragon true names are in High Draconic, unlike mortal names. If a caster learns this spell, he knows the dragon's true name (see Defeating Spell Resistance later in this chapter).

Power Word: Freedom
Transmutation (Teleportation)

Level: Clr 5, Sor/Wiz 5

Components: V

Casting time: 1 action

Range: Personal

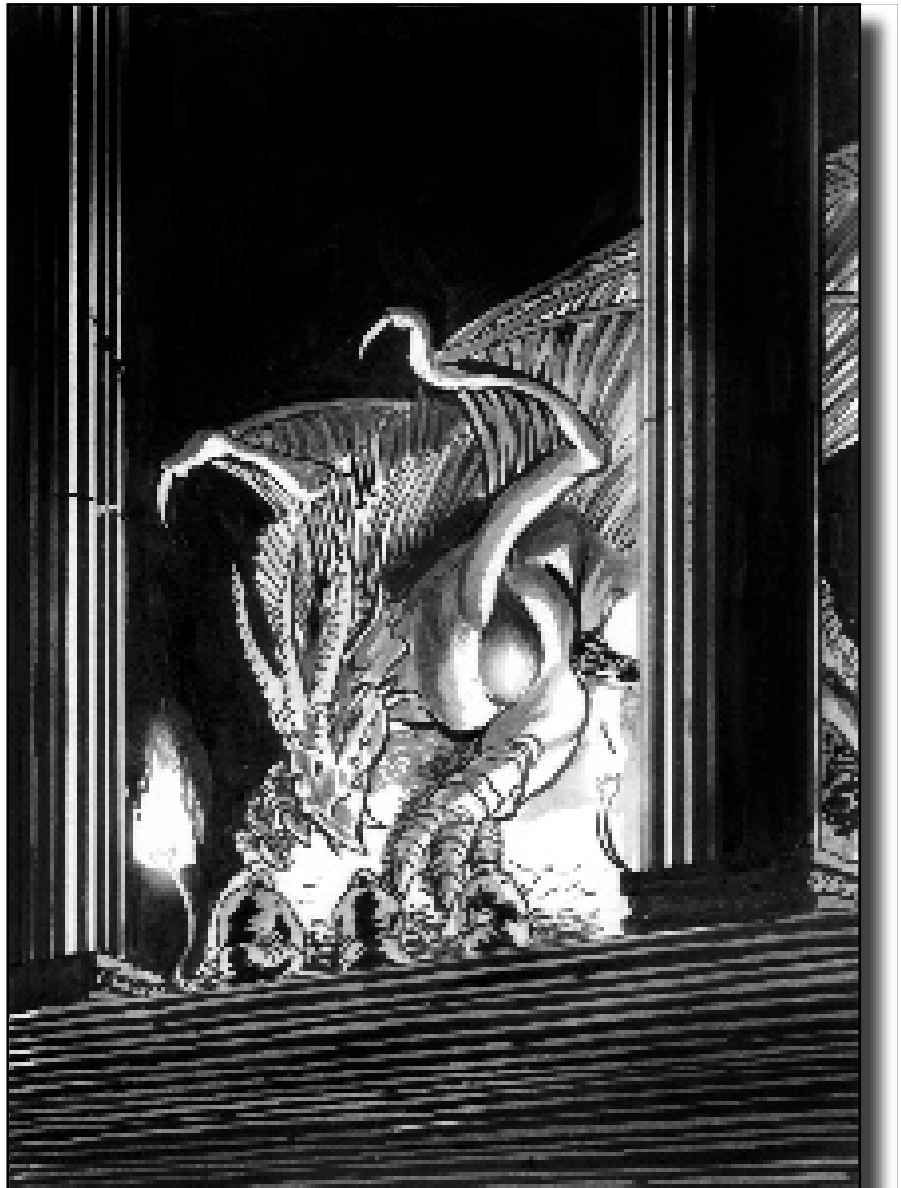
Target: You

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: No

Spell Resistance: No

Uttering the word of power creates a sudden burst of energy. For his next action, the caster gains a +20 enhancement bonus to Escape Artist or Strength checks to escape bonds, and a +6 enhancement bonus to saving throws against spells that restrict movement (see the *freedom* spell for examples). Furthermore, if the caster is freed by the spell and is winged, a *dimension door* effect transports him 300 feet straight up.



Hasten Breath

Transmutation [Dracoform]

Level: Sor/Wiz 5

Components: V, S

Casting time: 1 action

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: 1 round/level

This spell enhances the dragon's ability to generate new breath weapons. The delay between breath weapon attacks is reduced by one round (i.e., the dragon must wait 1d4-1 rounds instead of 1d4 rounds between breathing). Multiple *hasten breath* spells do not stack, but the spell does work with the Quick Breath feat.

Burn the Sky

Transmutation [Dracoform]

Level: Sor/Wiz 4

Components: V, S

Casting time: 1 action

Range: Personal

Area: A cylinder behind the dragon, with width equal to the dragon's wingspan and length equal to the dragon's movement in the turn it breathes

Duration: Until used

Saving Throw: Special

Spell Resistance: Yes

Burn the sky is used by dragons battling in the sky. It transfers one use of the dragon's breath weapon, making the flames or acid droplets or frost appear along the dragon's wings instead of in its mouth. The dragon then corkscrews as it flies, shaking off the breath weapon energy to blast anything following in its wake. Any pursuers are struck likely to be struck by the breath weapon blast, and may make saving throws as normal.

This spell may only be used while flying.

Congea Cloud

Transmutation

Level: Sor/Wiz 5, Metallic 4

Components: V, S

Casting time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Area: Portions of cloud touched

Duration: 1 hour/level (D)

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

By means of this spell, the caster makes a cloud or mist turn solid as stone. The cloud still floats as normal. The caster can choose to only solidify the cloud beneath his feet, allowing him to walk on cloud, or can solidify a 5 foot x 5 foot area each round. The caster may continue to solidify parts of the cloud for the duration of the spell, but when the spell ends, all the cloud returns to normal.

If the caster touches a gaseous creature such as an air elemental while this spell is in effect, the gaseous



creature must make a Fortitude saving throw or be turned into a statue for the duration of the spell. Each attempted or successful attack with this spell reduces its duration by one hour.

Wingbind

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]

Level: Brd 3, Clr 3, Sor/Wiz 4

Components: V, S, F/DF

Casting time: 1 action

Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)

Target: One winged creature

Duration: 1 round/level (D)

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

This specialised version of *hold monster* paralyses only the wings of a flying creature, causing it to fall. The creature suffers a -2 circumstance penalty to its Will saving throw against this spell.

Arcane focus: A pin.

Wings of Brilliant Energy

Evocation [Dracoform]

Level: Sor/Wiz 4

Components: V, S

Casting time: 1 action

Range: Personal

Target: Caster's wings

Duration: 3 rounds/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes

When this spell is cast, the caster's wings become shimmering fields of brightly coloured energy. The caster's flying speed increases by 50%. The wings count as weapons with the *brilliant energy* property (see *Core Rulebook II*), able to pass through armour with ease, making the dragon's wing buffet attacks much more likely to injure most targets.

Colour Ripple

Transmutation [Dracoform]

Level: Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V, S

Casting time: 1 round

Range: Personal

Target: The dragon

Duration: 1 round/level (D)

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

For the duration of this spell, the dragon's hide ripples and changes colour constantly. Scales shift from red to green to gold to diamond to ruby to blue

from moment to moment. The dragon changes its type modifier constantly. Whenever the dragon is targeted by a spell or effect that might be affected by a type modifier (such as a cold-based attack), roll on the following table to see what type the dragon currently is:

1. Cold
2. Air
3. Earth
4. Fire
5. Water
6. Electricity
7. Chaotic
8. Lawful

Bend Lances And Break Swords

Abjuration

Level: Clr 6, Sor/Wiz 7, Draconic 7

Components: V, S

Casting time: 1 action

Range: Personal

Effect: 30 ft. emanation centred on you

Duration: 1 round/3 levels

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes

Whenever a melee attack is made with a weapon within this spell's area of effect, the attacker must first resolve the attack as if he had just tried to sunder his own weapon. For example, if a fighter hits an ogre, the fighter must make a damage roll against his sword before damage is inflicted on the ogre. The hardness of weapons is halved for the duration of the spell. If a weapon breaks, no damage is inflicted by the attack. Natural weapons are unaffected by this spell.

Gullet of Surprising Capacity

Transmutation [Dracoform]

Level: Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V, S, M

Casting time: 1 action

Range: Personal

Target: The dragon

Duration: 3 hours/level

The spell allows a dragon to swallow up to 300 lb. of material per caster level. Swallowed items are transported to an extradimensional space within the dragon's gullet. The dragon can only swallow items that it can fit within its mouth, and items are not significantly damaged by being swallowed if the dragon is careful. Items can be retrieved by coughing them up. When the spell ends, the

extradimensional space collapses. If it is not empty, the dragon suffers 1 point of damage per 20 lb of material that appears unexpectedly in its gullet.

Willing creatures can be transported in the gullet, but there is only enough air for 10 minutes per level of the caster, divided by the number of creatures.

Lesser Lairguard

Abjuration [Dragon]

Level: 4

Components: V, S, M

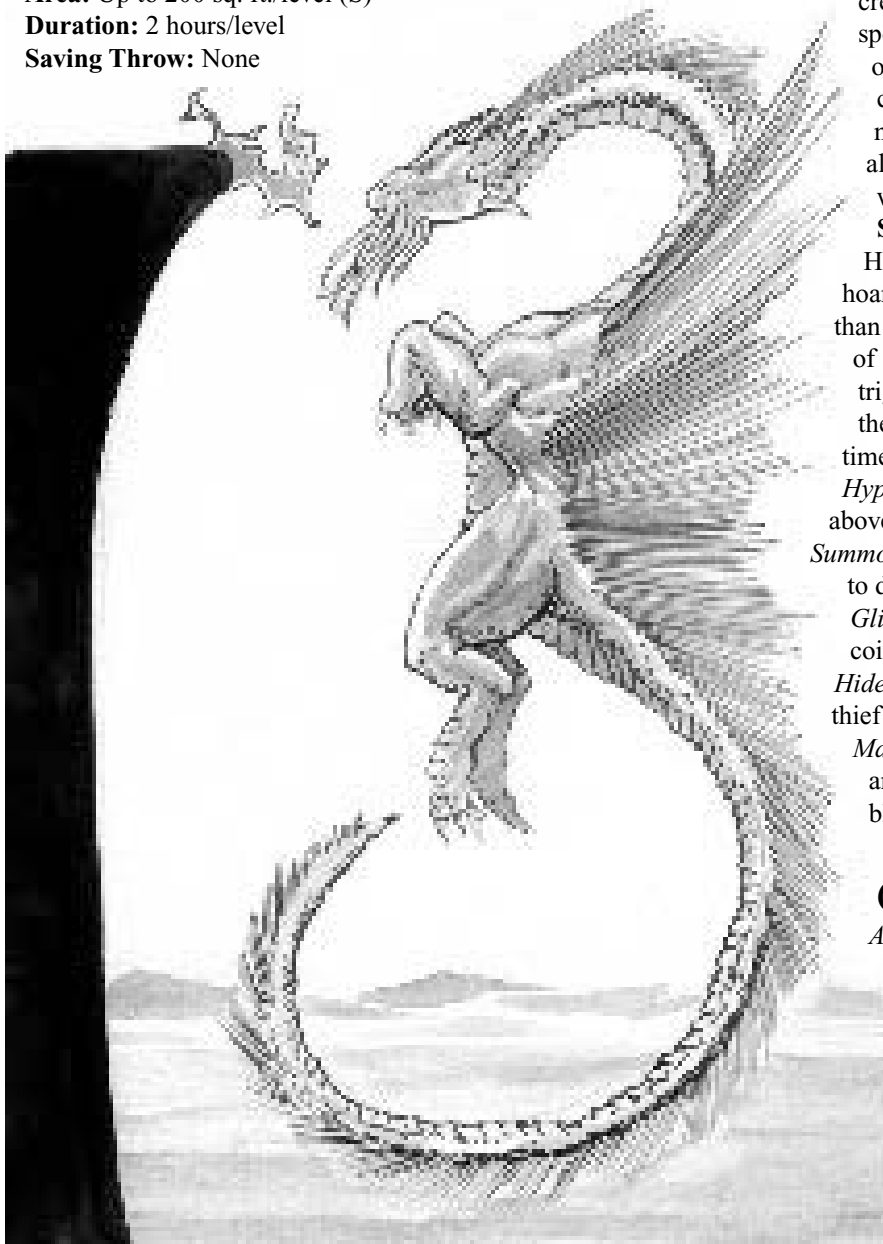
Casting time: 30 minutes

Range: Anywhere with the creature's lair

Area: Up to 200 sq. ft./level (S)

Duration: 2 hours/level

Saving Throw: None



Spell Resistance: See text

Lesser lairguard protects a dragon's lair. Like *guards and wards*, it creates a number of spell effects designed to ward against intruders.

Scent-bearing winds: Small magical breezes blow throughout the lair, carrying the smell of intruders to the dragon. It gains a +4 circumstance bonus to Spot and Search checks. **Spell Resistance:** Yes.

Alarms: Up to five *alarm* spells can be placed anywhere within the area of effect. **Spell Resistance:** Yes.

Lifetrace: The dragon is constantly aware of the health of one living creature per level within the area of effect present when the spell is cast. These creatures are affected by a *status* spell. If a creature leaves the area of the spell or dies, the dragon ceases to be aware of it (but can notice the creature's passing, allowing the dragon to detect when its servants are slain). **Spell Resistance:** no.

Hoard guard: If the dragon's hoard is touched by anything other than the dragon, this spell causes one of the following spell effects to be triggered as if the dragon cast it on the target (dragon's choice at the time *lairguard* is cast):

Hypnotic pattern, centred directly above the hoard

Summon Monster II, calling a monster to defend the hoard

Glitterdust, as a handful of gold coins explode into glitter

Hideous Laughter, targeting the thief

Material component: A piece of amber and a drop of dragon's blood.

Greater Lairguard

Abjuration [Dragon]

Level: Sor/Wiz 8

As *lesser lairguard*, but *greater lairguard* adds the following abilities:

Dimensional Guard: Forms of extradimensional travel (see the *dimensional anchor* spell) are delayed. Extradimensional movement

speeds are reduced to one-quarter normal within the area of effect. Any characters travelling by *teleportation* effects take 1d4 rounds to materialise. A character in the process of materialising is incorporeal and cannot move, but can be seen. **Spell Resistance:** yes.

Restocking: The *lairguard* can cast *raise dead* and *cure critical wounds* on any creature marked with a *lifetrace*. It can do this once per five caster levels. Normally, the *lairguard* will use its healing powers on any slain, *lifetraced* creature 1d10 minutes after the creature dies, but the caster can choose to override the spell and keep a use of this ability reserved for a more important defender. *Greater lairguard* cannot raise the caster from the dead. When the spell's duration ends, any creatures raised from the dead die again instantly. **Spell Resistance:** no.

Divination: The caster may invoke *arcane eye*, *clairaudience*, *clairvoyance*, any of the *detect* spells, *locate creature*, *locate object* or *see invisibility* at will as a spell-like ability while *greater lairguard* is in effect.

Hoardguard: The dragon may either choose to use any of the spells listed under hoardguard for *lesser lairguard* up to six times, or else use one of the following spells once:

Summon monster VI

Chain lightning

Programmed image

Flesh to stone

Magic jar (using the item of treasure from the hoard touched by the intruder as the *jar*).

Rain of Fire

Transmutation [Dracoform]

Level: Drd 5, Sor/Wiz 6

Components: V, S, M

Casting time: 1 action

Range: Personal

Area: Dragon's wingspan (Fighting Space width x 1.5) x distance moved or see below

Duration: Concentration

Saving Throw: Fortitude partial

Spell Resistance: Yes

When this spell is cast, the dragon gains the Water subtype, if it did not have it already, and becomes permeable to water – it flows right through the dragon as if the creature were incorporeal. Any rain that falls through the creature, or water that flows through it picks up the dragon's elemental nature, becoming damaging. Red dragons turn the rain to fire, blue dragons turn it to tiny falling

sparks of electricity). Anyone touched by the rain suffers 1 dice of damage of the type used for the dragon's breath weapon (so a character touched by a red dragon's rain would suffer 1d10 points of fire damage). Creatures damaged by the rain may make a Fortitude save to take half damage.

Dragons usually use this spell to wide areas under the cover of a storm, although some dragons use it to turn a river into a lethal weapon. A blue dragon can turn the rushing river that flows through the heart of a town into a thrashing, crackling lightning bolt just by diving into the river upstream of the settlement.

Dragons with the Acidic Blood feat double the damage caused by this spell.

Material component: A drop of dragon's blood.

Entrancing Gaze

Enchantment (charm) [Dracoform, Language-dependant, Sonic]

Level: Brd 4, Sor/Wiz 5, Draconic 5

Components: V, S

Casting time: 1 action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: You

Duration: Concentration

Saving Throw: See text

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell draws on the dragon's natural presence and terrible eloquence, allowing it to charm and warp the minds of listeners. Each round, any creatures caught by the dragon's gaze are allowed a Will saving throw against the spell's effect. If the saving throw succeeds, the creature moves one step down on the table below. If the saving throw fails, the creature moves one step up. The dragon also gains a +2 bonus to Diplomacy checks for every step advanced on the table.

Saves failed in succession	Effect
0	None
1	The character suffers a -4 penalty to attacks on the dragon.
2	The character may not attack or cast spells at the dragon.
3	The dragon may give one character per round a <i>suggestion</i> .
4	The character suffers a permanent -1 penalty to Will saves against the dragon.
5	The dragon may use <i>charm monster</i> on any one affected character per round.
6+	The character suffers an additional permanent -1 penalty to Will saves against the dragon every round.

Dragons uses this spell to completely break down the mental defences of a target before either attacking or using the target as a pawn in some larger scheme.

Shadowbite

Illusion (shadow) [Dragon]

Level: 2

Components: V, S

Casting time: 1 action

Range: See text

Target: One creature

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Reflex negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

Using this spell, the dragon can reach through its own shadow to deliver a bite attack. The range depends on the current lighting conditions; a flying dragon can bite at someone on the ground from hundreds of feet above. The damage caused by the spell is real, reinforced by the dragon's own strength. The moment before the bite strikes, the shadow twists and roars, giving the moment's warning that permits the reflex save.

Shadows Wheel

Illusion (shadow) [Dracoform]

Level: 1

Components: V, S

Casting time: 1 action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 2 ft./level)

Target: The dragon

Duration: 10 rounds/level

Shadows wheel creates 1d4+1 illusory shadows of the flying dragon on the ground below, which wheel and circle and flicker. This is extremely unsettling – if the dragon flies overhead, triggering its Fearful Presence, the saving throws of those below suffer a -1 penalty per shadow. The shadows can also be used with the other shadow Dragon and Dracoform spells.

Shadow Watch

Illusion (Shadow)

Level: Sor/Wiz 5

Components: V, S

Casting time: 1 action

Range: See text

Target: Caster's shadow

Duration: 1 hour/level

This spell detaches the caster's shadow from his body and makes it into a sentry or hunter. The shadow has the same perception abilities (Spot skill ranks, Blindsight etc) as the creature, but gains a +4 insight bonus to all perception checks. It also gains the Track feat. The shadow can be commanded to watch for enemies, or to track a target. The shadow moves twice as fast as the caster. The shadow cannot attack or interact with the real world in any way. Once it accomplishes its task, it returns to the caster and delivers a short (maximum three words per point of Intelligence of the caster) report on what it perceived.

Shadow Dragon

Illusion (Shadow) [Dragon]

Level: Sor/Wiz 9

Components: V, S

Casting time: 1 action

Range: Medium (100 ft + 10 ft./level)

Target: Caster's shadow

Duration: 1 round/level

This spell is similar to the *simulacrum* spell – it animates the dragon's shadow, turning it into a duplicate of the dragon. The shadow cannot move beyond the range of the spell, but has full access to

all the attacks, spells and powers of the dragon; it is a perfect copy, utterly loyal to its creator.

Sloughing Spell

Transmutation [Dracoform]

Level: Sor/Wiz 7, Chromatic 6

Components: V, S

Casting time: 1 action

Range: Personal

Target: The dragon

Duration: 1d4 rounds/level

Sloughing spell has no effect until its duration expires. At this point, the dragon's skin bursts and is sloughed off. All spell effects currently affecting the dragon are left behind in the shed skin, and the

following spells are cast on the fresh hide of the dragon: *cure critical wounds*, *expeditious retreat* and *haste*. This spell can even restore the dragon to life if it has been killed (if the *cure critical wounds* brings it back to positive hit points), or to flesh if it has been turned into a statue.

Spellrip

Abjuration [Dragon]

Level: Sor/Wiz 3, Draconic 3

Components: S

Casting time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Target: One spellcaster, creature, object, or spell

Duration: 1 round/level or until discharged

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This spell functions just like the targeted form of *dispel magic*, but uses the dragon's Strength instead of its caster level for the dispel check. The dragon physically grabs the skein of the magic and rips it to pieces.



Counting Charm

Divination

Level: 1

Components: V, S

Casting time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Target: One hoard or container

Duration: Instantaneous

This simple spell instantly tallies the total number of items, such as coins, in a treasure hoard. The spell lists the contents of the treasure as best it can – it can only describe items in general terms and cannot distinguish between, say, a pewter drinking cup and a holy chalice studded with emeralds. Both items are just 'cups' to the charm. It also does not note which items are magical and which are mundane. Dragons use this charm to rapidly count their hoards after returning to their lair.

Feed on Fear

Necromancy [Dragon]

Level: Sor/Wiz 3, Chromatic 2

Components: V

Casting time: 1 action

Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)

Area: All creatures within range

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes

Feed on fear draws on the terror felt by those who have fallen victim to the dragon's Frightful Presence. Their wilting spirits are psychically bled to give new strength to the dragon. For every character within range who is panicked or shaken due to the dragon's Frightful Presence, the dragon is healed of one point of damage.

Sibilant Charm of the Wyrm

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Dragon, Mind-affecting, Language-dependant, Sonic]

Level: Brd 2, Sor/Wiz 2

Components: V

Casting time: 1 action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Target: One living creature

Duration: Concentration

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell forces the victim to walk towards the dragon. The dragon needs to know the victim's name or point to him, and the victim must be able to hear the dragon's command. The victim must move at least 5 feet per round towards the dragon (and may not willingly move further away), although he may make other actions while doing so. The victim suffers a -2 penalty to attacks against the dragon while under the effects of the charm. The victim may make a saving throw each round to break free of the spell.

Modulate Resistance

Transmutation [Dragon]

Level: 4

Components: V, S

Casting time: 1 action

Range: Personal

Target: The dragon

Duration: 1 round/2 levels

This spell allows the dragon to alter its natural spell resistance, strengthening it at times at the cost of weakening it overall. When the spell is

cast, the dragon chooses how its Spell Resistance will function for the duration of the spell. For any given round, the dragon may add any amount up to its Charisma bonus to its Spell Resistance, but must balance this by subtracting a total of twice this amount from its Spell Resistance in other rounds. All these changes are chosen in advance, when the spell is cast.

For example, an ancient dragon with caster level 15 and a Charisma bonus of +7 is about to attack a wizard's tower. It casts *modulate resistance* and chooses the following modulations:

Round	Spell Resistance
1	0
2	+7
3	+7
4	+7
5	-14
6	-14
7	-14

The dragon chooses to leave its Spell Resistance unchanged at 28 during the first round of the spell, during which it flies up to the tower. For the next three rounds, its Spell Resistance increases to an impenetrable 35. After this, it must repay twice this bonus, and drops its Spell Resistance to 14 for the next three rounds. The dragon hopes that it can deal with the wizards in the tower within three rounds of combat.

Golden Arcane Lure

Transmutation [Dragon]

Level: 4

Components: V, S, F

Casting time: 10 minutes

Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)

Target: One pile of treasure

Duration: 1 day/level

Dragons use this spell to protect their lairs. It functions by enhancing the natural lustre and attractive qualities of gold, transforming it into a magical lodestone. Any divination or teleportation effects targeting a location, item or creature within range of the spell may be redirected to the location of the treasure. There is a 1% chance of redirection per 250 gp value of the treasure, to a maximum of 75%. Some dragons set up a lure in a watched or

trapped pair of their lair; others enchant their hoard to drawn enemies into their inner sanctum.

