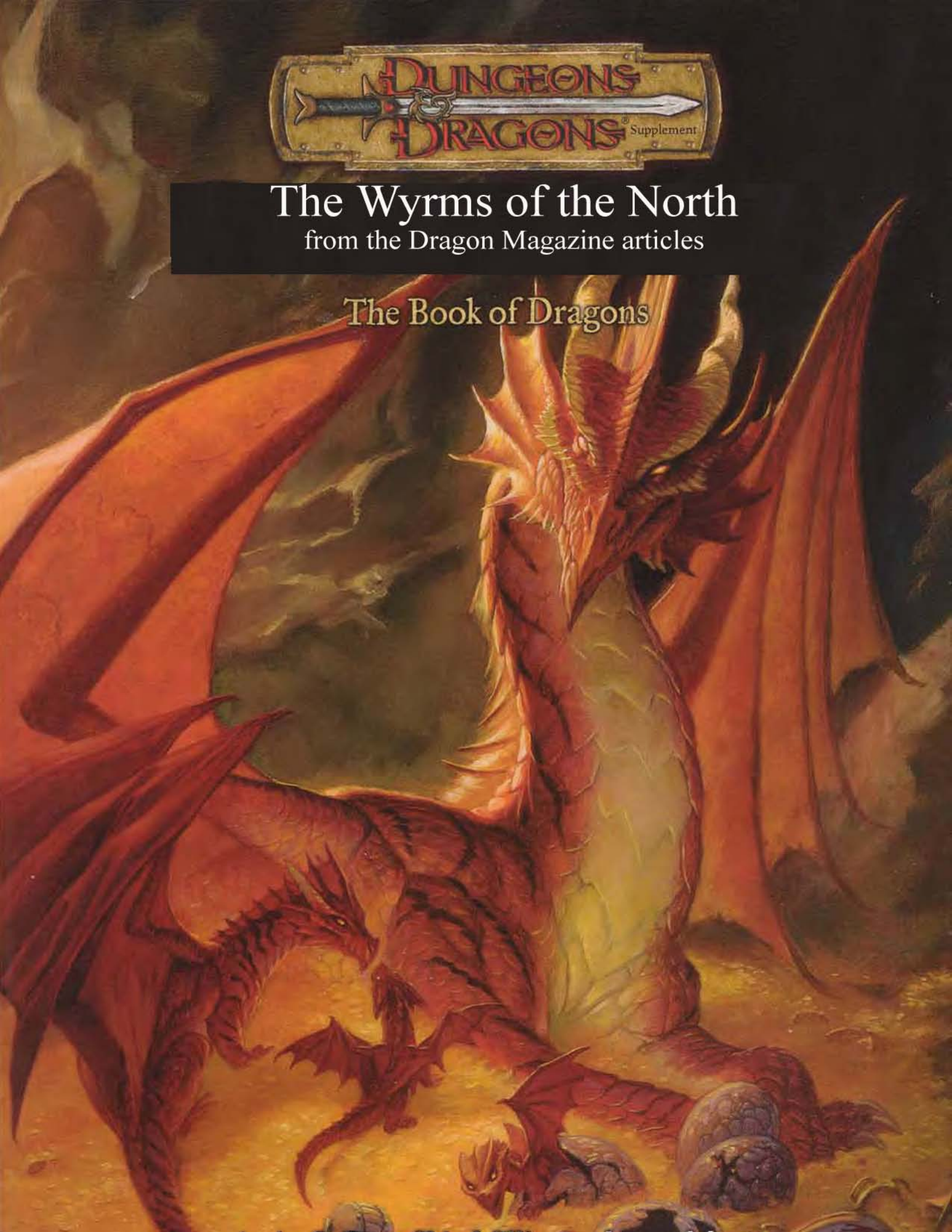




The Wyrms of the North

from the Dragon Magazine articles

The Book of Dragons



Wyrms of the North



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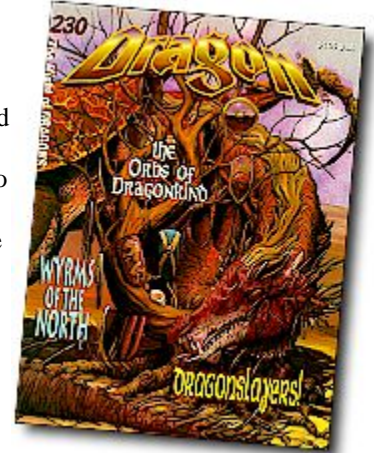
Ed Greenwood's *Wyrms of the North* column ran from *Dragon* 230 through *Dragon* 259, detailing over two dozen unique dragons of Faerûn. These articles reprise the originals but include game statistics for the new version of **D&D**.

Arauthator, "Old White Death"

Dragon #230

Through the efforts of the intrepid explorer Volothamp Geddarm (more widely known across Faerûn, perhaps, as "that serpent-spitting rogue Volo!"), an incomplete but nonetheless useful survey of currently active dragon rulers in the Sword Coast North region has been compiled, printed, and energetically sold in chapbook form on the streets of Waterdeep, Neverwinter, and Silverymoon. One copy fell into the hands of Elminster of Shadowdale, and after many a snort and head-shaking over it, he was persuaded to render it into English (repairing its execrable grammar along the way), append some **D&D** game-specific information, and remove certain statements ("to give the wyrmkin a fighting chance," the Old Mage was overheard to say) so as to arrive at the words you'll read hereafter. Adventurers take note: Volo's work didn't list all active dragons of the North, it lists only those who've risen to hold a territory known and respected by other dragons. Dracoliches and dead wyrms, however famous, were omitted. Otherwise, Volo would've been old indeed before his wagon-sized chapbook saw print -- and any issue of *Dragon Magazine* reprinting a respectable portion of it would fill a man-length bookshelf all by itself!

Alphabetically, the first great dragon of the present-day North is Arauthator, "the icy claws that wait at the cold end of the world."¹ This old white dragon is famous for his great size and savagery. For almost a century he has defended his dominion against many ambitious dragons, slaughtering over a score of his own offspring in the process. "Old White Death," as the miners and foresters of the North know him, is clearly more intelligent than most white dragons. He uses traps and spells to hamper foes in battle and to strike intruding dragons from a superior position, rather than employing the more prevalent "rush-headlong-into-revenge-whatever-the-cost" behavior of his kind. Arauthator is larger than most white dragons but adept at silent gliding and stealthy movement. He has been known to cause rockfalls and even to tear up and drop boulders -- not just on the heads of intruding orcs or humans, but also to create barriers to seal up rothé and other large alpine beasts inside mountain valleys so that he can dine upon them at leisure.



Old White Death patrols his domain tirelessly, keeping careful watch over even the most minor changes. He adjusts his own habits to avoid both the traps of foes and the careless overfeeding that might lead to the disappearance of a species on which he likes to dine. In the process, he has smashed at least one community of frost giants (Bulindiful, a cavern-catacomb fortress set in the heart of Mount Halaragh, just west of the mines of Mirabar in the Spine of the World mountain range), and he has torn apart a mountain peak (Sardin's Sword, once a lookout over the upper Surbrin) to destroy the bugbear hold inside it.

Arauthator is far more cunning and patient than most white dragons. "The spark of revenge still kindles the fire that warms his heart to carry him on through the centuries," wrote the sage Amorthas of Ruathym,² "but he lets it smolder under dampers of patience and cold calculation, where other whitewings [white dragons] would leap to the attack." No one knows why Arauthator is this way, but it's clear that the old dragon uses this patience to anticipate and prepare for attacks from rival dragons, rising orc hordes, and the remorhaz who roam the Endless Ice Sea. He also bides his time to develop new personal-warning spells that alert him of approaching dragons and magic items.

Arauthator is a skilled mimic and can speak the Common tongue well enough to pose as a lost miner or injured prospector. He has long practice in concealing himself under snow by flapping his wings as he burrows into drifts so as to lift the snow, which then falls over him again in a pristine blanket. Arauthator often dozes when sleeping in snow, but he never sleeps through the approach of danger (he can smell most beasts, including humans, for a mile or more downwind). He has mastered the patience needed to remain still for days on end, perched on a mountainside or lying in the snow of a bowl-shaped mountain valley. Prey and foes often don't notice him until far too late.

Old White Death holds his own survival as his highest goal, but he is far less lazy than most dragons in pursuing it. He regards the maintenance of his dominion as crucial to his own strength, though he has chosen not to strike at the creatures of Icewind Dale. This abstinence may be born of habit; the region was formerly part of the territory of the dragon known to humans as Icingdeath, and the two dragons came to an uneasy truce, ignoring each other and leaving each other's territories alone, rather than destroying each other in a battle for rule over the Reghed Glacier. Instead, Arauthator concentrates on carving ever-deeper tunnels into the Endless Ice Sea and the rock beneath, devouring all subterranean creatures he finds (chiefly gnomes), to unearth his own gem and mineral treasure, and protect his realm against attack from below by exterminating all possible attackers. These forays seem to attract remorhaz from the vast glacial areas that lie north of the Spine of the World, and Arauthator fights an ongoing battle against the iceworms, devouring all of the remorhaz he defeats. Northern giants and gnomes refer to these delvings as the Dragonholes and report that they consist of at least six separate tunnel complexes spread over a wide area north of the dragon's lair. Several observers have also mentioned that the

dragon takes pleasure in slaying remorhaz, often hurling the monsters around like rag dolls before killing them, or folding his wings and wriggling across the ice to meet and fight them worm to worm.

Arauthator's Lair

Arauthator lairs in the Lonefang, a prow-shaped mountain that rises out of the Endless Ice Sea several hundred miles due north of Mithril Hall. Intrepid adventurers report that it can be seen on the horizon by those who reach the frigid, wind-clawed northern faces of the Spine of the World mountains. Although Arauthator's home is thought to have a subterranean back entrance through glacial rifts many miles to the northwest (near the row of rock pinnacles known as the Worldwyrms' Teeth), the mountain itself has only one visible entrance: a vast shaft that cuts into the descending northern slope from above and plunges down to a cavern filled by a frozen lake. Here Arauthator hurls most of his spells at intruders seeking to reach the network of caverns at the far end of the lake, where he dwells.

The lair proper is known to include a bonepit; a cavern crammed with chunks of metallic ores; a cluttered central feeding and working cave that is home to some captured magical items; and an ancient iron structure that Old White Death uses as a prison for humans and smaller creatures he intends to devour later. According to an escaped prisoner, his cage, a curious cylindrical enclosure divided into several internal chambers, looks very much like some of the gnomish craft built to sail the skies from crystal sphere to sphere. A rising, trap-lined tunnel leads to a descending series of ice-walled storage caverns, each opening into the next in a frozen waterfall of gems that Arauthator occasionally rolls around in, purring in catlike bliss. Lying on his accustomed bed of diamonds in the last, lowest cavern, the dragon can look up through all of the hoard-caverns. He customarily reaches that bed by slithering down the river of gems, chuckling in contentment. A vertical shaft large enough to permit proper flight allows the old dragon fast ascent from the bottom of this cavern to a ledge overhanging the trap-lined approach tunnel. To soar up the entrance shaft and leave, Arauthator customarily takes wing from the ledge and glides down the tunnel and out over the frozen lake before beating his wings in a mighty rush. No servants serve Arauthator in his lair.

Arauthator's Domain

From the Lonefang, Arauthator holds sway over a dominion that stretches from the Cold Run in the west (although he doesn't feed on the inhabitants of Icewind Dale, he has several times slain dragons who tried to raid or settle there) to Mount Caumarath in the east (the huge peak at the northern end of the Ice Mountains, northwest of Citadel Adbar). The northern boundary of this dragon's domain is unknown to scholars and others, but the southern extent of Arauthator's rule is marked by the Spine of the World range as far east as the Fell Pass, where the boundary swings south and east in a great arc to take in all the land north of Mithril Hall and the Citadel of Many Arrows. All creatures in this vast, rocky wilderland (the headwaters of the River Surbrin) exist at Arauthator's pleasure, unless they keep to the Moonwood or the Coldwood, for the white dragon never hunts prey in the trees. With the rise of civilization centered at Silvermoon, the supremacy of Arauthator's rule over this more southerly area may soon be tested.

The Deeds of Arauthator

The favorite prey of Old White Death is full-grown frost giants (rarely available these days), followed closely by remorhaz and northern deer. Rothé and various bear species are next on the menu, and other dragons are also favored fare. Arauthator is less fond of the flesh of orcs, bugbears, and other goblinoids, but such creatures make up much of his staple diet; without the dragon's presence, the frequency and numbers of orc hordes sweeping down through the Sword Coast North would no doubt be much greater. Arauthator is known to use an *icemelt* spell both in his glacial delvings and to transform frozen lakes into temporary watering holes. He is careful never to feed or drink in a pattern that foes could observe and exploit. The dragon usually makes one long patrol of a part of his domain every day, plus a shorter, similar foray. He usually feeds at least once a day, upon sighting suitable prey during the longer patrol. He may sleep atop a rocky height if tiring when far afield (once, boldly, atop Berun's Hill, in the territory of the green dragon Claugiylamatar), but he prefers to sleep on his bed of gems in the Lonefang. On rare occasions he keeps to his lair for three days or more, perfecting a new spell.

Arauthator employs a wide array of detection and trap spells (most of the latter being cold-based) and wields spells effective against other dragons (such as *wingbind*³), and to enjoy freewheeling aerial clawing and raking battles rather than dodging among mountain peaks and sniping with his spells. Arauthator is famous for tearing apart the venerable red dragon Rathalylaug high above the rooftops of Neverwinter in the Year of the Grimoire (1324 DR), in a spectacular battle at sunset. The white dragon dove down to smash apart a tower in triumph. He happened to choose the tower of the sorceress Shareera, who was smashed amid the toppling stones, even as the blood of the dying Rathalylaug -- and his last, vain *firetrail* spell⁴ -- rained down on the city. Wizards also remember Arauthator for freezing the mage Phaulothlin of the Arcane Brotherhood⁵ solid, then shattering the helpless sorcerer against a mountainside. It seems that the haughty mage made the mistake of challenging the white dragon for ownership of a spellbook unearthed from the ice-covered grave of a Netherese wizard during mining north of Mirabar.

Arauthator has a dozen or more grimoires hidden in his lair and also works away patiently at mastering all the spells in them. He has obviously transcended the traditional spell-handling limitations of white dragons that keep their verbal-only adaptations to wizard spells of the first level -- but his personal limits are as yet unknown. Old White Death also impressed watching wizards at the MageFair held on the western verges of Var the Golden several decades ago, by the ease with which he shouldered the blue wyrm

Eltagrathuuloor into the side of Mount Gundar (the source of the River Gundar). The blow was powerful enough to cause a rockfall that brought most of the top of that peak down on his rival, burying Eltagrathuuloor alive.

Arauthator regards the white dragon Arveiatrace as an acceptable mate when he feels inclined. He employs a sending spell to call her to his lair for dalliance, giving her gems from his hoard after each mating but firmly escorting her out of his domain to rear any hatchlings that may result on her own. In the past, he has mated with the gigantic white dragon Ghaulantatra, the "Old Mother Wyrn" worshiped by some orc tribes as a goddess. Arauthator exhibited no remorse when the beholder Thaluul destroyed Ghaulantatra and claimed her lair (somewhere in the mountains north of High Gap, between the Delimbiyr and the Fallen Lands).

Arauthator's love of a good fight has made him respected -- and avoided -- by other dragons. Only ambitious, overconfident younglings seek to defeat him, finding instead their own deaths. Arauthator makes no alliances and ignores the overtures of other dragons. He lusts after treasure of his own finding and magic of his own creation, and he can't be lured out of his domain by promises of gems or magic. The prospect of a good fight with another dragon always interests him, but he's too wise to leave the lands he knows so well just to do battle, since true foes always come to him eventually. He's too patient and calculating to be governed by hatreds, and he even seems to admire capable or wily foes. Old White Death has saluted adventuring bands he could easily have slain, after witnessing a clever ruse or bold stratagem on their part.

Arauthator seems especially busy these days developing new magics and seeking wizards' tombs within his domain to increase his personal magical might. He also seems wary of intrusions into his territory. Elminster is of the opinion that the old dragon may have witnessed the opening of a gate from another plane and been horrified at the realization of how easily unknown foes with powerful magic can penetrate his lair without warning.

Arauthator's Fate

It's likely Old White Death will die violently, but he's begun to seem ageless and certainly too wily to be slain easily by any rival dragon. It's rumored he's taken to hiring certain adventurers, via sendings, to retrieve the hoards of dragons he has slain, rather than leaving his domain to seize them himself. This seemingly prudent practice may offer a foe the chance to introduce harmful (perhaps explosive) magic into the treasure taken to Arauthator -- and certainly treacherous adventurers could use their mission to get closer to Old White Death than most humans could ever hope to do before launching an attack.

Arauthator: Male old white dragon Sor5*; CR 19; Huge dragon (cold); HD 24d12+120 5d4+20; hp 308; Init +4; Spd 60 ft., burrow 30 ft., swim 60 ft., fly 200 ft. (poor); AC 31 (touch 8, flat-footed 31); Atk +31 melee (2d8+9, bite) and +29 melee (2d6+4, 2 claws) and +29 melee (1d8+4, 2 wings) and +29 melee (1d8+13, tail slap) or +31 melee (1d8+13, crush); Face/Reach 10 ft. x 20 ft./10 ft.; SA Breath weapon (cold, 50-ft. cone, save DC 29), frightful presence, spell-like abilities; SQ Blindsight, cold subtype, damage reduction 10/+1, dragon traits, *fog cloud*, *freezing fog*, *gust of wind*, icewalking, immunities, keen senses, spell resistance 21; AL CE; SV Fort +19, Ref +14, Will +15; Str 29, Dex 10, Con 21, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 15*.

*Arauthator has transcended the traditional spell-handling limitations of white dragons. He receives a +1 bonus to Charisma for his additional sorcerer levels.

**Arauthator is cleverer than most white dragons. He uses traps and spells to hamper foes in battle and to strike intruding dragons from a superior position, rather than employing the more prevalent "rush-headlong-into-revenge-whatever-the-cost" behavior of his kind.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +26, Concentration +34, Craft (gemcutting) +9, Craft (trapmaking***) +15, Diplomacy +4, Hide -1, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (arcana) +34, Listen +27, Move Silently +12, Search +27, Spellcraft +44, Spot +27, Alertness, Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Power Attack, Snatch, Wingover.

***Further detail on Craft (trapmaking) is found in *Song and Silence*.

Languages: Common, Draconic, Giant, Gnome.

Breath Weapon (Su): Arauthator can breathe a 50-foot *cone of cold* every 1d4 rounds; cold damage 8d6. A breath weapon attack allows a Reflex save for half damage with a DC of 29. He is immune to his own breath weapon unless otherwise noted.

Frightful Presence (Su): This ability takes effect automatically. It affects only opponents with fewer hit dice or levels than the creature has. The affected creature must make a successful Will save of 26 or become shaken. Success indicates that the target is immune to Arauthator's frightful presence for one day.

Spell-like Abilities (Sp): 3/day--*gust of wind*, *fog cloud*, *wall of ice*; 1/day--*control weather*; all as Sor8; save DC 12 + spell level.

Blindsight (Ex): Arauthator maneuvers and fights by using nonvisual senses (smell). Invisibility and darkness are irrelevant, though he still can't discern ethereal beings. (240 ft.). Arauthator usually does not need to make Spot or Listen checks to notice creatures within range of his blindsight ability.

Cold Subtype: Immune to cold damage; takes double damage from fire unless a saving throw for half damage is allowed, in which case it takes half damage on a success and double damage on a failure.

Dragon Traits: Immune to sleep and paralysis effects; darkvision 60 ft.; low-light vision.

Freezing Fog (Sp): This ability is similar to a *solid fog* spell but also causes a rime of slippery ice to form on any surface the fog touches, creating the effect of a *grease* spell. Arauthator is immune to the *grease* effect because of his icewalking ability.

Icewalking (Ex): This ability works like the *spider climb* spell, but the surfaces the dragon climbs must be icy. It is always in effect.

Keen Senses: Arauthator sees four times as well as a human in low-light conditions and twice as well in normal light.

Spells Known: (6/7/7/6/5/3; base DC = 12 + spell level): 0 -- *arcane mark, detect magic, detect poison, mage hand, open/close, prestidigitation, ray of frost, read magic, resistance*; 1st -- *alarm, detect secret doors, identify, know protections, ventriloquism*; 2nd -- *detect thoughts, icemelt, invisibility, magic mouth*; 3rd -- *clairaudience/clairvoyance, fireball, water breathing*; 4th -- *frost vortex, wingbird*; 5th -- *sending*.

Possessions: Countless flawed diamonds and various coins worth approximately 10,000 gp in total, 1 diamond worth approximately 5,000 gp, *Blingdenstone warpick* (see *Magic of Faerûn*), *rod of alertness* (72,000 gp), half a dozen spellbooks (contents to be determined by the DM), and the remnants of a wrecked flying ship built by gnomes.

Arauthator's Magic

Old White Death commands a respectable roster of detection, entrapment, and combat spells, with many of them being variants of well-known wizard spells. He has also demonstrably developed magical means of triggering captured wands from afar, so that he can fire them at intruders in his lair without touching them directly. It must be stressed that human knowledge of Arauthator's magic is dangerously incomplete. Thanks to long and diligent observations by Felandaert the Farscrying of Candlekeep, however, we now have specifics of three of the dragon's spells:

Arauthator uses *frost vortex* both in combat and as a trap, leaving its waiting motes in tempting alcoves and blind passages in the walls of his lair. He uses *icemelt* primarily to dig tunnels through glacial ice in his search for treasure, but at least once used it to flood orcs out of subterranean tunnels by tapping a meltwater river under a glacier. (The spell temporarily prevented the exposed water from freezing.) Arauthator uses *wingbind*, a spell known to a small number of dragons, in freewheeling aerial clawing and raking battles with other dragons.

Frost Vortex

Transmutation

Level: Sor/Wiz 5

Components: V

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Medium (100 ft. plus 10 ft./level)

Effect: One tiny dustflake (see below)

Duration: Permanent until discharged

Saving Throw: Reflex (half) and Fortitude (see text)

Spell Resistance: Yes

You create a tiny dustflake that either races towards a target creature or hangs motionless in a chosen spot, as you choose. In the former case, you must succeed at a ranged touch attack to hit your target, but if you fail, it hangs motionless near your target. This spell is triggered whenever any living creature passes within 5 feet of the dustflake.

When this occurs, the spell takes effect. The air in a 20-foot radius sphere around the dustflake whirls violently about with a harsh hissing noise, then grows very cold, coating all solid objects within it with thick frost. The frost inflicts 1d4 points of cold damage per caster level (maximum 10d4) to all creatures within the area. Unattended objects also take this damage. Creatures that fail their Reflex save also suffer from the effects of a *slow* spell for 1d4 rounds. Once activated, the frost vortex is gone within the round, leaving no moisture, ice, nor rushing of air behind.

Icemelt

Transmutation

Level: Sor/Wiz 2**Components:** V**Casting Time:** 1 action**Range:** Medium (100 ft. plus 10 ft./level)**Area:** 10-ft. square/level (see text)**Duration:** Instantaneous/2d4 hours**Saving Throw:** None**Spell Resistance:** No

This spell causes solid, nonmagical ice to vaporize, dissipating into the surrounding atmosphere without fog, water runoff, or heat. You affect a 10-foot-square area to a depth of 1 to 4 feet; you can orient it vertically to ablate a wall-like structure. Natural and magical ice cannot form in the affected area for 2d4 hours thereafter. Ice within an organic mass (such as a frozen body) is unaffected by this spell.

Wingbind

Evocation

Level: Sor/Wiz 3**Components:** V**Casting Time:** 1 action**Range:** Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)**Area:** One winged creature**Duration:** 1 round/level**Saving Throw:** Reflex negates**Spell Resistance:** Yes

This spell gets its name from its effectiveness against winged creatures -- particularly dragons. You create a net of force that acts to weight down your opponent. The amount of weight is sufficient to heavily encumber the target, making it unable to fly. All other aspects of movement are affected as well.

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1. As he was described by the sage Myrindas of Port Kir, in *Dragons Ye Should Know* (1354 DR). **Dragon Magazine** 230, page 37.
 2. In *Famous Legends* (published in 1344 DR) and *Lore of the North*, **Dragon Magazine** 230, page 39.
 3. Detailed in the accessory sourcebook FOR1 *Draconomicon*, page 76.
 4. Ibid, page 75.
 5. This band of evil wizards, based in Luskan, is described in *Volo's Guide to the North*, pages 121-125.
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Arveiatrace, "The White Wyrn"

Dragon Magazine #231

The inquisitive (not to mention foolish) explorations of the famous traveler and author Volo, filtered through Elminster, have yielded details of another dragon of the North: Arveiatrace the White Wyrn, known to sailors and minstrels alike as Iceclaws, thanks to her habit of drifting low over ships sailing off the Sword Coast and plucking up crew members for quick snacks. This ancient white dragon is feared by all sailors who ply the shipping lanes of the Sword Coast, except for those who dismiss her as a legend -- until it's too late. The Flying Hunt of Nimbral and several aerial patrols from Evermeet have fought her in midair and forced her into flight on occasion, but most ships are helpless against her diving attacks -- and when crews scramble down into their holds to escape her snatching claws, she's been known to land on a ship and tear it apart like a child opening a gift. What makes Arveiatrace so deadly is her past: She was the steed of a wizard, Meltharond Thone, who captured and tamed her. Over the centuries of her servitude, her hatred for him turned slowly to love, and she was plunged into melancholy when at last, longevity magic failing, he died (sometime around 1326 DR).



When she is especially lonely or going into battle, Arveiatrace straps the wizard's old palanquin on her back, and takes to the skies with his skeletal figure riding between her shoulders. A web of desperate magics spun by Meltharond in his waning days keep his bones whole and floating in proper relation to each other, so the wizard's skeleton sits upright and turns its head to look in whichever direction Iceclaws is looking. An observer could be forgiven for thinking Meltharond is a lich or some other sort of undead, but the dragon is truly alone, save on the rare occasions when she mates with the white dragon Arauthator -- occasions during which Meltharond's skeleton is left at home, sitting and eternally looking at nothing.

The wizard may be no more than bones now, but his legacy has kept his faithful steed alive in the face of attacks from strange dragons, elves, and humans seeking to rid themselves of her hunting, and her own offspring as well, whom she drives from the Icepeak to fend for themselves as soon as they grow bold enough to try to slay her and take over her lair. Meltharond's magical boons are twofold: he crafted her a *ring of spell triggering* that allows her to trigger the wands, rods, and staves he left behind, and he taught her such rare and useful magic as she does know. She knows how wizards hurl magic, what tactics they employ, and how to recognize some popular battle spells (such as *fireball* and *lightning bolt*) by their castings. This and a familiarity with various wands, rods, and staves makes her crafty in battle against mages. One such tactic is flying low in the troughs of waves, so as to entice a wand-wielding wizard to waste magic by firing at a glimpse of her, only to have his attack absorbed or turned aside by the roiling waters. (In seas of 5 ft. or more, consider this one-quarter cover. In seas of 10 ft. or more, consider this one-half cover.) Another is toppling masts down atop mages standing on decks trying to work spells.

Arveiatrace is more intelligent -- and vastly more sensitive -- than most white dragons, but she has all the savagery and snarling hunger for revenge of her kind. She grew so used to the company of Meltharond (who chatted with her constantly, treating her as an equal despite the spells that prevented her from attacking him) that she's now governed by loneliness and has been known to spare sailors and others she snatches if they don't like wizards, don't attack her, and have the quick wits to shout out a desire to talk (or demonstrate an ability to sing) before she bites the life from them.

Several humans have escaped from a snatching by Arveiatrace having endured nothing more than a month or so of conversation with the terrifying, always-suspicious, and vigilant Iceclaws. If captives refrain from attacking her or stealing anything of Meltharond's that still lies about his rooms, largely as he left it (including many items of magic and spellbooks, some accounts say), they'll be taken to the locale of their choice on mainland Faerûn as soon as they admit to any loneliness. It is from such former guests that the wider world knows details of the White Wyrn and her lair.

It would be a mistake to conclude from this that Arveiatrace is gentle, kind, or has a soft spot for humans. She is clearly looking for a companion she can trust, but evil wizards who would refrain from cheating her, doing her other harm, or trying to enslave her -- and yet share her love for destruction and acquisition of treasure -- are just as clearly all too rare. Her loneliness drives her to answer the calls of the white dragon Arauthator to mate, but the White Wyrn deals savagely with intruders who sail too close to the isle where she lairs, and she has been known to leave her territory to hunt down adventurers who have entered her lair and then gone elsewhere in Faerûn.

Arveiatrace is more patient than most white dragons, but when roused to battle, she loves to lose all self-control and slay and destroy until nothing remains to withstand her. She knows the winds and waves of the Sea of Swords and Sword Coast (and the Trackless Sea

east of a line from Uttersea to the Wave Rocks and the northern shores of Lantan) better than any other living entity, and she is adept at sinking ships and at plucking things from masts, decks, and the waves without slowing down or tumbling into even the roughest seas.

Arveiatrace seems bent on devouring a hungry dragon's share of all Sword Coast seafarers and in making dragons and lesser races alike terrified of venturing north of Ruathym. On rare occasions she will use her skills to rescue shipwreck victims or retrieve floating items -- if rewarded with generous amounts of gems and treated with respect, as an equal and not some semi-intelligent, easily-manipulated beast.

Over the years, she has developed a relationship of mutual respect with Laeral, the Lady Mage of Waterdeep, and with the seafarer and shipwright Old Aldon of Mintarn, but the White Wyrms is spoken of with awe and fear in Candlekeep: She once heard from a captive that a certain sage of that establishment had written disparagingly of Meltharond. She arrived unannounced to tear the roof from the main building, snatch up the writer, and set straight his views on the dead wizard. It's reported that less than a month later, Laeral of Waterdeep personally delivered a freshly printed tome from Candlekeep entitled *The High History of the Mighty Mage Meltharond* to the White Wyrms, and stayed with the dragon for more than a tenday, talking day and night through. She has refused to answer queries as to just what was discussed, but sailors have noticed that the White Wyrms now seems to turn a blind eye to vessels sailing near Waterdeep.

Arveiatrace's Lair

Iceclaws makes her lair in a frigid complex of caverns high up in the eastern face of the Icepeak, an isolated island south of the Sea of Moving Ice and west of Fireshear. They lie beside smaller chambers that were once the sanctum of Meltharond Thone. In fact, Arveiatrace dug her caves so that she could carefully remove the walls along one side of the wizard's rooms, to allow her access to them with snout and claw without destroying them with her bulk.

The rock of the Icepeak is soft, crumbling easily under a dragon's claws or a climber's boots alike, and Arveiatrace took the time to sculpt out spaces large enough for her to turn easily in, beat her wings, and sprawl at ease. Unfortunately, such huge caverns are inherently unstable; bits of the roof keep falling when she brushes them with an upraised wing, or when she lands heavily. (Ice at the three entry caves often makes her skid as she lands.) Eventually the White Wyrms may find herself at the bottom of a roofless ledge, with a fifth or more of the Icepeak that was once above her gone.

Outside each cave entrance is a sheer drop onto jagged rocks, and few creatures dare to dwell on the Icepeak with a hungry white dragon. There are rumors of gnome tunnels that reach up from deep under the sea into the heart of the Icepeak. Also, the more foolish sort of adventurers come visiting the island all too often, drawn by tales of the back wall of the deepest of the White Wyrms' caverns: the wall that glitters from roof to floor with heaped diamonds. Some believe these tales to be true, although a few also mention a side cavern crammed with Arveiatrace's other treasure, all tumbled carelessly together: suits of armor, coins, all gems except diamonds, weapons, and other things that look important or valuable, perhaps even magic items (Iceclaws ignores likely-looking items that she seizes, using only things of magic she knows to have belonged to Meltharond). At least one stone golem lies stiffly among the heaped wealth, its origin and means of control unknown. Adventurers hearing talk of the Icepeak lair in dockside taverns up and down the Sword Coast are warned that a hill of cracked and gnawed bone fragments has built up on the rocks below the caves of the White Wyrms -- and that almost all of those bones belonged to human adventurers before they provided Arveiatrace with a meal. One of the wands crafted by Meltharond can generate *unseen servants*, and the White Wyrms often makes use of these forces to manipulate small items that are beyond her personal reach or Dexterity, but it is thought that no creatures serve Arveiatrace in her lair or elsewhere, and that she avoids formal alliances or ties that can summon her to battle.

Arveiatrace's Domain

From the Icepeak, Arveiatrace holds sway over a territory that stretches along the Trackless Sea east of Evermeet from Tuern and the Sea of Moving Ice (where long-necked monsters lair under the ice and erupt to do battle) in the north to the shores of Lantan in the south, and east to take in the coastal shores and headlands from Tethyr north to Mount Sar beyond Waterdeep.

Arveiatrace has been known to make forays into the Crag and northern Neverwinter Wood, but other dragons (notably the green dragon Claugyliamatar) dispute her right to freely enter this region. The topaz dragon Iltharagh (who dwelt near the mouth of the Iceflow) fought several vicious territorial battles with Arveiatrace in the skies over the city of Luskan -- inconclusive struggles in which both dragons were badly wounded and had to retire to their lairs for long periods of recuperation. Since Iltharagh's recent conversion to a dracolich (assisted by the Cult of the Dragon, who provided the dragon with steady food, lair-guardians, and worshippers), however, the former topaz male hasn't bothered to defend any territory of its own.

The Deeds of Arveiatrace

Humans are the favorite prey of the White Wyrms, and she spends most of each day hunting over the waves, plucking meals from the decks of ships and using her wings to flip over vessels that menace her with ballistae, fiery missiles, or spells. She drinks from freshwater cascades and lakes in the mountains of Ruathym, on Gundarlun, and on northern Alaron and the Korinn Archipelago. When on these long hunting forays, Arveiatrace has been known to curl up and rest atop heights on Barth (tallest crag of the midsea

islets known as "the Teeth"), Tonter (the most seaward of The Singing Rocks), Ulduth (the more southerly of the two seabird-haunted Weed Rocks due south of Carcathen and west of the Sea Tower of Nemesser), and even on Sunset (in the Moonshae Isles) and on Mintarn itself. This last resting perch led to her not-quite-friendship with the shipwright Aldon, but it is a spot she rarely dares to frequent today (what with Zhentarim wizards forced west by the fall of Zhentil Keep, sorcerers fled from the turmoil of Tethyr, and outlawed mages from all over the Sword Coast lands fetching up in Mintarn).

When she's not hunting for food or ships that might hold gems, Arveiatrace stays at home, brooding over what Meltharond left behind. She finds entertainment in outwitting and devouring adventurers and in defending her territory against dragons that dare to dispute her authority. She allows young dragons to dwell unmolested at Dragonhome in the Moonshaes and several places in the Nelanter within her territory, so long as they obey her whenever she issues commands to them; she'll tear them apart on the spot if they defy her. Her loneliness drives her to journey inland when Arauthator calls or whenever wizards use magic to contact her, for she hopes that one of them will have the skills to bring Meltharond back from the dead. Adventurers planning to lure Iceclaws to her doom are warned that she expects treachery to await her on such trips, and she brings along magic items she can wield as well as her full measure of cunning. It is Elminster's firm belief that Arveiatrace regularly uses a crystal ball or other scrying device in her lair to observe weather and shipping, and to scout ahead at her summoner whenever she's called upon by anyone.

Besides her raid on Candlekeep and countless merchant ships, and her aerial battles with the elves of Evermeet, the Flying Hunt of Nimbral, and others, Arveiatrace is famous for tearing apart a midair *portal* to other planes that opened uncomfortably close to her lair and disgorged some sort of flying ship and an aerial guard of no less than twelve young adult black dragons! The White Wyrms screamed a challenge and charged to the attack, destroying the ship, the gate, and every last dragon in a wild fray that lasted for most of a day -- despite the hostile and quite spectacular spells of several wizards aboard the ship. Those accounts come from no lesser sources than Khelben Arunsun of Waterdeep, Alustriel of Silvermoon, and several senior mages in the service of other members of the Lords' Alliance -- who were all called upon by an awed agent-wizard of the Alliance aboard the Lady of the Waves caravel out of Waterdeep.

Arveiatrace isn't known to have any special bonds with, or hatreds of, any individuals or species beyond the aforementioned relationships. She shows no signs of being interested in closer contact with the dragons or other inhabitants of Faerûn, save wizards who can bring her beloved Meltharond back to her.

In recent seasons, her hunts have grown bolder, particularly along the coast of Tethyr. Strife and gathered power seems to attract her, and word has spread along the Sword Coast that the Cult of the Dragon is becoming very interested in converting her to the Scaly Way. At the very least they would like to eliminate her and place another dracolich in her lair at Icepeak. It is not known if Arveiatrace is aware of this rumor.

Arveiatrace's Fate

The White Wyrms seems to heal quickly and enjoy vibrant health and strength; it is unlikely that disease will claim her. Misadventure is always a peril, and Arveiatrace's lonely existence could end abruptly at any time, if she loses her latest battle. The Cult of the Dragon seems to be the greatest threat to her future. In addition, there are constant mutterings in Evermeet about ways to eliminate her, and young, ambitious elves may just mount a successful attempt one of these days.

On the other hand, Arveiatrace could become the scourge of the Sword Coast, invigorated anew, if someone returned Meltharond Thone to life or unlife. She could also, if Thone regained control over her and desired it so, become a messenger and a potent controlled fighting force, of much less danger to civilized folk than she is at present. In this potential, she is unique among currently powerful dragons of the North.

For the nonce, Arveiatrace's sad life remains an inspiration to minstrels up and down the Sword Coast -- and the bane of all sailors. "The White Wyrms came calling" has recently become a popular euphemism for the death of a sailor, whatever the cause.

Arveiatrace: Female ancient white dragon; CR 17; Huge dragon (cold); HD 30d12+180; hp 375; Init +4; Spd 60 ft., burrow 30 ft., swim 60 ft., fly 200 ft. (poor); AC 37 (touch 8, flat-footed 37); Atk +39 melee (2d8+11, bite) and +37 melee (2d6+5, 2 claws) and +37 melee (1d8+5, 2 wings) and +37 melee (2d6+16, tail slap) or +39 melee (2d8+16, crush); Face/Reach 10 ft. x 20 ft./10 ft.; SA Breath weapon (50-ft. cone of cold), frightful presence, spell-like abilities; SQ Cold subtype, dragon traits, freezing fog, icewalking, keen senses, spell resistance 24; AL CE; SV Fort +23, Ref +17, Will +19; Str 33, Dex 10, Con 23, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +22, Concentration +36, Diplomacy +34, Escape Artist +20, Hide -8, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (arcana) +32, Listen +34, Scry +22, Search +32, Spellcraft +32, Spot +34; Alertness, Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Power Attack, Snatch, Wingover.

Breath Weapon (Su): Arveiatrace can breathe a 50-foot cone of cold every 1d4 rounds; damage 10d6 (cold). A breath weapon attack allows a Reflex save (DC 31) for half damage. Arveiatrace is immune to her own breath weapon.

Frightful Presence (Su): This ability takes effect automatically. It affects only opponents with fewer hit dice or levels than Arveiatrace has. The affected creature must make a successful Will save (DC 27) or become shaken. Success indicates that the target is immune to Arveiatrace's frightful presence for one day. On a failure, creatures with 4 or fewer HD become panicked for 4d6 rounds. Those with 5 or more HD become shaken for 4d6 rounds. On a success, the creature is immune to Arveiatrace's fear effect for one day.

Spell-like Abilities (Sp): 3/day--*fog cloud, freezing fog, gust of wind, wall of ice*; save DC 12 + spell level; cast as a 10th-level sorcerer.

Cold Subtype: Immune to cold damage; takes double damage from fire unless a saving throw for half damage is allowed, in which case it takes half damage on a success and double damage on a failure.

Dragon Traits: Immune to sleep and paralysis effects; darkvision 60 ft.; low-light vision.

Freezing Fog (Sp): This ability is similar to a solid fog spell but also causes a rime of slippery ice to form on any surface the fog touches, creating the effect of a *grease* spell. Arveiatrace is immune to the *grease* effect because of her icewalking ability.

Icewalking (Ex): This ability works like the *spider climb* spell, but the surfaces Arveiatrace climbs must be icy. It is always in effect.

Keen Senses: Arveiatrace sees four times as well as a human in low-light conditions and twice as well in normal light.

Sorcerer Spells Known: (6/7/7/6/4; base DC = 12 + spell level): 0 -- *detect magic, mage hand, mending, open/close, prestidigitation, ray of frost, read magic, resistance*; 1st -- *alarm, expeditious retreat, Kaupaer's skittish nerves* (see *Magic of Faerûn*), *obscuring mist, shield*; 2nd -- *eagle's splendor* (see *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*), *endurance, resist elements, see invisibility*; 3rd -- *analyze portal* (see *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*), *dispel magic, sleet storm*; 4th -- *Tirumael's energy spheres* (see *Magic of Faerûn*), *wall of ice*.

Possessions: Suits of armor, coins, gems (including a couple of diamonds), weapons, and other things that look important or valuable worth approximately 3,600 gp, half a dozen of Meltharond's spellbooks (contents to be determined by the DM), *crystal ball, ring of spell triggering*, and a *wand of unseen servant* (750 gp). At the DM's discretion, the lair could hold the following specific item should he or she set up traps and other encounters that use the treasure guidelines in the *Dungeon Master's Guide: ring of spell turning*.

Languages: Common, Draconic, Illuskan.

Arveiatrace's Magic

Little is known of the magic Meltharond Thone cast upon the White Wyrms or made available to her, beyond this one (highly useful to all creatures lacking human-like hands) spell:

Awaken from Afar

Evocation

Level: Sor/Wiz 5, Clr 6, Drd 6

Components: V

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Target: One spell trigger activation item

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

An *awaken from afar* spell allows you to use a spell trigger item without actually touching the item. The item to be activated must be within the range of the *awaken from afar* spell, and it functions as though you yourself were triggering it from its current position. All other conditions, such as the requirement that you have the spell on your spell list or if the item's enchantment restricts its use to a particular race or individual, still apply. Both you and the item to be activated have to be on the same plane. The item cannot be in the possession of another creature at the time of activation, and it must be an item that you have previously triggered normally (in other words, without the aid of an *awaken from afar* spell).

New Magic Items

Ring of Spell Triggering: This ring allows the wearer to continually utilize the effects of the spell *awaken from afar*.

Caster Level: 9th; *Prerequisites:* Forge Ring, *awaken from afar*; *Market Price:* 90,000 gp.

Balagos, "The Flying Flame"

Dragon Magazine #232

The survey of dragon rulers of the North conducted by the notorious Volo (and corrected by Elminster) continues with one of the most famous dragons in all Faerûn: Balagos, the Flying Flame. This great red wyrm is legendary for his gigantic size and temper, and for the spells he hurls so often and recklessly in his boisterous, brawling rise to supremacy (he intends) over all Faerûnian dragonkind. Balagos acts like a much younger dragon, betraying neither weakness nor loss of fire and showing wisdom only in his avoidance of well-prepared mages who come looking for him. He strikes hard and unexpectedly, and he has slain so many other dragons that the elves dubbed him "Dragonbane."

Balagos is Ulla Babor in the tongue of the gnoll. Shortened to Babor, this name has passed into wider use among the humans. Whatever he is called, this giant dragon is a fearsome foe who delights in slaughtering adventurers, wizards, and dragons alike. He has been the death of the Company of the Firestar (based in Esmeltaran), the Company of the Coin (out of Amnwater), the Laughing Lynx Long-haul Caravan Company of Riatavin, the wizards of the Tower of Tyruld east of Keshla, and the entire seven-ship Silver Swords Boarding Company pirate fleet!

In addition, Balagos is thought to have destroyed Tastrar Nagthalass and at least four other Red Wizards, as well as three or more Zhentarim magelings sent separately on a mission to steal magic from the Flying Flame's hoard. This fool's errand was ordered by Lord Manshoon not to win powerful magic but in hopes that Balagos would be goaded into pursuing the magelings to recover the lost treasure -- only to be lured into a trap. Certain of the elder orb beholders who support (some would say manipulate) Manshoon have developed a spell they believe will (if they surrounded the great wyrm and cast it together) put Balagos in mind-thrall to them, helpless to escape the endless watchful weight of a dozen old and mighty beholder minds. Presumably this trap still awaits Balagos, who avoided it by slaughtering all the Zhentarim who dared approach his lair.

Balagos is a megalomaniac who truly believes he has the wits and might to rule all Faerûnian dragons -- and lead them in a war of extermination against humans and elves, leaving other beings as fodder to be devoured at will by the victorious wyrmkin. His mighty ego and raging temper doesn't render him stupid, however. Where many a red dragon charges into waiting death, Balagos coolly slips away and plots revenge by striking foes at their weakest point. (He typically flies away to strike at the homes and mates of those who come seeking to slay him, if he can learn who and where such targets are). The great red wyrm is more intelligent than most red dragons and has three outstanding talents: he never forgets the face, name, or attitude of any being he meets (dragon, human, or other); he is a shrewd judge of character (of many races, not just dragons); and he always looks ahead for consequences and likely outcomes. These faculties allow him to act in just the right way to defeat foes or further his aims as effectively as possible.

If cornered or pressed into a fight, Balagos is merciless and fearless, taking hurt if need be to disable a foe when he faces many opponents, and moving to force enemies to hamper or harm each other with spells and wielded weapons intended for him. He's called 'the Flying Flame' for the effective aim of his firebreathing dive, but he prefers to snatch up rocks, wagons, or horses and drop them on foes from aloft before sending his fire-breath onto foes or moving close enough to face the blades of his foes directly.

Balagos seems to need less sleep than most red dragons and spends the additional wakeful time he gains in wary observation of the land around. He often perches motionless atop a mountain peak in his domain, looking out over the landscape for hours. As the sage Thoravus of Athkatla commented in a public speech (given on Mirtul 26, 1354 DR), "The mind of Balagos is never still. He is always thinking -- thinking on how best to rise to rule all Faerûn. Most red dragons think they are fit to rule the world, if only the rest of us would acknowledge them. Balagos knows he is, and he just might, for once among all the arrogant, lazy failures that make up the dragonkind of today, be right. He bears watching. He will always bear watching."

Three days after that speech, Balagos swooped down from a clear sky and devoured Thoravus, smashing apart the sage's home in central Athkatla to do so. Most who witnessed the attack say the dragon intended to be seen, taking a deliberately leisurely approach beforehand, and a majestic pose atop the ruins afterward, to ensure that as many humans as possible saw him and were impressed. The bowmen of a mercenary caravan escort company hustled out into the street to fire at him, and he ignored their arrows as he leapt into the sky, circled slowly, and then flew away -- but the next day, when that company left the city guarding a mixed-wares caravan bound for Iriaebor, Balagos dove down out of the clouds and blasted or devoured every horse and being of the escort company -- leaving the caravan itself untouched. It's no wonder that in Amn and the surrounding lands, Balagos is deeply feared. His confidence and might make him seem truly a "Dragon King."



The Flying Flame's Lair

Balagos lairs in the Smokespire, the most westerly peak of that arm of the Troll Mountains that shelters the upland forests of Amn north of Eshpurta, and points toward the Ridge.

The Smokespire is a long-extinct volcano, with a central cone or shaft whose walls are covered with caves and pits. Most of these Balagos has turned into traps, filling the pits with the jagged, cracked bones of creatures he has devoured, then covering them with the scales of fallen draconic foes and dirt. The central pit is adorned with a mound of blackened stone coffers and melted coins, upon which is coiled the bones of a burned dragon, the remains of Hulrundrar, the old red dragon Balagos slew to take this lair as his own. With the aid of a few fire spells to provide a burnt smell and some drifting smoke, they fool some adventurers into thinking Balagos has been slain -- but their foe is usually watching them from aloft, or lurking in a side-shaft that opens into the bottom of the central shaft, allowing the Flying Flame to send his breath out across the scorched pit in a deadly sheet of flame.

Counting on his own immunity to fire, the great red wyrm often shows himself to foes. As they are concentrating on him, he activates the deadliest trap in his lair: the *firestaff of Aunagar the Black* (a long-dead mage of Tashluta). This weapon is buried among the scorched coffers so that its tip is exposed, and Balagos can activate only one of its powers from a distance -- the one that unleashes a *meteor swarm* silently up and in any one direction desired -- using an *awaken from afar* incantation. The Flying Flame triggers this behind a band of adventurers who face him and often melts or at least fries them all before a single spell is hurled or a sword raised in earnest.

Those who free themselves from this trap discover that the Smokespire is riddled with large, smooth-walled tunnels and that Balagos delights in dodging in and out among them, wearying intruders until they stop for a rest -- and become easy prey for spells or fire-breath sent down their tunnel.

Balagos keeps all of his magical treasure, and most of his gems, buried under sand in two of the deepest caverns of his lair, but most intruders never find them: they're busy battling one of the trio of young or juvenile (never older; Balagos devours them when they grow too old) dragons that Balagos has captured and forced to guard areas of his lair, with their wings bitten away and their hunger kept ravenous.

Balagos doesn't even spend most of his time in the Smokespire, using it instead as a lure for adventurers, Dragon Cultists, and other foes and would-be thieves. When he's not out exploring wider Faerûn (flying freely, daring other dragons to challenge him while in their territories) or enforcing his growing rule, he's inspecting his other lair, in Tethyr: the Wymwell, in Mount Thargil (easternmost of the Starspire Mountains), overlooking the former duchy of Sulduskoon (the upland farms between the upper Sulduskoon River and the Forest of Tethir).

This lair is named for its entry shaft -- a natural cauldron formed by the long ago collapse of a volcano. A thoroughly miserable, always-cold young adult brown dragon (*found in Monsters of Faerûn*), Altagos, inhabits this bowl valley, spending most of his time huddled in a tunnel he's scraped out in the ash, trying to get warm. He scrambles out smartly when intruders enter the cauldron: they're almost the only food he receives.

Altagos is the doorguard of a lair that begins as a huge cavern in the eastern side of the shaft walls -- a cave that is home to bats. Altagos swoops among them, mouth agape, as they leave at dusk and return at dawn, but it takes many bats to feed a hungry dragon. It is also home to several helmed horrors (*found in Monsters of Faerûn*), operating under orders to attack all humanoids who try to enter or leave the cavern unaccompanied by Balagos.

This cavern leads to a steeply descending tunnel whose floor is a slick chute of melted and fused glass (prepared by Balagos, with his flame breath) and whose ceiling is graven with regular holds for a dragon's claws. (Balagos slides down into the lair to enter, and -- on his back, with wings folded to fit into the tunnel -- climbs up out of it, to exit.) At the bottom of the tunnel is a large, irregular natural cavern whose once-molten walls resemble iron-red flows of ice (everything is smooth and sweeping, because the rock flowed like water before hardening), once a gas cavity at the heart of the volcano. In the sulfurous gloom here slithers a young black dragon, Auroxas, wingless (thanks to the Flying Flame's jaws) and tethered here with a *mithral chain of woe* by Balagos, to serve as a second lair guardian. This chain is too short to allow him to reach the bottom of the tunnel, and when Balagos enters this lower cavern, he can avoid contact with any acid Auroxas might dare to spit by turning sharply to the left, down a way along the edge of the cavern that keeps many pillars of rock between the two dragons.

This route leads to a spot where the cavern narrows, noxious volcanic vapors waft up into it, and a channel of chokingly hot lava crosses the open space. Only a red dragon or other creature immune to fire and heat effects can leap, stretch, or climb across the channel without harm. Beyond the channel, the way widens again in two smaller chambers, where Balagos keeps his main metals (coins, trade-bars, and items such as coffers, candlesticks, and platters, that are fashioned of precious metal) hoard. No one knows exactly how much wealth has been amassed here, but the guardian dragon Auroxas believes both caverns are heaped almost full, because increasing amounts of coinage are spilling down the passage to where they can reflect the dull, angry red glow of the lava.

Balagos keeps his two servitor dragon guards hungry and hating each other (by annually offering freedom to whichever one kills the other, and then towing Auroxas up into the Well to do battle with Altagos, only to declare neither worthy of freedom when the evenly matched dragons collapse from their wounds), but both would cooperate in an instant if they truly believed that they could win their freedom by doing so. The problem is that they don't believe there's a creature in Faerûn -- demigods and all -- who can defeat Balagos, so they dare not help any intruder against the Flying Flame, for fear of suffering the fate he often promises them: to cook small portions of their anatomy with his flame and then dine, leaving them alive as he nibbles away, taking meal after meal.

The Domain of Balagos

Balagos holds sway over a domain that stretches from the southern edge of the Wood of Sharp Teeth to the Giants Run Mountains, and from the southern banks of the upper River Chionthar (hard by the walls of Iriaebor) to the River Ith.

Many stretches of land around the edges of this area -- and the entire Forest of Tethir, within it -- are claimed by other dragons, but the Flying Flame has a rather casual attitude toward draconic dominion that other dragons have learned to accept. Most dragons hide when they see him on the wing or keep to their lairs and ignore his passage. Balagos considers all of Faerûn to be his, and lesser dragons (that is, all other wyrms) to be merely custodians of this or that part of it, who hold their offices and lives at his pleasure. Every so often, he makes an example of a random dragon to keep the others in fear of him; his common practice at such times is to slay the other dragon and then fly in a slow, triumphal flight around half the continent, with the corpse of his vanquished foe dangling from his jaws, for dragons and "cattle" (humanoids) alike to gawk at.

Balagos won his large personal holding by slaying the old red dragon Hulrundrar (in 1258 DR) and the venerable silver dragon Eacoathildarandus (in 1216 DR), whose lair was atop Scarsiir's Crag on the northern side of the Cloud Peaks, overlooking the Neck. The abandoned lair is now a monster-haunted place, with wyverns and peryton battling for use of the high ledges, and giant slugs and far worse things roaming the depths.

The Deeds of Balagos

Balagos is most fond of human flesh, particularly that of youngish females, though few communities think he can be appeased by offering him live maidens as sacrifices (as was once done in the villages of eastern Amn, in less civilized times). He relishes a good fight almost as much as a good meal, and he plays with prey that scrambles to escape or tries to fight back, while ignoring terrified cows that cower in fields in plain view.

The Flying Flame likes to bathe (unusual in a red dragon), and prefers to do so in the Chionthar (from which he has risen, dripping, at dusk, to terrify many a bargeman). He usually takes water at Lake Esmel or the Gaping Face Cascade (where Gaping Stream, the westernmost of the two tributaries of the upper Esmel River that join each other in the Troll Mountains and then flow south to join the Esmel at Trollford, is born). Balagos hunts anywhere he pleases, always over land and usually taking creatures on the move and not actually in mountains (the great wyrm is too cunning to trust confined spaces and the cover that caverns and rock pinnacles afford enemies).