Countering Spell Resistance

Although the spell resistance of dragons is not quite as strong as that of other naturally antimagical creatures, it does make it much harder to affect the monsters with spells. Cunning spellcasters draw upon the power of sympathetic magic to reduce the dragon's spell resistance. Any one of the following items can be used as an extra material component in a spell to reduce the dragon's resistance by the listed amount. Only one item can be used in a spell, and the item is consumed in the casting.

Item	Spell Resistance Reduction
100+ gp item from the dragon's hoard	-1
Scale from the dragon	-2
Horn or tooth from the dragon	-3
Blood from the dragon	-4
Shard of the dragon's egg	-5

Knowing the dragon's true name and using it as extra Verbal component in a spell also reduces the dragon's spell resistance by three. Dragons never willingly reveal their true names, but some have been tricked or forced into doing so.

DRAGON SPELL DOMAINS

The Chromatic and Metallic spell domains may be taken by any dragon in lieu of one of its usual domains. Some dragons gain clerical domains automatically due to their instinctive connection to a deity; others learn to master clerical spells by taking the Mystical age advancement. Only a dragon or dragon-blooded caster may take either the Chromatic or Metallic domain.

Chromatic Domain

Granted Power: You gain a +1 profane bonus to all saving throws against spells and effects created by

Metallic dragons, and you gain a +1 profane bonus to all attack rolls made against Metallic dragons.

1. Colour Spray
2. Feed on Fear
3. Dispel Magic
4. Dominate Person
5. Dispel Good
6. Sloughing Spell
7. Control Weather
8. Prismatic Spray
9. Storm of Vengeance

Metallic Domain

Granted Power: You gain a +1 sacred bonus to all saving throws against spells and effects created by Chromatic dragons, and you gain a +1 sacred bonus to all attack rolls made against Chromatic dragons.

1. Sanctuary
2. Zone of Truth
3. Scrying
4. Congeal Cloud
5. Break Enchantment
6. Heroes' Feast
7. Control Weather
8. Fire Storm
9. Astral Projection

The Draconic domain is used by mortal clerics who serve deities allied with or sympathetic towards dragons. It is a domain of cultists and wrym-worshippers. Dragons may take the Draconic domain, but gain little benefit from it.

Draconic Domain

Granted Power: The cleric may use [Dragon] spells, even though he is not a dragon.

1. Endure Elements
2. Power Word: Dragon's Name (Clerics serving a deity, not a dragon, can use this spell to attract the attention of the god or one of its agents, but they are under no compulsion to respond or even take notice in any way.)
3. Spellrip
4. Sending
5. Entrancing Gaze
6. Forbiddance
7. Bend Lances and Break Swords
8. Protection from Spells
9. Summon Monster IX

DRAGON MAGIC ITEMS

Although most dragons prefer to steal items instead of crafting them, gold dragons are experts at making magical devices – their skill is so great that they can spontaneously create certain items, such as the *luck charms*. Most of the following items were originally created by gold dragons, but have been copied or taken by others over the centuries.

Weapons and Armour

Dragons create magical weapons and armour in the same way other creatures do, by taking the Craft Magic Arms and Armour feat.

Draconic Glaive of Opposition: The *glaive of opposition* is a *draconic glaive* +3 with five coiled metal serpents wound around the shaft. On command, one of these serpents can be made to bite the blade at the end, giving it one of the following abilities: *flaming*, *frost*, *shock*, *thundering* or

weeping (as *shock*, but inflicts acid damage). When faced with an opponent especially vulnerable to or protected from one of these attack forms, the *glaive* automatically selects the most effective serpent. For example, it would shift from *flaming* to *frost* when striking a red dragon.

Moderate evocation; CL 12th; Craft Magic Arms and Armour, *flame blade*, *chill metal*, *lightning bolt*, *shout*, *acid arrow*; Price 22,500 gp; Cost 11,275 gp + 450 XP.

Barding of Tenfold Shields: This *heavy barding* +2 can be commanded to reconfigure itself. When the armoured dragon wishes to fly, the armour plates covering its wings magically disconnect from the main body of the armour, freeing the wings. The plates fly along after the dragon and immediately reconnect when the dragon lands and stows its wings. The armour even disconnects when the dragon wishes to cast spells. In game terms, the



dragon can choose to decrease the armour class bonus from the armour by one point for a round in order to reduce the armour's check penalty by one or the arcane spell failure chance by 10%. *Barding of tenfold shields* takes no time to don or remove.

Faint transmutation; CL 5th; Craft Magic Arms and Armour, *levitate, unseen servant*; Price 21,800 gp; Cost 10,900 gp + 436 XP.

Scales

One of the most common items used by dragons are magical scales, which are grafted to the dragon's hide. These scales are used instead of rings or talismans. Use the Size Values table on page 102 (Dragon Anatomy) to determine how many scales a dragon can wear. Scales are created using the *Craft Scale* feat. Despite the names, a dragon of any type or colour can wear any of the scales listed below. Scale versions of most of the common magical rings and talismans exist, such as *scales of protection*. Only creatures with the Dragon type or similarly scaly bodies can use magical scales.

Black Scale of Shadow: Once per day, the wearer of a *black scale of shadow* can make the scale exude shadow over the dragon's whole body. This grants protection equal to a *blur* spell, but the dragon can also choose to *shadow walk* at will. The *black scale of shadow's* powers last for 1d6 hours.

Moderate illusion; CL 12th; Craft Scale, *darkness, shadow walk*; Price 38,400 gp; Cost 19,200 gp + 768 XP.

White Scale of Undeath: The feared *white scale of undeath* channels negative energy. If the wearer is struck by an energy drain or other negative energy-based attack, the scale glows brightly and the dragon does not suffer the draining effects of the attack. For the next 2d4 rounds, the wearer's physical attacks have the *ghost touch* property. If the wearer can strike the source of the negative energy attack within this time, it can discharge the negative energy as a cold attack that inflicts an extra 1d8 points of cold damage for every negative level. However, if the dragon cannot discharge the stored negative energy in this time, it suffers the full effect of the attack.

Faint Necromancy; CL 9th; Craft Scale, *death ward*; Price 4,000 gp; Cost 2,000 gp + 80 XP.

Green Scale of Poison: While wearing a *green scale of poison*, the dragon is immune to all poisons. Furthermore, its scales weep a form of contact poison – anyone touched by the dragon must make a Fortitude save (DC equal to the wearer's Hit Dice) or take initial damage of paralysis and a secondary effect of 2d6 points of temporary Constitution damage.

Moderate Conjunction; CL 9th; Craft Scale, *delay poison, poison*; Price 72,000 gp; Cost 36,000 gp + 1440 XP.

Blue Scale of Shooting Stars: When the *blue scale of shooting stars* is invoked (which can be done three times per day), every scale on the dragon's body begins to glow brightly. Invoking the scale is a free action, but it takes 1d4+1 rounds to charge the dragon's hide with magical power. Once this is done, the dragon may choose to fire its scales as shooting stars with a range of 720 feet. Each star explodes in a 10' radius burst inflicting 1d8 points of electrical damage on anyone struck (Reflex save, DC13 for half damage). Each star fired reduces the dragon's natural armour class bonus by 1, to a minimum of 0. The dragon's armour is restored at a rate of 3 points per round.

Moderate evocation; CL 9th; Craft Scale, *lightning bolt*; Price 25,200 gp; Cost 12,600 gp + 504 XP.

Red Scale of Detonation: The *red scale of detonation* has no effect while the wearer lives. However, 1d4 rounds after the wearer dies, the scale causes the corpse to explode violently. This explosion is a burst centred on the dragon with a radius of 10 feet per age category of the dragon. Anything caught in the explosion suffers 1d12 points of fire damage per Hit Dice of the dragon. Victims are allowed a Reflex save to take half damage (DC equals 10 + ½ the wearer's Hit Dice + its Constitution modifier).

Faint Evocation; CL 15th; Craft Scale, *delayed blast fireball*; Price 10,500 gp; Cost 5,250 gp + 210 XP.

Brass Scale of Audacity: The wearer of the *brass scale of audacity* may 'break the rules' once per day. For one round, it can ignore a single magical restriction, such as *hold person, windbind, geas, charm, antipathy, repulsion, dimensional anchor* or any other effect created by another character which says that others 'may not do' something.

Moderate abjuration; CL 9th; Craft Scale, *dispel magic, freedom of movement*; Price 25,200 gp; Cost 12,600 gp + 504 XP.

Bronze Scale of Defence: A *bronze scale of defence* is an improved version of a *scale of protection +3*. It improves the armour class of the dragon by giving a +3 deflection bonus, but also extends this protection to anyone riding on the dragon.

Faint abjuration; CL 5th; Craft Scale, *shield, shield other*; Price 20,000 gp; Cost 10,000 gp + 400 XP.

Copper Scale of Joy: The *copper scale of joy* grants immunity to fatigue, exhaustion, fear, terror and the effects of spells like *crushing despair* or *phantasmal killer*.

Faint Abjuration; CL 7th; Craft Scale, *good hope, restoration*; Price 56,000 gp; Cost 28,000 gp + 1120 XP.

Gold Scale of Wisdom: The *gold scale of wisdom* allows its wearer to meditate on a problem. For every day spend meditating, it gains a +1 inherent bonus to Intelligence, Wisdom or Charisma for the purposes of a single spell or skill check, to a maximum of +20. A dragon cannot do anything else while meditating.

Moderate divination; CL 10th; Craft Scale, *contact outer plane*; Price 25,000 gp; Cost 12,500 gp + 500 XP.

Silver Scale of Reflected Knowledge: The *silver scale of reflected knowledge* has two distinct effects. Firstly, the dragon is in tune with the emotions and thoughts of those around it, giving it a +5 insight bonus to Disguise, Knowledge (local) and other skill checks used by the dragon when pretending to be a human. Secondly, any *divination* spells of fourth level or lower that target the dragon return false information. Usually, the results of such spells the reflection of the caster – a paladin using *detect alignment* on the dragon would receive the result of ‘Lawful Good’.

Faint abjuration; CL 10th; Craft Scale, *detect thoughts non-detection, screen*; Price 120,000 gp; Cost 60,000 gp + 2400 XP.

Dreaming

During its long periods of slumber, the soul of a dragon leaves its body. The first step is a month-long period of preparation, during which the soul protects itself by weaving a magical cocoon or shell of silver threads from the astral plane. Viewed with arcane sight, this shell resembles the dragon from some angles, but looks more like a sphinx or serpent from others. Girded in this form known as a dream-avatar, the dragon’s soul moves through the Astral Plane to the Plane of Dreams. This is an entirely natural and instinctive process over which the dragon has little conscious control; it is the mental and spiritual equivalent of the dragon shedding its skin.

The dream-avatar may behave quite differently to the ‘parent’ dragon, as it is ruled by the dragon’s subconscious mind. The dragon is exploring its mind while dreaming. In some rare cases, the dream-avatar is philosophically quite opposed to the dragon, and may attempt to deny their connection or even act against it. There are dragons who cannot bear to sleep, for sleeping frees their worst enemies to plot against them.

The Plane of Dreams is a curious realm. It bleeds into many different realities and planes at different points. Just as the Astral Plane is the structure in which all other planes exist, the Dream Plane is a ‘backdoor’ to reality, a gestalt composite of the consciousness of all mortal creatures. Dragons, as the eldest and most primal of all living creatures, have a special connection to the Dream Plane. While in dream-avatar form, a dragon can perceive the shape of the multiverse and hone their magic, as well as observe the dream-reflection of events on the prime material plane. This is one method by which dragons find new treasures to loot – they can scent the greedy dreams of dwarves.

While most dragons spend all their time while asleep in the Dream Plane (specifically, in a region of the Plane referred to variously as the Recollection of Dragonsong or the Wyrmind), dream-avatars do sometimes find their way from dreams into other outer planes, or else descend too far into an individual dream and become enmeshed. A mortal with the dream-avatar stuck in his mind goes insane,

and the dragon is unable to wake until the two are separated by means of a *dismissal* or similar spell.

It is possible, but very difficult, to use spells like *planar binding* to call a dream-avatar. A dream-avatar's abilities are based on those of the underlying dragon – apply the following template.

Creating a Dream-avatar

'Dream-avatar' is a template that can be applied to any dragon (hereafter referred to as the sleeping dragon). It has all the dragon's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Size and Type: Add the 'dream' subtype. While dream-avatars are Dragons, they also count as Outsiders for the purposes of spells.

Hit Dice: Unchanged from the sleeping dragon.

Armour Class: Unchanged from the sleeping dragon.

Attack: Unchanged from the sleeping dragon.

Full Attack: Unchanged from the sleeping dragon.

Damage: Unchanged from the sleeping dragon.

Special Attacks: Unchanged from the sleeping dragon.

Special Qualities:

Dreaming (Su): A dream-avatar can only exist on the Plane of Dreams. When pulled out of this plane, it must make a Will saving throw each round (DC equal to the number of rounds since it left the Dream Plane) or be destroyed. When destroyed by any means, the dream-avatar either reforms on the Plane of Dreams or else the dragon awakens and the dream-avatar is incorporated back into the dragon.

Quasi-real (Su): Dream-avatars are only somewhat real, like an entity created by a *shadow conjuration* spell. Anyone encountering a dream-avatar may make a Will save (DC equal to 10 + ½ the dream-avatar's Hit Dice + its Charisma modifier). If this save is successful, the dream-avatar's attacks and abilities are only 20% likely to work.

Plane Shift (Sp): A dream-avatar may *plane shift* once per day at will, but only to either the Plane of Dreams or back to the Prime material to rejoin its body.

Abilities: Unchanged from the sleeping dragon.

Skills: Unchanged from the sleeping dragon.

Environment: Plane of Dreams.

Organisation: Usually solitary. Dragons from the same egg-clutch or lair sometimes share a dream.



LIFECYCLE

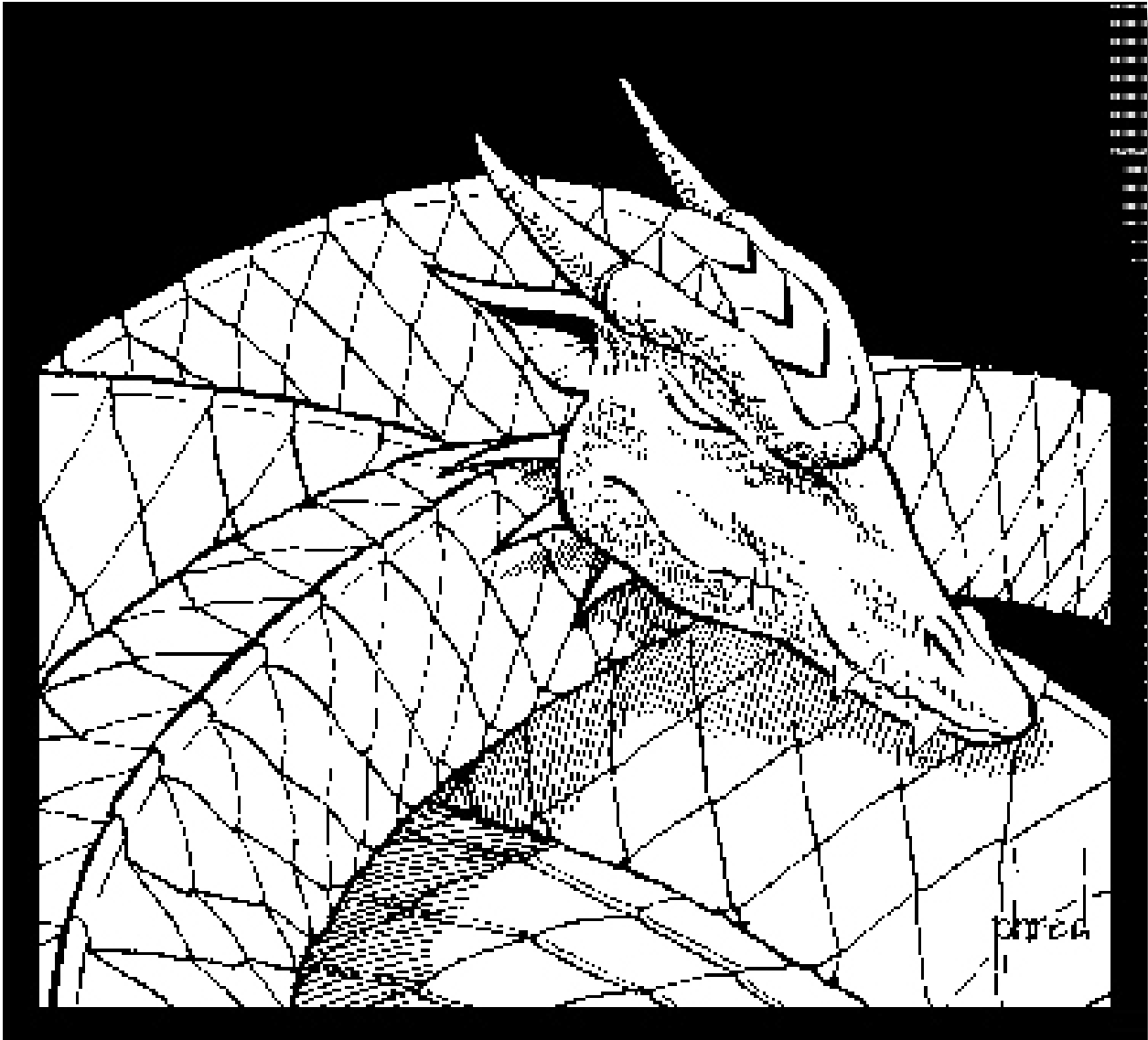
It begins with a small crack in the leathery surface of the egg. The crack widens and fragments of the egg fall away, and the egg-tooth of the hatchling pokes out into the dim light of the lair. Slowly and uncertainly, the hatchling clammers out of the egg, a wet tangle of spindly limbs, damp wings and an overlarge head precariously balanced by a clumsy tail. A hatchling is rarely bigger than the size of a man's arm, and most are no larger than a housecat.

In a thousand years time, this bedraggled cat-thing will be an ancient wyrm, hundreds of time larger and unimaginable more powerful. It will have gone through a series of tremendous metamorphoses,

each one a step in the dragon's long development from weak hatchling to titanic wyrm. A hatchling has within it the potential to be the ruination of the world, to burn the sky and break the mountains, to hoard the treasure of a dozen kingdoms and become in essence a living god... if it survives and completes its lifecycle.

YOUTH

Hatchlings are unable to fly until their wings dry and harden, which takes two weeks (less in hot or sunny climates). They can barely walk, often tripping over their own tails or forelegs, and their thoughts are little more than animalistic and are concerned solely with hunger. All a hatchling can do is eat, and it does that very well, devouring its own weight in meat every day for several days.



Sleeping Dragons

Dragons spend a large proportion of their time asleep. A dragon may sleep for centuries before rousing itself for a few years of destruction. Others adopt a more regular pattern, sleeping for most of the day but staying awake for a few hours. The following table shows dragon sleep patterns:

Sleep Patterns			
Age	% Awake	Daily Activity	Year-long reign
Wyrmling	40%	10 hours	Every two years
Very Young	35%	8 hours	Every three years
Young	30%	7 hours	Every three years
Juvenile	25%	6 hours	Every four years
Young Adult	20%	5 hours	Every five years
Adult	15%	3.5 hours	Every seven years
Mature Adult	10%	2.5 hours	Every ten years
Old	7.5%	2 hours	Every thirteen years
Very Old	5%	1.5 hours	Every twenty years
Ancient	3%	1 hour	Every thirty years
Wyrm	2%	1 hour	Every fifty years
Great Wyrm	1%	30 minutes	Every century
Draco Invictus	1%	15 minutes	Every two centuries

A dragon can exist in a half-awake state for months at a time, able to give orders and move around its lair, but unwilling or unable to take flight.

Waking a Dragon

If a character tries to wake a sleeping dragon, use its % awake as the base chance to wake the dragon, modified as follows:

Waking Modifiers	
Action	Waking Bonus
Noises	
Quiet noise (failed Move Silently check, whispering)	+0
Normal noise (conversation)	+5
Loud noise (raised voices)	+10
Shouting	+15
Loud shouting	+20
Bells, horns	+30
Church bells	+40
Explosions like <i>fireball</i>	+50
Actions	
Smell of blood	+5
Smell of fresh meat	+10
Approaching within 20 ft. of the dragon	+15
Touching the dragon	+20

Note that these are the chances to *deliberately* wake the dragon. It is comparatively easy to wake a dragon accidentally – just try stealing from its hoard or make a threatening noise in its lair. The difference is that if the dragon is woken deliberately, its first reaction is not usually to reach out and eat the person who woke it.

Attentive dragon parents bring food for their chicks, or have servants feed them. Abandoned dragon hatchlings are often forced to turn on each other, leaving only a single survivor. Most clutches contain two to seven eggs, although not every egg successfully hatches.

A month after hatching, a wyrmling has learned to speak Draconic – the words of the language come instinctively to the dragon, the grammar forming in its mind just as the plate scales form on its body. A great deal of draconic wisdom is inherited through instinct, and a young dragon dreams of flight before its wings are dry, and of magic before it knows the first words of a spell. Other lore must be taught, although most dragon parents wait until the wyrmling reaches the age of very young.

Wyrmlings do not leave the lair. When there are two parents, one dragon remains behind (often sleeping) and guards the wyrmlings, while the other hunts. Otherwise, the wyrmlings are left in the care of servants, or just walled up in a secure section

of the lair and told not to wander. Wyrmlings are hardly defenceless, but they are weak enough to fall victim to relatively common predators, such as owlbears, griffons, or manticores. In the lair, wyrmlings sleep on the same treasure pile as their parents.

All dragons sleep for long periods of time; both to conserve energy and to explore the realms of dream. Wyrmlings are comparatively active, staying awake for several hours each day, but they spend most of their time eating.

Once a dragon has reached the age of very young, it is permitted to leave the lair for short periods. Young dragons can be seen flitting around the lair entrance, practising flying. At this age, the dragon also begins to learn from its parents, and is permitted to hunt small animals for itself. As the dragon grows, its prey becomes larger and larger, but it still carefully watched by its parents.

Vassals

When a thousand-year or more lifespan stretches ahead of you, the brief lives of mortals seem inconsequential. The only constants in the world are other equally long-lived creatures – other dragons. While dragons of different alignments hate and despise each other, they are also bound together by kinship. If a silver dragon slays a red, it kills one of the few other beings who might be around in five hundred years. The world changes, and only the dragons remain.

This has given rise to the custom of vassal dragons. Rather than kill a defeated foe, a dragon can choose to take the defeated dragon as a vassal. The vassal must cede half its treasure hoard to its liege, and swears to defend its domain and lair. The vassal is not permitted to leave the domain of its liege. This arrangement permits good dragons to contain the evil of metallic dragons without killing them, and vice versa. The vassal's oath is unbreakable; a metallic dragon submits to the restrictions of its promise because it knows, at some point in the future, that it might be able to break free.

The restrictions of the oath are:

- The vassal gives half its treasure at the time of the oath to its liege
- The vassal defends the liege's lair as best it can
- The vassal does not leave the liege's domain
- The vassal does not attack the liege

In return, the liege allows the vassal to live, and often agrees to come to its defence when threatened. While direct attacks are forbidden (but not unheard of, if the vassal can ensure that no-one ever discovers its treachery), the vassal can be deliberately inattentive or even hire assassins to slay its liege.

The vassal oath is commonly used between dragons of the same alignment or breed, so a red dragon might have three or four younger red and green dragons in its service. More rarely, the oath crosses alignments – a gold dragon's lair might be defended by three much younger red dragons.

The offspring of a dragon are considered its vassals unless they leave its domain to make their own lairs.

Dragons without parents (either their guardians have been slain, or the egg clutch was abandoned) become scavengers. These dragons leave the lair once they can fly, searching for food. Some clutches stick together as a pack, others go alone or even fight amongst themselves, leaving only a single survivor. The ancestral memories and draconic strength means that many of these abandoned hatchlings will survive, although they usually end up feral and vicious.