To Balagos, there is no such thing as a typical day. He's always varying what he does, so no foe can catch him in a routine and no creature living in his domain can come to feel safe and complacent. He's as likely to alight on the roof of a coster hall in Athkatla as to sun himself on high ledges in the Troll Mountains, and every so often he flies hard and fast along the Trade Way, 40 ft. or so off the ground, terrifying horses and humans alike, and sending goods and wagons tumbling in the wind of his passing. If a farmer in Amn checks over his shoulder to look at the roof of his barn when coming in from the fields at dusk, grunting that "the King of All Dragons could be a-sittin' up there -- or anywhere!" Balagos is well pleased; that's exactly how he wants all of the creatures he rules over to feel.

Such behavior has won him no shortage of foes, and many a wizard has sought to win fame as "the destroyer of the dread Balagos" -- but such titles must be earned, and though a lone red dragon shouldn't be able to prevail against the right combination of spells and items, somehow Balagos always seems to survive, and the list of wizards who ended up as smoldering bones spit into bone pit by the Flying Flame grows ever longer.

Balagos takes no mates, though it's said he once consorted with Uluuthavarra, a venerable red dragon who laired somewhere near the Lake of Steam. In the end he had to slaughter all of his offspring, after they slew and ate their mother and came looking for him. Several wizards (including Elminster) share the belief that Balagos is covertly trying to research clone magics or a new kind of lichdom that will allow him to retain more of his powers than the Cult-assisted undead dragons that he contemptuously calls "bone dragons."

Balagos holds no special affinities or hatreds for anyone; all beings are his rightful subjects, and all who defy him must be destroyed. To many observers, he seems one of the few mad tyrants in Faerûn who just might have a chance to carry out such a policy and survive, as he already has done, for more than a thousand years.

Currently, Balagos is thought to be assembling a small band of loyal human agents whose tasks will be to strike at any human organization or dragon cabal that plots to work together against Balagos. The first few of these agents have already slain a Red Wizard who tried to poison the Gaping Face Cascade, so as to render Balagos blind and paralyzed. (The wizard had the concentration of liquids wrong and succeeded only in causing the great wyrm several days of discomfort).

The Fate of Balagos

It's conceivable that the Simbul, any two of the other Seven Sisters, or a cabal of wizards led by Khelben, Elminster, or perhaps Halaster of Undermountain could defeat Balagos in face-to-face battle -- and that a score or more of beings resident along the Sword Coast, such as the ultra-lich Larloch, could destroy the Flying Flame if he attacked them on their home ground, where they could call on servitor creatures, magic items, and traps. Yet none of these mighty ones ever corners Balagos -- and so his arrogant rule continues from decade to decade, century to century, and age to age. Misadventure or a lucky attack could weaken the wyrm and leave him vulnerable to the attacks of his many enemies, but at the moment such a fate seems unlikely. His recent efforts to achieve immortality, or at least a second chance, suggest that Balagos is at last feeling the hand of time . . . but they also mean that his first death may not be his last. Only his unpredictability keeps his tyranny from becoming intolerable -- and so long as his brilliance never strays into foolishness, Faerûn may live in fear of the Flying Flame for centuries to come.

Balagos: Male great wyrm red dragon; CR 20; Colossal dragon (fire); HD 40d12+400; hp 660; Init +4; Spd 40 ft., fly 200 ft. (clumsy); AC 41 (touch 2, flat-footed 41); Atk +49 melee (4d8+17, bite) and +47 melee (4d6+8, 2 claws) and +47 melee (2d8+8, 2 wings) and +47 melee (4d6+25, tail slap), or +49 melee (4d8+25, crush), or +49 melee (4d6+25, tail sweep); Face/Reach 40 ft. x 80 ft./15 ft.; SA Breath weapon (70-ft. cone of fire, 24d10), frightful presence, spell-like abilities; SQ Blindsight 360 ft., damage reduction 20/+3, dragon traits, fire subtype, keen vision, spell resistance 32; AL CE; SV Fort +32, Ref +22, Will +30; Str 45, Dex 10, Con 31, Int 26, Wis 27, Cha 26.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +28, Bluff +48, Climb +37, Concentration +50, Diplomacy +44, Escape Artist +30, Hide -16, Intimidate +32, Intuit Direction +23, Jump +57, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge (geography) +28, Knowledge (history) +18, Listen +48, Scry +38, Search +48, Sense Motive +23, Spellcraft +48, Spot +48, Swim +32, Wilderness Lore +18; Cleave, Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Initiative, Lingering Breath, Multiattack, Power Attack, Snatch, Track, Wakefulness, Wingover.

Breath Weapon (Su): Balagos can breathe a 70-foot cone of fire every 1d4 rounds that deals 24d10 points of fire damage. His breath weapon attack allows a Reflex save (DC 40) for half damage. Balagos is immune to his own breath weapon.

Frightful Presence (Su): This ability takes effect automatically whenever Balagos attacks, charges, or flies overhead. It affects only opponents with fewer than 40 Hit Dice or levels. The affected creature must make a successful Will save (DC 38) or become shaken. Success indicates that the target is immune to Balagos' frightful presence for one day. On a failure, creatures with 4 or fewer HD become panicked for 4d6 rounds. Those with 5 or more HD become shaken for 4d6 rounds.

Spell-like Abilities (Sp): 12/day--*locate object*; 3/day--*suggestion*; 1/day--*discern location, find the path*; save DC 18 + spell level; cast as a 12th-level sorcerer.

Blindsight (Ex): Balagos maneuvers and fights as well by using nonvisual senses (mostly scent and hearing) as he does with vision. Invisibility and darkness are irrelevant, though he still can't discern ethereal beings. Balagos usually does not need to make Spot or Listen checks to notice creatures within range of his blindsight ability.

Dragon Traits: Immune to sleep and paralysis effects.

Fire Subtype: Immune to fire damage; takes double damage from cold unless a saving throw for half damage is allowed, in which case it takes half damage on a success and double damage on a failure.

Keen Vision (Ex): Balagos sees four times as well as a human in low-light conditions and twice as well in normal light.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/8/8/8/8/7/7/7/4; base DC = 18 + spell level): 0—*arcane mark, detect magic, light, mage hand, mending, open/close, prestidigitation, read magic, resistance*; 1st—*alarm, burning hands, enlarge, expeditious retreat, shield*; 2nd—*bull's strength, cat's grace, eagle's splendor* (see *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*), *pyrotechnics, see invisibility*; 3rd—*dispel magic, fireball, haste, slow*; 4th—*fire shield, shout, stoneskin, wall of fire*; 5th—*dismissal, feeblemind, passwall, prying eyes*; 6th—*eyebite, Tenser's transformation, true seeing*; 7th—*delayed blast fireball, spell turning, teleport without error*; 8th—*incendiary cloud, iron body, mind blank*; 9th—*foresight, meteor swarm*.

Possessions: Double Standard = Countless coins (many melted into slag), gems, trade bars, and other items fashioned of precious metal including coffers, candlesticks, and platters, worth approximately 24,625 gp, *firestaff of Aunagar the Black, mithral chain of woe*, and 3 *potions of bull's strength*.

The Magic of Balagos

Little accurate information is known of the magics of Balagos, but it is certain that he uses some powerful items crafted by others. One such item is a minor artifact known as a *mithral chain of woe* and another is the aforementioned *firestaff of Aunagar the Black*.

Mithral Chain of Woe: This ancient, rarely seen item may have been crafted in long-ago Netheril, where they captured, subdued, and controlled (as steeds, digging forces, or beasts of burden) large monsters such as dragons. It consists of two mithral manacles that expand or shrink magically (from 3 inches to a 20-foot interior radius) to pass around a living body or stone spar that they're touched to as a command word is whispered (they do not change size if touched to wood or metal). A second command word causes the manacles to shrink again until they touch something solid -- allowing them, for instance, to be put over a man's head and then shrunk to clasp his neck snugly.

To open a manacle or change its size, the correct command words must be uttered by a creature who is directly touching the manacle to be affected. A heavy mithral chain links the manacles of a *mithral chain of woe*. The chain itself is 5 inches thick, and it has a hardness of 15, 150 hp, AC 9, and a break DC of 40.

The chain and manacles possess a resistance to both acid and lightning (similar to the protection from elements -- acid and protection from elements -- lightning spells cast at 20th level). As a result, those trying to use either of these elements on the item may find their efforts fruitless and even painful (see below).

A creature that strikes the manacles or chain directly or with any sort of weapon (regardless of its conductivity) suffers the effects of a *lightning bolt* spell, and such attacks cause no damage to the item (beings imprisoned in the manacles at the time don't suffer this damage). Missile attacks don't harm the launcher, but they also leave the chain unaffected.

Typically a *mithral chain of woe* is used to tether a powerful being to a stone spar or two beings to each other, usually with the chain between them wrapped around a stone pillar or other anchor. (In such a case the horizontal level of such a chain can be altered if both prisoners work together to shift the arc up or down the pillar, which is why this sort of tether often involves passage of the chain through a hole, or slot too narrow for the prisoners to pass through, between the anchor and either prisoner.)

Caster Level: 20th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *lightning bolt*, *protection from elements -- acid*, *protection from elements -- electricity*; **Market Price:** 150,000 gp; **Weight:** 50 lb.

Firestaff of Aunagar the Black: The *firestaff of Aunagar the Black*, a long-dead Tashlutan wizard, is crafted from the heart of a suth tree. It allows the wielder to cast the following spells:

continual flame (1 charge)
fireball (1 charge)
wall of fire (2 charges)
delayed blast fireball (2 charges)
meteor swarm (3 charges)

The *firestaff* also grants its current owner a +1 resistance bonus to saving throws against fire effects and a -1 resistance penalty to saving throws against cold effects.

Caster Level: 17th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Staff, *continual flame*, *delayed blast fireball*, *fireball*, *meteor swarm*, *resistance*, *wall of fire*; **Market Price:** 135,375 gp.

One spell employed by Balagos is known to Elminster:

Choking Claw

Evocation

Level: Sor/Wiz 5

Components: V, S, F

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Effect: 10-ft. hand

Duration: 1 round/level (D)

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes

Choking claw creates a Large magic hand in the form of a black, taloned claw that moves and attacks as directed by you. (You direct it as a free action). The floating hand can move up to 60 feet and can attack in the same round. Since this hand is directed by you, its ability to notice or attack invisible or concealed creatures is no better than yours. The hand attacks once per round, and its attack bonus

equals your level + your Intelligence or Charisma modifier (for a wizard or sorcerer, respectively), +7 for the hand's Strength score (25), -1 for being Large. The hand's damage is 1d8+7. The hand cannot stun, grapple, or bull rush.

This floating, disembodied claw is 10 feet long and about that wide with its fingers outstretched. It has as many hit points as you when undamaged and its AC is 20 (-1 size, +11 natural). It takes damage as a normal creature, but most magical effects that don't cause damage do not affect it. The hand cannot push through a *wall of force* or enter an *antimagic field*. It suffers the full effects of a *prismatic wall* or *prismatic sphere*. The hand makes saving throws as its caster. *Disintegrate* or a successful *dispel magic* destroys the hand.

By concentrating (as a standard action), you can designate a new opponent for the hand.

Focus: The taloned claw of some beast.

New Feats

Lingering Breath [General]

Thanks to expanded lung capacity, your breath weapon lasts longer than most creatures.

Prerequisite: Breath weapon.

Benefit: Each use of your breath weapon lingers until the creature's next turn, and those entering or staying within the area of effect on the second round may take damage (see below). Those using Lingering Breath must decide before breathing that they are using the feat, otherwise the breath weapon acts as normal. Damage done in the second round is reduced by half. For example, a great red wyrm can normally breathe a cone of fire every 1d4+1 rounds doing 24d10 damage. A great red wyrm with the Lingering Breath feat can breathe a cone of fire every 1d4+1 rounds that lasts 2 rounds, doing 24d10 damage the first round and 12d10 damage the second round.

Normal: Each use of a breath weapon normally lasts one round.

Wakefulness [General]

You need less sleep than others of your race to function.

Benefit: You need only half the amount of sleep per night normal for your species to get a good night's rest. You can recover from fatigue after 4 hours of complete rest. You can move from exhausted to fatigued after half an hour of complete rest.

Normal: Most creatures need 8 hours of sleep per night. A character can recover from fatigue after 8 hours of complete rest. An exhausted character becomes fatigued after 1 hour of complete rest.

Claugiyliamatar, "Old Gnawbone"

Dragon Magazine #233

The Volo and Elminster survey of current dragon rulers of the North continues with one of the most infamous hero-banes in all Faerûn: the vicious, nasty, ancient green dragon known as Claugiyliamatar. This wyrm delights in hunting down and slaughtering small armed bands wandering in the wilderlands (in other words: adventurers). From time to time she varies such activities with devouring a field of almost-ripe grain in Goldenfields or tearing apart a food-caravan bound for the northern interior and eating men, beasts, and cargo alike. Claugiyliamatar usually signals this last sort of triumph by plucking up a caravan wagon, flying very high (to avoid the attention of griffon-back city patrols until it's too late), and dropping the wagon down as a lethal missile on the roofs of Waterdeep.

Some ballads call Claugiyliamatar "Old Gnawbone" for her habit of carrying a corpse dangling from her jaws to munch on absently from time to time, just as some humans suck on unlit pipes or chew cigars. She is cunning, paranoid, and possessed of a cruel sense of humor: Trapped victims have been known to escape her because she played with them to watch their pain and suffering instead of slaughtering them outright.

Claugiyliamatar lives alone, driving away male green dragons who come courting, but rumors state that she employs several dozen loyal human and halfling agents to work behind the scenes for her in the less savory side of business in Neverwinter and Waterdeep. In particular, these agents make profits on goods made scarce by the dragon's attacks. Old Gnawbone seems to enjoy manipulating affairs in the cities for the sake of wielding secret power, not for the wealth it brings her. Little treasure is brought back to her lair; all but the coins pocketed by her agents -- misdemeanors Claugiyliamatar pointedly ignores if the amounts stay small -- is invested in businesses meant to stir up rivalries and gain her ever-more-powerful organizations, allowing her more swiftly and thoroughly to create trouble in her next scheme!

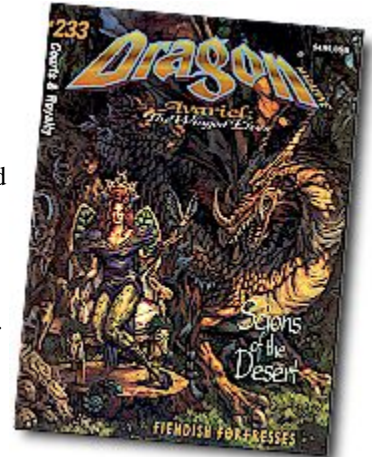
Claugiyliamatar is fascinated by human and elven women who wield power, and she spends hours watching them from her lair through her array of *crystal balls*. This collection of scrying spheres marks the second thing that fascinates Claugiyliamatar: magic, especially items that allow her to take human form and participate in the things humans do (knifings in alleyways, for example, and passionate courting, and, well, drinking). Her personal spells are too weak to enable her to take human shape, so she watches the nobles of Waterdeep and the sorcerers of Neverwinter for hours at a time, learning who has magic and where it is hidden, before sending her agents forth to steal it. Woe betides an agent who tries to cheat Old Gnawbone out of even the tiniest scrap of magic: He will find himself nailed to a tree deep in the forest, drenched with blood, and left for the wolves (or other hungry forest denizens).

Claugiyliamatar herself hungers for the bustle and intrigue of city life in the form of a human, but she wishes to call on her full range of dragon powers while in that form. She was almost tricked into servitude once by a wizard, Hyrix Greentree of Waterdeep, whom she hired to craft her a variant *shapechange* spell. The magic would have transformed her into a beautiful human maiden, yet leave her able to call on her magic, breath weapon, and immunities. She discovered, however, that while in human form she would have been Hyrix's *charmed* slave, and he would have ensured that her desire to return to dragon-shape was firmly quenched. Hyrix died slowly and painfully, and if the phantom of a screaming wizard silently fades into view from time to time above the spell scroll Claugiyliamatar keeps carefully hidden in a coffer beneath the floor of her lair, she ignores it.

Having her own way is everything to Claugiyliamatar. Among other dragons, her reputation for trickery makes her best avoided. Balagos, for instance, considers her a twisted, crabbed thing given to petty silliness and, as such, beneath his notice.

She is a tireless foe who goes to ridiculous lengths to cause even small harm to someone she regards as an enemy, and this "worry-all-the-bones" trait has made most other dragons leave her alone. This is just fine with Old Gnawbone, as it leaves her free to pursue her schemes wrapped in the presumption of her own supremacy over other dragons. It also leaves her great Waterdeep as part of her territory. That more than a dozen dragons dwell in the city under her very nose, and generally regard her activities with amusement, is something she serenely ignores, even when one of her agents is imprudent enough to point it out to her.

How those in authority -- in particular, women of power -- wield their influence and legal might is something Claugiyliamatar never tires of studying. Increasingly she has turned to scrying Alustriel's Palace in Silvermoon, and even distant Twilight Hall in Berdusk. She seems unaware that her snooping was detected long ago in both of those places. Junior mages in both cities now take turns honing their illusion-weaving skills by spinning false scenes of intrigue for the green dragon to watch. The impish mage Ralderston Tinter of Silvermoon has even taken to crafting scenes of a handsome young green dragon who takes on human form to court ladies of high



station. It has been observed that Claugiyliamatar's agents are visiting Silverymoon in a steady stream these days, looking for a certain young man with the emerald eyes of a *shapechanged* green dragon.

Certain mages of Silverymoon have been weaving spells that can be cast covertly on an unwitting agent, to be triggered by Old Gnawbone's presence: spells made to plunge the green dragon into a long, heavy slumber, so adventurers can safely reach her lair for a massed attack. So far, the castings they've attempted have failed. For her part, Claugiyliamatar seems not to have noticed. She has explained away the occasional clumsy images and distortions she observes through her *crystal balls* as the defensive magic her scrying is penetrating.

Claugiyliamatar's Lair

Old Gnawbone has her lair in a cavern in Kryptgarden Forest, at the end of a deep ravine that runs from the base of one of the mountains that bounds the old, thickly-grown woods on the north. Several tombs and abandoned dwarfholds pierce the mountain walls nearby, including the infamous monster-haunted complex known as Southkrypt. Claugiyliamatar employs both human agents and woodland creatures as guards around her lair, and these guardians lead intruders astray (sometimes with the aid of *ghost sound* and other spells she casts herself) into waiting traps or into one of the waiting perils of another cave.

The green dragon doesn't seem to have a name for her abode, but to humans it's Deeping Cave, a name of forgotten origin that it possessed long before Claugiyliamatar arrived (in 1303 DR, most sages believe).

The cave gapes at the end of a gloomy, vine-crossed gully overhung by gigantic old oaks and duskwoods. Within, Old Gnawbone's lair is a weird place of creeping phosphorescent lichens, giant toadstools, and hanging mosses draped over statues of imperious human women (warriors, mostly) looted from a dozen tombs. (At least one of the statues is believed to be an emerald golem, detailed in *Magic of Faerûn*.)

At the back of the cave, Claugiyliamatar slithers about in the gloom from her bed of coins to the alcove where her *crystal balls* glow and flicker. She often spends hours sprawled before them, watching what befalls far away, while a servant (always a man clad only in manacles and chains, though these are a decorative costume he can remove whenever desired) oils her soft scales with tree-sap and ointments made to the dragon's own formulae from crushed and boiled forest leaves, fungi, and roots.

Claugiyliamatar is vain and believes she will stay youthful and supple if her scales are tended daily, polished with these healthy substances to a deep, almost blue emerald hue. Those who anoint her are allowed to scoop up as many coins they can grasp in one hand (only!) from her hoard-bed as payment when they leave. Thus, attending the dragon is a popular duty among her servants -- though one must be careful to do nothing to make Old Gnawbone suspect treachery; she's been known to roll over with sudden, deliberate speed and crush a servant beneath her bulk.

Claugiyliamatar's Domain

From Deeping Cave, Claugiyliamatar holds sway over a dominion that stretches from the southern bank of the River Mirar down the Sword Coast to the north bank of the Dessarin, and along the western fringes of the High Forest to about Dead Horse Ford, where it swings north and west in a wide arc over the Evermoors to take in Nesmó, Longsaddle, and Grunwald, to reach the Mirar south of Mirabar. If all the borders of her territory are disputed by other dragons (particularly northern Neverwinter Wood and the land between the Dessarin and the High Forest) and her ability to waltz into Waterdeep is more fantasy than something she dares do, Claugiyliamatar cares not. She rarely flies anywhere east of the Long Road and seldom leaves her lair in any case, preferring to watch through her scrying crystals and have agents work for her. (Those servants who contemplate treachery have learned to their cost that she does on occasion closely watch just how they carry out her orders.) This habitual idleness does not keep her from jealously defending her dominion when young dragons scout it -- and, seeing no draconic occupant, decide to settle in.

Lance Rock, a landmark west of the Long Road south of Red Larch, looks as if a gigantic boulder were hurled down from the sky to strike deep into the ground -- and that's just what happened. A brash young adult red dragon, Smergadas, liked the look of the lands around the Dessarin. After flying about unchallenged for most of a day, he filled his belly with roaming deer and curled up for a nap -- whereupon Old Gnawbone, who'd been watching him through one of her crystals, emerged from her lair, plucked a loose boulder almost as large as herself from atop the mountains, and flew over to drop it on him. Then she landed to fill her own belly with foolish red dragon.

Deeds of Claugiyliamatar

The favorite prey of Claugiyliamatar is adventurers, particularly human males, but she does enjoy the taste of dragon-meat. When orc hordes sweep down from the mountains, Claugiyliamatar emerges from her lair and gorges herself, devouring the orcs by the hundreds until, too bloated to fight any more, she labors back to her lair and crawls inside to sleep off her feast. Sages have identified such

occasions as the time when she's most vulnerable. Of course, when orcs are streaming by the thousands down into the lands of civilized men, dragon-hunting is a luxury no one can afford.

Claugiyliamatar prefers to hunt between Westwood and Kryptgarden Forest (on deer, cattle, or human travelers that she can catch in the open), or if she's feeling more energetic, in Neverwinter Wood south of the river. She drinks from the mountain streams that empty into the Mere of Dead Men, or sometimes from the lake that feeds the Laughingflow, or the Dessarin itself. Most of her days are spent scrying and sleeping but she can break her sloth with periods of agile, lightning-quick flight, and fighting if need be.

Adventurers know Claugiyliamatar for the grim toll of their ranks she's exacted down the years, and in particular for the time she posed as a silver dragon to dupe a Waterdhavian noble (the late Saerlin Brokengulf, head of his house at the time). In her disguise, she tricked Saerlin into hiring her to rid the Brokengulf grazing lands of herself. She learned through scrying where her payment was being assembled, used magic (*alter self*) to appear as a silver dragon again, and in that guise destroyed the place, seizing all the coins and devouring all the guards, and then flew to the Brokengulf ranch and used illusions (*persistent image*) to make it seem as though a titanic midair battle was being fought by a silver dragon and a green. In the process, she smashed fences, allowing the terrified livestock to flee out into the open grasslands for her later dining pleasure. The battling dragons disappeared west over the mountains, and a battered and angry silver dragon subsequently perched atop the Brokengulf abode in Waterdeep and demanded the payment for slaying Claugiyliamatar. Lord Brokengulf had to scramble to find alternative funds (as the silver dragon made it clear the alternative was to lose the house the wyrm sat upon), and the silver dragon flew away straining to hold aloft a Brokengulf boat plucked up from the harbor and crammed full of coins.

Old Gnawbone spent a leisurely tenday arranging coins in several hidden mountain caches (emptying her bed in Deeping Cave), then reappeared at Brokengulf Towers as herself -- just as angry, and demanding twice the payment the "Silver Slayer" had received to spare the lives of the entire Brokengulf family. When Lord Brokengulf played for time (trying hastily to hire a wizard to blast away his dragon troubles forever), Claugiyliamatar toppled the grandest tower of the villa down into its garden, crushing three of Lord Brokengulf's sisters and crippling Saerlin himself. She got her payment, though it almost emptied the coffers of the noble house. Then she flew happily back to her cave, after wrecking the rest of the villa almost as an afterthought. She then set all the traps she'd prepared and went off with the loot to Neverwinter Wood to hide while all the angry forces of Waterdeep scoured Kryptgarden for a dragon so bold as to dare to attack a noble of the city in his very home!

The crowning stroke in Claugiyliamatar's plan was her timing of the whole affair to coincide with the first cautious foray into her forest of Endracitar, a rival green dragon from the High Forest near Loudwater. A young male already fearful of the forces of Hellgate Keep, Endracitar had been growing increasingly wary of Zhentarim incursions near his own lair, and he had been preparing spells and stratagems for a decisive attack on Claugiyliamatar for some time. Unbeknownst to him, Old Gnawbone had been scrying on him regularly for some time, too -- as she did all the dragons she could find except Balagos, whom she didn't quite dare to watch -- and knew all about his plan. The strike force from Waterdeep charged into the Kryptgarden looking for a rapacious green dragon... and they found one.

Endracitar's vaunted spells and stratagems were no match for the fury of the assembled mages and heroes of Waterdeep. The smoke had barely ceased to drift and curl from his blasted bones when Claugiyliamatar glided calmly back across the mountains and returned to her cave, bringing her best *crystal ball* with her. It was time to spy on another noble family, to find something else she could exploit for enrichment, power, and pleasure.

Claugiyliamatar may acknowledge her physical and magical inferiority to other dragons (such as Balagos), but her behavior and occasional comments to agents reveal that she thinks herself smarter than all other dragons. She believes that she can manipulate other beings to gain her own way in situations where rival wyrms can only charge in and fight or lay waste to the surroundings -- to achieve their ends by force. Lack of sufficient magic is the only real weakness she seems to be working at rectifying; however, her paranoia makes finding wizards mighty enough to develop a roster of powerful unique spells for her, and to enable her to shift freely between dragon-form and human shape, a very difficult task indeed. She's recently come to the conclusion that the only way to find such a being may be to raise one herself -- to "adopt" a magically-gifted and good-aligned child as a mysterious, helpful benefactor, helping the human to grow into a mage of power who regards Claugiyliamatar as a friend whom he owes a tremendous debt. Yet even this long, exacting process is fraught with perils, and Old Gnawbone is proceeding very cautiously, scrying until she can find a handful of candidates. If one turns on her, is slain, or otherwise "goes bad," she'll then have others without all her time entirely wasted . . . and if all of them come to trust her and to master magic, she'll have more wizards at her beck and call than most emperors in the Realms ever manage!

Claugiyliamatar has little use for other dragons. She feels that mating will only delay or destroy her schemes, forcing her to rear offspring who'll inevitably turn on her as they grow up, and she fears it will give a male dragon entirely too much knowledge of her lair, defenses, and nature. Fear can win the loyalty of lesser creatures, however, and Claugiyliamatar is satisfied that very few of her carefully selected human agents ever cross her and live to tell the tale. She holds no special likes or dislikes of any species, but she finds humans both fascinating and useful; she believes their wits and dexterity almost equal that of a dragon's.

In recent seasons, word of her existence seems to be spreading slowly in Waterdeep, and more adventurers and young, bored nobles gone a-hunting have arrived in her forest; Claugiyliamatar has enjoyed taking the magic that these puny foes carry, but she is growing alarmed that folk of real power (such as the Lord Mage of Waterdeep, Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun) will eventually show up, so she is working hard at having her agents eliminate folk who spread rumors of her. The flattery of a good ballad, in particular one that speaks of a deadly green dragon coiling triumphant about Kryptgarden "long ago," would be more welcome. . . .