MOULTING

The dragon sheds its skin for the first time after a year, and again every two to three years for the first three decades of its life. Moulting takes one week per age category of the dragon. During this time, the dragon's plate scales snap and break, and its hide slowly sloughs off, revealing a new, darker hide beneath. The dragon's colour deepens and changes, and the new hide is much tougher. While moulting, the creature is foul-tempered and irritable. The strain of moulting inflicts a temporary -4 circumstance penalty to Strength and Dexterity, so the dragon dares not take out its frustration on other creatures.

The end of a moult is a time of celebration for the dragon, and a time of terror for the surrounding lands. Free of its old, too-tight skin and glorying in its new hide, the dragon takes to the skies and hunts for food to replenish itself. The end of a moult is one of the few times when very young dragons are permitted to range far from the lair; not only do they need to eat a great deal of food, but their parents are sick of the sight of them after a few weeks of whiny, bad-tempered company. (This bout of excitement and over-confidence leads to death of many young dragons.)

JUVENILE DRAGONS

The strain of raising children requires an adult dragon to stay awake for long periods of time. Once the young dragons have reached the Juvenile or Young Adult age categories, they are old enough to defend themselves, so the parents give into their exhaustion and sleep. Chromatic dragons usually chase their offspring out of the lair, forcing them to find their own territory. One metallic offspring often stays behind to protect the sleeping bodies of its parents.

Feeding

An active dragon needs to consume one Hit Dice worth of meat per age category per month. Dragons may starve themselves for months or years before gorging – a dragon can consume its Hit Dice multiplied by its age category in a single meal while gorging. If the dragon is underfed, it begins to suffer temporary Constitution at the rate of one point per week. A dragon can become grotesquely emaciated due to starvation before dying.

Dragons can also feed on gemstones and other substances. A gemstone counts as one Hit Die per 10 gp of value; other substances have varying values, but are rarely enough to completely sustain a dragon.

It is during its juvenile phase that most dragons make their lair and first hoard. It is also the age that sees the greatest number of casualties; without the protection of the fully-grown adults, the young dragons are targeted by predators (including rival wyrms) and dragon-slayers. Gathering gold also puts the ambitious young dragon in danger. Juveniles are therefore one of the most commonly encountered types of dragon.

ADULTHOOD

Dragons are driven to procreate just as much as humans are, but they lack the same parenting instincts. Mates are chosen on combination of factors; draconic females are much pickier about who they mate with, while males are more promiscuous. Most matings are mere dalliances, lasting no more than a season. As a dragon ages, and its hours of wakefulness are decreased, its partnerships become more important and it tends to pair with another dragon for up to six centuries. The two share their lair, but not their hoards (except in the rarest and most committed of relationships). A female dragon can lay up to three egg clutches per year. However, most of these egg clutches will not hatch for decades or even centuries. Some are kept in the dragon's lair, others are hidden in vaults or secret places. Raising a clutch is a tiring and time-consuming commitment, but dragons are rare enough that a fertile breeding pair cannot miss the opportunity to produce fertilised eggs. The 'compromise' is to lay many eggs when the chance arises, but delay their hatchings for years. A dragon can have a sibling laid in the same year that is five hundred years ahead in terms of growth.

Adulthood also brings the flowering of the dragon's magical abilities. When a dragon sleeps, its mind ranges out into the planes, especially the shifting realms of dream. Instinctively, with a cold certainty, the dragon learns to use the draconic language that it has known since birth in a new fashion, imposing its will upon reality. Dragon sorcery is based on a deep connection to and direct observation of the underlying structure of reality. With words learned in the egg and with wisdom learned in dreams, the dragons work their magic.

Other than mating, dragons have little need for others of their own kind. They associate with each other on the dream plane, forming alliances and trading secrets, but contact between dragons on the material plane is rare. There are a few dragon nests where a half-dozen or so adult dragons share the defence of the lair (often, only one dragon is awake at any given time, so it is assumed that only one dragon dwells under the mountain, where in actuality six wyrms lair there). Other than the tenuous bonds of mating, parentage and vassals, each dragon is a kingdom unto itself.

OLD AGE

Dragons never stop growing, so long as they have food and treasure. Its moultings become rarer, but it continues to shed its skin about once a generation. Moultings usually occur early in an activity cycle. Every fifty years or so, the dragon wakes up from its dark dreams. After such a long fast, the monster is starving, and descends upon the surrounding lands to feast. After gorging itself for weeks on whatever livestock it can find, it returns to the lair to moult and shed its too-tight skin. During this time, the combination of hunger and the constriction of its skin infuriates the dragon almost beyond the point of reason, so it hunts and feeds savagely. Once its skin is shed and its hunger sated, the dragon has several months or years of wakefulness, during which it gathers more treasure, puts long-term plans into motion, checks on the status of other plans that it started when last it work, and finally reinforces its defences before returning to sleep.

The inner fires of old dragons are dull, embers of the fury of youth. Certainly, when the dragon is angered or hungry, it can muster a terrible wrath and consuming flame, but its overall energy level is much lower. Old dragons therefore rarely bother with mating. There are pairs of wyrms who have been partners for millennia, but by and large old dragons rarely sire or bear young. They still raise hatchlings, though, from caches of eggs laid centuries before.

While 'wurm' is generally used as a synonym for 'dragon', the title properly belongs to the eldest of dragons. When a dragon reaches the status of wurm, it is a thousand years old and has become one of most powerful and unassailable creatures in the world. Wyrms are respected and feared by their kin; they are the nobility of dragonkind by virtue of both age and strength. Most great wyrms sleep for centuries at a time, waking only when singularly great or catastrophic events disturb their slumber. Some are woken only by thieves trying to steal their hoard, or by ambitious wizards delving into forbidden secrets.

The oldest of the old are referred to as draco invictus. These exceedingly rare dragons are so old that their lairs are often buried beneath the debris of centuries and hidden by ancient warding spells of terrible puissance, so whole civilisations can arise atop a sleeping dragon. Remembered only in legends and children's stories, draco invictus are considered myths by many. Still, the dragons remember them, the greatest of living dragons. They are the embodiment of the desires of dragons; wealthy beyond measure, older and greater than the mountains, powerful beyond imagining.

ON THE HERITAGE OF DRAGONS

The world was born from the egg of a dragon.
The seas were made from the blood of a dragon.
The lands were drawn up by the claws of a dragon.
The winds are blown by the wings of a dragon.
The world ends in the fire of a dragon.

HISTORY

Almost every myth concerning dragons states that they were either the firstborn children of the gods, or else their masterwork creation. One of the commonly told stories of the dawn days is the Flight of Fury.

In the beginning, there was nothing save Tiamat and Bahamut, who circled each other endlessly, a dragon's watchful dance. Each one waited for the other to show weakness for but a moment. After countless empty ages, Bahamut's attention faltered for an instant, and Tiamat leapt upon him and tore out his shining throat. His platinum ichor slid down her gullet and she was driven mad with the desire to *create*, a thought otherwise inimical to her nature.

In her fury, Tiamat flew through the endless void. She spat a gout of fire and made the sun and the red dragons. She froze the ether into solid rock with a breath of cold, making the world and the white dragons with a single action. A third breath made the sky crackle into existence, and the blue dragons descended out of the azure shroud. Tiamat spat the seas and black dragons crawled out of them. Finally, when her throat was nearly clear of Bahamut's ichor, she breathed out a cloud of gas that coalesced into the forests and the green dragons.

Satisfied, she crawled back to her lair and lay down upon her hoard. The hoard of Tiamat contained more coins than there are grains of sand on the shore, and more gems than there are stars in the sky. Its value was beyond calculation. As she slumbered,

the last of the ichor of Bahamut rose up out of her mouth and five drops fell on the hoard. One drop struck a brass cup, one a copper book, a third a bronze sword, a fourth a silver mask, and the fifth a golden ring. The ichor of Bahamut combined with the breath of Tiamat and the metal to create five new dragons.

The metallic dragons crept away from sleeping Tiamat and found the body of Bahamut. Gold, wisest of all dragons, healed the Platinum Dragon and restored him to his place in the heavens.

That is how Tiamat made the world, and the dragons.

The chromatic dragons say that the world was made of them and for them, so they are the inheritors of all that is. They also claim that Bahamut was mortally wounded in his clash with Tiamat and will one day die of his wounds.

The metallic dragons argue that Bahamut made a great sacrifice, because only by combining his essence with that of Tiamat could the world be born. The metallic dragons believe that they were created to guard the world from the predations of evil.

CITIES OF THE DRAGONS

The days of dragonkind's glory are gone. Although there are still many wyrms of strength and cunning left in the world, there are few fewer dragons. Once, the skies were choked with dragons in flight. Swarms of dragons would descend on the rough cities of man and elf, despoiling and destroying them. The hunger of the chromatics was only held in check by the vigilance of the metallics. Even when the metallic dragons countered an attack by chromatic dragons, the battle was still devastating to the lesser races. Dragon-blood rained from the sky and scorched the fields, breath weapons set the forests and towns alight, and dragons falling from the sky crushed many unfortunates.

After an age of warfare, the metallic dragons proposed the Great Détente. Both branches of wyrmkind left the mortal world and retreated to huge cities built amid the highest peaks. To curb the rapacious urges of the chromatic dragons, the metallics gave them most of their hoards. For a

time, peace reigned. Magic took flight – without the constant threat of warfare, dragon scholars could investigate the potential in their own blood and in the draconic language. It was in this era that the techniques of spell preparation and metamagic were developed and codified, and magic was first taught to the lesser races. The first sorcerers were also sired during this time of peace.

The era of the cities did not last long. The population of both chromatics and metallic dragons had grown to unsustainable levels. The spark for the inevitable civil war was an attempt by a trio of black dragons to steal a clutch of young sorcerers bred for use as weapons. The theft was discovered by a bronze dragon guardian, but the black dragons turned the sorcerers' magic on the bronze. War broke out.

The War of the Wyrms was fought almost exclusively amid the highest mountain peaks and above the clouds. Even then, the merest echoes of the war were devastating. The cities of the dwarves were troubled by earthquakes caused by the fall of dragons. The skies burned as opposing armies of great wyrms and invictus-rank dragons clashed. Spells of surpassing potency were cast for the first and only time, tearing open portals to unimaginable realms and calling up elemental and pseudonatural horrors.

This war cost the lives of the majority of dragons, both metallic and chromatic. Only a tiny fraction of dragons survived and most of these were juveniles too small to take part in the major battles. The civil war broke the power of dragonkind, and gave mortals their best defence against wyrms – the magic derived the draconic tongue and dragon blood. Some historians suggest that the Great Détente was a deliberate ploy by the metallic dragons to curtail the power of the chromatics, to gather them all into a handful of cities where they could be destroyed. If true, then this self-sacrifice was as costly as that of Bahamut for the metallic dragons suffered more losses in the war than their chromatic kin.

The Slow Decline

Ever since the War of the Wyrms, the dragon population has continued to fall. The fires of the great dragons are dull and they sleep for centuries

at a time. Younger dragons are rare, and lack the strength and cunning of their forebears. Without the constant setbacks caused by dragon attacks, the lesser races have established their civilisations and grown in power until they, not the dragons, are the masters of the world. Dragons are limited to the wilderness and the empty places. They fall victim to slayers, to the assaults of treasure hunters and rangers, to the spells of clerics and wizards. It has been a long, slow decline punctuated by occasional moments of glorious destruction.

Bahamut and Tiamat still circle each other endlessly in the heavens – and while they endure, so too shall the dragons.

CULTURE

Draconic culture is restricted by the lack of contact between dragons. One dragon might see another wyrm only once every fifty years or more. This means that most dragons are, in human terms, eccentrics. Each has its own peculiar obsessions and behavioural quirks. One dragon might pride itself on its sense of fair play, another might make wonderful scrimshaw sculptures out of the skulls and thigh bones of knights, and a third collects obscure philosophical texts and only eats those who cannot satisfactorily debate the nature of free will.

For all their age and civilisation, dragon culture as a whole is somewhat underdeveloped. Many dragons still live in caves and hunt for their food. A dragon has a veneer of intellect and mysticism, but the beast is very close to the surface. A human descends into savagery when denied shelter and food for weeks or even months, but dragons mix the most erudite intellectualism and cunning with pure animal fury. There is no distinction between the basest needs and urges and the highest thoughts in dragons. They have no subconscious as mortals understand it.

Psychology

All dragons are greedy and egotistical. The chief difference is that the chromatic dragons's ego leads them to believe that all other things exist to sate their hungers and to amuse them. The ego of the metallic dragon dictates that they are the only entities who can truly defend the world against evil. Each dragon

is firmly convinced that it is the true and deserving heir to all creation.

Evil dragons are cruel and sadistic creatures, taking pride in the destruction and pain they cause. They find perverse pleasure in watching a community grow in the shadow of their lair, developing from a hamlet to a village to a wealthy town, and then destroying it utterly. Everything is viewed in terms of how it can be used by the dragon. On occasion, a chromatic dragon can be capable of an act of grace or compassion, or be taught to view a non-dragon as something more than meat to be eaten or a slave to be oppressed, but such aberrations are rare indeed.

Good dragons are the mirror of their chromatic cousins. Where the chromatic dragon waits until the town is ripe to be fed upon, the metallic dragon guards and nurtures the town. However, this relationship is not entirely positive – the dragons

are unable to see humans and other mortals as anything close to equals. The town is much more like the dragon's pet than anything else. Metallic dragons therefore rarely ally with human heroes or existing organisations, much preferring to set their own plans in motion. A dragon would sooner start its own secret society, manoeuvre it into a position of power, and use it as a tool to fight evil than deal with a group founded by feeble, short-sighted humans. Dealing with dragons can therefore be an infuriating trial – they always think they know better and are unwilling to allow humans to forge their own destinies. Silver dragons are the only draconic breed to love mortals wholly and unconditionally, and are their chief advocates among the rest of dragon-kind.

Dragons are patient – their long lives teach them to wait. A dragon knows that one day it will come into its inheritance, so it can tolerate setbacks and defeats.

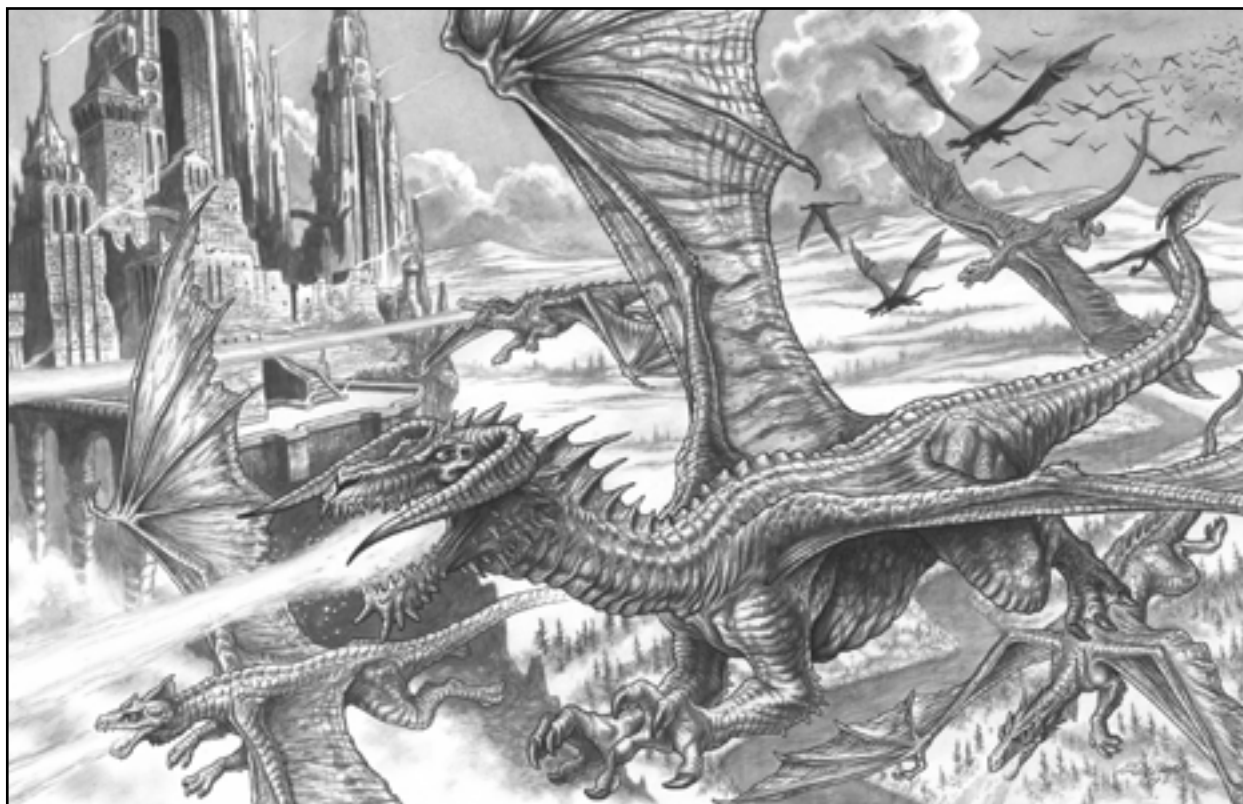


For all their foresight, most dragons lack perspective. A dragon can plot ceaselessly against a threat within its domain while ignoring a most distant but larger problem. Evil dragons are especially prone to this, ravaging a city for the sheer joy of destruction when they could profit far more by holding it to ransom year after year, but metallic dragons also focus on what are essentially trivialities in the grand scheme of things. A bronze dragon might spend three centuries assembling an army to battle an undead horde, but never stop to wonder about what dark force is animating and controlling the undead. The domains of dragons stretch for leagues across land and sea, but the minds of their masters are terribly parochial. When warned of a great danger, a dragon is quite capable of considering things from a grander perspective and can quickly adjust its plans, but time and again dragons have failed to see the true nature of things until it is pointed out to them. Patience is not always a virtue, as a dragon learns to wait too long, and never quite knows when the iron is hot. Of all the draconic races, only the dragons of red and gold are truly far-sighted.

Domains and Vassals

Both these institutions are legacies of the War of the Wyrms. Dragon domains keep individual dragons apart, limiting contact and controlling the draconic population. Vassalage allows dragons to clash and fight without killing. It is interesting to note that both concepts were adopted by humans to aid in co-operation, whereas in their original form they served to restrict draconic competition. This difference is seen time and time again; each dragon is fundamentally alone.

Before the institution of vassalage, the strength of a dragon was almost always directly proportional to its age. Now, a dragon can claim more territory if it has vassals than another dragon of equal age. This has given rise to an intense gossip network among dragons, as well as an abiding interest in genealogies, in hatchings and deaths. If one knows who claims vassalage over whom, and which dragons are free and which are dead, one can ascertain the strength of a rival. News of another dragon is almost as valued as flattery.



Dragon Moots

The grand moot at R'saknakus is well described in the *Slayer's Guide to Dragons*. Not every moot is held at that remote hill, nor are the avatars of Tiamat and Bahamut always present. Most moots are comparatively local affairs, encompassing no more than a continent and occurring on the frequent basis of once every two centuries on average. Moots are held in a variety of locations, but always in a place large enough to contain the dozens of dragons who attend.

The first event at any moot is the election of a speaker, which is done by acclamation – any dragon can claim the title, and the one who gets the loudest roar of approval from the crowd wins. The winner may be challenged once for the title. Often, the position of speaker is determined well in advance, negotiated by *sendings* and secretive meetings between the most influential dragons. The speaker's role is to keep order, select *drak'nehars* and ensure the moot's proceedings are smooth and balanced. The speaker may not vote.

After that, the dragons present are tallied by the speaker (who generally uses *truesight* to ensure there are no illusory or polymorphic deceptions) and a list of motions to be discussed. The moot is the only time when dragons of different breeds come together in a time of relative truce, so there is a terrible forced politeness. The ceremony of the moot is strictly observed, as any deviation from it could be an excuse for violence – and with so many dragons present, a battle could be disastrous for everyone present.

Topics discussed as a moot usually centre around the exact boundaries of dragons' domains, feeding rights, dangers posed by various powerful rivals and magical or occult events. Some moots impose injunctions, forbidding dragons from entering a particular kingdom. This is usually done to avoid offending a powerful entity such as an arch-wizard or divine avatar. Having the moot impose the law instead of the entity soothes the egos of dragons. Sometimes, the eggs of a dragon are given to other attendees at the moot to guard, to provide fosterage or hostages. Each discussion ends with a vote. Each dragon's voice is weighted depending on its age, standing and territory. Vassals are expected to vote with their master, and as vassals also allow a dragon

to control more territory, most politically-minded dragons are enthusiastic supporters of vassalage.

Criminals are also tried at moots – dragons have few crimes, but they do strictly enforce them. The crimes against dragonkind are:

- † Conspiring with mortals or extraplanar creatures to destroy dragon-kind
- † Conspiring with mortals or extraplanar creatures to injure the draconic deities
- † Attacking a slumbering dragon
- † Betrayal by a vassal dragon
- † Attempting to bring about the end of the world

The first three are all obviously to prevent an ambitious and treasonous dragon from turning on its kin. The fourth is the most controversial of all; although a vassal dragon is sworn to defend its master's domain, the requirements of 'defence' have never been fully agreed upon. Furthermore, as the only person who can accuse a vassal of betrayal is the master, successfully carrying out this crime usually results in stopping any accusations. The fifth crime was added to the roster after much debate, and exemptions have been granted to several dragons. The punishment for all these crimes is death.

Most moots last for one month. The moot is called by the previous speaker, who issues *sendings* or *dreams* as the last duty of his office. Dragons have one month to reach the moot site, and one month afterwards to return home from the moot. Warfare between dragons is forbidden during this time.

Mortals and other creatures are allowed speak at moots only by express permission of the speaker.

Famous Moot Sites

- † The Isle of Ash: An isolated island surrounded by near-unscalable cliffs, the central plateau of the isle is used as a ground for moots. Currently, the only inhabitant of the isle is a shipwrecked sailor. His vessel was driven onto the cliffs by a white dragon heading for the last moot. The sailor's only hope is for there to be a second moot within his lifetime, that he might cling on to a dragon as it flies off the island.

- † Mount Glare: A terrifying jagged peak, snow-covered all year round, Mount Glare shimmers in the sun like an aurora. When the dragons gather there, the aurora matches their colours, sending threatening rippling across the sky.

- † The Ruins of Alatas: One of the last cities of the dragons to be fall, Alatas was mostly destroyed when a huge chasm opened up beneath it. A handful of buildings still cling to the sides of the chasm, protruding at bizarre angles from the rock. When the moot comes, the dragons perch amid the ruins and their roars echo out of the chasm like earthquakes.

- † The Venomous Keep: A massive fortress made out of living poisonous plants, the Venomous Keep is the home of a green Draco Invictus named Nightshade. Despite her name and home, she is quite a gracious host, leading many to suspect that she is manipulating the moots for political advantage.

Government & Authority

The only real form of authority among dragons is the institution of the drak'nehar ('Wings of Justice'), the two enforcers chosen by the Speaker at a moot. Drak'nehars are responsible for bringing those accused of a crime to the moot, and are rewarded by a share of the hoards of any executed criminals. Drak'nehars are commonly drawn from the ranks of the red dragons, although bronzes are often called to keep the reds in check. Drak'nehars are permitted to use force to bring their targets to the moot, but are not given leave to kill.

There are two unofficial authorities among dragon-kind. A triumvirate is a alliance of three dragons. One specialises in magic, a second in combat, and the third guards their lair. Besides the tactical advantages, triumvirates have a sacred status among dragon-kind. The number is an imbalance in the natural order of things (with two factions, two deities, two wings and a bilateral symmetry overall, threes are disquieting to most dragons). A triad implies that the alliance is not based on mating, which is the normal foundation for draconic partnerships. By forming a triumvirate, the three dragons gain influence much greater than any two of them could claim.

The second authority is the Fifth Flight. A Fifth Flight consists of five dragons, one from each of the five colours or five metals. A Fifth Flight is often formed by a moot to investigate some issue in detail. For example, if mortal wizards are engaged in dangerous experiments involving demon summoning, the moot might assign a Fifth Flight to deal with the problem, or else spy on the wizards and bring the results to the next moot, a century or more hence. Unofficial Fifth Flights are also formed to speak on some issue – as they draw on all the different breeds, they speak with great weight and authority.

There has not been a true draconic legislature or government in millennia. In the hoards of certain elder dragons, the vast records of the House of Wyrms moulder. With the fall of the cities, local moots, the Grand Moot at R'saknakus and the occasional *commune* are enough for draconic society, such as it is, to function.