So Old Gnawbone lies in her cave, watching the schemes and deeds and unfolding lives of humans in bright Waterdeep and the other settlements of the North, striving to become ever more subtle in what she bids her agents do, so that her power will grow even as knowledge of her wanes. She is close to danger, but if she can keep out of its reach, there are centuries yet to grow mighty -- and a city just pulsing with magic just beyond her very snout . . . magic that might all someday be hers.

Claugiyliamatar's Fate

The Dragon of Kryptgarden Forest dwells too near Waterdeep ever to be truly safe, and if civilization grows in the North as most sages expect it to, and settlement spreads up the coast or (more likely) up the Long Road, Claugiyliamatar is likely to be discovered with increasing regularity and tested by band after band of adventurers. Eventually one will be too strong for her, or too lucky -- or her continuing slaughter of them will bring a foe she can't defeat to her door.

She could relocate, of course, but Neverwinter Wood is too cold for her liking and probably soon to be a territory where younger dragons regularly show up to make challenges (to say nothing of the white dragon Arveiatrace). The High Forest, with at least three incumbent green dragons [1], is likely to become her grave if she dares try to lair there. Claugiyliamatar knows of these perils and would prefer to slip away from unwanted foes by taking human shape, or otherwise having magic enough to prevail against even the mightiest foes.

If she can see a way to achieve undeath herself, without the meddling, manipulative aid of the Cult of the Dragon, she may very well do so. The removal of a need to eat and keep warm would allow her far more freedom, and she can continue to enjoy her chief pursuit and entertainment: spying on humans and other humanoids, and manipulating their affairs just to enjoy her power over them.

Sometimes, though, she dreams of an even better fate: ruling Waterdeep as a human queen, her dragon nature hidden. Even more often, she sees herself as an alluring, mysterious lady all the noblemen and ambitious merchants of the city are wild over, as she glides from dark alley trysts to gentle jests at parties, with all eyes on her and all tongues darting with the news of her latest outrageous deeds. Her servants say Old Gnawbone sighs often as she stares into her *crystal balls*. . . .

Claugiyliamatar: Female ancient green dragon Rog4/Drd4; CR 28; Gargantuan dragon (Air); HD 32d12+224 plus 4d6+28 plus 4d8+28, hp 520; Init +1; Spd 40 ft., swim 40 ft., fly 200 ft. (clumsy); AC 38 (touch 7, flat-footed 38); Atk +43 melee (4d6+10, bite) and +40 melee (2d8+5, 2 claws) and +40 melee (2d6+5, 2 wings) and +40 melee (2d8+15, tail slap); Face/Reach 20 ft. x 40 ft./15 ft.; SA Breath weapon (60-foot cone of corrosive gas), crush 4d6+15, frightful presence, sneak attack +2d6, spell-like abilities, tail sweep 2d6+15; SQ Animal companion (2 HD), blindsight, DR 16/+2, evasion, immunities, keen senses, nature sense, resist nature's lure, spell resistance 27, trackless step, traps, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC), water breathing, woodland stride; AL NE; SV Fort +29, Ref +23, Will +28; Str 31, Dex 13, Con 25, Int 22, Wis 23, Cha 20.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +37, Concentration +44, Diplomacy +45, Escape Artist +20, Gather Information +35, Hide -11, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (arcana) +38, Knowledge (nature) +33, Listen +38, Read Lips +13, Scry +45, Search +38, Sense Motive +35, Spellcraft +48, Spot +38, Swim +26, Wilderness Lore +31; Create Infusion, Extend Spell, Faster Healing, Flyby Attack, Greater Resiliency, Improved Flight, Multiattack, Quicken Spell-like Ability, Skill Focus (Scry), Snatch, Weapon Focus (bite), Wingover.

Breath Weapon (Su): Claugiyliamatar can breathe a 60-foot cone of corrosive gas every 1d4 rounds as a standard action for 20d6 acid damage (Reflex save DC 33 for half damage). Claugiyliamatar is immune to her own breath weapon and to those of other green dragons.

Crush: Claugiyliamatar can land on opponents three or more sizes smaller than herself as a standard action, using her whole body to crush them. A crush attack affects as many opponents as can fit under Claugiyliamatar's body. Each creature in the affected area must succeed at a Reflex save (DC 33) or be pinned, automatically taking bludgeoning damage the next round unless the dragon moves off them. If she chooses to maintain the pin, treat it as a normal grapple attack. Pinned opponents take crush damage each round if they don't escape.

Frightful Presence (Ex): This ability takes effect automatically. It affects only opponents with fewer than 32 HD or levels. The affected creature must make a successful Will save (DC 31) or become shaken. Success indicates that the target is immune to Claugiyliamatar's frightful presence for one day. On a failure, creatures with 4 or fewer HD become panicked for 4d6 rounds. Those with 5 or more HD become shaken for 4d6 rounds.

Spell-like Abilities (Sp): 3/day -- *dominate person, suggestion*; 1/day -- *plant growth*. Caster Level 13th; save DC 15 + spell level.

Tail Sweep: Claugiyliamatar can sweep with her tail as a standard action. The sweep affects a half-circle with a diameter of 30 feet, centered on the dragon's rear. Creatures within the swept area are affected if they are four or more sizes smaller than the dragon. The sweep automatically deals the listed damage. Any affected creature can attempt a Reflex save (DC 33) to take half damage.

Animal Companion: Claugiyliamatar may have one or more animal companions. This animal is one that she has befriended with the spell *animal friendship*.

Blindsight (Ex): Claugiyliamatar maneuvers and fights using nonvisual senses (hearing, scent, vibrations, and other environmental clues) as well as a sighted creature does in normal lighting. Invisibility and darkness are irrelevant, though she still can't discern ethereal beings. The range of her blindsight is 300 feet. Claugiyliamatar usually does not need to make Spot or Listen checks to notice creatures within range of her blindsight ability.

Evasion (Ex): If exposed to any effect that normally allows a character to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, Claugiyliamatar takes no damage with a successful saving throw.

Immunities: Claugiyliamatar is immune to acid and to paralysis and sleep effects.

Keen Senses (Ex): Claugiyliamatar sees four times as well as a human in low-light conditions and twice as well in normal light. She also has darkvision with a range of 1,000 feet.

Nature Sense: Claugiyliamatar can identify plants and animals (their species and special traits) with perfect accuracy. She can determine whether water is safe to drink or dangerous.

Resist Nature's Lure: Claugiyliamatar gains a +4 bonus to saving throws against the spell-like abilities of feys (such as dryads, nymphs, and sprites).

Trackless Step: Claugiyliamatar leaves no trail in natural surroundings and cannot be tracked.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): Claugiyliamatar can react to danger before her senses would normally allow her to do so. She retains her Dexterity bonus to AC even when flat-footed.

Water Breathing (Ex): Claugiyliamatar can breathe underwater indefinitely and can freely use her breath weapon, spells, and other abilities while submerged.

Woodland Stride: Claugiyliamatar may move through natural thorns, briars, overgrown areas, and similar terrain at her normal speed and without suffering damage or other impairment. However, thorns, briars, and overgrown areas that are enchanted or magically manipulated to impede motion still affect her.

Druid Spells Prepared (5/5/4; base DC = 15 + spell level): 0 -- *cure minor wounds, detect poison, know direction, resistance, virtue*; 1st -- *cure light wounds, entangle, goodberry, magic fang, pass without trace*; 2nd -- *charm person or animal, force talons, tree shape, wood shape*.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/8/7/7/7/4; base DC = 15 + spell level): 0 -- *dancing lights, detect magic, ghost sound, light, mage hand, mending, open/close, prestidigitation, read magic*; 1st -- *alarm, comprehend languages, endure elements, magic missile, obscuring mist*; 2nd -- *alter self, invisibility, mirror image, see invisibility, lesser fireball*; 3rd -- *clairaudience/clairvoyance, dispel magic, protection from elements, wind wall*; 4th -- *detect scrying, improved invisibility, scrying, stoneskin*; 5th -- *cloudkill, dominate person, persistent image*; 6th -- *legend lore, Tenser's transformation*.

Languages: Chondathan, Common, Draconic, Illuskan, Dwarven, Elven.

Possessions: Countless coins worth approximately 12,000 gp in total (including a large fraction of the House Brokengulf fortune), 7 emeralds worth approximately 1,000 gp each, 19 art objects (most of which are statues of imperious human women, predominantly warriors, looted from a dozen tombs, but one of which is an emerald gemstone golem, detailed in *Monsters of Faerûn*) worth approximately 15,000 gp in total, two crystal balls, a *hand of the mage*, a *ring of chameleon power*, and a *rod of spheres* (detailed in *Magic of Faerûn*). At the DM's discretion, the lair could hold the following specific items should he or she set up traps and other encounters that use the treasure guidelines in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*: Four crystal balls (many of which exhibit unique powers not commonly imbued in such scrying devices).

Claugiyliamatar's Magic

The Dragon of Kryptgarden Forest considers her roster of spells puny, but she has a bit of useful magic, including the two spells detailed here.

Force Talons

Evocation [Force]

Level: Drd 2

Components: V

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Effect: Force talons

Duration: 1 round/level (D)

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes

As *spiritual weapon*, except it creates a translucent line of four black foot-long, razor-sharp nails instead of a weapon of force and the damage is only 1d6 points per hit. In addition, the target cannot be changed and the weapon stays with the target until the target flees beyond the spell's range. The force talons dissipate the moment the target moves out of range.

Lesser Fireball

Evocation

Level: Sor/Wiz 2

Components: V

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Area: 5-ft.-radius spread

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Reflex half

Spell Resistance: Yes

As *fireball*, except that the burst of flame deals 1d4 points of fire damage per caster level (maximum 10d4).

[1] According to Elminster (Volo knows nothing of this, having never ventured into the depths of "the Great Everwood"), three mighty green dragons dwell in the High Forest: the males Elaacrimalicros and Grimnoshtadrano, "the Riddling Dragon," and the female dragon Chloracidara. More about these three can be gleaned from the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting* and *The North* boxed set, and Grimnoshtadrano also appears in the novel *Elfsong* by Elaine Cunningham (TSR, Inc., 1994).

Daurgothoth, "The Creeping Doom"

Dragon Magazine #234

The prying of Volo (polished somewhat by Elminster, whose eyebrows rose on more than one occasion while reading them) bring us this time to something the Old Mage had intended to omit from this survey of powerful dragons of the North: a dracolich. So you're now reading something even Elminster decided to leave out of a book!

Why would one of the most powerful wizards in all Toril break his own rules now? Well, this undead wyrm bears watching. Not only is his influence quickly spreading, but the dracolich Daurgothoth is attempting to gain some abilities of other dragon types (he was originally a black wyrm) and to "come back to life" sufficiently to breed true and found his own new dragon species. The twin obsessions of achieving personal supremacy and fathering a new race have kept Daurgothoth busy for over a century, improving his abilities however he can, and seeking a suitable mate -- or planning how to construct one, much as he's been modified in undeath. The implications of Daurgothoth's fascinating endeavor are dark indeed. The only reason hordes of adventurers haven't descended on the dracolich, seeking his destruction, is that they don't know about him. Plenty of wild rumors are, however, spreading. . . .



Both Tolgar Anuvien and Malchor Harpell are (independently) beginning to uncover the location and activities of the undead wyrm, but the only folk who know the broad truth about the nature and aims of Daurgothoth are the Chosen of Mystra, powerful figures such as Elminster, Khelben, Laeral, and Alustriel. These archmages will not act or speak out against him, because the magical experimentation and advances Daurgothoth is making are precisely the sort of thing Divine Mystra encourages so that magic will continue to grow.

Daurgothoth is under no such restrictions and energetically seeks to slaughter any being who learns of his endeavors or who stumbles upon his lair. He has already slain no fewer than three bands of hired adventurers who were working for him in Waterdeep -- but whom he judged had begun to suspect too much about him. His spells allow him to speak with such underlings by means of projected (human-seeming) images and to spy upon them from afar. When doing so, Daurgothoth customarily poses as some sort of renegade, deliberately mysterious wizard.

In such roles, this dracolich has begun to play an increasingly active role in the shadier businesses of the cities of Waterdeep, Baldur's Gate, Neverwinter, and Secomber. At first, he pursued the acquisition of spells, magic items, and substances that might serve as magic components, but this drew the attention of too many alarmed spellcasters and authorities (one of whom dubbed the unknown cause of the thefts "the Creeping Doom," a title Daurgothoth gleefully adopted), so he has taken to cloaking his activities behind a web of often unwitting thieving bands and sharp-dealing gray market merchants.

Once a great wyrm of considerable size, with a distinctive gouge in his left flank (an old, nearly mortal wound), Daurgothoth was transformed into a dracolich by the crazed Cult wizard Huulukharn. He promptly slew the wizard and vanished from the knowledge and influence of the Cult.

Today, the Creeping Doom possesses all the normal powers of a great black wyrm dracolich who is also a 20th-level wizard and 5th-level archmage (detailed in the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*, pages 41-42). Daurgothoth is known to be developing other breath weapon attacks -- in particular seeking to modify certain of his spells into this attack form.

Daurgothoth's phylactery is rumored to be a black opal of insignificant size, and it may be hidden in a huge heap of gems of all types and sizes that nearly fills a cavern that also holds the skeletal bodies of six lesser dragons that could serve him as a succession of replacement bodies. This cave is walled away behind tumbled rock somewhere under the gem-filled cavern of Daurgothoth's main lair. (The rock to be dug aside to reach it may well underlie the dracolich's bone pile itself.)

Daurgothoth is a brilliant crafter of magic, an eternally inquisitive being, and a practiced observer with an impressive memory. He is governed by a wary paranoia that keeps him always on the lookout for lurking foes and possible attacks, and that makes him work constantly to better his personal powers and defenses. This is one wyrm who will never be found with most or all of his spells exhausted. If he ever reaches such a state (in the heat of protracted battle), he swiftly departs, to hide away until his magic is again strong. He is patient in his dealings and calm in battle; none can successfully goad him, and pride never leads him into overconfidence in battle, or any stubborn refusal to retreat. For an immortal dracolich who takes care to safeguard himself from destruction, there will always be another day for fighting -- or for seeking revenge.

Daurgothoth has a cruel sense of humor and enjoys anticipating tactics ahead in any struggle. He craves music and company from time to time, but he never lets these needs compromise the security of his lair. Beautiful lady bards who acquire mysterious lone male human audiences at their campfires in the North are warned that they could be entertaining simple travelers, lycanthropes or doppelgangers, Harpers -- or the Creeping Doom. Daurgothoth seldom molests or devours good singers.

Daurgothoth's Lair

The Creeping Doom lairs in the abandoned gnome city of Dolblunde, which is north and east of Waterdeep. Known entrances to this subterranean labyrinth include the "Bandit Tunnels" in nearby Maiden's Tomb Tor, certain passages in the vast dungeon complex of Undermountain, and a flooded tunnel leading from the muddy bottom of the River Dessarin itself. This latter, largest route is the one most often used by Daurgothoth, though the dracolich does employ *teleport* spells on occasion. Daurgothoth's spells have hollowed out many large caverns for his convenience, forming an ever-growing chain that is tunneling slowly northwest, to a planned emergence shaft in the mountains north of Waterdeep.

To discourage intruders, the undead wyrm has placed many traps in the smaller gnome-created passages surrounding the great caverns of his lair. There are a few teeter-block pit traps of varying depths, but most of these perils are stone spikefall traps consisting of sharpened stones on dangle-chains suspended from the ceiling. These mechanical hazards are assisted by unswervingly loyal undead servitors -- deathfangs (detailed in *Races of Faerûn*), bone lurkers, and bonestings. The last are the wyrm's salvaged early attempts at creating a tail-sting.

Spikefall Trap: CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Atk +10 ranged (5d4/x2); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20). *Market Price:* 1,000 gp. *Note:* Damage applies only to those underneath the spikefall block.

At the heart of Daurgothoth's chain of caverns is a side passage large enough for a dragon to fly down. It is guarded by a wall of Large skeletons (the remains of a tribe of hill giants, still armed with their greatclubs) who have orders to attack all beings in the tunnel who aren't Daurgothoth himself. Above them hangs a death tyrant (an undead beholder detailed in the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*, pages 309-310; its precious surviving eyestalk powers unknown) with similar orders.

Beyond these guardians, the tunnel leads to a closed stone door that is itself a stone golem that attacks anyone trying to open it. The door opens into a vast, ravaged cavern almost half a mile in length, its walls scorched and scarred, and its floor heaped with broken stone. This is the dracolich's spellcasting chamber, where he experiments with magic.

A smaller tunnel leads off of one side of this cave, doubling back on itself several times, to reach the gem-filled cave where Daurgothoth sleeps and broods upon a huge pile of bones. Aside from the rumored secret, walled-away chamber that holds his host, two lesser caverns branch away from the main one: a treasure vault crammed with all manner of magic, statuettes, coins, and the like; and a storage room where the dragon keeps his spellbooks, the magic items he knows enough about to feel safe in using (just what these are remains a mystery), and a smooth-walled prison pit into which he drops living creatures he wants to keep for later. This pit is a smooth-walled (the stone walls fused into an almost glassy state by many applications of fiery breath and certain spells) shaft 30 feet across and 100 feet deep. The pit floor is damp sand, and lost in it is a *staff of the magi* (unknown to Daurgothoth). The dragon typically loops a rope around prisoners and tosses them down the shaft, securing the upper end of their pull-rope under a "lid" consisting of a huge, four-ton slab of stone that covers the top of the shaft. Dangerous prisoners (such as spellcasting adventurers) are encased in a set of *iron bands of Bilarro* first; this sphere lies ready in a hollow beside the shaft. Much of the rest of this storage cavern contains a vast collection of odd substances that might serve as material components, including the pickled corpses of such large monsters as dragon turtles, purple worms, and remorhaz (and, of course, several sorts of dragons).

In his main lair, Daurgothoth's massive bone pile affords him raw material for some bone-related attacks he is currently researching.

Daurgothoth's Domain

From Dolblunde, Daurgothoth keeps watch over traffic on the High Road, the Long Road, and on the River Dessarin, as well as overland from the walls of Goldenfields south along the west bank of the Dessarin to Zundbridge, and north from there along the coast roughly as far as Mount Sar. He lacks the time to spy much in Waterdeep but employs a modified, long-range *wizard eye* spell for hours at a time to peer at things in the City of Splendors when he's interested in something (when word is abroad in the city about a wizardly duel, for instance, or the Watchful Order is gathering to discuss something important). Daurgothoth is interested in all things magical and in news of dragons and their doings. He's not, however, interested in being identified and located by nosy priests or wizards, and he seldom acts openly in his "territory."

One day, when his lair reaches to the surface somewhere in the mountains, he may fly forth each night to destroy any who dare to question his authority -- once his traps are ready to deal with the archmages who will inevitably try to destroy him. Soon, perhaps. . . . In the meantime, Daurgothoth prefers to employ various unscrupulous minor wizards (including, notably, several Zhentarim wizards who fled the fall of Zhentil Keep) and adventuring bands. He keeps these forces believing they're working for a Waterdhavian noble who uses magic to conceal his identity and tries to keep each group of his agents ignorant of the existence of the others. Sometimes he

tests their loyalty and mettle by sending various agents after the same thing, to see who prevails, how, and what they report to him about it.

These agents seize various magic items, spells, and substances that could serve in spellcasting. Daurgothoth often employs such aliases as "the Masked Master" or "Onalibar" when dealing with his underlings (the latter name is a private joke: it once belonged to a Cult wizard who tried to enslave the dracolich soon after his initial rebellion -- and who was promptly eaten for his pains). He rewards the wizards with useful spells from his collection, steering them into stealing or developing other magic for him in return.

Deeds of Daurgothoth

Freed of the need to hunt or consume any sort of food, Daurgothoth can pursue ever-greater magical achievements more or less constantly.

Daurgothoth tries to hide from other dracoliches and living dragons as much as possible, as well as from the annoyingly energetic members of the Cult of the Dragon. He has decided that if the latter organization proves to be too much of an annoyance, he will attempt to take over its leadership (concealing his true nature) and put it to work on his quest for the finding or making of a perfect mate.

Daurgothoth is especially wary of, and yet fascinated by, amethyst dragons. He judges that their skills make them unpredictable and therefore dangerous, yet he also considers them possible sources for something that could be bred or modified into his mate. Studying the activities of the Cult of the Dragon and of wizards in general (while keeping well away from strongly organized groupings of wizards such as the Red Wizards of Thay or the archwizards of Halruaa) makes up much of his daily work. He's always considering schemes to improve the powers of any underlings or constructed servitor creatures to "snatch" newly developed magic from such sources undetected -- or at least in such a way that they can't reliably be followed. Often he ponders how he might control the mind of a scholar of Candlekeep well enough to learn things mind-to-mind and direct what books the individual read, while at the same time eluding the efforts of anyone searching for such a mind-link (which those in power in Candlekeep do regularly, as such infiltrations have been attempted so often in the recent past).

Daurgothoth's current activities include trying to infiltrate temples of Lathander to gain magic related to the creation of life (for his own breeding plans) and personally trying to develop a breath weapon that will act as a *Mordenkainen's disjunction* on everyone's magic but his.

Daurgothoth's Fate

The Creeping Doom is so ambitious that his schemes seem destined to failure. Even Daurgothoth himself is aware that spawning a race of descendants having powers akin to his own could well be bringing on his own eventual doom (at their hands). Still, even if he never mates, his continual growth in power is a matter of grave concern for folk all over Faerûn, both draconic and human. This dracolich will stop at nothing, and Mystra seems content to let him build himself into the greatest creature of magic in all Toril if he can achieve this aim. At the same time, his lonely search for a mate opens him to attack from wily foes, and if his capturing of magic grows more successful, he'll soon have no shortage of those.

Daurgothoth: Male black great wyrm dracolich Wiz20/Acm5; CR 49; Gargantuan undead (Water); HD 37d12 plus 25d4, hp 302; Init +0; Spd 60 ft., swim 60 ft., fly 200 ft. (clumsy); AC 44 (touch 6, flat-footed 44); Atk +59 melee (4d6+13 plus 1d6 cold plus paralyzing touch, bite) and +57 melee (2d8+6 plus 1d6 cold plus paralyzing touch, 2 claws) and +57 melee (2d6+6, 2 wings) and +57 melee (2d8+19, tail slap); Face/Reach 20 ft. x 40 ft./15 ft.; SA Arcane fire, breath weapon (120-ft. line of acid, 24d4), *control undead*, paralyzing gaze, paralyzing touch, spell-like abilities, spells, tail sweep; SQ Arcane reach, blindsight 360 ft., *charm reptiles*, *corrupt water*, dracolich traits, flight, invulnerability, keen senses, mastery of elements, mastery of shaping, spell power +1, spell resistance 31, undead traits, water breathing; AL CE; SV Fort +32, Ref +32, Will +37; Str 37, Dex 10, Con --, Int 23, Wis 21, Cha 22.

Skills and Feats: Alchemy +41, Bluff +16, Climb +19, Concentration +37, Diplomacy +47, Escape Artist +37, Hide -12, Intimidate +45, Jump +19, Knowledge (arcana) +43, Knowledge (history) +43, Knowledge (nature) +43, Knowledge (planes) +43, Knowledge (religion) +43, Listen +42, Scry +43, Search +43, Sense Motive +11, Spellcraft +45, Spot +42, Swim +21, Wilderness Lore +23; Brew Potion, Cleave, Combat Casting, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Flyby Attack, Forge Ring, Great Cleave, Hover, Multiattack, Power Attack, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Skill Focus (Spellcraft), Snatch, Spell Focus (Abjuration), Spell Focus (Evocation), Spell Focus (Necromancy), Spell Focus (Transmutation), Spell Penetration, Still Spell, Sunder, Wingover.

Arcane Fire (Su): Daurgothoth can channel arcane spell energy into arcane fire, manifesting as a bolt of raw magical energy. The bolt is a ranged touch attack with long range (600 feet) that deals 5d6 points of damage plus 1d6 points of damage per level of the spell channeled to create the effect.

Breath Weapon (Su): Daurgothoth can breathe a 120-foot line of acid that deals 24d4 points of acid damage (Reflex save DC 28 halves). Once he breathes, he must wait 1d4 rounds before he can do so again.

Control Undead (Sp): Once per 3 days, Daurgothoth can use *control undead* as a 15th-level sorcerer. He cannot cast other spells while this ability is in effect.

Paralyzing Gaze (Su): The gaze of Daurgothoth's glowing eyes can paralyze each victim within 40 feet who fails a Will save (DC 34). If the save is successful, that creature is forever immune to Daurgothoth's gaze. If it fails, the victim is paralyzed for 2d6 rounds.

Paralyzing Touch (Su): A creature struck by any of Daurgothoth's physical attacks must make a Fort save (DC 34) or be paralyzed for 2d6 rounds. A successful saving throw against this effect does not confer any immunity against subsequent attacks.

Spell-like Abilities (Sp): 3/day -- *darkness* (120 feet), *insect plague*; 1/day -- *plant growth*. Caster level 20th; save DC 16 + spell level.

Spells: In addition to his wizard spells, Daurgothoth knows and casts spells as a 15th-level sorcerer.

Tail Sweep: Daurgothoth can sweep with his tail as a standard action. The sweep affects a half-circle with a diameter of 30 feet, centered on his rear. Creatures within the area that are four or more size categories smaller than Daurgothoth are affected. The sweep deals 2d6+19 points of damage plus 1d6 points of cold damage plus paralyzing touch. An affected creature can attempt a Reflex save (DC 28) to take half damage.

Arcane Reach: Daurgothoth can use touch spells on targets up to 30 feet away. If a spell requires a touch attack (melee or ranged), the archmage must make a ranged touch attack.

Blindsight (Ex): Daurgothoth can maneuver and fight by nonvisual means (mostly hearing and scent, but also by noticing vibrations and other environmental clues). Invisibility and darkness are irrelevant, though he still can't discern ethereal beings. Daurgothoth's blindsight is effective to a range of 360 feet. He usually does not need to make Spot or Listen checks to notice creatures within range of his blindsight ability.

Charm Reptiles (Sp): Three times per day, Daurgothoth can produce an effect identical to that of a *mass charm* spell, except that it works only on reptilian animals. He can communicate with any charmed reptiles as though casting a *speak with animals* spell.

Corrupt Water (Sp): Once per day, Daurgothoth can stagnate 10 cubic feet of water, making it become still, foul, and unable to support animal life. This ability spoils liquids containing water. Magic items (such as potions) and items in a creature's possession must succeed at a Will save (DC 33) or become fouled.

Dracolich Traits: Daurgothoth is immune to cold, electricity, paralysis, polymorph, and sleep effects. Like a skeleton, he takes only half damage from piercing and slashing weapons. He has low-light vision.

Flight (Su): Daurgothoth now flies without the aid of his bony wings.

Invulnerability: If Daurgothoth is slain, his spirit immediately returns to its phylactery, a black opal of insignificant size. If there is no reptilian corpse within 90 feet for his spirit to possess, it is trapped within the phylactery until such a time that a corpse becomes available. If his spirit is in its phylactery, destroying that item when a suitable corpse is not within range effectively destroys him. Likewise, Daurgothoth is unable to attempt further possessions if his phylactery is destroyed.

Keen Senses (Ex): Daurgothoth sees four times as well as a human in low-light conditions and twice as well in normal light. He also has darkvision (120-foot range).

Mastery of Elements: Daurgothoth can alter an arcane spell when cast so that it utilizes a different element from the one it normally does. This ability can alter only spells with the acid, cold, fire, electricity, or sonic descriptors. The spell's casting time is unaffected. Daurgothoth decides whether or not to alter the spell's energy type and chooses the new energy type when he begins casting.

Mastery of Shaping: Daurgothoth can alter area and effect spells that use the following categories: burst, cone, cylinder, emanation, or special. The alteration consists of creating spaces in the spell's area or effect that are not subject to the spell. The minimum dimension for these spaces is a 5-foot cube. Furthermore, any shapeable (S) spells have a minimum dimension of 5 feet instead of 10 feet.

Spell Power +1: This ability increases the DC for the saving throws against Daurgothoth's arcane spells and caster level checks for his arcane spells to overcome spell resistance by +1 (already included in save DCs below).

Undead Traits: Daurgothoth is immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death, effects, necromantic effects, mind-influencing effects, and any effect requiring a Fortitude save unless it also works on objects. He is not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, ability drain, or energy drain. Negative energy heals him, and he is not at risk of death from massive damage but is destroyed at 0 hit points or less (but see invulnerability above). Daurgothoth cannot be raised, and resurrection works only if he is willing.

Water Breathing (Su): Daurgothoth can breathe underwater indefinitely and can freely use his breath weapon, spells, and other abilities while submerged.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/8/8/7/7/6/6/5/5/5; base DC = 17 + spell level or 19 + spell level for Abjuration, Evocation, Necromancy, and Transmutation spells): 0 -- *arcane mark, detect magic, disrupt undead, light, mage hand, mending, open/close, prestidigitation, read magic*; 1st -- *alarm, comprehend languages, mage armor, shield, ventriloquism*; 2nd -- *alter self, arcane lock, bull's strength, cat's grace, detect thoughts*; 3rd -- *dispel magic, haste, nondetection, vampiric touch*; 4th -- *charm monster, detect scrying, improved invisibility, scrying*; 5th -- *cloudkill, dominate person, major creation, nightmare*; 6th -- *analyze dweomer, move earth, true seeing*; 7th -- *prismatic spray, teleport without error, vision*; 8th -- *demand, discern location, mind blank*; 9th -- *foresight, Mordenkainen's disjunction, wish*.

Wizard Spells Prepared (4/6/6/5/5/5/4/4/4; base DC = 17 + spell level or 19 + spell level for Abjuration, Evocation, Necromancy, or Transmutation spells): 0 -- *dancing lights, daze, mage hand, ray of frost*; 1st -- *change self, color spray (2), grease, hold portal, magic missile*; 2nd -- *blindness/deafness, fog cloud, locate object, Melf's acid arrow, see invisibility, Tasha's hideous laughter*; 3rd -- *fireball, hold person, protection from elements, sleet storm, suggestion*; 4th -- *Evard's black tentacles (2), polymorph other, polymorph self, wall of ice*; 5th -- *animate dead, cone of cold, hold monster, teleport, transmute rock to mud*; 6th -- *acid fog, circle of death, disintegrate, globe of invulnerability, mass suggestion*; 7th -- *ethereal jaunt, finger of death, forcecage, project alternate image*; 8th -- *bonemelt, mass charm, protection from spells, summon monster VIII*; 9th -- *meteor swarm, shapechange, temporal stasis, wail of the banshee*.

Spellbook: 0 -- *arcane mark, dancing lights, daze, detect magic, detect poison, disrupt undead, flare, ghost sound, light, mage hand, mending, open/close, prestidigitation, ray of frost, read magic, resistance*; 1st -- *cause fear, change self, chill touch, color spray, grease, hold portal, identify, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement, shocking grasp*; 2nd -- *blindness/deafness, fog cloud, ghoul touch, knock, locate object, Melf's acid arrow, scare, see invisibility, spectral hand, Tasha's hideous laughter*; 3rd -- *fireball, gentle repose, halt undead, hold person, invisibility sphere, lightning bolt, protection from elements, sleet storm, suggestion*; 4th -- *contagion, enervation, Evard's black tentacles, fear, ice storm, minor globe of invulnerability, polymorph other, polymorph self, stoneskin, wall of ice*; 5th -- *animate dead, cone of cold, fabricate, hold monster, major creation, permanency, teleport, transmute rock to mud, wall of force*; 6th -- *acid fog, antimagic field, chain lightning, circle of death, disintegrate, flesh to stone, globe of invulnerability, mass suggestion, programmed image*; 7th -- *delayed blast fireball, ethereal jaunt, finger of death, forcecage, greater scrying, plane shift, prismatic spray, project alternate image, spell turning*; 8th -- *antipathy, bonemelt, etherealness, horrid wilting, mass charm, Otiluke's telekinetic sphere, prismatic wall, protection from spells, summon monster VIII, trap the soul*; 9th -- *astral projection, meteor swarm, power word, kill, prismatic sphere, shapechange, temporal stasis, time stop, wail of the banshee*.

Languages: Alzhedo, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Loross, Netherese, Roushoum.

Possessions: Countless coins worth approximately 200,000 gp in total, countless varieties of gems worth approximately 850,000 gp in total, various art objects worth approximately 50,000 gp in total, a *darkskull*, a *dragonskull talisman* (detailed in *Magic of Faerûn*), *iron bands of Bilarro*, a *hand of the mage*, an *orb of storms*, a *portable hole*, a *ring of evasion*, a *rod of metal and mineral detection*, a *mirror of mental prowess*, a *staff of the magi* (fully charged), a *rod of lordly might*, a *wand of fireball* (10th-level caster), a *staff of power* (fully charged), a *holy avenger*, *celestial armor*, an *absorbing shield*, a *dwarven thrower*, numerous wizard spellbooks, a *ring of spell turning*, and a *torque of the titans* (detailed in *Magic of Faerûn*). Dungeon Masters should feel free to add in epic level items from the forthcoming *Epic Level Handbook* in place of several other items when the *Epic Level Handbook* comes out.

Daurgothoth's Magic

The Creeping Doom commands almost as wide an array of personally modified spells as do the Seven Sisters, or such mighty spellcasters as Elminster and Khelben Arunsun. This write-up could be filled several times over with them, but one deadly magic deserves mention because it is so spectacular. Also a variant on a common spell deserves mention because Daurgothoth so frequently employs it when dealing with other creatures:

Bonemelt

Necromancy

Level: Sor/Wiz 7

Components: V

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Effect: Special

Duration: 1 day/level (D)
Saving Throw: Fortitude partial
Spell Resistance: Yes

You transform the bones of a living, vertebrate creature to jelly. This spell has no effect on constructs, undead, plants, oozes, vermin, elemental, or aberrations.

If the target makes a successful Fortitude save, only one limb is affected (determine randomly, not including the head or tail, if any). The limb becomes a dangling, jelly-like mass lacking the strength to hold or carry things. If the limb is used for locomotion (for example, a leg), the target's speed drops by three-quarters and Dexterity suffers a -8 circumstance penalty. If the limb is used for manipulation (for example, an arm), the target's Dexterity suffers a -8 circumstance penalty and all spellcasting requires a Concentration check (minimum DC 15). Held items are dropped, but worn items are not dropped.

If the target fails his Fortitude save, the victim collapses (at the end of his next action) into a helpless, amoeba-like slithering blob. Breathing and movement by creeping (speed 10 feet) is possible, but climbing, flying, wielding items, and the like becomes impossible. Death won't directly occur from this alteration but it often results from the lack of swift mobility the spell causes. After failing his initial saving throw, the target of this spell can make an additional Fortitude save every 24 hours. If he succeeds, his form changes to the same state as if he had saved against the spell originally.

Project Alternate Image

Illusion (Shadow)
Level: Sor/Wiz 7
Components: V
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)
Effect: One shadow image
Duration: 1 hour/level (D)
Saving Throw: Will disbelief (if interacted with)
Spell Resistance: No

As *project image*, except the shadow image can have the form of any creature, including your own, as visualized by you while casting.

Bone Monsters

	Bone Lurker Large Undead	Bonesting Medium-Size Undead
Hit Dice:	3d12 (19 hp)	2d12 (13 hp)
Initiative:	4	7
Speed:	20 ft., fly 30 ft. (poor)	0 ft.
AC:	12 (-1 size, +0 Dex, +3 natural) touch 9, flat-footed 12	15 (+3 Dex, +2 natural) touch 13, flat-footed 12
Attacks:	Slam +5 melee	Swordspike +6 melee
Damage:	Slam 1d8+7	Swordspike 2d6+7
Face/Reach:	5 ft. by 10 ft./5 ft.	5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Constrict 1d8+7, improved grab, paralysis	Swordspike, wounding
Special Qualities:	Immunities, undead traits	Immunities, undead traits
Saves:	Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +3	Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +3
Abilities:	Str 20, Dex 10, Con --, Int --, Wis 10, Cha 11	Str 20, Dex 16, Con --, Int --, Wis 10, Cha 11
Skills:	--	--
Feats:	Improved Initiative	Improved Initiative
Climate/Terrain:	Any land and underground	Any land and underground
Organization:	Any	Any
Challenge Rating:	2	1
Treasure:	None	None
Alignment:	Always neutral	Always neutral
Advancement:	4 HD (Large); 5-9 HD (Huge)	3-4 HD (Large); 5-6 HD (Huge)

Bone monsters are undead creatures assembled from the bones of fallen creatures and knitted together with necromantic magic. They are mindless automatons that obey the orders of their evil masters. If destroyed, they collapse into piles of unconnected bones.

Bone Lurker

These undead creatures appear as portcullises or gridwork-curtains created from interlaced human and beast bones adorned with sharp bone spurs.

A bone lurker can be created by means of an *animate dead* spell, and it requires three corpses to create one bone lurker.

Combat

A bone lurker attacks by dropping onto its prey and wrapping itself around its victim. Dropping down in this fashion is considered a charge attack from higher ground. A bone lurker that misses its initial attack often flies up and tries to drop on the opponent again.

Constrict (Ex): A bone lurker deals 1d8+7 points of damage with a successful grapple check.

Improved Grab (Ex): If the bone lurker hits an opponent that is at least one size category smaller than itself with its slam attack, it deals normal damage and attempts to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity (grapple bonus +10). The bone lurker has the option to conduct the grapple normally, or simply use its body to hold the opponent. Either way, each successful grapple check it makes during successive rounds automatically deals slam damage and constrict damage.

Paralysis (Ex): Any creature hit by a bone lurker's slam attack must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 11) or be paralyzed for 1d6+2 minutes.

Immunities (Ex): Bone lurkers have cold immunity. Because they lack flesh or internal organs, they take only half damage from piercing or slashing weapons.

Undead Traits: Immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death, effects, necromantic effects, mind-influencing effects, and any effect requiring a Fortitude save unless it also works on objects; not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, ability drain, or energy drain; cannot heal damage if there is no Intelligence score, (though fast healing and regeneration work normally); negative energy heals; not at risk of death from massive damage, but destroyed at 0 hit points or less; darkvision 60 ft.; cannot be raised; resurrection works only if creature is willing.

Skills: A bone lurker gains skills as a construct.

Bonesting

These undead creatures appear as great snakelike assemblies of bone that are fixed to the wall, ceiling, or floor at one end. They have a length of 8 to 16 feet when fully uncoiled, and they have a thickness of about 1 foot.

A bonesting can be created by means of an *animate dead* spell, and it requires two corpses to create one bonesting.

Combat

A bonesting attacks by coiling and lashing out from its anchor point. It slashes or stabs foes with a bone "swordspike" as long as some men stand tall. If severed from its anchor point, a bonesting is destroyed.

Swordspike (Ex): The "tail" of a bonesting is known as a swordspike. This natural weapon inflicts slashing damage (crit 19-20).

Wounding (Su): Damage from a swordspike bleeds for 1 point of damage per round after dealing initial damage. Multiple wounds from a swordspike result in cumulative bleeding loss (two wounds for 2 points of damage per round, and so on). The bleeding can be stopped only by a successful Heal check (DC 15) or the application of any *cure* spell or other healing spell (*heal*, *healing circle*, and so on).

Immunities (Ex): Bonestings have cold immunity. Because they lack flesh or internal organs, they take only half damage from piercing or slashing weapons.

Undead Traits: Immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death, effects, necromantic effects, mind-influencing effects, and any effect requiring a Fortitude save unless it also works on objects; not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, ability drain, or energy drain; cannot heal damage if there is no Intelligence score, (though fast healing and regeneration work normally); negative energy heals; not at risk of death from massive damage, but destroyed at 0 hit points or less; darkvision 60 ft.; cannot be raised; resurrection works only if creature is willing.

Skills: A bonesting gains skills as a construct.

Deszeldaryndun Silverwing

Dragon Magazine #236

The prying of Volo (polished somewhat by Elminster, whose eyebrows rose on more than one occasion on his first reading of them) bring us this time to one of the good dragons of the North: Deszeldaryndun Silverwing, the Guardian Wyrms of Everlund and consort to the seldom-seen Valamaradace (the Dragon Queen of Silvermoon).

Silverwing is sometimes called "the Kindly Dragon" in the lore of the North, because he so often aids humanoids. Though he avoids human society and politics, Silverwing seems fascinated by individuals. He has healed and sheltered many lost, lonely, or hurt folk.

Some have heard that Deszeldaryndun has participated in the adventures of those he has befriended. He prefers to do such things entirely in disguise, so those he helps are often unaware of his draconic nature. He does not hesitate, however, to reveal his true powers if such a tactic can help one of his chosen companions in need. He's also a shrewd judge of character. (Silverwing is very rarely duped or taken unawares.)

Silverwing is a sleek, graceful silver wyrm who seems to enjoy a slow-paced, simple life in the wilds, spiced with frequent human contact that he initiates or for which he sets his own terms. (Those he wishes to avoid simply cannot find him if they come looking.) The Guardian Wyrms spends much of his time in human shape in the forests west of Everlund, posing as a woodcutter going by such names as Ergoth Falaer or Drouth Sammart. His *ring of sustenance*, and the fungus caverns and stocked fish pools he has established, provide him with ample food. When he takes wing to hunt, it is to deal with beasts he wants removed from his chosen domain, not to meet the demands of hunger.

Though only veteran rangers active in the area may suspect that certain humans they meet with are in reality Deszeldaryndun, the Guardian Wyrms is famous in tavern-tales for tricking Zhentarim agents, members of the Arcane Brotherhood, Red Wizards, and other foes of law-abiding civilization in the North. He usually confounds such foes by approximating the shapes and mannerisms of powerful and influential persons (such as Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun and Elminster of Shadowdale) with uncanny precision. Silverwing often impersonates Alustriel to allow her to slip away on covert (usually Harper or Chosen) business unnoticed, enhancing her reputation by allowing her to appear to be in two places at once or to respond to foes or crises with apparently blinding speed. On many occasions, he has deliberately taken her place in dangerous situations (including several *antimagic field*-laden ambushes intended to slay the High Lady of Silvermoon). Alustriel has kept such aid secret from all but her sons and certain fellow Chosen. Not even most senior Harpers know of it. The dragon renders such aid purely as a friend; although he approves of Alustriel's efforts to found a realm of relative safety and sophistication in the Moonlands of Luruar, Silverwing refuses to take any open part in the affairs of Alustriel's court, and he does not recognize that it has any authority over him (or his own Dragon Queen).

In return, Alustriel renders aid to both Silverwing and Valamaradace whenever they ask. The Lady of Silvermoon has prevented several dragon battles by appearing, ready to do battle, to surprise red dragons that have arrived to challenge Silverwing to combat. On one occasion, she posed as Silverwing's human slave in a ruse that allowed him to fool a dragon foe.

The veteran Harper Orbrind Hauthleather insists that the silent, cloaked swordsman who sometimes accompanies Alustriel in her palace and when she ventures outside the city is a shape assumed by some benevolent, powerful ally. Elminster confirms that the swordsman, who goes by the name of Talyndun, is Silverwing's favorite human shape when he is with Alustriel. (His consort Valamaradace is known to favor an agile, diminutive, elven female human form and use the name of Targarda on her rare forays into civilized places.)

Although Deszeldaryndun is a silver dragon and Valamaradace is a gold dragon, they're undeniably a couple, and all sources refer to Silverwing as Valamaradace's "consort." The Dragon Queen is rarely seen, but Deszeldaryndun often mingles with folk; he genuinely likes the company of intelligent, sensitive, good-aligned humans. Silverwing is an adult wyrm of graceful build and an abundant sense of humor. He has a natural talent for mimicry, and he specializes in the voices, movements, and mannerisms of humans and half-elves of both sexes.



Kindness is the defining, governing element of Deszeldaryndun's character, but he also has an impish sense of humor. This often shows itself in that he utters both sides of apparent "whispered conversations" to trick eavesdroppers into wild goose chases, precipitous actions, and spreading false rumors.

Silverwing personally enjoys gossip, learning secrets, and seeing the overall thrust and implications of all human activities in the Sword Coast North, but he enjoys a patience and self-control that no nosy human village busybody could hope to attain. Dragon Cultists and others who have tried to lure him into traps or revelations with the promise of rare or exclusive information have learned - sometimes to their cost -- that Silverwing's interests never override his prudence and wry, wary grasp of perils around him. An accomplished singer with a prodigious memory for old lyrics and obscure harmonies, Deszeldaryndun eagerly follows the careers and performances of both the famous and obscure bards and minstrels of Faerûn. One may often find him, in disguise, in fireside or tavern audiences, drinking in every intonation and gesture (for his own mimicry later). This habit has made him capable of perfectly aping the way certain musicians render songs.

Though he is a foe of pompous, humorless, or recklessly eager doers-of-good, Silverwing also likes and is entertained by the work of paladins, Harpers, and other positive agents in the Sword Coast North. He sometimes attaches himself to such individuals (and to less noble adventuring bands) as an uninvited, unannounced, and -- as much as he can manage -- unnoticed guardian and helper. Often when a warrior manages a "lucky escape," or a paladin prevails against impossible odds, the true cause is the watchful, unseen Guardian Wyrms of Everlund.

Deszeldaryndun's Lair

Silverwing lairs with Valamaradace in the Floating Mountain, a gigantic, hollow oval rock whose uppermost surface rises into a ragged row of peaks or pinnacles. The spells of the Dragon Queen keep it aloft, enshroud it in mists, and allow her to direct it wherever she desires. Usually it hovers low over the woods due west of Everlund, or south of there on the verges of the High Forest. Most folk who see it through its mists think that they're looking at one of the distant Starspires or "Sisters" (peaks that rise at the heart of the High Forest, far to the south). Occasional glimpses of its true nature have won the flying rock its nickname. The dragon couple refer to their floating rock abode as Softwing, which often confuses others who overhear them talking into thinking they're speaking the name of another dragon. (The secretive couple encourages such misunderstandings.) Softwing has one huge central cavern opening that a dragon of Colossal size can glide into with wings fully spread, and many tiny, twisting passages that only Medium-size or smaller creatures can traverse. These lead to two small exits from the lair, one on the underside of the rock and one on its upper surface, and to a treasure cavern underlying the main one. The small exits are known as "the open doors," and the underside pair provides the favorite manner of exit from Softwing for both its inhabitants; they dive from an exit in human form and take dragon shape while plunging earthward.

Secret warding spells guard the cavern, but the magic veiling the open mouth of the main lair cavern includes some known spells, woven by Deszeldaryndun: *gentle breath*, which slows falling or flying creatures of even dragon size; *guardian trumpet*, an alarm spell that announces, highlights, and traces intruders; and *icy claw*, a defensive spell that harms and paralyzes certain chosen types of creatures who fail to elude or withstand it.

Softwing has many secrets as yet unrevealed. It is known, however, that a spell operating there allows both Deszeldaryndun and Valamaradace to generate multiple phantom images as the spell *project multiple images*. Such images primarily confuse intruders into attacking each other or wasting spells and missile weaponry on empty passages.

No friends or allies of the Dragon Queen and her consort have been invited to Softwing except Alustriel of Silverymoon. Both Elminster and Khelben, however, have independently investigated the place in beast shapes, emerging (so far as they know) undetected. The Blackstaff told his lady Laeral what he saw and spoke of feeling a "waiting, watching presence" in Softwing that maintains an alert and tireless vigil but conceals itself from both dragons. Knowing so little, he did not care to speculate on its nature and aims, but he found it "unsettling." Elminster detected no such lurking watcher.

Deszeldaryndun's Domain

From his lair in the Floating Mountain, Silverwing roams a territory whose borders are set (and patrolled) by his consort; in recent years they are roughly the entire Moonwood to the north, southeast to Sundabar and back southwest along the River Rauvin to Turlangtor (westernmost of the rocky heights that lie to the south of the river, and run east to Turnstone Pass). From there they plunge southwest into the Woods of Turlang to touch the Lost Peaks, and then run west along the Dessarin to a point south of Flint Rock, where they turn and run due north across the Evermoors to the River Surbrin, and thence along its banks back to the northern tip of the Moonwood again.

Although neither the Guardian Wyrms nor the Dragon Queen like to achieve prominence in the affairs of others in this area, it seems likely that their behind-the-scenes work and vigilance prevented the spread of the evil that resided for so long in Hellgate Keep, aided the treants of Turlang in withstanding the depredations of other creatures, and kept the trolls from arising in numbers enough on the

moors to sweep humans out of the inland North. The two dragons prefer to bring about the mysterious "vanishing" of key foes; they dislike the open hunting and spreading of fear practiced by so many other dragons.

The Deeds of Deszeldaryndun

The favorite prey of Silverwing, on those rare occasions when he does hunt in earnest, is the hippogriff. (He also likes horses and the deer of the High Forest.) In human form, Deszeldaryndun loves roasted almonds and cherry brandy. He likes to drink at several secluded pools in the Woods of Turlang, and once during a dry season he tore huge chunks of ice from the edge of the Endless Ice Sea and carried them south to feed his drying pools and make the forest green again.

The Guardian Wyrms spends most of his days wandering the woods west of Everlund, observing their endless panorama of life as he contemplates, uses spells to scry on distant individuals, and plans what to do next. He is especially fond of finding rare, strange, and beautiful things -- sights and deeds as well as flowers or other items -- to share with his Dragon Queen, and carries a spell -- *magic memory* -- that records things he sees in his mind for vivid sharing with her later. Thus, he can pass on to her the opening of a flower, the splendor of a sunset, or the touching valor of a deed performed by a human, sprite, or treant now dead.

How long Silverwing and his Queen have been together is not known by humans, though it is clearly more than a thousand years. Their love is deep and unshakeable -- both enjoy the freedom to pursue their own interests, friendships, and even love affairs among humanoid. They are capable of long-distance telepathy when necessary (probably through a permanent *Rary's telepathic bond* forged by Valamaradace with a *wish*) and admire each other even while they delightedly follow the doings of certain humans.

Neither Deszeldaryndun nor Valamaradace is interested in other dragons or even knows the names, breeds, and current deeds of neighboring wyrms. Neither has any known past or present alliances or matings with other dragons. They share similar attitudes toward other species (though Silverwing enjoys human contact far more than his Queen does) and nurture abiding hatreds only for the Cult of the Dragon and the dracoliches they've encountered.

Currently, Deszeldaryndun is working covertly to bring about a stable human realm in the North (that is, to aid Alustriel in establishing the land she dreams of, without being detected in his work) and to confound the agents of Thay, the Zhentarim, and the Dragon Cult who stray into the domain he shares with Valamaradace.

Deszeldaryndun's Fate

Silverwing is still vigorous and growing in power, but his selfless devotion to his Dragon Queen and his deep friendships with various lone humans in need of aid in the North are likely to bring about his eventual doom -- fighting against evil to defend the things he finds precious. As Elminster remarked, that's a fate to be proud of.

Deszeldaryndun: Male silver wyrm; CR 23; Gargantuan dragon (Air); HD 37d12+333; hp 573; Init +4; Spd 40 ft., fly 200 ft. (clumsy); AC 42, touch 6, flat-footed 42; Atk +47 melee (4d6+14, bite) and +45 melee (2d8+7, 2 claws) and +45 melee (2d6+7, 2 wings) and +45 melee (2d8+21, tail slap); Face/Reach 20 ft. by 40 ft./15 ft.; SA Breath weapon, crush 4d6+21, frightful presence, spell-like abilities, spells, tail sweep 2d6+21; SQ Blindsight 330 ft., cloudwalking, DR 20/+3, immunities, keen senses, SR 30; AL LG; SV Fort +29, Ref +20, Will +30; Str 39, Dex 10, Con 29, Int 28, Wis 31, Cha 30.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +28, Climb +32, Concentration +46, Diplomacy +53, Disguise +47, Escape Artist +37, Hide -12, Intimidate +15, Jump +51, Knowledge (arcana) +46, Knowledge (history) +46, Knowledge (local—the North) +46, Listen +47, Perform +28, Scry +46, Search +46, Sense Motive +47, Spellcraft +46, Spot +47; Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Flyby Attack, Great Cleave, Hover, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Power Attack, Snatch, Wingover.

Breath Weapon (Su): As a standard action, Deszeldaryndun can breathe either a 60-foot cone of cold or a 60-foot cone of paralyzing gas. Once he breathes, he must wait 1d4 rounds before using either breath weapon again. The cone of cold deals 22d8 points of damage (Reflex save, DC 36, for half); the paralyzing gas paralyzes any creature within its area that fails a Reflex save (DC 36) for 1d6+11 rounds.

Crush: When flying or jumping, Deszeldaryndun can land on opponents three or more size categories smaller than himself as a standard action, using his whole body to crush them. A crush attack affects as many creatures as can fit under his body. Each creature in the affected area must succeed at a Reflex save (DC 36) or be pinned. If Deszeldaryndun chooses to maintain the pin, treat it as a normal grapple attack (grapple bonus +63). Each pinned creature automatically takes 4d6+21 points of bludgeoning damage that round and each succeeding round that it remains pinned.

Frightful Presence (Su): This ability takes effect automatically when Deszeldaryndun attacks, charges, or flies overhead. It affects only opponents within 330 feet of Deszeldaryndun and those with fewer Hit Dice or levels than the dragon. The affected creature must make a successful Will save (DC 37) or become shaken. Success indicates that the target is immune to the creature's frightful presence.

for one day. On a failure, a creature with 4 or fewer Hit Dice becomes panicked for 4d6 rounds, and one with 5 or more Hit Dice becomes shaken for 4d6 rounds. Deszeldaryndun is immune to the frightful presence of other dragons.

Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day -- *control winds, fog cloud, polymorph self*; 2/day -- *feather fall*; 1/day -- *control weather*. Caster level 17th; save DC 20.

Spells: Deszeldaryndun knows and casts spells as a 17th-level sorcerer.

Tail Sweep: Deszeldaryndun can sweep his tail as a standard action. The sweep affects all creatures four or more size categories smaller than Deszeldaryndun within a half-circle with a diameter of 30 feet, centered on his rear. The sweep deals 2d6+21 points of damage (Reflex save DC 36 for half).

Blindsight (Ex): Deszeldaryndun can ascertain his surroundings by nonvisual means (mostly hearing and scent but also by noticing vibration and other environmental clues) to a range of 330 feet. Invisibility and darkness are irrelevant, though he still can't discern ethereal beings. Deszeldaryndun usually does not need to make Spot or Listen checks to notice creatures within range of his blindsight ability.

Cloudwalking (Su): Deszeldaryndun can tread on clouds or fog as though on solid ground. This ability functions continuously but can be negated or resumed at will.