Scenario Seeds

- † A spy contacts the party. She has discovered that a dragon is guilty of the crime of conspiring with mortals. If evidence of this crime could be brought to the local Speaker, then the drak'nehars would be sent to bring the criminal to the moot. The dragon's lair would then be empty – and lootable.
- † The party discover a moot site in a ruined city, with an ancient draconic artefact at its heart. As they attempt to recover the artefact, they accidentally trigger one of its abilities – summoning a moot. The party have to escape the ruins, carrying the dragon-sized artefact, with more and more dragons arriving every single day.
- † A gold dragon contacts the characters. The next moot is going to be dominated by the chromatics, who will be able to push through a vote for a dragon attack on the lesser races. The gold dragon has managed to secure its election as speaker in advance. It proposes that it uses extended *polymorphs* and illusions to make the party appear to be young metallic dragons. All they have to do is successfully bluff a cavern full of aggressive dragons for a month or so.
- † The characters are sent to convince a dragon moot that a new order of human knights is no danger to them. The speaker of the moot is a black dragon, open to bribery. In truth, the order is training dragon-slayers, but none are ready to openly challenge a dragon. Can the players bargain their way into the moot and outwit the dragons?

PHILOSOPHY & THEOLOGY

Most dragon have little time for gods, even their own. From the dragon's perspective, the gods are merely placeholders for its own eventual destiny. They owe a little respect to Tiamat and Bahamut, but other deities are seen as little more than overly ambitious outsiders that will one day be an absolutely divine meal. Draconic clerics are rare, and take a mercenary attitude towards their worship – most venerate one deity or another purely

for the power. Those few dragon-fanatics are truly terrifying, consecrating towns as sacrifices with their fiery breath.

Tiamat & Bahamut

The King of the Good Dragons dwells on the Celestial Planes, in a vast palace of platinum and diamond. He has few followers, but many allies. Bahamut acts through a vast network of agents, contacted via the Plane of Dreams. His clerics are vagrant philosopher-priests, who wander the world seeking out evil and arranging for it to be thwarted. Most of the clerics are human, although a few are dragons in human guise. (The clerics gleefully spread the rumour that all of them are dragons.) His other titles include the August Personage in Silver and the Wayfinder.

Tiamat, the Queen of Many Colours, seeks a method to return to the prime material. She is the Devouring Mother who eternally hungers for the world she created. Potent bindings laid on her by the gods prevent her from transiting to the material realms (save at the grand moots, and then she is carefully watched by Bahamut). Tiamat is ultimately selfish and hateful – she is entirely without compassion, without selflessness, without mercy, without any positive quality save one. She tolerates her own chromatic dragons, but loves them only when they become clerics and totally subsume their will to hers, becoming nothing more than living tools and weapons.

Clerics of Tiamat have access to the Chromatic, Evil, War and Darkness domains. Clerics of Bahamut have access to the Good, Metallic, Travel and Light domains.

ADRACONIC PRIMER, continued...

Selas'arc: Bahamut

Tak'ne'dris: Tiamat

Aar'drack: The Great One

Kis'asa'sik: Ouroboros

Dra'agol: Attendant Dragon

The Great One

The Great One is considered a myth by many theologians, but a cult in its honour does have a few affiliates among dragon-kind. The Great One is either another guise for Bahamut, an equivalent deity for the few neutral dragons, or else a personification

of the draconic nature. While both Bahamut and Tiamat have goals beyond the acquisition of treasure, mating, and hunting, the Great One is a reptilian deity who exists in an eternal, blissful hunt. Its hoard is said to contain whole worlds.

Dragon-clerics of the Great One were blamed by some for the destruction of the cities, and certainly the cult of the Great One despise any movement towards civilisation. They venerate the hunt and the kill, the lair and the hoard, the fire and the ash. A few misguided mortal clerics worship the Great One as an apocalyptic deity, and call for him to devour this sinful world. A bizarre dwarven sect also honours this god, but pray that he will take the world into his hoard so they can see the greatest pile of gold in all the multiverse. The symbol of the Great One is a dragon's claw.

Clerics of the Great One may use the Draconic, Air, Animal and Strength domains.

Ouroboros

Ouroboros among humans is depicted as a serpent eating its own tail. The truth is quite different – Ouroboros is actually two dragons of the divine rank, chasing each others' tails. One dragon is Chromatic, the other Metallic. Both are named Ouroboros. They represent the unity and interdependency of the draconic race – each one is reliant but always watchful of the other.

Clerics of Ouroboros are peacemakers and diplomats. They are keepers of the moot sites, and Speakers are often drawn from their ranks. Mortal clerics of Ouroboros are rare, and tend to worship the Twins in their aspect as the Serpent of Time. Ouroboros does seem to have some special relationship with the flow of time, leading many dragons to suspect that the history of dragons is in fact circular, and that Tiamat's role is endlessly create and destroy all that is.

The symbol of Ouroboros is a depiction of the Ouroboros itself. Its clerics have access to the Draconic, Death, Knowledge and Law domains.

Attendant Dragons

Two fates await dragons. Some simply continue to grow in power and majesty, becoming larger and larger until the world shakes when they twitch in their sleep. Such dragons find that the surface of the world is too cold and barren to support them and travel to the Outer Planes or break through the crust of the world and find warmth in the molten core below the underworld. Other dragons are chosen to be Attendant Dragons, the direct servants of the draconic deities. To create an Attendant Dragon, apply the Celestial or Fiendish template to it.

The dragon opened his eyes. A thousand thousand pairs of wings glittered in the infinite light of his scales, and this was but one chamber of his palace. The diamond walls were taller than a dozen mountains stacked, and still this chamber constrained him. He squeezed through the portal and stood on the perch that overlooked all the worlds. Bahamut peered down, seeing the multiverse as a billion beloved sparks of hot metal and cold colour. His breath misted in the exalted airs of his heaven (and a thousand mortal dreamed the dreams that would inspire them to heroism). He spread his wings (and dawn broke on a million worlds below).

Beyond all that was, he sensed her. She spat her hate at him (plagues, blights, floods, firestorms, blizzards) and he knew that if he remained there, the force of her enmity would send worlds spinning into their suns or off into the outer darkness. Still, he waited a little longer before bidding her farewell.

Goodnight, my love.

HATCHING AND RAISING DRAGONS

DRAGON EGGS

The egg of a red dragon is no less than seven feet tall, and weighs almost as much as an ogre. The surface of the egg resembles volcanic stone, marked with streaks of ruby. It is leathery to the touch, but about two-thirds of the surface is covered with a protective crust that bears a striking resemblance to ground dragon-scales. The egg is warm to the touch, but only barely, like a stone that has absorbed a fraction of the day's heat. The surface of the egg is strong enough to survive considerable impacts (such as being transported by the draconic parents, who are hardly noted for their gentleness) and is wholly resistant to mundane flame.

Dragon eggs are mottled with the colour of their parentage and immune to the corresponding elemental forces. The appearance of each egg varies, and is possible unique to its dam. Since

dragons lay egg caches that go unused for centuries, the mottling serves as a sort of mark identifying to the dragon which eggs belong to it. The colouring denotes the age of the dragon when the egg was laid, and roughly matches its scale shade at that time.

Egg Caches

Dragon eggs are fertilised before being laid, but the fertile egg can wait for a long period before hatching. Soon after being laid, the egg enters a state of what might be termed hibernation or suspension. In this state, the egg's surface becomes completely covered in a crust, until it might be mistaken for a chunk of unworked stone.

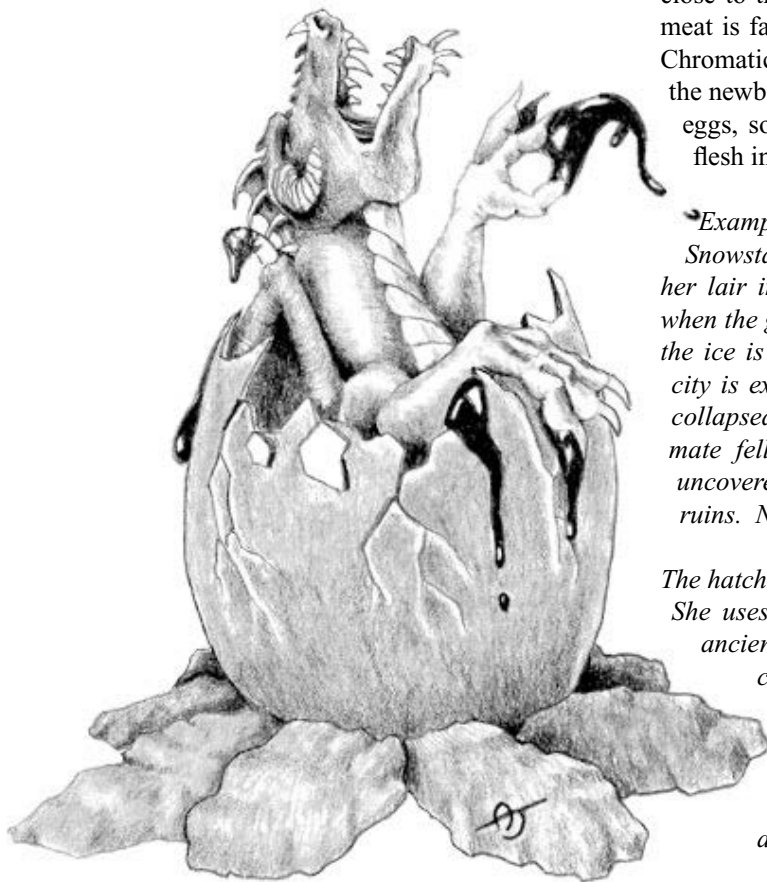
A dragon lays between two and five eggs on average; green dragons are the most fecund, leaving caches of up to a dozen eggs, while gold dragons rarely have more than a single egg. These caches are left in hidden places within the dragon's domain, often in purpose-built dungeons or secondary lairs. Others are merely buried in the earth, their position either marked with some object such as a standing stone, or else with a magical beacon (usually an *arcane mark* which is later found with a *locate object* spell). These caches are protected by traps or allies of the dragon (such as draconic cuckoos).

Egg Colours	
Dragon	Egg Description
Black	Covered in slime, the egg appears mottled with black bands that alternate between glistening wetly and being dull as shadow.
Blue	The egg's surface is sand-coloured, with bright streaks of blue.
Green	The small, yellow-green egg smells foully, as if it has rotted inside. It gleams like wet leaves.
Red	The egg is covered with a thin layer of what appears to be greasy ash. Beneath, the shell is ruby-red on top, darkening to a dull red-brown on the base.
White	The egg appears somewhat crystalline, as if the outer shell is a thin crust of ice. Beneath this glistening layer, the egg is an unblemished white ovoid.
Brass	At first glance, this egg appears to be a carefully crafted work of art, as it resembles a baroque brass ornament covered in abstract patterns. It is only when its cool leathery surface is touched that you realise it is organic.
Bronze	The egg glistens, and seems strangely reminiscent of sea-weed. A strong smell of ozone hangs over it, like the shoreline before a storm.
Copper	The egg is brown in colour, speckled with tiny glittering metallic shards.
Gold	This is obviously the egg of a gold dragon; it is a perfect golden ovoid, gleaming with a serene inner light.
Silver	The egg shimmers, with fractal patterns chasing each other endlessly over its silvery surface.

To awaken a dragon egg from suspension, the protective outer coating of the egg must first be peeled away, without damaging the contents. Dragon claws are curiously suited to this delicate task. The egg must then be slowly heated and infused with elemental essences. Dragons can do this by placing the egg in their hoard and lying atop it. Submerging the egg in a bath of molten metal (for metallic dragons) or alchemical solutions (for non-metallic dragons) can also awaken the egg. This costs 500 gold pieces per hit dice of the wyrmling, and requires a successful Handle Animal check or Knowledge (dragonkind) check (DC20) to avoid killing the embryo inside.

Egg Statistics

A dragon egg is one Size category larger than the hatchling inside. A Small egg weighs 50 lb, a Medium egg weighs 150 lb, and a Large egg weighs 350lb. An egg has a natural armour bonus equal to the wyrmling's natural armour bonus plus four, and a hardness of 5. If the egg has entered suspension, its hardness increases to 10.



Whenever damage (normal *or* subdual) inflicted on the egg, the dragon inside must make a Fortitude save (DC of 10+the damage inflicted) or die.

RAISING HATCHLINGS

As outlined in the discussion of the dragon's lifecycle (see page 204), an adult dragon hatches a cache of eggs once every few decades. It takes about three months to hatch an egg, but the dragon must stay awake and active for up to thirty years to raise its offspring. Most dragons find this a rather tiresome duty, and often use magic or co-opted servants to speed the task.

When a dragon is hatching an egg cache, it half-buries the eggs in its hoard. Loose coins are used to protect the eggs, and the gaps between eggs are often lined with gemstones. The dragon sleeps curled around the eggs, using the heat of its own body to hatch them. As the eggs come closer and closer to hatching, their colour brightens and the dragon can feel the hatchlings moving and pushing against the confining shell. If the dragon has a mate, it is sent to retrieve food; if the dragon is raising the hatchlings on its own, it must find fresh meat very close to the lair or send servants out. Soft, tender meat is favoured for newly-hatched dragon-chicks. Chromatic dragons often keep prisoners to feed to the newborns, chaining the unfortunates next to the eggs, so the hatchlings learn the taste of human flesh in their first moments of life.

Example: The white dragon known as Snowstalker (or Shashouro in draconic) makes her lair in the ruin of an ancient city abandoned when the glaciers rolled down from the north. Now the ice is melting and retreating, and some of the city is exposed. The dragon's lair is in the half-collapsed dome of an ancient temple. Shashouro's mate fell victim to an ancient magical trap he uncovered while exploring the meltwater-flooded ruins. Now she must raise their eggs alone.

The hatchlings are kept in the sacristy of the temple. She uses her gust of wind ability to awaken an ancient organ at the sound end of the temple, creating bizarre music to attract prey. The city is largely empty, with only a few wandering animals and the occasional treasure hunter to feed upon. Due to the dangers of the ancient city, Shashouro is loath to leave

her hatchlings unprotected and is beginning to starve.

Foster Dragons

Only about half the eggs laid by a dragon will actually be hatched and raised by that dragon. Some will never hatch, lying abandoned in hidden caches or destroyed by adventurers. Others are given to other dragons to raise. Often, the sire of the hatchlings is given several eggs; it keeps these for centuries and raises a few hatchlings every few centuries.

Other eggs are given to allies of the dragon. Some black dragons are raised by lizardman or kobold tribes. Silver dragon eggs are sometimes entrusted to especially honourable and valued friends of the dragon. These fostered hatchlings rarely have any contact with their actual parent, although the dragon is at least vaguely interested in the fate of its offspring, and will come to their aid if alerted to the danger. Dragons are carefully to choose only those foster parents who can competently care for and protect the eggs and raise the hatchlings.

Example: The gold dragon Oridestes has long been the patron of an order of paladins known as the Dawnguard. Oridestes is the secret weapon of the order, called in when the Dawnguard faces the blackest evils. Her fiery breath has brought 'purification' to many secret sanctums and fortresses of darkness. Still, Oridestes knows that one day, some assassin or blackguard will break through her defences and end her life.

To prepare for that day, she has entrusted nine eggs to the Dawnguard. Should Oridestes be slain, the paladins will hatch these eggs and have nine golden warriors to replace their fallen patron.

Hostage Eggs

One of the best ways to control a dragon is to take its eggs. While many dragons are poor and inattentive parents, they will go to great lengths to retrieve a stolen egg. The dragon can be bargained with, offering the safe return of the egg in exchange for some service from the wyrm. However, it cannot be assumed that the dragon will automatically comply with any demand when its eggs are threatened; dragons are instinctively very protective of their eggs, but are quite capable of

intellectually disengaging from their parental drives and sacrificing their offspring.

Holding a dragon's egg hostage gives the holder a circumstance bonus of up to +40 to all Diplomacy and Intimidation checks made against the dragon (depending on how much the holder threatens the eggs), but there is a 5% chance per +2 bonus that the dragon decides to sacrifice the eggs and cancels the bonus. For example, a party of adventurers have captured a dragon's egg, but are now trapped in the lair by the dragon, so they choose to use the egg to bargain for their freedom. They threaten the egg to gain a +20 bonus to their Diplomacy check. There is a 50% (5% per +2) that the dragon just shrugs, decides the egg is probably a lost cause anyway, and ignore the party's Diplomacy.

Long-term hostage eggs can be hatched and raised as normal. Doing so is considered one of the greatest indignities possible.

Example: The three eggs of the blue dragon known only as Sister of Thunder were stolen by a famous desert thief. Now, the dragon must give a tithe of the treasure it captures to the thief. He has grander plans in mind than merely using the dragon as a giant flying tax collector; while the eggs are in his custody, he is studying them. The thief is a master forger, and soon he will have learned enough to make perfect copies of blue dragon eggs, which can be sold on to wizards and beastmasters...

Hatching Dragons

The rules here are aimed at characters who are trying to raise dragons in captivity, for use as mounts, war machines or pets. Don't bother with using these rules for eggs that are being cared for by an actual adult dragon.

THE HATCHING PROCESS

A viable dragon egg takes several months to hatch. During this time, it must be kept warm, even for dragons elementally aligned to the cold. The shell of the egg slowly hardens, and its colours become brighter and brighter. The surface becomes more and more metallic and brittle. A red dragon's egg on the verge of hatching resembles a perfect oval of crimson ceramic, a gold egg appears to be made out of solid gold.

HATCHING AND RAISING DRAGONS

The hatching bonus for an egg to hatch begins at +0. The Games Master should make a hatching check every month, against the following table:

Hatching Check Difficulties	
Month	Hatching DC
1	30
2	25
3	20
4	20
5	25
6	30
7	35
8	50

After eight months, the egg becomes unviable.

If the check is successful, the dragon hatches. A newborn wyrmling hatched under perfect conditions has 8+1d4 hit points per hit dice. Subtract one hit point per hit dice for every two points of difference between the Hatching DC and the result of the hatching check. (This means that the closer the result is to the Hatching DC, the healthier the dragon. A character trying to hatch a dragon cannot just throw on as many bonuses as possible to the hatching check, he must learn the exact needs of each egg to produce the healthiest dragons.)

If the check fails by more than 20, the egg is ruined.

The bonuses to the hatching check are as follows:

Hatching Check Modifiers	
Treatment	Modifier
Egg kept at correct temperature	+10
Egg kept at too hot a temperature	+5
Egg kept at too cold a temperature	-5
<i>Resistance</i> cast each day*	+1
<i>Aid</i> cast each day*	+3
<i>Animal growth</i> cast each day	+2d6
<i>Endurance</i> cast each day*	+Constitution bonus from the spell
Egg kept with other eggs	+1 per other egg
Creature used to keep egg warm	+3
Dragon used to keep egg warm	+5
Hatchery	+2
Alchemical treatments#	+/-1d6
Elemental essences*#	+/-2d6
Egg moved	-1
Egg touched by non-dragon	-2
Egg disturbed	-3
Egg damaged	-3/point of damage

Treatments marked with a * do not reduce the hit points of the dragon if the hatching check exceeds the hatching DC.

Treatments marked with a # can be used to *reduce* the hatching bonus.

Temperature: The temperature varies for each dragon species. In general, it matches the body temperature of the parent dragon – red dragons prefer a temperature of around 100 degrees F, while a cold dragon is most at home at around 30 degrees

F. A Knowledge (dragonlore) check (DC30) is required to ascertain the correct temperature if the characters do not have access to a dragon's lair.

Resistance, aid, endurance: If these spells are cast, they strengthen the hatchling inside. The spell must be cast once each day to get the hatching bonus.

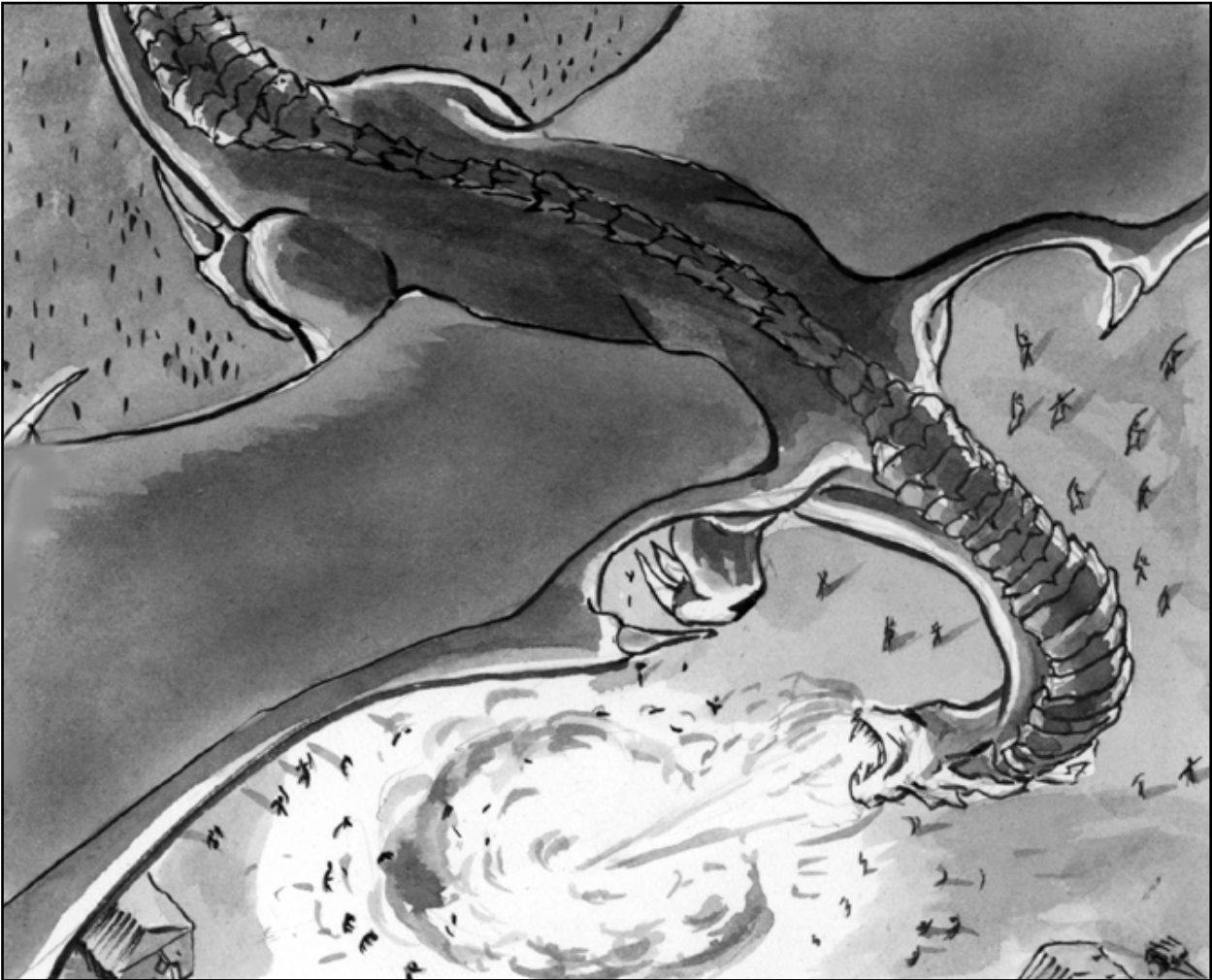
Animal growth: This spell causes the egg to bulge and twist as the hatchling inside grows quickly. The spell energies are channelled into hastening the egg's development instead of actually doubling the size of the unborn dragon.

Creature/Dragon used to keep egg warm: The creature must spend at least 16 hours a day atop the eggs. The best creature is obviously a dragon, but wyverns or hydras are also effective. In a pinch, properly adapted undead or constructed reptiles can be used.

Hatchery: A hatchery is essentially a dragon-sized henhouse, containing bedding for the eggs, heat sources such as torches or a furnace, and often mechanical arms for moving the eggs without touching them. A hatchery costs 500 gp per egg, and can be reused.

Alchemical treatments: A properly made alchemical preparation (costing 100 gp, Craft (alchemy) DC 20 to make) can balance the egg's inner humours and hasten the dragon's development. These potions must be carefully injected into the egg using needles of pure silver (costing 100 gp each). The needles can be reused. Injecting the treatment requires a Dexterity check (DC15); if the check is failed, the egg takes 1d6 points of damage.