Immunities: Deszeldaryndun is immune to acid, cold, sleep, and paralysis.

Keen Senses (Ex): Deszeldaryndun sees four times as well as a human under low-light conditions and twice as well in normal light. He also has darkvision with a range of 1,100 feet.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/9/9/8/8/8/7/5; base DC = 20 + spell level): 0—*arcane mark, detect magic, ghost sound, light, mage hand, mending, open/close, prestidigitation, read magic*; 1st—*feather fall, jump, shield, Tenser's floating disk, ventriloquism*; 2nd—*bull's strength, cat's grace, detect thoughts, protection from arrows, web*; 3rd—*dispel magic, gaseous form, lightning bolt, magic memory*; 4th—*detect scrying, fire shield, shout, stoneskin*; 5th—*feblemind, guardian trumpet, gentle breath, teleport*; 6th—*control weather, legend lore, true seeing*; 7th—*greater scrying, limited wish, spell turning*; 8th—*icy claw, project multiple images*.

Languages: Alzhedo, Chondathan, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Illuskan, Netherese, Orcish.

Possessions: Countless coins, gems, and art objects worth approximately 34,900 gp in total, 4 *beads of force*, a *harp of charming*, a *figurine of wondrous power* (*serpentine owl*), a *necklace of adaptation*, a *ring of sustenance*, a *ring of friend shield* (Valamaradace has the matching ring). At the DM's discretion, Deszeldaryndun's lair undoubtedly holds other items as well, as it is the shared home of the Guardian Wyrms and his consort, a great gold wyrm in her own right, and together they have a combined encounter level of 28.

Deszeldaryndun's Magic

Silverwing isn't known for spectacular spells, but he can prepare and cast mighty spells that his Dragon Queen devises and passes on to him, and so his potential spell arsenal should never be underestimated.

On at least one occasion, the Guardian Wyrms dropped a "dead magic bomb" from aloft onto a party of magic-wielding foes: that is, a breakable container that unleashed a temporary *antimagic field* in a specific area upon breaking.

Gentle Breath

Transmutation

Level: Sor/Wiz 5

Components: V

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Area: Cone

Duration: 2 rounds/level (D)

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

Gentle breath creates a cone-shaped cloud of pale, odorless, cloying vapors. Although the cone dissipates quickly, objects and creatures caught in its area suffer the effects for the duration of the spell.

The spell's first effect is similar to that of the *feather fall* spell and affects only free-falling objects and free-falling creatures. The rate of falling is instantly changed to 60 feet a round (equivalent to the end of a fall from a few feet), with no damage incurred upon landing while the spell remains in effect. However, when the spell duration ceases, a normal rate of fall resumes.

The spell's second effect is identical to that of the *slow* spell and affects only creatures (including flying and free-falling creatures). *Slowed* creatures can take only a partial action each turn. Additionally, they suffer –2 penalties to AC, melee attack rolls, melee damage rolls, and Reflex saves. *Slowed* creatures jump and pounce half as far as normal.

Haste counters the *slow* effect, but not the *feather fall* effect.

Free-falling creatures are the only targets susceptible to both the *feather fall* and *slow* effects. A free-falling creature cannot choose to resist one of the spell's effects and not the other; one successful Will save negates both of the spell's effects.

Guardian Trumpet

Abjuration

Level: Brd 5, Sor/Wiz 5

Area: 25-ft.-radius emanation centered on a point in space (S)

Duration: Permanent until discharged

As *alarm*, except it triggers both a mental and audible alarm. The audible alarm sounds like a trumpet, not a hand bell. The mental alarm can be heard anywhere on the same plane. You can deactivate or activate the *guardian trumpet* an unlimited number of times from within the protected area by uttering a secret word while within its confines.

A creature that triggers a *guardian trumpet* is bathed in *faerie fire* (as the 1st-level spell). Moreover, you can mentally sense the creature's exact location for as long as the *faerie fire* effect lasts, as the spell *locate creature*.

Arcane Focus: A tiny trumpet and a piece of very fine silver wire.

Icy Claw

Transmutation

Level: Sor/Wiz 8

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 full round

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Area: 30-ft. radius spread

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Reflex half (see text)

Spell Resistance: Yes

You create a wraithlike, faintly glowing cloud of white vapors. The vapors coalesce into a visible, white, four-taloned claw of Medium-size whenever an intruder enters the spell's area. Multiple intruders generate multiple claws, one for each intruder. An "intruder" is any creature of one of three races or species chosen by you at the time of casting. You can choose one or two specific individuals of the selected races or species to be unaffected by the spell, but they must be present and touched by you during the casting of the spell.

An *icy claw* attacks once per round, and its attack bonus equals your level + your Intelligence or Charisma modifier (for a wizard or sorcerer, respectively) +10 for the hand's Strength score (31). The *icy claw* deals 1d6+15 points of slashing damage plus 3d6 points of cold damage.

Arcane Focus: A glove fashioned from the hide of an ice toad.

Magic Memory

Divination [Mind-Affecting]

Level: Sor/Wiz 3

Components: S, M

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Personal

Target: You and one other living creature

Duration: Special

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: No

You absorb the sights, smells, sounds, tastes, and/or textures of your immediate environment and magically record them in your memory for as long as you concentrate (up to 1 round/level). Anything that causes you to break your concentration ends the record. You can later share your experience with another willing living creature simply by maintaining direct physical contact and letting the

memory replay. For as long as contact is maintained, that creature's senses perceive the earlier recorded environment. Once the memory is replayed, the spell ends, and the memory becomes a normal memory for both you and the target.

Arcane Focus: A mind flayer tentacle.

Project Multiple Images

Illusion (Shadow)

Level: Sor/Wiz 8

Effect: 1d3+1 shadows

As *project image*, except you can create 1d3+1 images, each image can act differently, and each image need not resemble you. You do not need to maintain a line of effect to each shadow, and you can cause each shadow to appear, disappear, or alter form as a free action.

Eldenser, "The Worm Who Hides in Blades"

(Dragon Magazine #237)

This time around, Volo has uncovered one of the most unusual and interesting dragons of the North: Eldenser, the Worm Who Hides in Blades. Whispered of in obscure legends of the North for some six centuries (and described as frail with age even in his earliest mention), Eldenser is an amethyst great wyrm of decrepit, wearywise appearance. Long ago he mastered magic that allows him to leave his withered, wasted body in a secure hideaway (reportedly a crypt in Waterdeep's City of the Dead) and transport his sentience into the blade of any tempered, edged metal weapon.

In this way, Eldenser has cheated death down the ages, preserving his slowly-crumbling form as much as possible by leaving it unused and walled away from air and elements, as he passes from blade to blade, able to see, hear, and speak freely out of the metal -- and all metals in direct contact with a blade he currently inhabits.

Authorities unanimously refer to this dragon as a male, and the few that make mention of his true draconic body say that his wings are little more than tatters hanging between the structural spines, and that his scales are almost white in places, paling with age in the same way that the ancient black dragon of Cormyr became "the Purple Dragon." He is said to have tufted eyebrows and an extensive "beard" of spines on his chin, both white in hue, and to have very wise large eyes whose customary appearance is "twinkling with inner amusement."



In younger days, Eldenser was said to be a solitary wanderer among dragons, who flitted about Faerûn (the Sword Coast North wilderlands in particular) without apparent rhyme or reason, following his own whims. It's now clear that he was enjoying his first love: the observation of all living things, and learning how they appear and "work" in all stages of life. The deep knowledge of this sort that he's acquired down the ages makes him both less proud and more formidable than most dragons -- he knows the causes and effects of deeds and events more than most living beings of Toril.

It's also clear from the historical record that Eldenser tends to avoid other dragons -- but to reveal himself as a wily, enthusiastic, and savage fighter when attacked. Three women of the household of the long-ago nomad lord Tharnor of the North saw Lorrageuth, a black dragon of some reputation, swoop down to attack Eldenser when the Lurker was intruding into Lorrageuth's territory. As Lorrageuth spread his wings to slow and aim himself for a devastating pounce, Eldenser calmly snapped his wings once, rolling to rise sharply under Lorrageuth's right wing -- and the Lurker burst up through it, tearing one of his foe's wings almost right off the wyrm's body, sending the luckless Lorrageuth "cartwheeling across the rocks and sky, to a broken and splintered death against a mountainside some way off to the south."

Eldenser is also said to have snatched up a fishing boat while in full flight from a gigantic red dragon and looped in the air to use the vessel as a crude spear, piercing his foe's eye and slaying him before the racing red wyrm could slow down or duck aside. Most of Eldenser's exploits preserved in Realmslore, however, concern his deeds while lurking in various swords -- such as the time he caused the death of the notoriously cruel and destructive mage Arnaglym of Arrabar by unexpectedly reflecting a *fireball* spell that Arnaglym had cast at Eldenser's wielder, hurling it back at the mage, who stood in a hall with a massive hammerbeam ceiling hung with huge old tinder-dry tapestries -- which became a smothering inferno from which even the fell Arnaglym could not escape.

There are a score of similar surprising tales of astonishing powers bursting from blades that Eldenser is known to be the cause of, and many more that he isn't connected to by present-day bards and sages -- but for which he may in truth be responsible.

It's important to remember that Eldenser fights only when battle can't be avoided readily; he prefers to observe and remain undetected or at least ignored. He likes just to watch silently, and this habit has given him a rich range of experiences and knowledge, from how to cook certain complicated recipes to the configurations of sewers and back alleys in many cities, to where certain treasures lie hidden. It has been said (and repeated by some elder Harpers) that "Eldenser sees much, and never forgets anything from an expression on one face glimpsed in a crowd to the position of gaming pieces on a board seen through a doorway while passing in haste." The Lurker will never do anything as crass as sell such information, but he'll often trade a service for some of it, to get adventurers or others to do something he doesn't want to take a hand in directly -- but wants to watch.

Elminster has corrected many of the suppositions about Eldenser's powers that follow, but he stresses that adventurers shouldn't trust in what is said here; the Lurker's true abilities may be more potent. All of what immediately follows refers to the dragon's powers while he is within a metal object, which is almost always a sword of fine make.

Eldenser knows Common and several human and elven tongues. Eldenser dislikes the "feel" of metal items that have alignments not at least partially neutral, and he won't remain in them for more than a minimally necessary time to bring about a likely transfer to a more suitable home (in other words, until he perceives other metal items near; he never likes to go "drifting blind"). He won't manifest any of his powers or cast any spells when in such a situation except those that are likely to bring about an immediate possibility of transfer. (He might spit out lightning to attract an adventurer's attention, for example, to allow him to move into that adventurer's weapon.) Eldenser is sometimes called "the Lurker" in the lore of the North because he reveals himself only if he chooses, often spending much time silently observing those who wield him (or rather, the blade he currently inhabits) before speaking to them or exhibiting his powers. About 1277 DR, he told a daring Harper who questioned him about this: "I prefer to watch the strivings of others and act only when I must. From time to time something within me stirs, and I rise up to work my will on Faerûn with vigorous energy . . . but those risings come seldom now; I must be growing old."

The Lurker's relationships with other dragons have been, in the words of the human sage Velsaert of Baldur's Gate (fast becoming recognized as an authority on the history of dragons up and down the Sword Coast), "A parade of friendly hidings -- but ready deadliness." Put into everyday words, that means that Eldenser prefers to conceal himself from other dragons, reacts with calm friendliness if he is discovered -- and is quick and savage in battle if forced to defend himself (or his wielder).

The key to Eldenser's character could be said to be his interest in the rich variety of Faerûn, as it unfolds all around him. He is patient, good-natured, and wise, able to draw on far more experience than most mortal beings, to outwit foes who plan ahead. He can cast prudence aside in an instant if he must, bursting into bold action, but he has no interest into luring or trapping others (though he may manipulate beings to aid his wielder, or merely to observe the result -- particularly if it is likely to reveal the character of someone he's interested in, perhaps as a possible wielder of the blade he's currently inhabiting).

Eldenser is said to be an accomplished mimic and to have a taste for riddles and puzzles. In recent years, he has become increasingly fascinated by love in all its forms, and what it can make beings do.

The Worm Who Hides in Blades is said to be a foe of whoever's pestering him right now -- he doesn't bother pursuing anyone on an ongoing basis, though he'll certainly thwart the Cult of the Dragon whenever he can.

Eldenser's Lair

The Lurker has no known servants, willing or unwilling, but he is thought to enjoy an alliance with the Simbul, Witch-Queen of Aglarond, and possibly with her sisters Syluné and, surprisingly, Dove (who has wielded him from time to time in big battles against Zhentarim, Thayans, or other magically-powerful menaces). He seems to have no true lair but rather a dozen or more inaccessible sea-isle or mountain-heart caverns in which to "stash" his immobile, stasis-ruled body.

For most of the time, this body lies in a crypt in the City of the Dead. The tomb is reachable only by correctly passing through several trapped *portals* that fling the unwary to random destinations (for example, a deep level in Undermountain or the outskirts of ruined Myth Drannor) unless a user utters the correct passwords while traversing them. The crypt is rumored to contain wardmists or similar protective magical barriers, including helmed horrors or similar automaton guardians, but no precise details of such defenses are available.

Eldenser's Domain

Inside blades, Eldenser roams all of Faerûn, considering none of it his "territory" but all of it his to traverse. He ignores nearby dragons of any breed -- unless they discover him, whereupon he cheerfully defies any attempts to establish authority over him (or anyone wielding the blade he currently inhabits). Eldenser usually has little interest in slaying other dragons of any sort, but he dislikes fleeing from them. He prefers to best other dragons or outwit them and then leave at his leisure, rather than allowing them to consider themselves victorious over him.

The Deeds of Eldenser

The favorite prey of the Lurker is a great cat of any sort, though he usually feeds on cattle, and even derives nutrients from any gore he spills while inhabiting a blade. He is said to enjoy good wine and sharp cheeses as well.

It's not known if Eldenser has ever mated with another dragon. He is known to have accompanied several human females -- and at least one elven lady -- for most of their lives, and to have formed friendships with heroic individuals of both genders and most intelligent races. At heart, though, he seems that rarest of things, even among dragons: a contented loner.

Eldenser spends his days in three pursuits: observing the beauties of Faerûn and the entertaining strivings of its inhabitants (half-elves, humans, and elves in particular), trying to influence events in the same way that rulers and archmages do, and to follow Ossavitor's Way to fruition.

Ossavitor was -- or is (it is now either dead or dwelling on another plane) -- a dragon of forgotten breed, who achieved something very important to all dragonkind some 20,000 years ago: his Way, or magical process for achieving immortality.

Humans are warned that betrayal of any knowledge of this process (even mentioning its name in "confidential" inquiries at Candlekeep, for example) will attract the attention of both the Cult of the Dragon (who are anxious to eliminate rivals in their bid to influence dragons into achieving dracolichdom) and powerful dragons of all sorts.

Ossavitor's Way is a long, exacting, and difficult process, the details of which remain secret to this writer (in other words, Volo couldn't discover anything more about it, and Elminster refused to). Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun, the Lord Mage of Waterdeep (and presumably certain other powerful mages of his acquaintance, such as his consort Laeral and perhaps others of the Chosen of Mystra) has the entire process somewhere in one of his hidden libraries. Ambitious adventurers should take note that dragons -- after a long and increasingly impressive death-toll mounted alarmingly -- long ago gave up any hope of getting the secrets of Ossavitor from the Blackstaff.

What I have learned thus far is the end result of the process, and certain of its ingredients. The end result is practical immortality: It gives the dragon's sentience three bodies to inhabit (the unused two are in stasis, and typically hidden away in remote mountain caverns, buried under sand in the hearts of such vast deserts as the Plains of Purple Dust in Raurin, and so on), and allows the dragon to select the size and "age" of these bodies. The dragon retains its spell resistance and spells regardless of the apparent age of its form, but its size, Hit Dice, breath weapon, and the like vary with the age chosen. All of these newly created bodies are vigorous and have fast healing 3. How the dragon's sentience can move from one body to another also remains a mystery as of this writing, but the written evidence suggests that this can be done as often as desired, and with ease.

The process itself has been the hardest thing to unearth. I suspect that dragons or their agents, and folk of the Cult of the Dragon, have set about stealing or destroying as many references to the Way as possible. I'm confident that it involves gathering many draconic components, including the talon of a topaz dragon, a scale from a silver, some blood from a bronze, and so on. (Note: This confidence is Volo's, but Elminster did not correct this statement.)

Eldenser can be presumed to know (or to believe he knows) the entire Way, and to be pursuing the collection of components in a patient, almost leisurely manner. Certainly he has often influenced individuals who are wielding a blade he is part of to attack and slay dragons -- and if they are successful, to sever certain of their body parts which vanish at the blade's touch (presumably teleported away by a magic launched by Eldenser, to some secret hiding place).

Eldenser: Male great wyrm amethyst dragon; CR 25; Gargantuan dragon (earth); HD 39d12+234; hp 487; Init +2; Spd 40 ft., burrow 20 ft., fly 200 ft. (clumsy); AC 50, touch 8, flat-footed 48; Atk +46 melee (4d6+12, bite) and +41 melee (2d8+6, 2 claws) and +41 melee (2d6+6, 2 wings) and +41 melee (2d8+18, tail slap); Face/Reach 20 ft. by 40 ft./15 ft.; SA *amethyst telekinesis*, breath weapon (120-ft. line of concussive force), crush 4d6+18, *explosive gem* 13d6, frightful presence, psionic combat modes (all attack modes/all defense modes), *psionics*, tail sweep 2d6+18; SQ blindsight 360 ft., darkvision 1,200 ft., DR 20/+3, fire resistance 30, force resistant, low-light vision, planar travel, PR 31, psionic power points 170; AL N; SV Fort +27, Ref +23, Will +26; Str 35, Dex 15, Con 23, Int 24, Wis 21, Cha 22.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +48, Concentration +48, Diplomacy +49, Escape Artist +21, Hide -11, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (geography) +49, Knowledge (history -- the North) +49, Knowledge (local -- the North) +49, Knowledge (nature) +47, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +37, Knowledge (psionics) +49, Listen +47, Psicraft +49, Search +49, Spot +47; Extend Power, Flyby Attack, Inertial Armor, Persistent Power, Power Attack, Power Penetration, Psionic Weapon, Quicken Power, Snatch, Wingover.

Amethyst Telekinesis (Sp): Once per day, Eldenser can use a *telekinesis* effect. With this ability, he can lift up to 10 tons (200,000 pounds), or hurl a creature against another object. The impact deals 20d6 points of damage to a Large creature, 15d6 to a Medium-size one, 10d6 to a Small one, 5d6 to a Tiny one, or 1d6 to a Diminutive or Fine creature.

Breath Weapon (Su): Once every 1d4 rounds, Eldenser can breathe a 120-foot line of concussive force. Each creature in the affected area takes 24d8 points of damage (Reflex DC 35 half). He may choose to deal an equal amount of subdual damage instead of normal damage.

Crush: When flying or jumping, Eldenser can land on Medium-size or smaller opponents as a standard action, using his whole body to crush them. A crush attack affects as many creatures as can fit under his body. Each creature in the affected area must succeed at a Reflex save (DC 35) or be pinned, automatically taking 4d6+18 points of bludgeoning damage. Thereafter, if Eldenser chooses to maintain the pin, treat it as a normal grapple attack (grapple bonus +63). While pinned, the opponent takes 4d6+18 points of bludgeoning damage each round.

Explosive Gem (Sp): Once per day, Eldenser can spit a crystalline violet lozenge up to 75 feet away with pinpoint accuracy. The gem explodes on impact, dealing 13d6 points of impact damage to every creature in a 20-foot radius (Reflex DC 29 half).

Frightful Presence (Su): This ability takes effect automatically when Eldenser attacks, charges, or flies overhead. It affects only opponents with 38 or fewer Hit Dice or levels. Each affected creature must make a successful Will save (DC 35) or become shaken for 4d6 rounds (if it has 5 or more Hit Dice) or panicked for 4d6 rounds (if it has 4 or fewer Hit Dice or levels). Success indicates that the target is immune to Eldenser's frightful presence for one day.

Psionics (Sp): 3/day -- *stomp*; 1/day -- *invisibility*, *body equilibrium*, *suggestion*.

Tail Sweep: Eldenser can sweep with his tail as a standard action. The sweep affects Small and smaller creatures within a 30-foot-diameter half-circle centered on the dragon's rear. Each affected creature that fails a Reflex save (DC 35) takes 2d6+18 points of bludgeoning damage; a successful save halves the damage.

Blindsight (Ex): Eldenser can ascertain his surroundings by nonvisual means (mostly hearing and scent, but also by noticing vibration and other environmental clues). This ability enables him to discern objects and creatures within a range of 360 feet. He usually does not need to make Spot or Listen checks to notice creatures within range of its blindsight ability.

Force Resistant (Ex): Eldenser gains a +4 saving throw bonus against force-based psionic powers, spells, or effects.

Low-Light Vision (Ex): Eldenser can see four times as well as a human in low-light conditions and twice as well in normal light.

Planar Travel (Su): Eldenser has the innate ability to pass instantly between the Material Plane and the Inner Planes.

Psionic Abilities (Sp): Eldenser uses psionics as a 17th-level psion (savant). He knows the following powers (8/5/5/4/4/4/3/3/2; save DC 1d20 + key ability score + power level): 0 -- *control shadow*, *daze*, *detect psionics*, *far hand*, *missive*, *my light*, *talons*, *verve*; 1 -- *biocurrent*, *charm person*, *conceal thoughts*, *lesser body adjustment*, *minor creation*; 2 -- *aversion*, *body adjustment*, *detect thoughts*, *invisibility*, *sever the tie*; 3 -- *charm monster*, *control sound*, *improved biofeedback*, *mindlink*; 4 -- *amplified invisibility*, *dimension door*, *dissolving touch*, *psychofeedback*; 5 -- *energy barrier*, *matter rearrangement*, *mind probe*, *steelsteal* (see below); 6 -- *breath of the dragon*, *bright and deadly ring* (see below), *disintegrate*; 7 -- *energy conversion*, *power turning*, *sequester*; 8 -- *matter manipulation*, *shadow body*.

Eldenser's Fate

Though his pursuit of Ossavitör's Way can be described fairly as leisurely and almost unconcerned, with a high value placed on enjoying the full range of experiences Faerûn has to offer a patient observer, it seems likely Eldenser will achieve the near-immortality of the Way. He has been working on it for so long and taking such care over the details that (in Elminster's estimation, at least) he's only a last grace note or crowning touch away from being able to enact the Way.

It's possible that Eldenser has achieved this state already and is simply reluctant to leave his present lifestyle. Perhaps he is trying to craft or discover psionics that will enable him to inhabit blades and travel between them and his three new bodies as freely as he does presently between his old, original body and the various weapons of which he has been a part. It is certain that he has spent a lot of time in and around Candlekeep and the Herald's Holdfast in recent years -- after having scoured both places centuries earlier for all references to the Way.

Against this rosy likelihood of success must be placed Eldenser's often dangerous lifestyle. More than most dragons, he places himself at risk often, and for extended periods of time. Only the gods can decide if ill fortune will find him before he enacts the Way -- and that brings to mind Volo's last note about the Worm Who Hides in Blades: There are many and persistent, but admittedly entirely unsubstantiated, rumors as to Eldenser being an ally or servant of this or that Faerûnian deity.

Elminster only smiled and shook his head when he read those lines, refusing to confirm or deny the truth of this. Instead, he pointed silently to Volo's very last words: "Bears watching. Keep an eye on this one -- if possible."

Eldenser's Magic

The Lurker is thought to have learned and practiced many rare and strange spells. He has all of the psionic abilities of an amethyst great wyrm, but his precise mind-powers remain mysterious; Elminster believes that one of Eldenser's achievements is the ability to duplicate the effects of certain high-level powers he can unleash once per day, costing hit points instead of power points.

Two of Eldenser's abilities in particular are sought by other dragons (and by ambitious mages of Thay and the Cult of the Dragon), and these follow. (The descriptions of these powers are drawn from the notes in books of Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun, who apparently received them from Eldenser long ago in trade for magic.)

Bright and Deadly Ring

Metacreativity (Int) [Force]

Level: Psion 6 / Psychic Warrior 6

Display: Au, Vi

Manifestation Time: 1 action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Target: 1 object or willing creature

Duration: 1 minute/level or until discharged (D)

Power Resistance: Yes

Saving Throw: None

Power Points: 11

You create a ring of glowing blue-white energy around the target resembling *faerie fire*, which provides light equal to a candle. The ring extends 5 feet horizontally from the target. The ring moves with the target and does not interfere with its motion or abilities. The ring can be programmed with one of two effects:

Complete discharge: The next enemy of the target that touches the ring discharges it, unleashing a pulse of force at the enemy that deals 11d6 points of force damage. This ends the power immediately.

Staggered discharge: As above, except each time the ring is touched by an enemy, it releases only a portion of its energy chosen by you (such as 3d6, 2d6, 1d6, and so on). The ring remains until it has released 11d6 dice of damage, at which point the power ends.

Steelsteal

Psychoportation (Dex)

Level: Psion 5

Display: None

Manifestation Time: 1 action

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: 1 hour/level or until you return to your body (D) (see text)

Power Points: 9

You free your spirit from your body, allowing you to travel as an incorporeal creature and inhabit metallic blades (such as daggers, swords, and so on). While incorporeal, you cannot make attacks or use any abilities, but you can fly at speed 30 (perfect). You do not carry any equipment with you but gain a deflection bonus to AC equal to your Charisma bonus. You can remain incorporeal for up to 3 rounds in succession, after which the power ends and your spirit returns to its body. When incorporeal, you are affected by spells and powers that ward or harm such disembodied spirits or possession attempts, such as *magic circle against evil*, which prevents you from entering or attempting to possess any blade within the area.

While incorporeal, you can overlap a metallic blade with your incorporeal form and enter it fully. While "possessing" the blade in this manner, you can see, hear, and feel as well as a normal human. You can speak and use any powers or abilities you have that don't require somatic or material components (therefore psionic abilities function normally). You cannot move the blade unless you have magic or psionics that allow you to move objects (such as *far hand*, *skate*, or *telekinesis*). You can remain within a blade indefinitely, subject to the duration of the power. As a standard action you can vacate the blade and become incorporeal again, or transfer directly between two blades in physical contact at the time. A blade possessed by you can bypass damage reduction as if it had a +2 enhancement bonus, but it does not gain any bonuses to hit or damage. Damaging the blade causes you no harm, and destroying it merely returns you to your incorporeal form. At any time you can end the power as a standard action and immediately return to your body.

If you attempt to possess an intelligent blade, the blade resists and you must attempt a Will saving throw (DC = item's ego). Success means you possess the blade and can use its abilities in addition to your own (so if the weapon could *teleport* once per day, you could activate that ability and teleport yourself and the blade to your choice of locations). Failure means you possess the blade but cannot use its abilities or any of your own (you are essentially a passenger), although you can still leave the blade normally.

Your body remains behind, unconscious. Effects on your body (such as poison, disease, and so on) continue while you are away, and because your body is still alive, it still needs air, water, and food. If your body is killed, you die.

Felgolos, "The Flying Misfortune"

Dragon Magazine #238

It's not often that the famous explorer, mageling, and sometime travel guide writer Volo admits to puzzlement about something in the Realms. However, Elminster chuckled frequently over the bewildered notations, queries, and counter-notations in Volo's entry on Felgolos, a dragon known to some sages and long-lived inhabitants of the western Heartlands and eastern Amn as "the Flying Misfortune" because of his long career of crashing into things, causing mayhem, and appearing in the midst of draconic battles, clashes of armies, archmages' spell-duels, and other spectacular events.