Elemental essences: Like alchemical treatments, elemental essences can be channelled into the egg. These essences can be prepared by crushing appropriate gemstones to dust (rubies for fire dragons, pearls for water dragons, etc.) and



channelling the elemental energies into the egg, or distilled from dragonsblood. Again, silver needles are used to insert the essences.

Egg kept with other eggs: The more dragon eggs in a place, the more likely they are to hatch.

Egg touched by non-dragon: Using dragonskin gloves or other tools counters this penalty. Reptilian creatures may touch the egg without incurring this penalty.

Egg moved: Any movement, no matter how small, can jostle the egg. The best solution is to carefully pad the egg's surroundings – loose gold pieces are favoured by dragons. An egg can be moved safely if the character makes a successful Dexterity check (DC10).

Egg disturbed: This penalty occurs when the egg is severely jostled, such as being dropped, the hatchery collapsing, or other potentially damaging effects. Note that the penalties from disturbing the egg stack with those for damaging the egg.

Egg damaged: Inflicting actual damage on the egg severely harms its chances of hatching successfully.

Specialists

A sage specialising in the care of dragons can ascertain the current health of the egg (i.e., the current hatching bonus) by making a Knowledge (dragonlore) check (DC20). Such a sage costs 100 gp per consultation.

A dragontamer is a rare kind of specialist who is expert in raising and training dragons. He has multiple skill ranks in both Knowledge (dragonlore) and Handle Animal, and costs 50 gp per month per skill rank.

General workers for a dragon hatchery cost 1 gp per day.

THE CARE AND FEEDING OF DRAGONS

A newly hatched wyrmling is weak (see above for its initial hit points) and very, very hungry. Dragons can eat meat from the moment of hatching, and chromatic hatchlings may turn on each other if food is not provided immediately.

After the initial feeding frenzy, dragons are remarkably easy to raise. Wyrmlings are extremely resilient, and thrive even in the worst conditions. The main problem is keeping the active and agile wyrmlings from escaping; even a newly hatched wyrmling can tear a man limb from limb. Keeping the dragon chained up underground is a poor solution, as the worm's wings need exercise and practise early in life if it is ever to full at full strength.

The best way to keep a dragon in captivity is to make its life as comfortable as possible, giving it a hoard to lie upon, fresh meat to devour (or, better yet, provide it with convenient and well-stocked hunting grounds), regularly scale baths and a suitable lair. Caverns are usually used as lairs, but dragons are equally happy in constructed stables, dungeons, or the cellars of a castle keep. Some dragon-keepers forge exceedingly long and light chains from mithral, giving the dragon room to fly while preventing it from vanishing off into the



sky. Often, the chain is anchored to a large wagon, allowing the wyrm to be wheeled out to hunt.

Magic offers several other solutions for controlling young dragons – *charm monster*, *geas* and *suggestion* can all ensure a dragon does not attempt to escape.

TRAINING DRAGONS

A dragon is quite unlike any other mount; it is an intelligent, self-aware creature. While intelligent mounts are not unheard of – a paladin, for example, may have an intelligent celestial warhorse, or a druid might *awaken* his steed – such steeds are generally willing to serve another creature. The paladin's mount chooses to aid its master, its destiny is to help its master achieve his goals. Dragons, on the other hand, are proud and free-willed individuals and generally less than enchanted with the idea of serving as a glorified pegasus for some ambitious human knight.

There are four ways, then, to make a dragon agree to being used as a steed (or as any other form of servant). They are:

- † Breaking the dragon's spirit
- † Taming the dragon
- † Magical binding
- † Partnership

Breaking The Dragon's Spirit

Subduing dragons by inflicting a large amount of non-lethal damage on them is a long-established tradition, although it requires even more skill and daring to subdue the dragon than it does to slay the wyrm. A somewhat easier tactic is to grievously wound or trap the dragon, then spare its life instead of finishing it off. The key here is to make it clear to the dragon that it is being spared not because of any bargain or promise the dragon makes, but because the characters are deliberately choosing, by



their whim alone, to let the dragon live. This utter humiliation cripples the dragon's pride, and it suffers a penalty equal to its hit dice to all Diplomacy and Intimidation checks, making it vulnerable to being dominated by the characters. It becomes a rather pathetic, fearful creature, desperate to escape from these terrible humans who have ruined the natural order of things.

This psychological blow quickly heals, and the subdued dragon begins to plot how it can extract its revenge on its captors. After all, if the dragon can escape from, then destroy those it lost to, it proves that its defeat was nothing more than an aberration, a fleeting, momentary error in the universe. Their deaths – their humiliating, painful, bloody defeat – will wholly renew the dragon's confidence.

If the characters can defeat and subdue the dragon again, it will serve them, grudgingly, for some time (2d6 months) before rebelling *again*. If the dragon can be defeated and subdued a third time, the dragon's spirit breaks and it surrenders wholly. A subdued dragon can be used as a mount and will obey commands.

Even a broken dragon retains something of the proud spirit of wyrmkind, but it is turned in on itself, becoming bitter. Subdued dragons are hateful, sour beasts, who take little pride in their appearance or conditions. They live in filth, and delight in little victories and the pain of others. The broken dragon serves its master, but it knows nothing of duty or loyalty, only fear.

Example: The blackguard Thucis slew a silver dragon and has captured her three young wyrmlings. The trio are held in the evil warrior's castle, where he has a well of blackness that serves as a gate to an outer plane of torment. This gate can only be opened at the solstices and equinoxes. Each time the gate is opened, the three young dragons are subjected to hideous torture that breaks their spirits. Unless they can be rescued before midwinter, Thucis will open his gate a third time and the dragons will be his forever.

Taming the dragon

A dragon raised from the egg can be tamed and trained to willingly bear a rider. As dragons are intelligent creatures, many of the usual methods for handling an animal do not apply; taming a dragon often requires bringing in tutors and philosophers to

argue with the beast as well as using the best animal trainers and beastmasters.

Taming a dragon requires a series of Handle Animal and Diplomacy checks. The Handle Animal checks have a Difficulty Class of 15+the dragon's hit dice. The Diplomacy checks are opposed by the dragon's own Diplomacy. See *Core Rulebook I* for details on the requirements for rearing a wild animal, and apply the same rules for the Diplomacy check. These Handle Animal and Diplomacy checks must be made three times – once as the dragon grows from Wyrmling to Very Young, and again as the dragon moves from Very Young to Young, and finally as the dragon moves from Young to Juvenile.

If the majority of the Handle Animal checks fail but the Diplomacy checks succeeds, the dragon is willing to aid its captors, but will not bear a rider unless the dragon decides the situation warrants the indignity. If the majority of the Handle Animal checks succeed but Diplomacy fails, the dragon is trained to bear a rider, but refuses to submit to captivity and will try to escape or bargain with its captors; it has no inbred loyalty or humility. If the majority of both checks succeed, the dragon is tamed and will loyally serve its new masters.

As it takes a dragon up to three decades to reach the Juvenile age category, dragon taming is a slow process. Often, a tamed dragon is left as a legacy for the next generation; the dragon hatched from an egg captured by a noble on his youthful wanderings is given as a mount to the noble's son when he comes of age many years later.

The chief benefit of actually taming the dragon, of course, is that it is loyal for life, and will serve as mount and guardian of the family for many generations.

Example: The Dragon Kings of Highcroft are an ancient family, who rose to power seven centuries ago. They owe their fortune to the wyrm they now refer to as Grandfather. Many hundreds of years ago, the first of the kings – then, a minor adventurer named Myroth – found a bronze dragon egg in a forgotten cache. At great expense, he tamed the hatchling and named it Skyshaker. Myroth's heir rode the dragon into battle, winning a knighthood and a barony for himself. As the generations sped by, the dragon grew and grew, and turned from being a mere steed and war machine to an advisor, and then even a friend and honorary member of the family. Eventually, he became a member of

the family in truth, as when Skyslayer mastered his alternate form, he married the great-granddaughter of Myroth. Now, centuries later, the family are kings and royalty, and the old wyrm sleeps beneath their palace, dreaming of those long-ago days when a peasant adventurer won its trust with meat and kindness.

Magical Binding

Spells and enchantments can be used to speed the process of taming a dragon. Why bother painstakingly building a bond between dragon and tamer when a single *charm* can convince the dragon to serve in a moment?

(The answer, of course, that loyalty does not fail when spells unravel.)

The simplest spell to use is *charm monster*. Bards are usually employed to soothe the savage beast, using *fascinate* to calm the dragon before applying the spell. Spells to reduce the dragon's spell resistance and saving throws are also applied. Will-sapping drugs are added to the dragon's feed. Once the dragon is *charmed*, it will serve happily.

Charm monster spells last only a few days. To ensure the dragon does not break free, the bonding is renewed well in advance of the spell's expiration. Repeated applications of the spell can slowly break down the dragon's mental defences, but there is always a danger of the dragon breaking free, especially if the dragon is old enough to exude the countermagic of spell resistance.

A more permanent solution is to use *feeblemind* on the dragon. While this does remove the dragon's spellcasting abilities and fearsomely cunning mind, it does make it much more tractable. The near-mindless dragon must be retrained using the standard Handle Animal checks to train an animal, but once this is done, the result is a creature with the size and strength of a true dragon without the wilful and dangerous mind.

Example: Rijoflex, a young adult brass dragon, serves a half-orc sorcerer named Uthruz. As far as Rijoflex is aware, Uthruz is an honourable and charming master, worthy of having a dragon as a mount. Not only is his friend Uthruz a powerful sorcerer, he is also a healer with gentle hands, and is working on healing an old wound on Rijoflex's breast. What the dragon does not know is that

the half-orc is slowly replacing the scales with magical talismans that reduce the dragon's mental resistance. Each charm spell brings Rijoflex deeper into Uthruz's thrall.

Of course, when the dragon grows large enough to shed his skin, Uthruz's talismans will be sloughed off with the rest of the scales...

Partnership

The best method for acquiring a dragon mount is for the dragon to willingly and freely agree to serve. Such partnerships are exceedingly rare. There are temporary alliances of convenience, where both mortal characters and dragons work together to fight some battle or further some cause. Dragons sometimes debase themselves serve as mercenaries, accepting huge payments to use their powers and breath on the battlefield.

Young dragons are sometimes attracted to a particularly heroic and dynamic mortal. Humans live such short, frenetic lives, cramming all sorts of adventure and excitement into a few short years. In contrast, elder dragons seem to take years to do *anything*. Impatient young wyrms sometimes fly off and enter the service of a suitably noble and inspiring human (i.e., one who has the Leadership feat and takes the dragon as a cohort).

Example: The monk Hsiao has a problem. Three days ago, a gold dragon arrived outside the monastery, bowed respectfully to the doorkeeper, and politely informed the abbot that it was here to collect its rider for the impending war against the Void. This rider, according to draconic prophecy, is named Hsiao, and could he please gather his belongings and come out to war?

It might help if Hsiao knew what the Void is, what the prophecies say, or who the dragon is. It would certainly help if he was more than a mere novice in the order... but he cannot wait. There is a dragon on the doorstep, and it cannot be kept waiting.

CAMPAIGNING

DRAGONS & THE GAME

If there is an iconic, quintessential monster, it is the dragon. From the very start of fantasy roleplaying, dragons have been the classic threat, the monster to end all monsters. If dragons exist in a world, then there are other monsters to be fought, treasures to be won, dungeons to be navigated, dangers to overcome, quests to accomplish, legends to be forged. Their existence opens a gateway to fantastical possibilities.

Similarly, in the wider fantasy genre, dragons imply a great deal. Put a dragon on the cover of a novel, and you immediately tag it as being a fantasy book. A book about magic and fantasy creatures suddenly appearing in the modern day might show a dragon fighting a helicopter gunship, while one about a fantasy version of medieval Europe might have a dragon on a battlefield with knights carrying recognizable banners. Turning to mythology and legend, dragons are again a symbol – of evil, of wisdom, of danger, or of the unknown. Challenging and slaying the dragon is the function of the hero.

Before this gets needlessly Campbellian, we turn to the question of how all this can be used in your campaign. Dragons are a wonderful tool for the Games Master because they are universally recognised as a symbol, but *what* they signify changes from story to story and mythos to mythos. By presenting dragons in one way or another, the Games Master implies a great deal about his campaign to the players. Think of them as a marker of something important – whatever you associate



dragons with, that element of the game will become more important, even central. For example, the more common dragons are, the higher the 'fantasy level' (the amount of monsters, magic, and deviation from the usual quasi-medieval setting). Dragons are method for showing, not telling, the players the nature of the game.

When considering what place dragons have in your campaign and how to present this to your players, it may be helpful to decide how rare dragons are, and what their purpose is. One determines how much of a direct influence dragons are on the setting, while their purpose is obviously what they are there to do in the campaign.

Rarity

Dragons can be *common*, *uncommon* and *legendary*. This is not really about how often dragons are encountered, although that does play a part. Essentially, the rarity of a dragon is how often it will come up in the course of the game. If dragons are common, then almost every session of the game will include a dragon-related plot or event. If dragons are uncommon, then encountering a dragon will be a major event, but not necessarily unheard-of or earth-shattering. If dragons are legendary, then meeting one will be the climax of a long-running plot or even the campaign.

In most fantasy games, dragons are uncommon or legendary.

If dragons are common, then they should either be powered down (either using only the younger, weaker dragons, or one of the weaker species like riding dragon) or some explanation should be given as to why the dragons are not ruling over all they survey. Normally, all that keeps dragons in check is their rarity – for every dragon, there are enough powerful wizards and fighters to stop it from rampaging. If dragons are everywhere in the campaign, then the non-dragon characters will probably get very eaten very quickly. Sometimes, this can be an entertaining game – for example, the players could be a resistance movement fighting back against draconic overlords. They cannot fight the dragons directly, as they are too powerful, so the players must use guile and secrecy to survive until they find a way to defeat the dragons.

In a setting where dragons are common, remember to adjust the rest of the world in response. For example, if villages getting attacked by red dragons is a relatively common event, then the villagers will keep barrels of water or sand ready to put out fires, and will be adept at firing bows at flying targets. Castles will be connected networks of keeps instead of a single keep linked by curtain walls, as such a design can better withstand flying attacks. Cities might be protected by domes of magical force.

If dragons are rare but not unheard of, an adventuring party can expect to encounter at least a few dragons during their careers. This requires the least alteration to the basic campaign setting and structure. Dragons are no more dangerous or important in the setting than any other monster, but dragons have a bigger 'mindshare' than other creatures – players attach more significance to them), the Games Master should still decide what the dragons are going to signify.

Legendary dragons are an excuse for the Games Master to cut loose with really epic adventuring. If only one dragon ever shows up in the game, or if there is only one dragon in the whole world in *total*, the appearance of the dragon can completely change the game. This might be on par with the appearance or death of a god or a similar legendary event. Alternatively, the dragon itself might be of quite reasonable power, but the battle with it should be as memorable and stylish as possible. If you only use the dragon once, then slaying it should be one of the defining moments of the campaign, bringing all the classic elements from your favourite tales.

As a rule of thumb:

Common implies that dragons are in half of all the sessions of the campaign, or are a low-level encounter.

Rare implies that dragons are in one plot or other, but not every plot. Players might encounter a dragon once every few months, or are a mid-level encounter.

Legendary implies that dragons show up once, usually at the end of the game, or are a high-level encounter.

In all three cases, whatever is associated with dragons will be pushed closer to centre stage. For example, say the Games Master is faced with a party consisting of a paladin, a druid, and a mage. He decides that the campaign will be about heroism in the face of danger (a common theme), temptation

(always a good one for paladins, but it also works well with mages delving into dangerous or forbidden secrets) and rebirth (which fits well with the druid mindset). By tying one or more of these themes to dragons, he harnesses the mythic significance of dragons for his own nefarious ends. The theme of 'heroism in the face of danger' fits well with Dragons as Common Threat (see below); the party could be sent to help an island nation defeat the sea dragons woken by an eruption. Temptation could be incarnated in the shape of a sneaky green dragon living in the forests at the heart of the island, who offers the party poisoned advice (Dragons as Rare Adversary or Authority). Rebirth could take the form of a gold dragon, who can dive into the volcano at the heart of island and remove the magical stone placed there by the green dragon that woke the sea wyrms. However, the gold dragon is taking care of its eggs, and therefore cannot sacrifice itself until it finds suitable guardians for its offspring (Dragons as Legendary Mystery).

This example is somewhat exaggerated – having three different sets of dragons is more than a little over the top, and any two of the three could be replaced with other characters or races. Dragons are a handy short-cut to significance, but vivid roleplaying and good description by the Games Master can lend significance to the replacement creatures. Sahuagin or koa-tua just don't have the literary antecedents going back to Jormungand.

Common Draconic Associations

- † Greed
- † Evil
- † Harsh Authority
- † Sleeping or Ancient Dangers
- † Unstoppable Forces
- † Primordial Forces

Purpose

Dragons as a whole do not have to have a single purpose. If the game does not centre on dragons, then each individual wyrm can have its own place in the game. However, if dragons are being used as a major plot in the game (for example, an evil sorceress has discovered an artifact allowing her to bind dragons to her will, and is using it to conquer a formerly safe kingdom), this plot will determine how dragons are used.

Shifting Rarities

One option is to change the rarity of dragons during the campaign. Moving dragons from being legends to being common was the start of one famous series of fantasy adventures and novels. Moving dragons from rare to legendary could be the result of a curse striking the draconic race, or a magical transformation that allows dragons to steal each other's internal fires, leaving only a single dragon survivor with the combined power of all dragons.

Any shift like this shakes up a campaign world, which leads to more opportunities for adventure.

Common purposes include:

Threat: Dragons are a danger to travellers and to civilisation. They are living natural disasters, catastrophes that strike a caravan, or a city, or a kingdom.

Weapon: Dragons are tools of warfare, used as mounts or flying artillery.

Resource: Dragons are enslaved or hunted.

Challenge: Dragons are the ultimate monster, at the end of the deepest dungeon.

Adversary: Dragons are enemies and overlords, engaged in fiendish plans to bring terror and darkness upon the world.

Authority: Dragons are the agents and enforcers for some higher power, such as a deity, powerful organisation or government, or moral alignment.

Mystery: Dragons are unknowable, mysterious creatures from an earlier age, an elder race watching and manipulating the activities of the young races.

Campaign and Adventure Concepts

Putting rarity and purpose together yields a nice selection of ideas for a campaign or adventure involving dragons. Again, because mythology and fantasy literature puts so much importance and emphasis on dragons, tying any one of these plots to dragons can seem more significant and meaningful. Use dragons to reinforce what the campaign is about.

Dragons could be a...

Common Threat: The world is a very dangerous place, crying out for heroes, for defenders... for anyone willing to risk their lives to hold back the dragons. Making dragons a common threat implies a world that is essentially post-apocalyptic (or even currently apocalyptic). Even if the power level of dragons is kept down by using only young or weak dragons, this combination of rarity and purpose implies a great level of hatred and bitterness on the part of the Games Master. The dragons are not sleeping in their caves, they are attacking and they are everywhere. A campaign of this sort will be about survival, about building communities that can withstand the dragon assault, and about fighting back.

Example: The red dragon queen Labyrinth laid hundreds if not thousands of eggs. She placed a spell on each one, ensuring that the egg would not hatch until she died, to ensure none of her children challenged her for her throne. Now, that spell has been broken. Perhaps Labyrinth has died, or perhaps some foolish wizard accidentally disjoined the magical field holding the eggs in check. However it happened, the land is now beset by a horde of hungry young red dragons. They must be killed as quickly as possible; if they have time to grow and spawn more of their kind, the world is surely doomed.

Rare Threat: This (along with Dragons as Rare Challenge and Rare Adversary) is one of the most common uses for dragons. An attack from dragons is a once-in-a-decade event, but still extremely dangerous and catastrophic. These attacks are essentially random and do not imply

a higher plan or anything; this is a predatory act. Dragon attacks might be interpreted as punishment for some misdeed, just like plagues and other natural disasters.

Example: The Dragon's Maw is the narrow channel between two island chains. Sailing around the islands adds weeks to the length of a voyage, but the islands are home to numerous monsters. A fast ship with a skilled crew and powerful guards could dare the Dragon's Maw and make a fortune bringing rare but perishable goods from one side of the ocean to the other, but risks attack from the dragons of the isles.

Legendary Threat: Dragons as a Legendary Threat basically means apocalypse, the dragon that rises to destroy the world. Dragons make excellent ultimate monsters, the end of the world makes a great end-of-



campaign plot, so the two work very well together. The build-up to this can be filled with lots of foreshadowing, preparation, and evil cults plotting to wake the dragon.

Example: Norse myth speaks of Jormungand, the World Serpent. At Ragnarok, Thor and Jormungand will fight; the Thunderer will slay the serpent, but will fall prey to its poisonous bite... perhaps a longship of heroic Vikings could sail over the edge of the world and find a cure for this poison, averting Thor's doom?

Common Weapon: In this scenario, dragons are used in every conflict. For example, dragons might take the place of horses, giving rise to dragon-mounted cavalry. Depending on how many dragons are available, each army might have but a single dragon used as the heaviest of heavy weapons, or dragons might resolve every battle between themselves. After all, few human troops could hope to stand up to dragons in combat.

Example: While knights and foot-soldiers are still used for minor skirmishes and peacekeeping, battles between kingdoms are conducted using dragon mercenaries. The players are agents who negotiate contracts with individual dragons. Someone is healing and raising slain dragons – a terrible crime. It is only through the attrition of warfare that the dragon population is balanced against its greed. If dragons start surviving a lost battle, then their numbers will grow and they will realise that they can take all the treasure of the kingdoms at once by attacking instead of taking a little at a time by fighting for pay.

Rare Weapon: Here, the presence of a dragon on the battlefield is much more uncommon, and hence much more devastating. Dragons do not participate in battle out of loyalty or patriotism, so the main question here is ‘why is the dragon involved’? Answering that leads onto a plan to get the dragon uninvolved, by freeing it of the binding spell, slaying it, killing the evil general who knows its true name and so on.

Another option is to use the heraldic dragons (see page 182).

Example: The Winterdrake, a colossal dragon made of living ice, is the only defence against the Frost Giants. For many centuries, the drake has guarded the border. Now, disaster has struck – the drake has

fallen in love with a mortal maiden, and its icy heart is beginning to melt. If the drake's heart melts, the giants will surely attack. What is to be done?

Legendary Weapon: Again, this usually involves using dragons to tip the balance of power. Bringing dragons to the battlefield for the first time – or bringing a great wyrm to any battlefield – would be a massive and terrible change to warfare. The size of dragon required depends on the power level of the setting – in a low-magic game roughly comparable to medieval Europe, then even a relatively small dragon could be a decisive factor. In a game where magic and monsters are common on the battlefield,

Example: The city of Mountainshadow has stood for centuries, protected by a ring of natural fortifications augmented by the best stonemasonry of the dwarves. Seven castles guard the seven tunnels through the surrounding mountains, and an anti-magical lighthouse sweeps the skies clean of flying wizards. The city is unassailable by land or sky – unless the attacker was a thing powerful enough to overcome the city guard and able to fly without the aid of magic. Such a thing is, of course, impossible.

Common Resource: As outlined in Dragon Anatomy (page 93), the corpse of a dragon can be chopped up and turned into all sorts of useful items. In campaigns where there are characters of sufficient power and skill to hunt dragons, this bloody business may become an industry. Dragoning could become a profession like whaling, as hunters strive to bring the big lizards down with lances and harpoons.

Example: The flying city of Aohm rests on a levitating platform made by the archmages of yore. For generations, the city has been at the mercy of winds and air currents, floating like a mile-wide leaf on the breeze. Now, the city has a plan. A huge ring has been attached to the prow of the city, and hundreds of dragons will be tethered to it. They will drag the city through the skies, allowing it to follow trade routes and ushering in a new golden age. All they have to do is catch and bind the hundreds of dragons...

Rare Resource: Where dragons are rarer, but still feared, dragonslaying might become a professional vocation. Groups of specialised mercenaries might travel from country to country, slaying the local wyrms and moving on. Each dragon is different, so it must be carefully studied and a plan to deal with it

conceived. The services of these ‘dragon-busters’ is expensive, but when a dragon threatens to eat your daughter, who you gonna call?