Felgolos is a juvenile male bronze dragon of sleek build, unshakable curiosity, and unfailing good nature. He refuses to make enemies or to be prudent, and he wanders Faerûn, intruding on the territories of other dragons and venturing into situations of great peril (when Dragon Cultists have urged a dracolich into making its first raiding flight, for instance, or Zhentarim wizards riding feywings rise aloft from Darkhold in great numbers, to mount a spell attack on some hapless city or other). Through years of this sort of peering about in perpetual wonderment, Felgolos seems to have led a charmed life. Although he has often been hurt and even forced to fight or flee in earnest many times, he has survived poking his nose into one danger after another and continues to blithely do so despite many warnings (and threats) as to his fate.

Born to a pair of magically mighty bronze dragons who've since used their Art to travel to other planes (where, presumably, they still flourish), Felgolos was taught to experiment, to observe, and to play with magic. When other hatchlings were exulting in tearing apart their first cattle, Felgolos was tinkering with a "pluck-and-grab" teleport spell that could uproot trees and stumps at his behest, so that he could make fences around his own stolen herd of cattle. When other young dragons were raiding their first villages, Felgolos was lying atop crags using spying spells to look around villages and learn how these strange creatures called humans and half-elves lived. His parents encouraged him to go on independent forays. When he wanted to play, they cast spells that linked their three minds and then worked magic together.

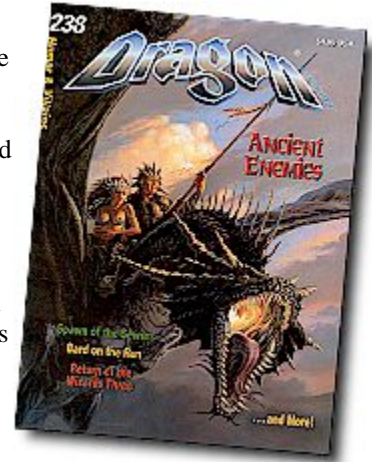
This upbringing has given Felgolos three unusual qualities: a carefree self-reliance that steers him well clear of the treasure-grasping paranoia that afflicts so many dragons, a knowledge (matched by few elves and even fewer humans) of everyday life of all things on the surface of Faerûn, and a mastery of magic far beyond the norm for his age (Felgolos is the equivalent of a 14th-level sorcerer, instead of the 3rd-level sorcerer typical of most bronze dragons his age).

If he ever turned to evil -- or to any aim or scheme in a determined, persistent way -- Felgolos would be a formidable foe. He seems incapable of this sort of behavior, however, treating opponents he faces again and again as some sort of amusement "laid on" for him - - never as enemies to be hated, feared, or slain.

Instead, Felgolos spends his days wandering aimlessly about Faerûn, peering at this and that. He stops from time to time to feed or whenever he sees something that interests him and trades information about what he's seen with folk he meets for other news. Felgolos is without guile and never lies outright, though he's often cryptic and omits important things for pranksome fun or to protect those he considers his friends. Certain hermits, sages, Harpers, and isolated mages (from Malchor Harpell to Elminster of Shadowdale) are among his favorite hosts; they always have news to impart. Many of these learned friends, of course, aren't above using Felgolos as an information-gatherer, or aiming him (rather as one goads a goat, or obliquely suggests something to a restless child without saying it directly and thus being refused) at particular places or folk to have him "stir things up." Elminster, for one, admits to sending Felgolos to "annoy and crash through" the work of the Zhentarim operating out of Darkhold (one of the reasons the Black Network hasn't been more dominant in the Far Hills area) or to check on activity in the vicinity of Hellgate Keep and Hellgate Dell.

The sage Velsaert of Baldur's Gate (a rising authority on the history of dragons up and down the Sword Coast) describes Felgolos as "an eternal wide-eyed blunderer, ignorant of draconic etiquette and ways, but more learned in the doings of humans and treants and hedgehogs than the wisest sage alive." Elminster says that Felgolos seems almost not to think of himself as a dragon and to have no interest in others of his kind -- other than to regard bronze dragons as trustworthy friends on sight.

The archmage Malchor Harpell once commented that Felgolos "seems to have more bounce (buoyant good humor and optimism) than anyone I've ever known -- and probably more than any entity active in Faerûn today, short of Tymora herself." Certainly the adventurer Toross of the elves, known for his boundless energy and high spirits, tried to accompany the Flying Misfortune for a time (riding on his back, as a trusted friend) and later described the experience as "exhausting . . . his gusty high spirits wore me down as winter gales tear through leafless branches."



Felgos has never shown any evidence of cunning or prudence, but great good luck seems to accompany him -- always preceded by clumsiness and a pratfall or two. He is said to be quick and expert in his use of spells, especially when surprised and attacked, but he seems to have few other accomplishments beyond sensitivity to the needs of others, wisdom in the ways of ail surface-world living things, and accomplished storm flying. He loves to ride the wild winds of gales, lightning storms, and even hurricanes. He never seems to take harm from the crackling aerial discharges or tearing winds, however, no matter how furious the weather.

Some sages have even advanced the theory that Felgos is the avatar of "a sleeping god" or "a child of Akadi." No "certain death" dealt to him seems to be final, and no foe seems to be able to destroy him utterly, though he has been badly beaten many times. His typical response to these defeats is to forget about the battle -- though not who his foes were -- rather than to seek revenge. If there is some hidden divinity to Felgos, or even just a favor of Tymora guarding him, the Flying Misfortune is honestly unaware of it. Elminster says the secret behind Felgos' astonishing survival dates from the twenty-odd years following the departure of his parents. They tried to keep him safe by offering his service as a steed to a certain archwizard of Halruaa, one Thongameir "Stormspells" Halargoth. Stormspells was a kindly old collector of rare plants and mosses who liked nothing better than to fly across half Faerûn looking at wilderlands, stopping for a picnic luncheon, scooping up a few specimens, and then wending his way home to Narhtowers, a mountainside keep in northern Halruaa that simply bristled with intelligent carnivorous bushes, vines, and similar deadly specimens. Felgos was happy to take him on such "poking around seeing things" jaunts, and they got on famously -- despite several close calls, such as the time they landed in the middle of an encamped orc horde one night, or the time they interrupted a conclave of hundreds of gathered spirit naga in a jungle valley deep in Chult.

Such adventures made Thongameir aware that Felgos could make them both far safer if certain spells were worked upon his draconic steed. So he cast a mighty and permanent manyfold magic on the bronze dragon. The spell's secrets have presumably, with Thongameir's death, been lost -- though some of their secrets may exist in written form, somewhere within the now-overgrown Narhtowers. Interested adventurers are warned that the plants growing there have slain several young and ambitious Halruaan mages.

Felgos' Lair

It could be said that the Flying Misfortune has no true lair but rather a score of favorite sleeping spots. Most of them are shallow depressions in high mountain ridges, where he won't be disturbed. He does, however, have a few places where he keeps things, and some might judge these to be "lairs." In both the Thunder Peaks range and the Troll Mountains, Felgos frequents mountain-locked high valleys where he can drink from lakes and keep free-ranging herds of stolen rothé, sheep, goats, and cattle for food. The one in the Thunder Peaks has a mountainside cavern large enough to hold Felgos (if he crawls in) and some keepsakes. These include a huge canopied bed (for humans to sleep in relative comfort, if the dragon should bring them here), a small sailing ship (in case Felgos ever finds someone who needs one), and even a castle drawbridge the Flying Misfortune once tore away from a fortress so that he could spill the mounted knights on it into the moat, one by one, after giving them an entertainingly wild ride in his claws as he dove, looped, and swooped around the battlements.

In another cave somewhere along the Sword Coast, Felgos has a growing collection of wagons gained from Zhentarim. Whenever he swoops low to look at a caravan owned by the Black Network, its guards fire crossbow bolts or spells at him. The Flying Misfortune responds by snatching up a souvenir wagon, beasts of burden and all, and taking it away to add to his hoard. If it contains people (Zhents often transport bound captives under other cargo, and sometimes they ride in their own wagons, particularly when guarding precious goods) or food, Felgos often empties it en route. Zhents are typically dropped into a lake after a terrifying dive toward its waiting waters, but otherwise Felgos does nothing but store the stolen wagon. He doesn't care if others find his "ghost caravan" and pilfer from it. Indeed, he often plucks a wagon up to take to a traveler on the road whose own conveyance has lost a wheel or overturned.

In all of the Flying Misfortune's lairs one may find odd coins (even a chest or coffer of wealth in the "ghost caravan"), but Felgos doesn't collect or value coins, gems, or jewelry.

Felgos seems to be a contented loner, but he sometimes teams up with a bored archmage (even one of the Seven Sisters, perhaps, seeking a momentary vacation of sightseeing and prank playing) for an adventure or two, or even comes to Shadowdale or Candlekeep for aid. The sages of Candlekeep so value his knowledge that they now eagerly trade lore with him; Elminster or Jhessail can furnish him with a little spell-muscle or a human ally.

Felgos' Domain

Felgos roams Faerûn more or less freely, ignoring the territories claimed by other dragons or creatures. By and large, such entities have learned that it is easiest to ignore the intrusions of the Flying Misfortune; fighting or trying to entrap him always carries a cost, and the bronze dragon clearly has no intention of carving out a domain of his own, seizing treasure, or competing in any lasting manner for food.

The bronze dragon is, however, sensitive to the needs and desires of others, and he tends to avoid the home ranges of mated dragons whom he knows are rearing young. The danger of war, wizards' duels, and the like is not a deterrent to Felgolos, however -- news of such things is likely to attract him.

The Deeds of Felgolos

The favorite prey of Felgolos is any sort of herd animal he can swoop on from above when he comes upon them in his wanderings; he finds having to hunt deliberately for food to be tiresome. He doesn't seem to have any favorite spells, watering holes, or hunting grounds -- doing things differently (and recklessly) all the time is life itself to the Flying Misfortune. His lack of planning and prudence often leads to the mishaps that have earned him his nickname -- but it is fatal to believe that Felgolos never learns from his battlefield mistakes nor recognizes individuals who've done him harm in the past.

Felgolos spends most of his days wandering Faerûn, spying on the deeds of others, playing pranks on them or aiding them as the whim takes him, and looking for fresh fun (or at least interest).

Felgolos is famous for two things: tearing off the tallest tower of the Citadel of the Raven and using it as a club to swat enraged beholders out of the sky (after they rose all around him), and for the *frame teleport* spell he (or perhaps Stormspells) developed -- which he uses to enter (or partially enter, for a good look around) areas whose entrances are too small for his body. He has used this spell to eavesdrop on covert meetings of conspirators (in one instance posing as a "stuffed dragon head" on a wall), bedchamber conferences, secret priestly rituals, and even wizards at work on their spells.

Felgolos: Male juvenile bronze dragon Sor 14; CR 22; Large dragon (water); HD 15d12+45 plus 11d4+42; hp 169; Init +0; Spd 40 ft., swim 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor); AC 23, touch 9, flat-footed 23; Atk +19 melee (2d6+3, bite) and +14 melee (1d8+1, 2 claws) and +14 melee (1d6+1, 2 wings) and +14 melee (1d8+4, tail slap); Face/Reach 5 ft. by 10 ft./10 ft.; SA breath weapon (80-ft. line of lightning), breath weapon (40-ft. cone of repulsion gas), spell-like abilities, spells; SQ darkvision 400 ft., immunities (electricity, paralysis, *sleep*), low-light vision, Thongameir's master spell, water breathing; AL LG; SV Fort +13, Ref +10, Will +16; Str 17, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 18, Wis 17, Cha 20.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +20, Diplomacy +15, Hide -4, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge (history -- the North) +26, Knowledge (local -- the North) +28, Knowledge (nature) +22, Knowledge (nobility and royalty -- the North) +20, Listen +16, Scry +29, Search +9, Spellcraft +29, Spot +13, Swim +11, Wilderness Lore +12; Combat Casting, Expertise, Extra Slot (4th level)*, Extra Slot (5th level)*, Snatch, Spellcasting Prodigy (sorcerer)**.

Breath Weapon (Su): Once every 1d4 rounds, Felgolos can breathe either an 80-foot line of lightning or a 40-foot cone of repulsion gas. The lightning breath deals 8d6 points of electricity damage (Reflex DC 20 half). Any creature caught within the area of the repulsion gas must make a Will save (DC 20) or be compelled to do nothing but move away from Felgolos for 1d6 + 4 rounds. This is a mind-influencing compulsion enchantment effect.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will -- *speak with animals*; 3/day -- *polymorph self* (change to one new form and back per use). Caster level 14th; save DC 15 + spell level.

Spells: Felgolos casts spells as a 14th-level sorcerer.

Low-Light Vision: Felgolos can see four times as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar low-light conditions, and twice as far under normal light conditions.

Thongameir's Master Spell (Su): This powerful, enduring spell was cast upon Felgolos by the archmage Thongameir. It has three effects; all three function only against effects that are subject to spell resistance. If the attack is one that affects multiple creatures, other creatures are affected normally and Felgolos is unharmed (Thongameir's magic doesn't protect anyone other than Felgolos himself). Like actual spell resistance, Felgolos can suppress this ability when he wants to accept certain spells.

All Enchantment effects that would affect at Felgolos have no effect other than to cure a number of hit points equal to one point per spell level of the magical attack. Hit points in excess of his normal total remain for one day as temporary hit points. Successive enchantment effects simply cure more hit points or give him more temporary hit points (these temporary hit points do not stack with themselves, so if he is at full hit points and hit by a 9th-level Enchantment spell followed by a 1st-level enchantment spell, he has only 9 temporary hit points). Effects without a spell level do not give him hit points but still do not affect him.

All Necromancy magics cast at Felgolos have no effect other than to give him a limited fast healing ability for one day, restoring hit points per hour equal to 1 hit point per spell level of the necromantic attack. This effect has brought the dragon back from apparent death more than once. Multiple Necromancy effects do not stack; he gains the most favorable rate of limited fast healing from the

attacks directed against him (so if struck with a 9th-level Necromancy spell and a 1st-level Necromancy spell, Felgolos heals 9 hit points per hour for the next day). Effects without a spell level do not give him fast healing but still do not otherwise affect him. All Transmutation magics of 5th-level or higher cast at Felgolos have no effect except to allow the dragon to cast a single *teleport* spell (caster level 25th) at any time within the next day. Multiple Transmutation effects give him multiple uses of this *teleport* spell, each with its own time of expiration. Transmutation effects of less than 5th level have no effect whatsoever, but do not give him the ability to use *teleport*.

Water Breathing (Ex): Felgolos can breathe underwater indefinitely and can freely use his breath weapon, spells, and other abilities while submerged.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/8/8/7/7/6/3; save DC 16 + spell level): 0 -- *detect magic, disrupt undead, flare, light, mage hand, mending, open/close, prestidigitation, read magic*; 1st -- *alarm, comprehend languages, launch item*, message, sleep*; 2nd -- *detect thoughts, fog cloud, Igedraaar's miasma*, invisibility, protection from arrows*; 3rd -- *Mestil's acid breath*, clairsentience/clairvoyance, tongues, unknown* (presumably his healing spell); 4th -- *arcane eye, improved invisibility, locate creature, scrying, spell enhancer**; 5th -- *Bigby's interposing hand, passwall, prying eyes, snatchport**, transmute rock to mud*; 6th -- *frame teleport* (new spell, see below), *true seeing*; 7th -- *teleport without error*.

* Spell from *Magic of Faerûn*.

**This spell may be replaced by a *teleport object* spell to appear in a yet unpublished product.

Felgolos' Fate

Whim, curiosity, and a desire to revel in constant fun govern every act of Felgolos. He is likely always to find fresh trouble to blunder into, and he will always like helping creatures who are lost or in need. Sooner or later, such acts are bound to bring him his death, yet he has cheated certain doom so often that it is hard to say what, if anything, can destroy him. Perhaps the claims of sages about his divine nature are true.

F

elgolos' Magic

The Flying Misfortune has always been interested in magic -- both watching others work it and experimenting on his own. He prefers to develop his own spells rather than to gain them from others via seizure or trading; however, spellbooks, spell scrolls, and magic items are among the few things the Flying Misfortune does like to acquire in his wanderings. Where he keeps them, no one knows.

Snatchport**

Transmutation (Teleportation)

Level: Sor/Wiz 5

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Target: Object weighing up to 50 lb./level

As *teleport*, except as noted above, and that the object's destination must also be within spell range. Normally the spell is used to move one large object within range to another location, such as a tree stump, treasure chest, wagon, and so on (multiple items within a container such as a belt pouch or chest count as one object).

As with *teleport*, a teleport check is needed to see how well the teleport works.

**This spell may be replaced by a *teleport object* spell to appear in a yet unpublished product.

Frame Teleport

Level: Sor/Wiz 6

Components: V, F

Duration: Instantaneous or up to 1 round/2 levels

As *teleport*, except as noted above, and with a *frame teleport* spell, you link two wooden frames (such as picture frames, mirrors, windows, and so on), so you can pass through one frame and exit through the other, ending the spell. Alternatively, you can stop partway through the link with at least one-quarter of your body on one side and the remainder on the other; this holds the magical link open for up to 1 round/2 levels, during which you can act appropriately on either side as if the two frames were the end points of a normal doorway. This second use allows you to converse, pass objects back and forth, or make attacks at creatures on either side. Other beings cannot pass through the frame doorway, but they can push or pull you (such as with a bull rush). If you are ever forced fully onto one side or the other of the frame, the spell ends immediately.

If the spell ends while you are still partway through the doorway, you are forced completely through to the destination side and suffer 1d10 points of damage from being "scrambled" by the teleport.

Aiming the link to the destination frame requires a teleport check; if the result is "off target" and no suitable frame is at that location, the spell fails.

The spell functions regardless of the material contained within the two frames, and it does not harm that material, so you can use a mirror's frame without breaking the mirror, a painting's frame without damaging the canvas, and so on.

Focus: The origin frame.

Galadaeros, "Sunset Flame"

Dragon Magazine #239

One of the dragons of the North that puzzles Volo most is Galadaeros, a copper dragon often seen in the sky flying low but fast across the Sword Coast North -- and usually bearing several riders on his back. When such dragonriders can be seen clearly, they are almost always human females in ornate armor, bristling with weapons and looking eager to use them. Elminster supplied secrets that Volo could only guess at (wildly and, as it turns out, wrongly), and so lay clear the unusual career of Galadaeros, the Sunset Flame or, less formally, the Flame Dragon. This latter nickname has confused many sages, who think it refers to a red dragon or other wyrm who breathes fire, whereas it was in truth bestowed on Galadaeros by Launchalo Rivryn, an otherwise forgotten Waterdhavian poet who was striving to describe the dragon's appearance as Galadaeros flew into the city across the Sea of Swords and out of the setting sun.



Galadaeros is a mature adult male copper dragon of unusually gentle and humorous character; the pride that so dominates his breed seems almost entirely lacking in his manner. He dwells alone in a mountaintop cavern, on a nameless, uncharted island in the Sea of Swords northwest of Gundarlun. This island is generally considered by those who see it to be one of the Purple Rocks. Regardless, the Sunset Flame is seldom at home. Galadaeros was visited in his lair 300 years ago by the Waterdhavian adventurer Ranressa Shiard, who preferred to seek her fortune in the company of other women. Ranressa was the last of an all-female adventuring band, the Shining Ring Swordshars, to survive a wild ocean voyage that ended in a shipwreck on the rocks of the dragon's island. "Bold" was her watchword and driving spirit; after hauling herself ashore, she set about exploring the isle. When she found Galadaeros, she promptly tried to slay him. Amused by her dogged yet futile attempts to bring about his doom, the lonely copper dragon chose to question Ranressa rather than destroy her, and eventually a friendship developed. This companionship led to the dragon taking Ranressa back to Waterdeep on his back. Her triumphal flight into the city made Ranressa an instant hero -- after the citizenry recovered from the sight of Galadaeros wheeling over the Palace to alight on Mount Waterdeep, which is a flourish that caused much consternation in the streets (and the hasty crafting of magical wards that, according to Khelben Arunsun, prevent most dragons from doing such things today).

Ranressa promptly chartered the all-female Galadran Company, who took ship 68 strong the next summer, to revisit her friend. All of the Galadrans (who were known rather less politely in the taverns of Waterdeep as "Sharptongues") were Waterdhavian ladies of gentle or noble birth who desired to be adventurers. Galadaeros was delighted to acquire such friends, and he adopted them as his own brood, inquiring as to their health, mating plans, and goals in life with the manner of a kindly old uncle. He also served as their steed as they set out to discover adventure in the North. Waterdeep soon dismissed the Galadran Company as a band of crazed young lasses out for a fling (though lady minstrels and young girls playing in the streets find them harder to forget), but Galadaeros can still pass the magical city wards freely and bring his young comrades home to their villa on the seaward side of Mount Waterdeep. When the Sunset Flame wheels low over the streets, it is a sign of celebration among his riders.

This is not to say that the career of the Galadran Company has been one long sun-drenched pleasure outing. Ranressa proved a tirelessly bold -- some might even say reckless -- leader, and she grew restless when evil mages whose towers dripped treasure from every window and turret seemed hard to find, marauding orcs proved to have empty belt-purses, and the lairs of great wyrms turned out to house dragons who were far less friendly than Galadaeros. Ranressa led her fellow adventurers on wilder and ever more daring exploits. The Sunset Flame had to effect several hasty rescues in that first season, and one or two in later years. During those seasons, fully half of the romantic but unskilled Galadran ladies perished messily in various misadventures. The remainder slowly became competent warriors, and one named Lhaerilda made a fortuitous discovery in the Crag while the Galadrans were sneaking up on an orc encampment: A rockslide had laid bare one chamber of an ancient underground dwarven tomb that was literally crammed to the ceiling with gold. Galadaeros flew it all out to his island for the Galadrans, and he gave over a side-cavern of his lair for their treasury. In return, they gave him a triple share of the staggering wealth; Ranressa judged the gold to total over thrice the dragon's body volume. The Galadran Company promptly acquired houses in Waterdeep, a fantastic array of impressive-looking armor (some of it almost useless in battle), and finally the respect they craved. There have, however, been no more tremendous discoveries of treasure in the years since, and news of the great Galadran wealth has drawn more than a few foes to come calling on the Galadrans.

The mage Nuldus of Turtorn (a ruin northeast of Conyberry), for example, enslaved several of the Galadrans with his spells, hoping to bring the entire band under his mental sway and thus lay his hands on their treasure. He got as far as crafting amulets that allowed him to speak mind-to-mind over great distances with those who wore them, then he sent his slaves back to their companions with orders to slay Ranressa and the dragon. They failed, and Galadaeros dove out of the sky one morning and smashed the mage's small tower to the ground, killing Nuldus. The Galadrans salvaged some magic from the rubble, and they retained the amulets. Today these magic

pendants allow six of the lady adventurers to communicate at will with each other and the copper dragon -- who can now be summoned from his isle when needed.

The Arcane Brotherhood of Luskan sent several of its ambitious apprentices out on separate missions to "prove themselves" by seizing what they could of the Galadran treasury. One after another found death rather than success -- though the apprentice Indratril Khalshus slew no fewer than eight Galadrans before Galadaeros tore her apart, and the apprentice Rythimm Hardrost killed two of the lady adventurers and did snatch up a fistful of rubies (which were lost into the sea at his death) before being run through by the swords of six Galadrans at once.

An unsuccessful company of adventurers, Falder's Flourish, left Waterdeep vowing to slay Galadaeros "and his ungodly harem of sword-ladies," but they were drowned by a dragon turtle before they ever reached the isle Galadaeros calls home. However, two Galadrans have since been slain in Waterdeep by stealth, on two separate occasions, by intruders lurking -- perhaps covertly dwelling - in Galadran houses. Taunting messages left beside the bodies indicate that the killers were surviving members of the Flourish, bent on "undying revenge." Whether this recurring phrase indicates that the Flourish slayers are undead is not yet known, but they have utterly eluded at least one magically-aided attempt to trace them.

The Galadran Company continues undaunted in the face of these and many more minor attacks and attempts to rob them. Some of their Waterdhavian homes have even been fitted with nasty falling-floor traps that dump intruders into greased shafts. Victims plunge down these ever-narrower chutes until they become wedged. There they can be hoisted out as captives, or just left in the walls to die. Other Galadran abodes sport overhead coal-scuttles full of boulders, which a retreating resident can pull down on the heads of pursuers by jerking on certain bell-pulls. Wise opponents of the warrior-women don't bother to dare the trapped rooms and passages of a Galadran house; the lady adventurers they seek are almost always on the island where the Company's dragon lairs -- and all substantial Galadran treasures are stored there.

Though his lair often rings with the clash of swords or the laughter of the ladies who wield them, Galadaeros never seems to tire of all the human activity around him. He has, however, been saddened by the infirmity and death of one aged adventurer after another (Ranressa, in particular), and he was enraged when some men brought to his isle by the Galadrans to be their husbands conspired to make a crude boat and try to steal off with as much of the treasure as it could hold -- he sank them when they were well out to sea. Other mates have proved more trustworthy, though the Galadrans now tend to rear healthy babes on the isle and sickly babes in Waterdeep, and they keep all husbands and consorts on the mainland. As the years have passed, all of the original Galadrans have died, and the strength of the Company has dwindled to between 20 and 30 members. Of these, seven (five of them current holders of the amulets) are descendants of founding Company members.

The unofficial but unquestioned leader of the Company today is the warrior Emra Ilchantra, whose close companion and second-in-command is the sorceress Aszyra Thunderstaff (of the Waterdhavian noble family, though you will wait in vain to hear any of them speak of her; they seem to have disowned her thanks to the "low" reputation of adventurers in general). Aszyra is judged to be "of middling powers" in her magecraft. The other amulet-holders, aside from the aforementioned Galadrans and Galadaeros himself, are the warriors Glyndra Rowandar, Jhandanna Orwynd, and Khalaltae Baedrith, and the fiery-haired and tempered Lokkara Aarsalan (the sole amulet-holder not descended from a company founder). The last two descendants of founding Company members, Ybril Harlundtree and Aurbreena Gathengate, have no desire or capacity for leadership. Ybril (pronounced "Eee-bril"), a priestess of Ilmater, serves as the Company's surgeon and healer; and Aurbreena sees to Company provisions, gear, and stores, and she keeps a rough diary of Galadran deeds and decisions.

A series of deaths and reversals in the Company some 20 summers ago led the Galadrans to add legitimate, stable business ventures to their adventuring lives, and today the Company provides short-term, high-risk bodyguard services to fearful (and wealthy) clients, and provides "secure hideaway banking and storage" facilities to Waterdhavians and citizens of Neverwinter and Baldur's Gate. Valuable items -- even, on one occasion, an endangered noble heir -- are conveyed to the dragon's isle and there stored in side-tunnels of his lair, secure behind boulders only the dragon can move. The Galadrans have ignored many business proposals involving their dragon for two reasons: they defer to Galadaeros in such matters, and he seems uninterested; and they fear Cult of the Dragon agents will try to lure the Sunset Flame into a trap. They are currently considering three separate requests from Waterdhavian noble families to take on daughters as short-term Company members, both to win treasure and to taste adventure.