Example: ‘Cinderella’ is the nickname given to one of the oldest and most feared red dragon females. Unlike other dragons, she keeps no permanent home. Instead, she travels from lair to lair, driving the resident dragon out and claiming the lair for a few weeks before moving on again. Her peregrinations have caused a great deal of havoc, and the reward for slaying here is greater than that for any other dragon – but you have to find her first.

Legendary Resource: If dragons are legendary in the campaign, hunting them makes little sense. A dragon can, however, dominate the campaign without actually being present. Perhaps all magic derives from dragonsblood, which is used as a material component in all spells. Now that all the dragons are gone, wizards have to carefully conserve the little they have left, and search ancient vaults and treasuries for rare urns of blood. Others have become arcanovamps, draining the blood of sorcerers and using it to fuel their spells. The dragons’ legacy, not the dragons themselves, can be a major element in the campaign.

Example: Bonetown is a small village that once stood in the shadow of an ancient skeleton, the remains of a long-dead dragon that poked out of the black earth. Now, the skeleton is mostly gone, the bones have been sawn up and used to build the structures of Bonetown. The grim architecture is both distinctive and practical, as the iron-hard bones endure the harsh weather much better than wood and are warmer than stone. The apothecaries of Bonetown are famed for their use of ground dragonbone in their cure-alls. Despite its macabre appearance, Bonetown is a nice place to live... until a necromancer comes to town.

Common Challenge: If challenging dragons is a commonplace thing, then it will be engrained into culture. Fighting a dragon might be a rite of passage or ceremonial battle. Alternatively, perhaps dragons are literally the source of evil in the world – slaying a dragon makes people more generous, pious and good. Good-aligned churches would therefore hunt down dragons to make the world a better place.

Example: The Eilhort dwarves are the only dwarves who know the secret of working the magical metal eilos. The mines have long since run out of this

metal, so each dwarf of the tribe must prove his worth before being given a chunk of unforged eilos and allowed to make his eilos masterwork item. The traditional task is to slay one of the black dragons that infested the flooded eilos mines.

Rare Challenge: This is the classic knight or hero going out to battle a dragon. In games based around this concept, the Games Master should go all out with the cunning tricks and traps, reviewing the Tactics and Warfare chapter (page 75) and coming up with the nastiest possible dragon. Make the players earn their kill.

Example: A paladin of the Brotherhood of the Sword once attacked the blue dragon Adastartes. Enraged, the dragon slew the paladin, then stormed the master-cathedral of the Brotherhood. Despite the best efforts of the paladins, they have been unable to defeat the wyrm, who has added all the relics and treasures of the order to his hoard. A young monk recently discovered a document describing one of the relics, the Stone of Judgement. When invoked, this ancient device forces everyone near it to face all their sins, incarnated into physical form. If someone could sneak into the lair and activate the stone, the dragon would be attacked by the embodiment of all the suffering and hardship it has caused – but the persons who activated the stone would similarly face all their fears and sins.

Legendary Challenge: If using a dragon as a Legendary Challenge, you may as well go all the way, and put a dragon as the pinnacle of evil or the guardian of the afterworld. A seven-headed dragon with ten horns, ten crowns that can pull a third of all the stars from the sky with its tail is at least a CR30 monster.

Example: Wizards who dabble in planar bindings know well the name of Xeo, the Dragon of the Threshold. Xeo, an ancient planar dragon, is responsible for guarding the material realms and preventing too-powerful creatures from ‘hitching a ride’ on summoning spells. If it were not for Xeo’s guardianship, a mage might accidentally call up a pit fiend when looking for a dretch. A cabal of powerful infernalists have vowed to destroy Xeo and open the material realms up to massive interplanar rifts. To accomplish this goal, they need to locate Xeo’s lair on the astral plane.

Common Adversary: Dragons make great villains, but their sheer power means they are best kept as

overlords and lieutenants, not everyday opponents. A game where dragons are as common as orcs is a big departure from traditional gaming, but is eminently possible.

Example: Everyone believed dragons were a myth. It was the age of Enlightenment, after all, and stories of monsters and magic were for peasant children. In France, the revolutionaries turned Notre Dame into the Temple of Reason, marking the beginning of the end for Papal influence in Europe.

Perhaps that is where things went wrong. Perhaps it was faith and religious cant that kept them away. In 1795, the Reign of Terror ended and the Reign of Fire began when the first dragon smashed through the cobblestones of Paris and took to the skies. Since then, hundreds of dragons have arisen and most of Europe lies under their shadow. A draconic anti-pope rules in Rome, while the English cannons and steamships of the St. George's Line try to keep the British Isles free of dragon dominion.

Rare Adversary: A dragon has the resources and abilities to be a match for any party of heroes. It is smart and charismatic enough to recruit allies and come up with a truly fiendish plan. It has magic and wealth and physical power enough to accomplish its goals. Shapeshifting dragons are especially suited to this sort of plot, as they can infiltrate human society.

Example: The Red Duke is one of the richest and most respected nobles in the kingdom. Some jealous souls whisper that his family is an obscure one, that he bought his position in court and that he has no place advising the king or wooing the princess. Such whispers are usually dismissed, as the duke is one of the wittiest and charming of the courtiers (save for those rare occasions when his fiery temper shows). Furthermore, it is well known that the Duke arrived at court after slaying the feared red dragon Fieraglos – certain proof of his value to the kingdom and his heroism. Soon, it is said, the king will entrust the duke with the position of Master of the Exchequer, making the young noble responsible for all the finances of the kingdom.

One of the duke's greatest gifts was his funding of the reconstruction of the Cathedral of Light, recently destroyed in an attack by Fieraglos. The dragon stole an ancient talisman which protects against divination, and this has yet to be recovered...

Legendary Adversary: Every gaming group goes through at least one epic, save-the-world quest, and dragons can be used as the ultimate bad guy. One of the traditional plots is to have the world threatened by a danger that was defeated centuries before by the heroes of old, and the current characters have discover the means that was used win the first time. A dragon, who lives for centuries, could be behind both threats – and it has had hundreds of years to refine its plans.

Example: It is called the Hunger. It is a magical disease that infects victims with a terrible, insatiable hunger, a desire to consume everything. It augments their physical abilities ten-fold, turning them into horrible monsters. Once, the Hunger plague tore across the land, infecting tens of thousands. The wars to destroy them lasted for decades, but eventually all the infected were purged – save one. The gold dragon Kamir was tainted in the last battle. Rather than slay his beloved friend, an archmage created a magical gate to the Plane of Beasts, giving the dragon a theoretically endless supply of food to feast upon. However, the dragon's predations have exhausted the Plane of Beasts, and soon it will turn back to the world, and the Hunger-crazed wyrm will attack.

Common Authority: Dragon are both intelligent and impressive, even awe-inspiring. They make an excellent 'spokesman' for the Games Master, should you need to convince the players of something. They also make excellent authority figures. With their long memories and strong moral characters, the metallic dragons could serve as judges and arbiters between the different races. Imagine a game set in a cosmopolitan fantasy city, where dragon magistrates and their mortal bailiffs and guards try to keep the peace. The laws would be rather draconic!

Example: The School for Wizards recently opened its doors to sorcerers. To ensure that these students get the specialised training on using their abilities that they require, a new lecturer has been recruited. Classes will commence in the cellars at nine a.m., sharp, under the supervision of Dr. Agon. Those coming to class late will be eaten.

Rare Authority: Dragons make excellent enforcers for a sufficiently powerful government. While dragons rarely serve mortal institutions, the egos of the wyrms could be salved by giving them sufficient rewards. The dragons would be elite troops, given

every possible comfort and privilege, and used only for the most important missions.

Example: The secret police of the Obsidian Empire are dragons. Whites are sent on long border patrols over the ocean. Green and blue dragons keep watch over the populace (the blues are the record-keepers and analysts, the greens the torturers). Black dragons swim in the sewers, their keen ears listening into every house. The red dragons are the enforcers and agents of terror.

Legendary Authority: While most European legends paint dragons as being evil monsters, many other cultures see dragons as a much more positive influence. Dragons can be chief among the powers of good as well as evil.

Example: The celestial silver dragons of the moon guard the upper firmament from attack by the Void Creatures. Once a century, a single one of these glorious creatures is permitted to leave its appointed place and fly down to the world below. For one day, the dragon can interact with the mortal races it loves from afar, teaching and guiding them and imparting great joy and wisdom before it is forced to return to its lonely vigil above the heavens.

Common Mystery: A common mystery is almost a contradiction in terms. Perhaps the characters are agents of a particular sleeping dragon, who sends them cryptic messages in dreams. They must interpret their shared dreams and complete the missions allocated to them by their draconic patron.

Example: The Hooded Personage in Saffron is the eldest of the monks in the monastery. He – or she – has dwelt in the Focus Cavern for centuries. Monks are sent out into the world to accomplish tasks for the Hooded Personage. Like all monks, the Personage is penniless, owning nothing but the saffron robes of office.

Rare Mystery: At this level, the mystery can be at the end of the plot, not at the beginning. Dragons can be the mysterious powers behind the throne who are manipulating the non-player characters, not the player.

Example: Once every hundred and fifty years, stones plummet out of the sky like falling stars. When the stones strike the ground, they break open. Each stone contains a single egg, which hatches into a fearsome dragon. In the past, heroes have

succeeded in slaying the dragons before they can infest the world, but it is still a constant danger, a disaster that repeats itself every five generations. An eccentric mage claims that one of the wandering stars known as ‘planets’ grows especially bright at such times, and believe the dragons come from that celestial body. He theorises that an especially powerful teleportation could reach the planet. Perhaps an especially brave group of heroes could deal with the dragon problem at its source?

Legendary Mystery: Putting dragons as a legendary mystery implies that they are central to the setting. Dragons could be responsible for all the evil in the world, or for the changing seasons, or for some other important element of the campaign. Perhaps all the dungeons were built in the first place as prisons for dragons.

GAMES MASTER ADVICE

A dragon is never a throw-away monster. Dragons are too big and powerful to be a wandering monster or denizen of a ten-by-ten dungeon room to be slain and forgotten about. Fortunately, the iconic status of dragons means that only the most blasé players will be unimpressed by the appearance of a dragon. The tricky part is ensuring that *your* dragon is not entirely overshadowed by the classic dragons of myth and legend. Borrowing the sheer mythic coolness of Fafnir or Smaug is one thing, but your dragon should still have its own identity instead of being a pale copy. This section gives advice on creating and running a dragon.

The first key is coming up with a distinctive concept for the dragon. The various concepts listed above can be a starting point for an individual dragon, but they lack style. How does the dragon behave? Is it a fearsome monster that roars and spews flame and ruins everything around it, or a creature of reptilian patience and terrible inhuman cunning that weaves plans over long centuries, or a witty but lethal charmer? Does the dragon work openly, or disguise itself through shapeshifting, or through intermediaries and servants? Has the dragon only recently awoken from sleep and is therefore hungry and fresh, but unsure of the current state of the world, or has it been active for years and is therefore enmeshed in a web of alliances and schemes?

What role does the dragon have as regards the characters? Is it intended to be another danger on the road, a long-term villain for the campaign, the

object of a quest, or even an ally or patron? Creating a dragon is much more like building a major non-player character than it is like dropping in another monster to get hacked apart.

Making a good villain

If the dragon's role is to be a villain, it deserves to be a great one. Most players will play along with the Games Master's plots with relatively good humour. If they hear rumours of villainy, and have a vague motivation to go and thwart it, they will go off and thwart as best they can. A good plot hook is essential, but once hooked they will keep going out of a sense of duty and sheer plot inertia. This is simply not enough for a game involving a great villain. The players should *hate* the villain, they should want to stop him because they are emotionally and fundamentally opposed to him.

- † **A connection to the players:** The easiest way to achieve this is to strike at something belonging to the players – for example, if one of the characters has built a castle, then the dragon could burn it down. If one of the characters is married, the dragon can murder her husband. While this does create an instant hook and motivation for the characters – revenge – it also shows the players that anything they become involved in will be turned against them, which is never a good thing. The Games Master should want the players to build their own connections to his game world, and they never will if he keeps severing these connections to serve his own plots.

A much better option is for the greedy dragon to *take* things from the characters. Instead of killing a character's wife, let the dragon abduct her. The dragon can damage but not destroy the character's castle as it empties the treasure vaults. The dragon can also be placed as an obstruction to the character's plans. For example, if one of the characters is granted a barony as a reward for some previous quest, then the characters might have to drive the dragon off their lands in order to claim the barony.

This works even better if you let the characters build their own opposition to the dragon. For example, one of the characters finds a sword with his family crest on the

hilt in some ancient treasure hoard. After taking it, he is troubled by visions of a ghost. He researches into his family history, and discovers that some ancestor of his went off to fight a dragon. Now, when that dragon is introduced as a villain into the campaign, that character has an immediate antipathy towards the wyrm. The key element is that the Games Master never directly tied the character to the dragon – he merely laid down a potential connection, which the player chose to explore. Any campaign elements established or embraced by the players have far more resonance with them than anything that is solely introduced by the Games Master.

These connections do not have to be as direct as revenge. Choose one or two of the characters and pick important traits of theirs, then echo those traits in the dragon. For example, if one of the characters is a paladin who prides himself on his piety, then have the dragon blasphemously claim to be a deity, or else be a fervent worshipper of a rival god to that of the paladin. Make the dragon a reflection on some level of one or more of the characters, and their opposition will drag the rest of the party along.

- † **Style:** All the best villains have a certain level of style. The sections on Roleplaying a Dragon and Glory and Terror have some advice, but also consider ways to make the dragon even more distinctive and impressive. An interesting lair and memorable goals go a long way towards this, as can a surprising entrance.

One option is introducing the dragon several sessions before it actually makes an appearance. Have the party come across signs or legends of the dragon's activities, or find cryptic clues relating to the dragon. Again, you will get more impact if you let the players put it all together; just lay the groundwork, and let them explore the implications and make the connections themselves. Dragons who can shapeshift are especially good for this – introduce them as a minor non-player character early in the game, who meets the characters by chance. For example, if the characters meet a merchant lord as part of one of their first adventures,

and the Games Master intends for the major villain for the third ‘arc’ of the campaign to be a dragon, then have the *polymorphed* dragon be leaving the merchant’s house as the party arrives. Describe this richly-dressed noble with a dragon on his shield riding off – perhaps he greets the party in passing as he goes by. Then, many adventures and levels later, have the characters find the shield in the dragon’s lair. Even though this shield and the dragon’s connection to the merchant have no real bearing on either plot, the fact that the dragon has been an element of the campaign for that long, and even encountered them earlier in their careers will give the dragon an added level of importance and danger in the minds of the players.

(One handy trick for Games Masters is to introduce cryptic non-player characters and events like that during the game even when he has no particular plan for them. Later in the campaign, he can retroactively connect our mysterious figure to the current plot. Foreshadowing is very hard to pull off in a roleplaying game, but it is especially effective when it works. A caveat – players will chase after any cryptic figure with the tenacity of a bloodhound, so make sure your cryptic figure is not mugged and interrogated five minutes after he is supposed to mysteriously sweep out of the character’s lives.)

An alternative, but equally stylish way to introduce a villain is to have him turn the whole campaign upside down in his very first scene. For example, if the whole campaign up until this point has been set in and around a small town, then let the dragon fly over and completely wipe out the town. The dragon’s attack should not sever any connections or friendships the players have made earlier in the campaign – if they always stayed in the inn in the village, then leave the innkeeper survive the attack and have him build or buy another inn later on. The key is shaking up the game, not destruction. The dragon is destroying all the safe assumptions and established facts about the setting, not the lives of the characters. A variant on this strategy is to have the dragon destroy some major authority figure such as a king or religion on its first outing. Make it clear that

everything has changed and that all the rules are broken with this new villain.

A classic but risky ploy is to establish something as the strongest and best thing in the world – say, the Castle Adamant is a massive keep that has never fallen in battle, no matter what forces besieged it – and have the dragon destroy it, apparently effortlessly. While this does immediately make it clear that the dragon is a scary, nasty bad guy, the ploy only works once or twice in a campaign. Whenever the Games Master establishes something as really, really tough/powerful/dangerous/unbeatable or unstoppable, and then introduces a new villain which is tougher, more powerful, more dangerous or whatever, diminishing returns means that the next time the Games Master tries this tactic, it will be considerably less effective. Players get jaded quickly to hyperbole.

† **Defeating but not humiliating the characters:** It is traditional for the heroes and the villain to clash at least twice. In the first meeting, the heroes lose horribly. In the second, they win. This narrative principle works well in roleplaying games if handled properly. Firstly, the villain should beat the heroes fairly. Nothing annoys the players more than a villain who is unbeatable purely through Games Master fiat. It is not necessary to fully write up the statistics for the villain at this point, but he should roll dice and at least give the impression that the villain has a chance of losing. Never say ‘he’s too powerful to beat, you lose’, even if the villain is too powerful to beat and the players are going to lose. Preserve the illusion of fairness. Furthermore, do not use this opportunity to humiliate or cause permanent injury to the characters. It is one thing to establish that the dragon is a major threat by making it much stronger than the characters (for example, using a dragon with a Challenge Rating four or more levels higher than the party level) and having it easily defeat the party in combat, but beating the characters and then rubbing their noses in it is just plain unsporting. (Toying with them a little is fine.) It is much cooler to have the dragon show up, defeat the party, accomplish its goal and fly off again. You want to have

the players hate the villain, not the Games Master.

Secondly, do not kill the characters in this initial clash. This is not supposed to be a balanced encounter, it is a narrative element designed to establish the villain in the players' minds. Of course, having a dragon show up and smash the party, but not kill anyone seems unrealistic and reveals the grubby hand of the Games Master in the setting. Ensure there is a reason for the dragon not to kill the characters in this engagement – perhaps it is driven off by another rescuing force (again, overusing *deus ex machina* rescues where the cavalry show up to save the characters is a bad thing), or it may be able to complete its goal without killing the characters. Alternatively, introduce a few non-player characters to be killed instead of the player characters.

- † **Keep the villain offstage:** Perversely, the less the villain is present, the more impressive he is. Every round that the villain is present is another round when a random lucky instant-kill spell could destroy him, or the Games Master could say something stupid in-character that turns the villain from the coolest, scariest character in the campaign into a figure of fun. Games Masters make unthinking mistakes, after all, but the villain should not. Therefore, to preserve the villain's life, not to mention his dignity, only bring him into the game when absolutely necessary.

The threat of the villain should be maintained by having regular references to him in the game.

Roleplaying a dragon

A dragon can actually be one of the easier non-human characters to portray. Unlike the alien mindset of an elemental, the too-cruel thoughts of a drow, or the essentially one-note personality of a demon or most forms of undead, a dragon can be just as complex and quirky as a human or elf.

- † **Mindset:** Dragons believe – with good reason – that they are superior to everyone and everything that is not a dragon (and all other dragons too, for that matter). Therefore, any actions the players take are either the feeble and amusing thrashings of infants, or else insolence from upstarts who do not know their place. Co-incidentally, this is rather similar to the attitudes most Games Masters have to their players. Dragons exude confidence. Everything exists to amuse or serve them.

Dragons are often thought of as being greedy, but technically they see this as tribute owed to them by the universe.

- † **Speech:** Dragons tend to fall into one of three distinct speech patterns. One is a very casual, conversational tone of voice. The dragon banter back and forth with others, and takes a somewhat cynical, ironic view of the world – fairly similar, in fact, to the speech patterns of most player characters. This is actually deeply threatening to the players, as the dragon is essentially communicating on the same level as them.

Another pattern is to have the dragon flatter itself, speaking in glowing terms about its own magnificence and strength. Try coming up with a few suitably epic descriptive terms before the game (or borrowing them from myth and literature – *the Slayer's Guide to Dragons* has plenty of quotes from classic sources that could be adapted) and have the dragon quote these to describe itself.

The final speech pattern includes lots of growling and gurgling. Remember, dragons are speaking with a long, dinosaur-like mouth filled with razor-sharp teeth. Having the dragon's words become guttural growls reminds the players that they are talking to something far from human. Be careful with this pattern, as it can make the dragon's speech indistinct.

- † **Presentation:** A little bit of theatrics does not go amiss when roleplaying a dragon. Slamming a hand into the table mimics the thunderous footsteps of the dragon (shaking the miniatures of the characters is a bonus, but be careful not to knock drinks over).

When speaking as the dragon, the Games Master should sit down when the dragon is in a conversational mood and then stand up dramatically if the dragon is angered or attacked. Do not walk around or make human hand gestures when 'in character' as the dragon. (If the dragon can shapeshift, it is easier to roleplay it in human than in dragon form.)

Challenging the whole party

Dragons give every class a chance to shine. While some monsters are especially vulnerable to one attack form or another, the dragon's very lack of weaknesses means that everyone has to get involved.

- † **Barbarians:** Added strength and speed allows a barbarian to inflict serious damage on a dragon, but his real value is as a 'meat shield'. Having one member of the party who can be sure of surviving the dragon's breath weapon or who can go toe-to-toe with a wyrm greatly ensures their chances of survival. Trap sense may also come in useful when exploring a dragon's lair.
- † **Bards:** Flattery, flattery and more flattery; bards are the best class to charm a dragon. Their *inspire courage* ability can also counter a dragon's Frightful Presence. Dragons have long histories, so bardic knowledge and Gather Information can be used to find out about the wyrm's previous attacks and battles, which might contain a key clue. Records and stories may also reveal a secret entrance to the lair.
- † **Clerics:** Obviously, healing and protective magic is a necessity when fighting dragons – the monsters can deal a terrifying amount of damage very quickly. Due to the dragon's spell resistance and excellent saving throws, casting spells directly at the dragon is often ineffective, so increasing the abilities of the other characters – something clerics excel at – is a good tactic. If dragons are agents of evil, the cleric may be able to draw on the support of his church.
- † **Druids:** The druid's weather control spells can be used to bring a flying dragon to ground. Druids also have a great number of long-range offensive spells, which are also useful against a flying dragon. Druids have the earliest access to long-range flight through wildshaping, and can follow a dragon through the air. A cunning druid could use animal control spells to deny a dragon its food supply – by herding all the cattle in a region to a single place, the characters could ambush the dragon.
- † **Fighters:** Fighters can absorb damage almost as well as barbarians, and make considerably better archers. Some weapons are better suited for fighting dragons than others, especially two-handed weapons with reach. Fighters also make the best dragon riders.
- † **Monks:** While the unarmed attacks of monks are unlikely to penetrate the heavy armour of dragons, monk agility and evasion means they have a good chance of surviving surprise attacks from a dragon. Abundant Step could also be used to leap onto a flying dragon.
- † **Paladins:** Paladins make excellent dragon slayers. Most dragons are evil, so smite will work on them. Aura of Courage protects against Frightful Presence, but more importantly ensures that the low-level characters have a chance of resisting the dragon-fear. When protecting refugees or helping prisoners escape, Aura of Courage could prevent the attacking dragon from scattering them through fear.
- † **Rangers:** The archery path of feats can help attack a flying dragon, but the ranger's obvious advantage when fighting dragons is his Favoured Enemy bonus. A ranger's ability to survive in the wilderness may come in handy when tracking a dragon over long distances.
- † **Rogues:** While a rogue is unlikely to do much in combat (although flanking a dragon is simple enough), he comes into his own when it comes to exploring and looting the

dragon's lair. One especially fun idea is to put an item key to defeating the dragon (an *arrow of dragonslaying*, perhaps) in the dragon's hoard. The rogue has to sneak in and retrieve the item before the party can face the beast in combat.

† **Sorcerers:** Sorcerers who know a spell that can damage a dragon can be extremely effective in combat, but pity the poor sorcerer who only knows *fireball* and who faces a red dragon. A sorcerer with an inappropriate selection of spells may end up sidelined in a dragon hunt. To ensure that the player of such a character does not get bored, the Games Master could play up the blood-ties between the two. Perhaps the sorcerer shares the dragon's dreams, or has an unconscious empathic link with the wyrm.

† **Wizards:** Unless the wizard gets lucky and overcomes both saving throws and spell resistance, damaging spells are likely to be overshadowed by the damage dealt by barbarians and fighters in melee. Spells that locate the dragon (*scrying*, *contact outer plane*), defend against its attacks (*stoneskin*) or make the fight more even (*fly*) may be more useful.

Glory and terror

The party should never just encounter a dragon while travelling. Here are ten descriptions (two for each species of chromatic dragon) for inflicting a blight on their lives.

† The ground here is muddy and treacherous. Stones and ancient knotted plants stick out like bones from a starving leper, and the mud feels like rotting, tainted flesh. One of you steps on an oddly flat surface that recoils, a vast plate of swamp that is drawn up. The marsh suddenly explodes, as if a mountain is being born beneath you. A vast shape pushes out of the ground; one leg, two, three, an uncertain continuity of necks and tails and backs, shapes that cannot possibly all belong to a single creature but are all moving with a single intent. A foul chemical stench rises from the mountain of muck that is unfolding before you.

It is only when it spreads its massive wings to let the mud slide off the membranes that you recognise the shape of the dragon.

† The stagnant water suddenly comes to life. Waves, tiny at first, begin to break against your legs. Soon, the waves grow until they threaten to knock you off your feet. A tidal bore rushes through the swamp, carrying with it a rotten odour. Something, a tremendous crocodile perhaps, is swimming nearby, each sweep of its huge tail sending giant ripples through the water.

† You sense it first in your feet. Tingles run over your soles, as if a thunderstorm is localised entirely to the inside of your boots. Static crawls over the sand, and tiny lightning bolts leap from the ground up to your metal items. The sand begins to move as if it was composed of metal filings brought near a lodestone. Cryptic shapes form in the sand, like veins, like horns, like wide wings. Then you realise that the shapes aren't forming, they're rising from the sand as the dragon pushes its way out of the dune.

† The sky about you is a perfect dome of bright blue, unbroken by any cloud. Still, something about it unsettles you. As you watch, a section of that perfect blueness detaches itself, a chip of the sky falling out of the heavens. It unfolds into a winged shape, catching the desert thermals as it glides towards you.

† The sun shining through the leaves makes broken dappled patterns of light around you. Then, a shadow flits through the forest, one pattern after another blinking out for an instant, then lighting again. The moving point of darkness circles you once, then vanishes. For a moment, all is still and bright...until, far off in the forest, you hear some vast shape moving through the trees, bending and breaking them with its weight.

† A wind rushes through the forest, tearing leaves from branches and hurling them into your face, along with a harsh acrid stench that burns your eyes. Blinking back the tears, you dimly see a vast shape in the midst of the woods. Wings and tail and spines momentarily rise above the treetops. Eyes

burn in the dark woods, emerald eyes in the shadows, looking right at you. Despite the furious, stinging wind and hurtling debris, those eyes do not blink.

- † Suddenly, one of the clouds above you flares with a strange light, like a flash of thunder only red like fire. A few moments later, the rain turns boiling hot for a second, the droplets sizzling off your armour and burning your skin. A tiny shape drops out of the roiling clouds overhead and swoops down towards you. What you mistook for thunder, you now realise is a tremendous roar that echoes off the mountains and back down out of the clouds. More flames begin to gather in the dragon's mouth as it dives towards you...
- † On the mountain's peak, you see the dragon. Its tail coils twice around the narrow spire of rock, and its claws dig great gouges into the stone as it clings. As you watch, it spreads its wings, casting a shadow as wide as the horizon into the valley below. Its eyes narrow, and you know it has seen you. It smiles, horribly, a shark's smile wreathed in flame.
- † The creature crawls across the icefloe like a tremendous bat. The smooth surface of the glacier reflects and refracts its image a thousand times, until it seems like every snowflake and ice crystal is a part of the dragon, an infinite whiteness, white dragon on white ice in a white land.
- † For a moment, all you can see is white. There is movement across the bay, a seal or some other creature pushing through the snows on the shore. Suddenly, a flurry of movement throws up snow, then a red stain explodes out. In an eyeblink, a white dragon has flown out and torn open its prey. It lowers its massive head and sniffs at the corpse – then the head swivels to stare at you.

Dragons are already a very visual monster – the players already have a strong mental image of what a dragon looks like, so the Games Master's efforts in description can profitably focus on the dragon's surroundings and context.

Cat and Mouse vs Set-piece play

There are two distinct ways to run a dragon encounter. Cat-and-mouse is the more dynamic style, where the dragon has its own agenda, but also reacts to the players' actions. For example, if the party watches the dragon's lair, they might see the dragon leave to hunt, fly back after a few hours carrying the carcass of a deer, leave the lair again later to get a drink of water from the river, and then stay at home for a week negotiating with a drow ambassador. If the party give away their location, the dragon might attack.

In set-piece play, the dragon will always be encountered by the party in a particular place. No matter what happens before the encounter, they will always meet the dragon for the first time in its lair as it speaks with the drow ambassador. Realism in the game world is bent in favour of the most dramatic encounter possible.

Both styles have their advantages and disadvantages. Cat-and-mouse play gives the impression of a living, breathing game world, and allows the players to take advantage of the actions of the dragon's actions. However, the disadvantages are that it can end up in dull, flat scenes (the characters wait until the dragon leaves, steal the best items from its hoard, and *teleport* away without ever even talking to the dragon) and it does mean that the Games Master will be unable to prepare fully for the encounter – the dragon's tactics will vary greatly depending on where and when it encounters the party, and cat-and-mouse style implies that the time and place of the meeting depends on the actions of the players.

Set-piece play's chief advantage is that it allows the Games Master to come up with a very detailed and exciting encounter. If realism is sacrificed so the characters always encounter the dragon in the same way, then that way should be as breathtaking as possible. Ambushes, round-by-round tactics, special effects, prewritten descriptions – set-piece means that the Games Master should set his pieces up as carefully as possible. The disadvantage is that it is static and diminishes the impact the players can have on the game.

A Games Master skilled in improvisation can merge the two styles. Being able to think and adapt on your feet while running a game is a great skill to acquire.

The Big Finish

The final battle with a dragon should be as exciting as possible. A knock-down, drag-out fight can be exciting, with both sides being ground down to their last few spells and hit points, but it can also turn into a dull routine of dice-rolling. The Games Master should therefore have one or more complications that can be included in the fight, to make it distinctive. Such complications might include

- † Fighting in an unusual place, or in unusual conditions. Perhaps both characters and dragon end up in a magical downdraft or cyclone, so one side or the other must win before both are smashed into the ground below. The dragon's lair could be flooded, or filled with explosive gases. The dragon could be in the process of shedding its skin – its mobility is limited early in the battle, but if the players do not end things quickly, it will emerge as a bigger, stronger dragon.
- † Adding in extra combatants, such as unexpected allies for the dragon (hatchlings, a mate, a compacted demon) or for the players (perhaps the unquiet spirit of someone slain by the dragon, out for revenge, or a rival group of dragonslayers hoping to claim the trophy of the kill). A third party makes things very interesting indeed – what if there was a second dragon present when the players attack, one willing to strike a deal and aid them in battle in exchange for certain favours?
- † Changing the structure of the combat during the battle. A powerful storm could be approaching, which will force the dragon to land after a few rounds. If the party can survive several rounds of aerial combat, the rising winds will force the combat to move to the ground. Alternatively, add a time limit for the players – perhaps the lava in the volcanic lair of a red dragon is rising, and will consume both party and imprisoned princess if the dragon is not killed quickly.
- † Inflicting a mortal wound is rarely the end of a battle with a dragon. *The Slayer's Guide to Dragons* describes the death throes of a draco invictus, but even lesser wyrms might pronounce death curses (real or faked), prophecies designed to break the party apart,

cruel lies and crueller truths, or merely trigger a last-ditch defence mechanism that threatens the party. One of the nastiest tricks is a device that destroys the dragon's lair a few rounds after the dragon dies.

Repercussions

The death of a dragon should not be the end of a dragon's presence in a campaign. When a wyrm dies, a huge power vacuum is created. Who claims the dragon's lair, and the dragon's domain? Who gains custody of the dragon's hoard? What enemies of the dragon emerge from hiding? Those who slew the dragon may gain a reputation as heroes (after all, slaying a dragon sounds much better in a bard's song than looting a dungeon) and be called upon to perform other acts of heroism and self-sacrifice?

Often, a dragon creates more problems after it dies than it did while living. The death of a dragon changes everything around it, and the Games Master should take advantage of the chaos and uncertainty following the death to spin off new plotlines and adventures.

DRAGON ALLIES

Most dragons in a campaign will be adversaries – wyrms make such great villains, it is a shame not to use them as such. Still, many dragons are aligned with the forces of good, and will therefore end up aiding and advising the players. Even dragons without such pure motivations may find themselves having common cause with a party of adventurers – dragons are nothing if not cunning, and often manipulate others into becoming part of their schemes.

Patrons

A patron is a major non-player character who supports and aids the party, but also assigns them missions to complete or problems to solve. Often, a patron is a higher official in an organisation that some of the party are members of, such as a church, army, guild, wizards' school or secret society, or an employer that has hired the party for a series of tasks. Sometimes, though, a patron is a more sinister or mysterious figure, manipulating the party's actions.

Dragons make excellent patrons. They are rich and intelligent enough to hire and guide the average party of adventurers, but restricted enough by their own needs and limitations (such as food, sleep, size, rivalry with other dragons or ignorance of mortal society and politics) that they need the party. They are powerful enough to rescue the party if they need it, but also disinterested enough not to risk too much to save the characters (this gives the players something of a safety net, but does not mean they can afford to be careless or cocky). Dragons tend to be very knowledgeable in obscure fields, a handy trait for a patron to have, but ignorant of basic facts about mortal behaviour and society. This lets the Games Master feed the players clues if needs be, but forces them to work problems out for themselves instead of letting the wise non-player character sort it out.

A patron can be a plot and clue dispenser and mouthpiece for the Games Master, providing a strong structure for a campaign.

Mounts

Dragon riding is covered on page 245. Dragons are quite different to other intelligent mounts – a paladin's warhorse may be comparatively smart, but it does not have its own goals or motivations. A dragon is not so accommodating, and has its own ideas about what should be done. While dragon mounts are impressive, they do create an added workload for the Games Master – it is another non-player character to play.

If the dragon is just being used as a mount most of the time, and is not a major character in the game, consider letting one of the other players roleplay the mount as a secondary character when it comes to dialogue. The Games Master or riding player still makes all the important decisions and moves in combat for the dragon mount, but the burden of actually roleplaying the character is moved onto another player.

Cohorts

Characters with the Leadership feat can acquire dragons as cohorts. Just as with mounts, a cohort is another character for the Games Master to play, which can be a burden. Dragons are very independent and self-sufficient creatures, so a cohort can be given its own missions to accomplish which take it out of play for long periods of time, relieving

this burden. A draconic cohort should also offer its own advice and possibly even try to take charge – while it is a loyal cohort and serves the character, it is a dragon, and therefore sees itself as first among the character's followers and friends.

DRAGON PLAYER CHARACTERS

Dragons as player characters is very much the province of high-level play. While it is possible to use any of the common methods for turning monsters into character races to make a hatchling character, this often leads to dissatisfied players. One of the major attractions of playing a dragon is the sheer size, power and glory of the beast, so playing a weak and immature little hatchling may seem disappointing in comparison. If the Games Master is going to allow dragon characters, he may as well do it properly and include big, powerful adult dragons.

Character balance often breaks down somewhat at high level play, when a character's political connections and influence become just as important as hit dice and combat ability. A dragon is not hugely different than a high-level fighter in terms of capabilities, and the wyrm's natural restrictions such as size and sleep requirements can help keep the character in check. Still, the best place for dragon player characters is in an all-dragon game.

While Challenge Rating is not supposed to be used as a way of comparing the relative strengths of characters, it can be used to do so with dragon characters. All dragons have roughly the same complement of abilities, special qualities, attacks and so on, so two dragons of equal Challenge Rating are about as evenly matched as two normal characters of equal level. For example, a hatching gold dragon (CR4) should be on par with a very young silver (also CR4).

Dragon Characters & Advancement

There are several options for advancing a dragon, as they can increase in both class level and age category. The Games Master should choose one of the following:

- † Dragons can gain class levels in addition to their hit dice. Characters gain experience as normal, but only increase in age category at

the appropriate time (every few decades or centuries). This option is the simplest, but does mean that the characters will never get bigger or older except in the longest games.

- † Dragons gain class levels, but whenever they gain a third class level (and hence third hit dice) they increase in age category. They gain experience as normal. This option may make dragons grow much too quickly, and also creates very power characters indeed – a 20 Hit Dice gold dragon must have 16 levels in various classes.
- † Dragons advance only in age category over time, and do not gain experience. This is a

very slow option, but does keep the dragon characters from being muddled up with class abilities.

- † Dragons advance only in age category, but can hasten their growth by gaining experience. To advance to the next age category, the dragon performs a magical ritual. This ritual requires that the dragon have an amount of experience and treasure equal to the average treasure of a creature of the dragon's Challenge Rating.

The variant Age Advancements can be used to add variety and specialisations to a group of dragon characters. Instead of all the young gold dragons having exactly the same abilities, one can focus on the Combat age advancement, another on the Mystical or the Arcane, another on the Charismatic and so on, giving them the same niches in the party as a fighter, cleric or wizard, and bard.



Adventuring Parties?

Dragons do not customarily band together into roaming groups of adventurers. Why, then, are the characters working together?

- † All the characters are siblings, spawned in the same egg-clutch. They hatch at the same time, at the beginning of the campaign.
- † All the characters' lairs are in the same region, so matters of common interest force them to work together.

- † The characters are all vassal wyrms of another dragon, ordered to work together.
- † The characters have allied together to defeat another dragon or powerful foe (perhaps the one who made them all into vassals).

Plot Ideas

Given the long lives of dragons, a dragon campaign could be episodic, with one adventure every few decades interspersed with long periods of sleepy 'downtime'. Dragons could establish relationships with towns or even civilisations in the same way characters establish relationships with other people. A human might befriend an orc of the Twisted Hill tribe, and watch him grow from a young orc to a strong warrior to a tribal chieftain to a doddering elder. A dragon might befriend the Twisted Hill tribe and watch it grow from a motley band of orcs to a trained fighting force to a mighty kingdom, and then decay or be destroyed.

Dragon adventures may be quite similar to those of lesser creatures, but on a much grander scale. A beginning dragon character, only a few years out of the egg, can fly dozens of miles in a single day, breathe a lethal gout of flame or acid, and take one quite difficult challenges, so adventures should be scaled to match.

- † The characters are contacted by a wizard, who claims that an evil cabal is engaged in a ritual to bind dragons. He knows where the cabal's fortress is, and he will aid them in destroying it. In truth, the wizard is a member of the cabal, and will betray the characters. The cabal's fortress is essentially a giant dragon-meat processing plant, full of traps to kill and dissect the player characters.
- † While dreaming, all of the characters dream of the same dragon, their ideal mate. Only one of them can claim her, so why did they all dream the same thing? Could a succubus be getting ideas above its station?



- † Two nations are at war, and both send emissaries to the characters, asking them to serve as mercenary dragons for the duration of the conflict. One nation has the obvious advantage in force of arms, but the other is notorious for using forbidden magics when attacked. Whom do the dragons serve?
- † A dragon known to the characters is visited by a vision from the draconic gods – the world has grown weak and useless, and must be purified. All dragons, chromatic and metallic, are to rise up in a glorious fiery crusade and wipe out all other life. Attempts to contact the gods using *commune* fail. Could the characters be the end of the world?

A MORTAL MISCELLANY

The draconic term for non-dragons like humans and elves is *N'drak'isc*, which is usually translated as 'mortals'. Dragons are believed to be immortal, although no dragon is known to have lived past its fourth millennium. They are the eldest of all living creatures, and the world is their inheritance. Still, the younger races have learned to live with dragons.

RIDING ON DRAGONS

A character riding a dragon usually sits between the wings, just behind the neck and before the wingmount. Even without a saddle, this is a comfortable and secure position, as the character is held in place by the massive shoulder muscles. The dragon arches its back slightly in flight, so the rider's view is not as obscured by the flapping wings as it might be. The major disadvantage of this position is that the rider's reach is limited. While the dragon's claws and teeth can strike at opponents below, the rider's swordarm cannot reach that far. The character is considered to be sitting at the centre of the dragon's square for the purposes of combat. Most riders therefore use bows or other missile weapons.

Communication is also limited. The noise of the rushing wind drowns out speech, and can even temporarily blind a rider unless precautions are taken. A character must shout commands to his dragon during flight, and casual conversation is impossible in most conditions. Spells like *telepathic bond* can help with this. The usual solution is to use reins attached to the dragon's barbels and horns. Most dragons have quite definite opinions about where they are going and about the place of the rider in determining their flight path, but the reins can also be used to pass simple messages to the dragon without the need to shout.

Other riders sit at the end of their mount's neck, just behind the head. This allows the rider to stab at enemies as the dragon bites them (allowing the rider to use the dragon's reach when fighting – the character is considered to have the same fighting space and reach as the dragon). This position also allows the character to shout into the dragon's ear, making communication somewhat easier. However,

hanging onto a dragon's slippery neck as it lashes and tears at enemies requires a Ride check (DC20) every round.

A Large dragon can bear a single rider. A Huge dragon can carry three passengers comfortably, a Gargantuan dragon can carry six, and a Colossal dragon twelve. Only one passenger can be the dragon's rider for the purposes of mounted combat. A dragon can carry twice as many passengers if necessary, but cannot engage in combat effectively (-10 circumstance penalty to all attacks) or fly at faster than half speed while doing so.

Equipment

Rider's Helm: This is a light metal helmet that includes a full-face leather mask. Glass or crystal goggles protect the wearer's eyes. The inside of the helm is padded against both impact and the cold. Without such a helm, a dragon-rider suffers a -2 penalty to all attacks and skill checks if the dragon climbs above 1,000 feet or flies at full speed. A suitable face mask can be added to an existing helmet, allowing a rider to use a magic helm instead of the mundane one supplied.

Dragon Saddle: A dragon saddle is little more than a network of straps and stirrups designed to keep the rider in place on the dragon's back. The rider's legs are tied to the dragon, so it takes one minute to get into the saddle or thirty seconds to remove the saddle. (A Use Rope check, DC15, can halve the time required.) Improved dragon saddles have a special strap that, when pulled, unravels the saddle, allowing the rider to dismount instantly. Pulling this cord is a free action. A dragon saddle has exactly the same benefits as a military saddle.

Dragon Throne: Only a Gargantuan or larger dragon can be fitted with a dragon throne. As the name suggests, this is an ornate throne that is strapped to the dragon's back. It carries a single rider (or two with a suggestion of impropriety) in style and comfort. The throne has a protective canopy to protect the passenger's eyes, as well as a small storage area beneath the throne for valuables or a packed luncheon. The price given is for the most basic dragon throne – most are richly decorated, gilded with gold and azure, or ensorcelled with protective spells. For a noble lord, there is no better way to travel.

War Howdah: A war howdah is essentially a dragon saddle that runs the length of the beast's flanks. A dragon equipped with a war howdah can carry twice its normal number of passengers while flying at up to three-quarters of its full speed. The dragon only suffers a -5 instead of a -10 penalty to all attacks. The passengers are strapped into the war howdah, and cannot move. They can, however, fire missile weapons. Each position in the howdah has a coiled rope attached to it, allowing the passenger to climb down while the dragon is hovering.

The cost of a howdah varies depending on the number of passengers it contains. A howdah for a huge Dragon hold six people, a Gargantuan one holds twelve, and a Colossal one twenty-four.

Rider's Lance: A rider's lance is a very long weapon, only a few feet shorter than the dragon's neck. It is much too ungainly to be used when unmounted. The lance is attached to a halter on the nape of the dragon's neck or else onto the front of the saddle. Using the lance is rather simple – the dragon charges towards an opponent, or waits for an opponent to come to it. At the last moment, the dragon whips its head away so the point of the lance is the first thing to strike the enemy.

The size and cost of a lance depends on the size of the dragon.

DRAGON RIDER PRESTIGE CLASS

The whole world is beneath you. The rivers coil in the moonlight like silver threads in the rich brocade of creation. Wisps of cloud fly past you on either side. The only sound is the steady, sweeping thunder of wings and the sound of your heart – or perhaps it is that of your mount. The two of you are one here, suspended between earth and sky. Your lance is heavy in your hands.

There – a gout of dragonfire, far below. Your dragon dives, the wind tearing at your clothes. If it were not for your sturdy helm and protective goggles, you would be blind. You are prepared for this – you have always been preparing for this – and your eyes are clear, focussed on the target. A red dragon, bigger than your loyal bronze, hovers over the once-peaceful town below. You twitch one of the reins, and your dragon nods. Then there is no more time for thought.

Like a bronze thunderbolt, you swoop out of the night sky. The red turns too slowly, and your lance catches it in the flank. It roars in pain. You roar in triumph and beat your mighty wings, climbing back towards the clouds and leading the injured red away from the town. You shall battle it in the high reaches, where everything is cold and still save the dragons moving against the stars. Your home. Your domain.

You steady the lance and ready your breath weapon, and see no paradox in this. The dragon is the rider and the rider is the dragon.

Hit Dice: d10

Requirements

To become a dragon rider, a character must fulfil all the following criteria:

Skills: Balance 4 ranks, Handle Animal 8 ranks, Ride 12 ranks, Spot 8 ranks. The rider must know the Draconic language.

Feats: Animal Affinity, Mounted Combat.

Special: It takes a special connection to dragons to become a true dragon rider. The character must either:

- † Be a paladin, and take the dragon as his bonded mount
- † Be a druid or ranger, and take the dragon has his animal companion
- † Have the Leadership feat, and take the dragon as his cohort
- † Win the lifelong respect of a dragon

Class Skills

The dragon rider class skills (and the key ability for each) are Balance (Dex), Concentration (Con), Handle Animal (Wis), Heal (Wis), Jump (Str), Ride (Dex), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the dragon rider prestige class.

Weapon and Armour Proficiency: Dragon riders are proficient in the use of lances. They gain no other additional weapon or armour proficiencies.

Dragon Rider					
Level	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1	+1	+0	+2	+0	Bonus Feat, Dragon bond
2	+2	+0	+3	+0	Immunity
3	+3	+1	+3	+1	Bonus Feat, Improved Dragon Bond
4	+4	+1	+4	+1	Blood of the Dragon
5	+5	+1	+4	+1	Bonus Feat, Master of the Sky

Bonus Feat: At 1st, 3rd and 5th levels, the rider gains a bonus feat, chosen from the following list: Acrobatic, Alertness, Blind-fight, Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Mounted Archery, Ride-by Attack, Spirited Charge, Trample, Point Blank Shot, Far Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Manyshot, Shot on the Run, Improved Precise Shot, Weapon Focus.

Each feat may only be taken once. Instead of taking a feat, the rider may choose to have his dragon gain an extra feat from any source.

Dragon Bond (Su): The rider and the dragon develop an empathic bond, allowing mental communication of images, emotions and simple ideas. A rider can only bond with one dragon at a time. If the dragon has the Rider Empathy feat, the two can use the Improved Bond abilities at 1st level.

Immunity (Su): The rider magically becomes immune to the breath weapon attacks of his bonded dragon or dragons of the same type. He gains a +4 insight bonus to all saving throws against the breath weapon attacks of other dragons.

Improved Bond (Su): The rider and the dragon can now communicate telepathically at will over any distance. Once per day, as a free action, the rider can gain Spell Resistance equal to that of the dragon for 1d4+1 rounds.

The rider may now communicate empathically while riding a dragon other than his bonded dragon.

Blood of the Dragon (Su): The rider can now cast spells through his dragon as if it was a familiar, and vice versa.

Master of the Sky (Ex): The rider's training and dedication makes him and his dragon a lethal fighting unit. He gains a +2 insight bonus to all attack rolls, Ride checks and Spot checks made while in the air.

SLAYING DRAGONS

Dragons would unquestionably dominate the world if every wyrmling grew into a wyrm. Fortunately for everything non-draconic, only a small fraction

of dragons ever reach their full growth. Most dragons fall victim to hungry monsters when they are very young, or else are brought to an unpleasant end by their overconfidence. A young dragon may think itself capable of sacking a town, but ballista bolts and arrows can pierce a hide that has not yet hardened. Over the centuries, those troubled by dragons have created various devices and dweomers for use against dragons.

Equipment

Counterbreath Barrels: Any community in a dragon's domain has at least a few of these barrels. A counterbreath barrel contains a substance that is anathema to a dragon's breath. In lands troubled by blue dragons, the barrels contain insulating liquid resins. The acid of green or black dragons can be neutralised with alkali alchemical preparations, while the ice produced by a white dragon is countered by placing firepots around the frozen areas. Finally, the fearsome fiery breath of a red dragon may be defeated by humble barrels of water. The contents of the counterbreath barrels are poured onto buildings and defensive structures before the dragon attacks, and reduces the damage caused by the dragon's breath weapon by 25%. Only buildings can benefit from this protection. It takes ten minutes to prepare the average building for a dragon attack.

Church Spires: Dragons have a special fear of having their tender wings torn by a spike. Putting sharp spires on the tallest buildings in a town, such as churches, watchtowers, guildhalls and palaces may dissuade the dragon from attacking. Given a choice between attacking two towns, one of which bristles like a stone hedgehog, and the other is as

soft and inviting as a tasty rabbit-warren, most dragons pick the latter. A dragon striking a church spire must make a Reflex save (DC25) or be dealt 6d10 points of damage.

Catapult Net: This strong net is weighted with lead weights, which causes it to open in mid-flight. The net is large enough to catch most dragons, and heavy enough to force the trapped dragon to make a Strength check (DC20) every round while flying or descend as much as possible. Multiple nets each add 10 to the DC of the Strength check. The dragon is allowed an Escape Artist check (DC15+5 per net) to escape all the nets enwrapping it.

To catch a dragon in a net, the operator of the catapult must make a successful ranged touch attack against the dragon at a -4 penalty due to the net's lack of accuracy.

Spells

Air Mine

Transmutation [Air]

Level: Sor/Wiz 2

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Medium (100 feet + 10 feet/level)

Area: Special

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Reflex halves

Spell Resistance: Yes

Air mine causes a small bubble of compressed air to pop out of the ground anywhere within range of the spell. It then begins to rise up at a rate chosen by the caster (anything from 0 feet per round to 50 feet per round). The bubble starts at one foot in radius, but grows by one foot for every ten feet of altitude (thus, a bubble floating 100 feet about the ground is 11 feet in radius). The caster can choose to stop the bubble rising at any time, but once stopped the bubble is stationary until it expires or explodes.

If anything touches the bubble, it explodes, dealing 1d6 points of damage per level of the caster to a maximum of 6d6. Anyone damaged by the spell must then make a Balance check (DC equal to the damage dealt) or be knocked prone (or forced to stall, if flying). To hit a target with this spell, the caster must make a ranged touch attack with a bonus of +1 per foot of radius of the bubble.

Turn the Worm

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-affecting]

Level: Clr 1, Pal 2

Components: V, S, DF

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Personal

Target: Self

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: No

Spell Resistance: None

For the duration of this spell, the caster may turn dragons, serpents, reptiles and other such creatures such as lizard-men as if they were undead. The paladin version of this spell also allows the caster to compel the target to emerge from its lair or to land if the turning attempt is successful.

Fold of the Faithful

Abjuration (Good)

Level: Clr 7

Components: V, S, M, DF

Casting Time: 10 minutes

Range: 0

Area: A hemisphere with radius 50 feet/level

Duration: Concentration

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes

Fold of the faithful requires the presence of at least ten other followers of the caster's religion. For the duration of the spell, all these faithful must pray in concert with the caster. The spell creates a shimmering dome of divine energy that protects those inside. Nothing can pass through the dome while it endures. The dome has a hardness equal to the level of the caster, and 20 hit points per faithful follower. Thus, a dome protecting a city of 5,000 faithful has 10,000 hit points.

However, the dome endures only as long as the faith of those inside. If the enemies outside the dome cause those inside the dome to stop praying, the dome begins to lose strength at a rate of 2d20 points per round per person not praying. For example, a dragon flying over the dome could stop people praying using its Frightful Presence.

Material Component: A religious icon or symbol worth at least 10,000 gp.

Fists of Cloud

Transmutation

Level: Drd 8

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: ½ mile/level

Target: A cloud

Duration: 1 round/level (D)

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes

The cloud targeted by this spell sprouts a pair of massive fists made of mist. These fists are under the control of the druid, and have a Strength score equal to his Wisdom score + his level. The fists can strike for $4d8 +$ their Strength bonus damage, using the druid's Base Attack Bonus. The fists can also grapple with targets (they are Gargantuan creatures) or pick objects up and carry them at a speed of 500 feet per round. Controlling the fists is a standard action.

BINDING DRAGONS

She raised her staff and spoke the dragon's name. The mountainside before her quaked and collapsed. Stones the size of castles slid down off the dragon's back and shattered far below. The dragon arose from the wreck of the mountain. It opened its eyes, and she was almost blinded by their hideous red light.

She shouted its name again. The dragon saw her and took three thundering footsteps towards her. It drew back its head and drew in its breath. A hurricane raced across the land, tearing at her robes and nearly snatching her staff from her hand. The clouds swirled above the dragon as the cyclone of its inhalation passed.

There was a moment of calm. In that instant of silence, she spoke again, almost gently. The dragon bowed its head and let its fires drain away. Then it spoke.

'Distress, what is your command?'

Dragon Binder Prestige Class

Dragon binders are a rare and secretive order of spellcasters. They hide themselves not because their researches are forbidden, but because dragons hate and fear them above all other mortals. All the

fortresses and towers openly claimed by dragon binders have been consumed by dragon-breath, so now the binders hide their true nature until the moment of the binding.

Their binding ritual is quite unlike the careful thaumaturgy used to contain extraplanar creatures. The dragon binder wrestles with the will of the dragon. For most mortals, this would be rank foolishness, as the minds of dragons are ancient, wily and powerful. The dragon binder channels arcane or divine energy through his own soul to reinforce his will. If successful, he can chain the dragon and make it his servant. If he fails, then he is left a broken ruin of his former self at the mercy of an angered dragon.

Hit Dice: d4

Requirements

To become a dragon binder, a character must fulfil all the following criteria:

Skills: Concentration 6 ranks, Diplomacy 4 ranks, Disguise 4 ranks, Gather Information 4 ranks, Intimidate 4 ranks, Knowledge (arcana) 6 ranks, Spellcraft 6 ranks.

Feats: Animal Affinity, Iron Will

Special: Able to cast *charm monster*, *dominate monster* or *geas/quest*.

Class Skills

The dragon binder class skills (and the key ability for each) are Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Gather Information (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (Int), Ride (Dex), Search (Int), Spellcraft (Int)

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the dragon binder prestige class.

Weapon and Armour Proficiency: Dragon binders gain no additional weapon or armour proficiencies.

Binding Limits: At each level after 1st level, the dragon binder must choose between getting an extra level of spellcasting based on his previous class, or else being allowed to bind one extra dragon.

Binding (Su): By touching a dragon, the dragon binder can initiate a binding attempt as a standard action. This consists of three opposed Will saves over three rounds. The dragon binder must remain in contact with the dragon for the duration of the binding attempt. Both the dragon binder and the dragon roll

1d20 and add their Will saves. The dragon also adds its Hit Dice or its Charisma score, whichever is higher. In the second and third rounds, the dragon binder may expend uncast spells, gaining a +1 bonus for every two levels of the spell used, rounding down.



If the dragon wins the majority of the three Will saves, the dragon binder suffers backlash, in the form of 1 point of damage for every spell level expended in the binding.

If the binder wins, the dragon is bound to him. This effect is identical to that of *dominate monster*, but the duration of the binding is unlimited.

A dragon may attempt to escape its binding whenever any of the following events occur:

- † The dragon grows to a higher age category
- † The dragon awakens after a long sleep (longer than a year)
- † The dragon is commanded to do something utterly against its nature
- † The dragon somehow gains a bonus to its Will save of +3 or higher
- † *Break enchantment*, *dispel magic* or *freedom* is cast on the dragon
- † The binder is reduced below 0 hit points
- † The binder is struck by the breath weapon of any dragon
- † The binder has no spells left at all
- † The binder shows abject, pathetic weakness in front of the dragon

Escaping a binding attempt uses the same rules as a normal binding attempt. A dragon who escapes a binding attempt will immediately attempt to destroy the binder.

Dismiss Dragon (Su): The binder may dismiss any dragon bound to him. This dismissal acts as an unavoidable *geas* on the dragon that lasts a year and a day. Most binders use this *geas* to send the dragon far, far away so it does not retaliate for its binding.

Enhanced Binding (Ex): The binder gets a +2 bonus to his Will saves for the purposes of binding dragons.

Ranged Binding (Su): The binder may now make a ranged touch attack with a range of ‘sight’ to bind a dragon.

Enhance Dragon (Su): Once per day, the binder may channel spell energy into one of his bound dragons, causing it to grow bigger. This ability requires the binder to spend spell levels totalling the dragon’s new age category each round – for example, to make a dragon grow to the age of Young Adult (age category 5) would require the binder spend one fifth level spell, or a third level spell and a second level spell or any such combination every round. The binder may choose to have the dragon grow multiple age categories, but he must pay for each ‘extra category’. For example, if the dragon grows from Juvenile (age category 4) to Adult (age category 6), the binder must pay every round for the extra age categories 5 and 6, and must spend 11 levels of spell each round.

Note that the dragon may attempt to escape its binding when it grows an age category.

Divine Challenge (Su): By ancient tradition, a dragon binder of the fifth rank may attempt to bind any one of the draconic gods. The binder gains the Spell-Like ability to *plane shift* to the home plane of any one of the draconic deities once per day. He may attempt to bind one of these gods, but no binder has yet succeeded in this feat.

Dragon Binder Prestige Class						
Level	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Dragon binding	First Dragon
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	Dismiss Dragon, Enhanced Binding	+1 dragons or +1 level of spellcasting
3	+1	+1	+1	+4	Ranged Binding	+1 dragons or +1 level of spellcasting
4	+2	+1	+1	+4	Enhance Dragon	+1 dragons or +1 level of spellcasting
5	+2	+1	+1	+4	Divine Challenge	+1 dragons or +1 level of spellcasting

INDEX

A

Ability Score Progressions	154
Abject Flattery	72
Accurate Breath (Breath)	141
Acidic Blood (Physical)	145
Adding Actions and Triggers	21
Adjusting for Play Style	22
Adult Dragon Tactics & Magic	78
Adult White Dragon	129
Adulthood	207
Adventuring Parties?	242
Aftermath (Damaging Breath)	142
Agents	23
Aging	175
Aging and Ability Scores	125
Aging and Breath	128
Aging and Magic	126
Aging and Toughness	126
Air Mine	247
Alchemical Serpent	38
Arcane Age Advancement	132
Arcane dragon concepts	133
Arcing Breath (Breath)	144
Armies	29
Armour	91
Army	148
Attack from above	76
Attendant Dragons	216

B

Beguiling Voice (Physical)	145
Bend Lances And Break Swords	193
Benefits of Domain	5
Black Dragons	7
Blind Ijin	139
Blue Dragons	7
Body Critical Hits	116
Borderlands	6
Bought Undead	46
Brass Dragons	9

Breaking the dragon's spirit	223
Breath	98
Breath Feats	141
Breath Weapon	151
Bronze Dragons	10
Build Breath (Damaging Breath)	145
Burn the Sky	192

C

Called Shots	113
Campaign and Adventure Concepts	228
Care and Feeding	84
Cat and Mouse vs Set-piece play	239
Cave Network Features	61
Challenging the whole party	237
Charismatic Age Advancement	131
Charismatic dragon concepts	131
Chromatic Domain	199
Circulatory	97
Cities of the Dragons	209
Classic Dragons	179
Cleric spells	80
Cohorts	241
Coins	119
Colour Ripple	193
Combat Age Advancement	130
Combat dragon concepts	130
Common Draconic Associations	228
Common Features	52
Components	104
Concept	149
Congea! Cloud	192
Conquered Lair Features	63
Conquered Lairs	62
Constructed Lair Designs	65
Constructed Lairs	65
Copper Dragons	10
Counterbreath (Damaging Breath)	143

Countering Spell Resistance	199
Counting Charm	197
Countless Piles of Precious Things	119
Craft Scale	148
Crawling Through Caves	60
Creating a Bought Undead	47
Creating a dragon	149
Creating a Dragonbonded	48
Creating a Dream-avatar	203
Creating a Goldghost	49
Creating a Weredragon	51
Creation Points	149
Critical Hits	114
Cult	148
Cultists	25
Cults	30
Cyelvic	138

D

Deal	73
Decoys	20
Designer's Notes	252
Designing a Lair	66
Desolations by Type	7
Destroying an Organisation	31
Devastating Age Advancement	136
Devastating dragon concepts	136
Digestion	95
Disinformation	21
Distractions	21
Divide and Conquer	76
Domain Size	4
Domains	4
Domains and Vassals	212
Dominion	148
Dominions	26
Doppelgangers	32
Draconic creatures	33
Draconic Cuckoo	39
Draconic Domain	199

INDEX

Draconic Outsiders	185	Extended Breath (Breath)	142	Goldghost	49
Dragon Armies	84	F		Golems	35
Dragon Binder Prestige Class	248	Famous Moot Sites	213	Government & Authority	214
Dragon Characters & Advancement	241	Feats & Unique Special Abilities	154	Greater Lairguard	194
Dragon cities	66	Feed on Fear	198	Greed	159
Dragon Craft	102	Feeding	207	Greed Dragon	161
Dragon Crafted Items	103	Fey	34	Green	88
Dragon Equipment	88	Fiefdom	148	Green Dragons	8
Dragon Magic Items	200	Fiefdoms	28	Grovel	71
Dragon Moots	213	Fiery Glory	147	Growth	154
Dragon Parts and Magic Items	103	Fighting amid gold	119	Guards	23
Dragon Rider Prestige Class	245	Finishing Touches	157	Gullet of Surprising Capacity	193
Dragon Spell Domains	199	Fists of Cloud	248	H	
Dragon Traps	59	Five poor combat feats for dragons	77	Halfings	35
Dragonbonded	48	Flattery	72	Hasten Breath	192
Dragonfear	147	Flattery and Riddles	68	Hatching Dragons	220
Dragons & the Game	226	Fold of the Faithful	247	Head Critical Hits	115
Dragons against Adventurers	75	Forearms	100	Heartland	7
Dragons against Armies	83	Foreleg Critical Hits	114	Helpful	71
Dragons against Dragons	84	Forewarned is forearmed	76	Heraldic Dragon	182
Dragons against Slayers	82	Foster Dragons	219	Hide	101
Dragons of Needless Complexity	136	Friendly	69	High Draconic	189
Dragontaint	110	G		Hindleg Critical Hits	116
Dreaming	202	Games Master Advice	233	Hindlegs	95
Dwarves	33	Gauntlet Traps	59	History	209
E		General Feats	147	Hit Locations	111
Earthquake Purr	147	General Tactics	76	Hit Locations and Critical Hits	111
Effects of Destruction	114	Generate Grown Dragons	156	Hobgoblins	35
Egg Caches	218	Genies	34	Hoblizard	40
Egg Statistics	218	Giant	34	Hoblizard Characters	41
Elementals	33	Glide	148	Horns (Physical)	145
Elves	34	Glory and terror	238	Hostage Eggs	219
Encounters	19	Gluttony	170	How many Creation Points?	149
Entrancing Gaze	195	Gluttony Dragon	172	Huge Dragon	138
Envy	163	Gnolls	35	Humans	36
Envy Dragon	165	Gnomes	35	Huntbeast	41
Equipment	244	Goblins	35	I	
Events	19	Gold Dragons	11	Improved Fling	147
Exotic Weapons - Melee	89	Golden Arcane Lure	198	Improved Quick Breath (Breath)	141
Exotic Weapons - Ranged	89	Golden Armour	118	Improved Spell Weave (Breath, Metamagic)	142
				Indifferent	69
				Initial Ability Scores	150

Initial Hit Dice	150	Mounts	241	Power Word: Insolence!	190
Inner Desolation	7	Movement	19	Power Word: Kneel	190
Inner Fire (Physical)	146	Mystical Age Advancement	134	Praise	71
Intrigue	72	Mystical dragon concepts	134	Precise Breath (Breath)	141
J		N		Pride	166
Jewellery	120	Nasty Tricks	87	Pride Dragon	168
Juvenile Dragons	207	Natural Lairs	60	Pride Dragon Abilities	168
K		Natural Saddle (Physical)	146	Psychology	210
Keeping Tamed Dragons	175	Neck	100	Pulmonary	98
Kobolds	36	Neck Critical Hits	115	Pulsed Breath (Damaging Breath)	143
L		Network	148	Purpose	228
Lair Combat	80	Networks	27	Q	
Lair Features	52	New Servant Races	38	Quick Breath (Breath)	141
Lambton Worm	179	New Spells	190	Quick Checks	21
Learned Age Advancement	130	O		Quintilateral Rend	147
Learned dragon concepts:	131	Ogres	36	R	
Lesser Lairguard	194	Old Age	208	Rain of Fire	195
Lethal Traps	58	Old Dragon Tactics & Magic	79	Rarity	227
Lingering Breath (Damaging Breath)	142	Open Warfare	84	Reach	111
Lizardfolk	36	Optional Chambers	55	Red	88
Locations and Hit Points	113	Orcs	36	Red Dragons	8
Locations and Weaponry	112	Organisation Feats	25	Refuge Contents	54
Lust	168	Organisations	25	Regeneration of the Worm (Physical)	146
Lust Dragon	170	Ouroboros	216	Repercussions	240
M		Outer Desolation	6	Riddles	74
Magic Exhalations	5	Overview	93	Rider Empathy	148
Magic Items	122	Overwhelm and Maim	77	Riding Dragon	175
Magic Progression	154	P		Ritual Combat	84
Magical binding	225	Partnership	225	Roleplaying a dragon	236
Making a good villain	234	Patrons	240	Roleplaying and Ruleplaying	73
Masterwork and Magical Weapons	88	Penetrating Breath (Damaging Breath)	143	Running an Organisation	31
Math Check	114	Physical Feats	145	S	
Maximised Breath (Breath)	142	Planar Dragon	187	Salamanders	37
Metallic Domain	199	Planar Dragons	185	Sample Dragons	137
Modulate Resistance	198	Planetouched	37	Satalice the Golden	139
Money and Maiming	104	Plot Ideas	243	Satalice the Golden	140
Mortals and High Draconic	189	Power Word: (Dragon's Name)	191	Scale Scan	190
Moulting	207	Power Word: Fool!	190	Scalers	42
		Power Word: Freedom	191		

INDEX

Scales	201	Spellrip	197	Triggers	19
Scenario Seeds	214	Spells	247	Troglodytes	37
Scry-and-fry	55	Spines (Physical)	146	Trolls	37
Searing Breath (Damaging Breath)	145	Spit Breath (Breath)	144	Turn the Worm	247
Secondary Fire Gland (Physical)	146	Stage Change Triggers	20	Tweaks	126
Serfs	24	Starting Alert Levels	13	U	
Servant Races	32	Stealing from beneath a sleeping dragon	119	Undead	37
Servant Types	23	Stocking the Hoard	119	Unfriendly	69
Servitors	24	Strafe (Breath)	144	Unmentionables the First	94
Shadow Dragon	196	Subtype	154	Unmentionables the Second	94
Shadow Watch	196	Sustained Breath (Breath)	143	Using Age Advancements	129
Shadowbite	196	Swamp Dragon	181	Using Alert Levels	14
Shadows Wheel	196	Swamp Dragon	182	Using the Alert Level system	21
Shape and Movement	150	Swapping spells	79	V	
Shifting Rarities	228	Swift Age Advancement	134	Vassals	206
Sibilant Charm of the Wyrn	198	Swift dragon concepts	134	Vessel Golem	44
Sieges	83	T		W	
Sightings	19	Tail Critical Hits	117	Waking a Dragon	205
Silver Dragons	10	Tail Spikes (Physical)	145	War Dragon	177
Sin Dragons	158	Tamed Dragons	175	War Dragon	178
Skeleton	98	Taming the dragon	224	Warriors	24
Sklaroth	137	Ten great combat feats for dragons	77	Weapons	89
Sklaroth the Destroyer	137	The Big Finish	240	Weapons and Armour	200
Skull	101	The Care and Feeding of Dragons	222	Weredragon	50
Sleeping Dragons	13	The Curse of the Hoard	122	Weredragon Lycanthropy	51
Sleeping Dragons	205	The Desolation of the Dragon	5	White	88
Slithering	43	The Great One	215	White Dragons	9
Sloth	161	The Quick Aerial Combat System	85	Wing Critical Hits	116
Sloth Dragon	163	The Slow Decline	210	Wing Spurs (Physical)	147
Sloughing Spell	197	The Tail	93	Wingbind	193
So it all goes wrong...for the dragon	82	The Tie to the Land	5	Wingmount	99
So it all goes wrong...for the party	81	The Twist of the Tail	111	Wings	100
Sorcerers and Dragons	188	The Wyrmling	150	Wings of Brilliant Energy	193
Special Ability Progression	155	Tiamat & Bahamut	215	Wingshield (Physical)	145
Special Actions	20	Torso	95	Wrath	173
Special Qualities	152	Tough Age Advancement	135	Wrath Dragon	174
Specialists	222	Tough dragon concepts	135	Y	
Spell Weave (Breath)	141	Traps and Defences	58	Young Dragon Tactics & Magic	77
Spellcasting	189			Youth	204

DESIGNER'S NOTES

I originally intended to use the metaphor of a dragon's hoard for this book – you'd delve into it, uncovering gems of game design and a wealth of advice to make your game all the richer. The book had its own ideas, though, so by far the best metaphor is, well, a dragon that fought really really hard. Finally, I've driven a sword through its black heart after much bloodshed and torment. I am wounded with claws of converting to 3.5 and pierced by vicious pointy teeth.

Anyway, enough with the overwrought afterword.

* * *

One of the earliest ideas for the book was the Age Advancement section – it bugged me that if you gave a dragon, say, a level of sorcerer to boost its spellcasting, you short-changed it severely in terms of Challenge Rating. That level of sorcerer increases its CR by 1, but so would adding another Age Category, and the Age Category includes two levels of spellcasting in addition to more hit dice, better attacks, better saves, lots of skills and, well, pretty much everything a dragon wants. Age Advancement lets you make a draconic wizard or fighting machine without making a mockery of its CR.

The basic system for Age Advancement fed into Dragon Design. Generic monster design has been done before, but this system has a nice organic feel to it. The dragons grow up in unexpected ways.

Watchers on the Mountain and Flattery & Riddles arose from experience with very different styles of play. On one level, they're an attempt to provide a middle ground between a strict, rules-dependant game and a more freeform, story-oriented game. Watchers on the Mountain was heavily inspired by the *Thief* computer games, as well as sections from various fantasy books. (Smaug, especially).

Dragons are curious beasts. In every game I've played in or heard about, they've had some special quirk or place in the setting. Unlike more uncommon monsters like titans, or one-note

creatures like trolls or wyverns, everyone has their own take on dragons. (The campaigning chapter talks about the iconic status of dragons, which is probably why so many games include them in an important role.) This makes writing a book on them somewhat tricky, as you've got to be as generally useful as possible. That's why I didn't go into huge detail on, say, draconic history or culture – most games have a particular niche for dragons, and I didn't want to cause contradictions and problems for the Games Masters. The other restriction was, of course, space – there's a lot to write about dragons. This book is as comprehensive as possible, but there is still a lot left uncovered. (As an aside, my thanks go to Gary Gygax & Jon Creffield and Alejandro Melchor, who wrote *the Slayer's Guide to Dragons* and *Dragon Magic* respectively – this book was guided by the sterling work already done in previous Mongoose Publications.)

I was tempted to continue the tradition set in d20 games of taking a colour or mineral and making a dragon out of it, but instead I tried to create new dragons that would expand the game somewhat. The Sin Dragons were great fun to write and I'm very fond of my (rather munchkin) Heraldic Dragon. The Tamed Dragons, though, fill a hole which I first noticed in my first campaign – having a dragon as a mount sounds great, but creates a huge headache for the Games Master. It's hard to cope with a mount that's much more powerful than the character (or, in the case of Sparky the Gold Dragon in my first campaign, more powerful than the entire party). The Tamed Dragons are much more reasonable mounts for most characters while still having that essential draconic style. (And you can reasonably name one of them *Sparky*, instead of trying to apply it to a 500-year old creature of ineffable nobility and great intelligence.)

I hope Games Masters find this book useful. I *really* hope I haven't inadvertently killed too many characters. And I hope you enjoyed it.

Now, I'm off to sleep. For a few centuries, if I'm lucky.

Gar

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