Galadaeros has made it clear that although he has no objection to ferrying Company members back and forth across the North, he is not eager to become any sort of aerial-steed-for-hire -- and the Galadrans are in full agreement. The one such commission the Company did accept, some years back, turned out to be from a wizard who tried to get the Sunset Flame to destroy the home of a rival mage by deceiving the dragon as to who owned the house. Galadaeros and two Galadrans found themselves in the midst of a wild spellbattle that ended only after Galadaeros swept past the turrets of the house and scraped the wizard (one Mrathatos Druiin, pretending to be a scribe from Iriaebor by the name of "Namarathos Alonabryn") on his back into bloody ruin. The Galadrans were badly hurt by that desperate aerobatic, and the wizard whose house was assaulted, Halynder Uinsible, still regards the Company as his foes.

This is not to say that the dragon and the Galadrans are adverse to new business ventures; in fact, they've charged their three city agents with the task of identifying new business ventures that the Company can undertake. Bruth Melber is the Company's agent in Waterdeep. This careful, balding, middle-aged longtime diplomat has been active in the City of Splendors all his life, and although some can recall his rather colorful past as a swindler and later envoy for shady principals and shadier causes, he is glad to have found an employer to see him through his graying years, and he is steadfastly loyal to the Galadrans. In a house behind his office on the Sutherlane, Bruth maintains sleeping quarters for Company members visiting the city on business.

A many-balconied, tall, and narrow house on Eel Street is home to "Mother" Mouchathos, who is the fat, bustling Galadran agent in Baldur's Gate. This kindly matron never seems tired and can be seen at all hours chattering excitedly to sleepy-looking servants as she crashes and dashes around her abode, seeing to the cooking and the cleaning and the troubles and aspirations of a hundred Baldurians who regard her as their true mother and would do anything for her. Mother Mouchathos runs a bakery, a shop that sells yarn and needles and bolts of fine cloth from the South (along with free advice and demonstrations on how to turn these into stylish garments), and a soup-window. She sells "hot pots" of soup to merchants and others who must eat on the run; a young boy doles out copper piece deposits for the return of all empty pots, with another copper if their lids come back, and a third copper if the ladles make it home, too. In the odd moments all these activities leave to her, Mouchathos acts as a messenger and go-between for folk who need an all-female adventuring company to right wrongs -- or just to appear in a parade.

One rich merchant of Amn hires the Galadrans every year to add an element of dangerous beauty to his revelries. This fat, prancing little man of many eager enthusiasms and squeals of boundless energy, by the name of Veloudamar Ralanshalass, hungers more than anything else for respect. Each year the little merchant throws a party to impress his clients -- and after there's been much dining, drinking, and dancing, curtains are rolled back to display Galadran warriors reclining in wild armor and outlandish costumes while the little man struts up and down declaiming their skills. A few breaths later, the curtains are firmly tied shut, and the Galadrans accept 100 gold pieces each from silent servants and take wing on Galadaeros!

The Galadran agent in Neverwinter is a quiet, always calm man named Alasturan Malatheer. He runs a shop on Hindalos Street where he sells maps, charts, and floorplans of castles, mansions, lands, and seas of Faerûn. Some adventurers mutter that some of the maps they've bought from Alasturan seem to owe more to his imagination than to reality in Faerûn, but there are rumors that folk who threatened this quiet shopkeeper found themselves facing a sudden onslaught of monsters and magic items that Alasturan seemed able to control in concert. Some say he's a retired adventurer, and others claim he's a wizard in hiding from some deadly sorcerous foe. Folk in Neverwinter most like to tell a tale that the mapseller denies: Once, when a copper dragon flew into the city with one ragged and torn wing weeping great tears of blood, Alasturan rose up into the form of a great gold dragon and cradled the wounded dragon to his breast, flying westward out to sea with his great golden wings carrying them both. Probably only Alasturan and Galadaeros (who personally chose the Galadran agent in Neverwinter) know the true nature and powers of the unassuming mapseller; Elminster refuses to do more than smilingly muse about what a formidable foe a song dragon wizard who retained his magecraft in gold dragon form would be -- and then add enigmatically that Mystra would almost have to take a personal interest in such an individual. On the subject of Galadaeros himself, Elminster was more forthcoming. The Company of striving, loving humans has become the dragon's family, banishing his loneliness and making him feel loved, revered, and needed for the first time in his life. It is more precious to him than treasure, dominance, and indeed anything else. So long as he can eat and find a safe place to rest from time to time, Galadaeros is happy to be a part of this noisy, reckless, fun-loving band of human women, with their wild plans and daring deeds; he is a young and playful wyrm at heart so long as he can be a part of this endless revel of human energy and ambition -- and the Sunset Flame takes delight in such simple acts as sliding softly past the windows of Waterdhavian nobility to pluck his Galadran ladies from a balcony in midrevel and hearing the gasps, oaths, and screams of awed nobles from all sides. Galadaeros seems to lack both the pride of his kind and the insensitivity that goes with it, but his most special talent is an uncanny ability he's developed over the years to judge the needs and schemes of humans. He's familiar with the North (and all of the Sword Coast from the Nelanther north to where the "undying ice" begins) and can find his way unerringly about in the worst snowstorms and other heavy weather. He also possesses some modest skill at magic.

Galadaeros happily spends his days acting as the steed, heavy reinforcement, and wise old advisor to the Company. His relationships with other dragons have been, in the words of the human sage Velsaert of Baldur's Gate (fast becoming recognized as an authority on the history of dragons up and down the Sword Coast), "polite but brief and casual encounters; he offers no menace but in turn ignores it when offered to him -- and then removes himself while the other wyrm is still lost in puzzlement." The key to understanding Galadaeros could be said to be recognition of his deep and discerning sensitivity to the characters of others -- human females in particular. He has few known foes, but the Cult of the Dragon is most definitely among them.

The Lair of Galadaeros

The Sunset Flame makes his lair in a network of caverns in the heart of the highest peak (a modest mountain by the standards of Faerûn, being a mere pinnacle rising out of high moors) on the island that he styles Flamehome (most of the Galadrans call it "Galadros" or "the Dragon's Isle"). The caverns are said to be warmed by volcanic vents at their lowest levels, and to stretch for miles, with many chambers large enough to hold Galadaeros comfortably, though he can spread his wings and glide to a landing or surge into flight in only a handful of them.

The Flame Dragon has at least three entrances to his lair, and he is said by some Galadrans to have three wizshades as servants, though others suspect these seldom-seen sorcerers are wild mages who visit him rarely -- or even some of the Seven Sisters. Elminster says that all three conjectures are wrong, but that the last one comes closest. Of other servants, there have been no signs -- beyond the dragon's obvious use of *unseen servant* spells.

The Domain of Galadaeros

From Flamehome, Galadaeros roams the waters in a wide circle that takes in the Purple Rocks. On at least three occasions, he has savagely attacked and driven away dragons who tried to make their lairs amid the isles of the Rocks. When a marauding black dragon of gigantic size attacked, Galadaeros slew her by driving her down into the sea and crushing her throat while she struggled in the cold depths. Beyond this rather modest territory, Galadaeros makes no claims -- but he also seems to consider himself exempt from the territorial claims of all other dragons, flying where he wills and (whenever possible) ignoring or avoiding battle with the wyrms he thus arouses.

The Deeds of Galadaeros

The favorite prey of Galadaeros are the mountain goats and rothé that roam the Purple Rocks and the "Cold Coast" (that part of the mainland coast north of Mirabar), but he is apt to devour creatures -- even livestock -- and drink from handy lakes and rivers wherever he finds them when ranging far and wide across the Sword Coast North on Company business. Outside of his time with the Galadran Company, Galadaeros is known to have gone on solitary flights exploring the northlands, but these have become rare in recent years. He has engaged in no known alliances or matings with other dragons (beyond whatever draconic element his relationship with Alasturan of Neverwinter may involve).

The Fate of Galadaeros

Those who go adventuring are apt to die by misadventure, as the old saying goes -- and that's as likely to be true for Galadaeros as it is for a human swordswinger; over the years, he's intruded on enough dragon territories, and swooped past enough Cult of the Dragon agents, to be widely noticed.

That would make him target enough for ambitious young dragons, even without his Company service -- which is all too apt to draw him screaming into deadly combat situations in attempts to rescue Galadran ladies from various dooms. Any attack on a Company member could well be intended as a lure deliberately to draw the Sunset Flame into a deadly trap -- and more than one cabal in Waterdeep has tried just that over the years (along with the Arcane Brotherhood, agents of the Cult of the Dragon, and even servants of a Red Wizard of Thay who hoped to enslave Galadaeros to his will). All such attempts thus far have been failures, but sooner or later one will inevitably succeed, unless (as Elminster hinted a time or two) Galadaeros has formidable magic or allies he can call upon in times of need.

Galadaeros: Male mature adult copper dragon; CR 15; Huge dragon (earth); HD 23d12+92; hp 241; Init +5; Spd 40 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor); AC 31, touch 9, flat-footed 30; Atk +29 melee (2d8+8, bite) and +24 melee (2d6+4, 2 claws) and +24 melee (1d8+4, 2 wings) and +24 melee (2d6+12, tail slap); Face/Reach 10 ft. by 20 ft./10 ft.; SA breath weapon (14d4 acid, 100 ft. line, Reflex DC 25), breath weapon (slow gas, 50 ft. cone, Will DC 25, 1d6+7 rounds duration), crush 2d8+12, frightful presence, spell-like abilities, spells; SQ blindsight 210 ft., DR 10/+1, immunities, keen senses, spell resistance 23, spider climb; AL CG; SV Fort +17, Ref +14, Will +17; Str 27, Dex 12, Con 19, Int 18, Wis 19, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +29, Concentration +24, Diplomacy +34, Escape Artist +21, Hide -7, Intimidate +8, Jump +31, Knowledge (history) +30, Knowledge (the North local) +24, Listen +32, Scry +19, Search +30, Spellcraft +27, Spot +32; Alertness, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Sunder, Wingover.

Breath Weapon (Su): Galadaeros can breathe a 100 ft. line of acid that deals 14d4 points of damage (Reflex save DC 25 half). Once he has breathed, he must wait 1d4 rounds before doing so again.

Breath Weapon (Su): Galadaeros can breathe a 50 ft. cone of *slow* gas (Will DC 25 negates). Any creature in the area that fails its save functions as though under the effect of a *slow* spell for 1d6+7 rounds. Once Galadaeros has breathed, he must wait 1d4 rounds before doing so again.

Frightful Presence (Su): This ability takes effect automatically when Galadaeros attacks, charges, or flies overhead. It affects only opponents within 210 feet and with 6 or fewer Hit Dice or levels. The affected creature must make a successful Will save (DC 25) or become panicked (if 4 or fewer HD) or shaken (if more than 5 HD). Success indicates that the target is immune to Galadaeros's frightful presence for one day.

Spell-like Abilities: 2/day -- *stone shape* (caster level 9th; save DC 14 + spell level).

Spells: Galadaeros cast spells as a 9th-level sorcerer.

Blindsight (Ex): Galadaeros can ascertain creatures within 210 feet by nonvisual means (mostly hearing and scent, but also by noticing vibrations and other environmental clues). He usually does not need to make Spot or Listen checks to notice creatures within range of its blindsight ability.

Immunities: Galadaeros is immune to acid, *sleep*, and *paralysis* effects.

Keen Senses (Ex): Galadaeros has darkvision (700 foot-range) and low-light vision (sees four times better than a human in low-light conditions).

Spider Climb (Ex): Galadaeros can climb on stone surfaces as though using the *spider climb* spell.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/7/7/5; save DC 14 + spell level): 0 -- *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*, *open/close*, *purify food and drink*, *ray of frost*, *read magic*; 1st -- *cure light wounds*, *know protections*, *reduce*, *shield*, *unseen servant*; 2nd -- *locate object*, *make whole*, *resist elements*, *speak with animals*; 3rd -- *dispel magic*, *scalespurs*, *summon monster III*; 4th -- *status*, *talonsnatch*.

The Magic of Galadaeros

Little is said of the magic of Galadaeros, beyond an oft-repeated tale about his once hurling a spell that released a handful of live firetails (a creature similar to a flamebrother salamander), and he seems to employ magic to do useful things, rather than as spectacular attacks or for foe-impressing effects.

Scalespurs

Evocation [Force]

Level: Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Personal

Effect: Up to 32 handles of force on your body

Duration: 1 hour/level (D)

You create a number of semicircular handles of force equal to your height or length in feet. These handles have a radius of 1 foot and emerge from any part of your body you desire. They are attached to you as firmly as your own limbs and cause you no discomfort (although excess weight or force applied to one of the handles can injure you if it that weight or force would harm one of your normal limbs).

Galadaeros developed this spell to help Galadrans riding him to stay on even in the middle of combat. Normally riders tether themselves to the handles with harnesses and also hold on with their hands. A person merely holding onto the bars is treated as if on a military saddle (+2 bonus on all Ride checks related to staying mounted). A person strapped in cannot fall off the mount unless the straps are untied or cut (a move-equivalent action).

The handles cannot be used to make attacks, even against ethereal or incorporeal creatures, nor do they provide you any defense. A person lying flat between two handles has up to one-half cover.

Grapple checks made against you while the handles are present get a +5 circumstance bonus.

The handles are not subject to *dispel magic* but are destroyed by *disintegrate*.

The spell gets its name from an earlier version that actually grew spurs from the dragon's scale, but he found that the spurs caused more damage to himself than to any foe, so he altered the spell to its current version.

Talonsnatch

Transmutation

Level: Sor/Wiz 4

Components: V

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Duration: 2 rounds

Target: 1 creature

Saving Throw: Will negates (see text)

Spell Resistance: Yes

You draw a single creature of up to 25 pounds per caster level toward you by a powerful telekinetic burst. This has one of two effects: an instant mounting or an instant snatch.

Instant Mounting: The target lands on your back safely in a position suitable for riding. Movement in this manner provokes attacks of opportunity from creatures (other than you) whose threatened area the target passes through. If you are a creature that normally can function as a mount (such as a horse, pony, riding dog, or dragon), you are now the target's mount. Otherwise, the creature you pull toward you can immediately attempt to grapple you as an attack of opportunity.

Instant Snatch: The creature is dragged into your open hand (or claw, if you have claws instead of hands). The creature stops in any square of your choice that is within your threatened range. Movement in this manner provokes attacks of opportunity from creatures (other than you) whose threatened area the target passes through. You deal claw damage to the target and can immediately attempt to start a grapple as if you had the Snatch feat.

Galadaeros often uses this spell to pluck Galadran ladies aloft from areas to which he can't fly close enough to reach safely with an actual talon.

Gaulauntyr, "Glorytongue"

Dragon Magazine #240

The investigations of Volo continue this time with Gaulauntyr "Glorytongue."

First mentioned in the Sword Coast Curiosities, Gaulauntyr is a mature adult topaz dragon of sinuous appearance. She has haunted the Sword Coast from Baldur's Gate to Luskan for the last century, and she moves about often to avoid other dragons, whom she has no interest in fighting. She prefers a life of stealth in and about human cities to the more typical -- for wyrms -- slumbering in a lair in the heart of a territory one dominates.

Authorities unanimously refer to this dragon as female and solitary. If she has ever taken a mate, history knows nothing of him or of his fate.

Gaulauntyr is one of the most intelligent and paranoid dragons of the North. She almost always cloaks herself in illusory disguises and hides in forest glades, abandoned warehouses or ruins, or just under cover of darkness whenever possible. She's quite adept at landing softly atop the palaces and mansions of nobles, cautiously testing the roofs to see whether they'll bear her weight, then draping herself over them to be as hidden as possible from eyes watching either from below or from windows in the building itself. She then employs *remote viewing* and *unseen servant* powers, plus her *glorytongue* power, to pluck gems and magic items out of the building.



Gaulauntyr is sometimes called "the Thief Dragon" because of her hunger for gems and the manner in which she has used spells, human hirelings, and stealth to steal gems from humans -- notably Waterdhavian nobles, but also jewelers and gem-merchants in Luskan and other places up and down the Sword Coast. Gaulauntyr's more familiar nickname, "Glorytongue," comes from her habit of delivering touch effects with her tongue after employing a 1st-level power, *glorytongue*, to make it a long, precise ribbon of flesh that can enter rooms via openings as small as a keyhole.

Gaulauntyr's true success, however, comes from a magic item and her own sly wits. The item, *Jharakkan's Talon*, is a little-known draconic artifact of Faerûn. More importantly, her shrewd mind allows Gaulauntyr to understand the societies of Luskan, Neverwinter, Waterdeep, Baldur's Gate, and Caer Callidyr, thus learning where gems and wealth may be found, and when they'll be most poorly guarded. She has learned the way both dragons and humans tend to think, allowing her to misdirect those folk of both races time and time again.

Gaulauntyr often uses spells to lure or misdirect humans, employing such devices as the illusion of a beautiful human girl to give sobbing evidence or to distract pursuers. On one occasion, the Thief Dragon was lying in a stable yard, and she magically cloaked herself to appear as a fresh and steaming pile of manure, with her elongated *glorytongue* running through a cellar and up a heating-vent into a great bedchamber in an adjacent mansion. Guards were pounding on the door of the room, trying to reach its rightful occupant -- a noble lady whom Gaulauntyr was keeping bound, gagged, and stuffed above the canopy of her own bed with the dragon's *glorytongue*. The lady had struck an alarm-gong before being thus trapped, and the guards gave the dragon only a few minutes to think of something before they brought the door down. When they burst into the room at last, the astonished guards saw naked women diving out every window of the bedchamber, clutching their lady's gems and finery. When the men gave chase to the illusory thieves and the stolen treasure, Gaulauntyr stuffed the lady headfirst down her own garderobe to keep her quiet for a while, supervised an *unseen servant* while it tied up the best gems in some bed-linens, and rolled the bundle out a window.

The guard whom the falling gems almost hit had a few moments to stare at them before the dragon's tongue, emerging from the cellar, dealt him a spell that toppled him into slumber. The dragon snatched up the gems and took wing in the suddenly glowing guise of a red dragon with a certain and recognizable wizard riding a high saddle on its back, so that the crime would be blamed on someone else.

Gaulauntyr spends her days watching (*remote viewing*, in most cases) human life up and down the Sword Coast, devising new ways to steal gems or, sometimes, food. She loves exotic cheeses and sauces, even though human portions give her only fleeting tastes of such delicacies.

Glorytongue's relationships with other dragons have been, in the words of the human sage Velsaert of Baldur's Gate, "one long series of hurried escapes and misdirections."

The key to Gaulauntyr's character could be said to be her wry grasp of human and draconic nature, and the skill born of this that always keeps her thinking three steps ahead of opponents. She always has an escape route, a scheme to disappear or adopt a disguise, or a secondary plan for seizure of gems or goods if the first one fails. Often ending a secondary crime with a spectacular occurrence, such as pulling down a building, creates enough confusion that Gaulauntyr can pursue her original plan once more.

Gaulauntyr is said to be an accomplished mimic of human voices and is very good at improvising interesting small talk to put in the mouth of one of her spell-images. Many dragons are said to be halfheartedly seeking her to recover the gems she has stolen, but Gaulauntyr seems to have no strong and persistent foes. The Cult of the Dragon would probably be deadly enemies to her if they knew just who was behind many of the thefts from their agents and treasuries that have occurred up and down the Sword Coast.

Gaulauntyr's Lair

Glorytongue makes her true lair in a many-armed tidewater cavern on the western face of a tiny island known as Alsapir's Rock, which was named for a long-ago fisherman who died when his boat was dashed apart against it during a storm. The Rock is so close to Mount Sar that it is ignored by most maps and charts.

Here she keeps the gems she steals, as well as a captive deepspawn, whose creatures can't escape from the caverns thanks to its watery entry. The monsters it births includes rothé, deer, and boars, among other prey suitable for Gaulauntyr's appetite. The cavern lacks any food for these beasts, but Gaulauntyr usually devours them long before they have any chance to escape.

The lair has no known traps or notable features, but Gaulauntyr usually devours any humans who see its interior. She keeps her treasures hidden in crevices and on ledges behind large boulders that she rolls up to form a false wall. Thus, most intruders think the cavern ends where her heaped boulders begin. The Thief Dragon has no known servants or habitual accomplices or allies.

Gaulauntyr's Domain

From Alsapir's Rock, Gaulauntyr roams up and down the coast, usually keeping to the outward islets of the Moonshaes or the vicinity of Waterdeep, but sometimes working as far south as the Nelanther. Glorytongue is finding the City of Splendors and its environs increasingly crowded with various disguised dragons and other formidable spies and creatures of stealth. She makes fewer and less bold forays into its range than she once did.

The Deeds of Gaulauntyr

Although she customarily dines on what her captive deepspawn produces, Gaulauntyr favors wyverns, giant squids, and -- when she dares to attack them -- dragon turtles. She has almost died several times trying to slay dragon turtles. Once, during a storm, she succeeded in beaching one too far out of water for it to return, and she had a feast.

Gaulauntyr spends most days more lazily, using spells to spy on events up and down the coast. She has the strength to dive in and clamber out of the submerged mouth of her cavern in all but the worst storm weather or winter ice, and she is known to have some high meadows and desolate tors to rest upon when she can't return to her lair or doesn't want to lead pursuers to it.

Gaulauntyr's Fate

Glorytongue is not likely to have a long and uneventful life. Sooner or later, one of the wizards who dwell in the Sword Coast North will catch up with her. Alternatively, an attempted theft might go seriously wrong. The topaz dragon can be a fearsome foe in any battle, but if she's caught overextended, she could well be slain.

At least one elven mage of Evermeet is considering how Gaulauntyr's psionic powers could be manipulated so as to make her steal things upon command, thus providing the elven realm with an additional line of defense. In such a case, Gaulauntyr could deprive explorers bent on reaching the fabled Far Isle of the magic they need, or of masts and keeps for their boats, or she might merely distract them with the apparent rise of a persistent personal foe.

Gaulauntyr: Female Mature Adult Topaz Dragon; CR 17; Huge dragon (water); HD 25d12+125; hp 287; Init +4; Spd 40 ft., burrow 5 ft., swim 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor); AC 32, touch 8, flat-footed 32; Atk +32 melee (2d8+9, bite) and +27 melee (2d6+4, 2 claws) and +27 melee (1d8+4, 2 wings) and +27 melee (2d6+13, tail slap) or +27 melee (2d8+17, crush); Face/Reach 10 ft. by 20 ft./10 ft.; SA breath weapon (cone of dehydration, 14d8), frightful presence, psionic combat modes (*mind thrust*, *ego whip*, *id insinuation*, *psychic crush*, *mind blast/empty mind*, *thought shield*, *mental barrier*, *tower of iron will*), psionics, spell-like abilities; SQ blindsight 210 ft., DR 10/+1, immunities, keen senses, psionic powers (71 power points), psionic resistance 24, water breathing; AL CN; SV Fort +19, Ref +16, Will +19; Str 29, Dex 10, Con 21, Int 22, Wis 21, Cha 20.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +16, Bluff +15, Concentration +30, Diplomacy +32, Disguise +15, Escape Artist +25, Gather Information +13, Hide -8, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (local [Amn]) +18, Knowledge (local [Nelanther Isles]) +13, Knowledge (local [Sword Coast]) +18, Knowledge (local [Tethyr]) +13, Knowledge (local [the Moonshaes]) +14, Knowledge (local [Waterdeep]) +18, Listen +30, Scry +22, Search +31, Spellcraft +31, Spot +30, Swim +42; Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Psionic Focus (Psychometabolism), Snatch.

Breath Weapon (Su): Gaulauntyr has one breath weapon: a 50-foot cone of dehydration that deals 14d8 points of damage (Reflex DC 27 half). Her breath looks like a watery blast. When directed against an aqueous liquid (water or a liquid consisting mainly of water), this effect evaporates 1 cubic foot of water per hit point of damage dealt.

Crush: When flying or jumping, Gaulauntyr can land on opponents three or more size categories smaller than herself as a standard action, using her whole body to crush them. A crush attack affects as many creatures as can fit under her body. Each creature in the affected area must succeed at a Reflex save (DC 27) or be pinned. If Gaulauntyr chooses to maintain the pin, treat it as a normal grapple attack (grapple bonus +42). Each pinned creature automatically takes 2d8+17 points of bludgeoning damage that round and each succeeding round that it remains pinned.

Frightful Presence (Su): This ability takes effect automatically when Gaulauntyr attacks, charges, or flies overhead. It affects only opponents with 24 or fewer Hit Dice or levels. The affected creature must make a successful Will save (DC 27) or become panicked (if 4 or fewer HD) or shaken (if more than 5 HD). Success indicates that the target is immune to Gaulauntyr's frightful presence for one day.

Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day -- *fog cloud*. Caster level 9th; save DC 15 + spell level.

Blindsight (Ex): Gaulauntyr can discern creatures and objects to a range of 210 feet by using nonvisual senses (mostly by hearing and scent, but also by vibration and other environmental clues). Invisibility and darkness are irrelevant, though Gaulauntyr still can't discern ethereal beings. Gaulauntyr usually does not need to make Spot or Listen checks to notice creatures within range of her blindsight ability.

Immunities: Gaulauntyr is immune to cold, sleep, and paralysis effects.

Keen Senses (Ex): Gaulauntyr has darkvision (700-foot range) and low-light vision that allows her to see four times better than a human.

Psionics (Sp): Gaulauntyr can use psionics as a 9th-level psion (egoist). She can also use the psionic power *feather fall* twice per day as a spell-like ability (manifest level 9th).

Water Breathing (Ex): Gaulauntyr can breathe water as readily as air.

Psionic Powers Known (save DC = d20 + power level + key ability modifier): 0 -- *daze, far hand, finger of fire, missive, my light, verve*; 1st -- *conceal thoughts, empathy, glorytongue, unseen servant* (as the spell, but a metacreative power); 2nd -- *body adjustment, claws of the bear, knock*; 3rd -- *displacement, false sensory input, remote viewing*; 4th -- *dimension door, psychofeedback*. The topaz dragon is detailed in the *Monster Manual II*.

Gaulauntyr's Magic

One power devised by Gaulauntyr appears hereafter, but her mightiest magic is *Jharakkan's Talon*, a draconic artifact she wears at all times.

Jharakkan's Talon

Jharakkan's Talon is really a talon-sheath: a hollow cone of black horn from some unknown creature. It is very hard and tough, so most blows don't even mark it. The *Talon* is 8 inches long, and is large enough to fit over the end of a dragon's own talon. It has a pierced end, so the real talon protrudes through it, allowing the dragon to make claw attacks normally while wearing it. The *Talon* is named for Jharakkan, a dragon-sorcerer who created it long ago. (No one alive is sure where or when.) Old legends recorded in books kept at Candlekeep say that Jharakkan was a black wyrm who lived for over 4,000 years and devised many magic items. No other evidence supports these tales, however, and some theorize that these tales are simply an exaggerated retelling of another tale, and so on.

The *Talon* was found about 60 summers ago by Gaulauntyr on the skeleton of a drowned dragon that was just off the end of the island of Highport in the Moonshaes. The skeleton might have been the remains of the red dragon known as Ualintharghar the Devouring Flame, of whom the Ffolk tell wild tales.

Other creatures (such as humanoids) that cannot wear the *Talon* can still employ its powers simply by touching it. Certain organizations (such as the Zhentarim, the Red Wizards, the Arcane Brotherhood, and the Cult of the Dragon) would be very interested in acquiring the *Talon* to see whether its powers could be unraveled and adapted to the creation of items that would temporarily allow underlings to cast a few minor spells so as to aid in attacks, though it will probably drain the lives of those unfortunates in the process.

Holding or wearing the *Talon* allows any arcane spellcaster to cast six additional spells per day, with one coming from levels 1 through 6, similar to a *ring of wizardry*'s ability to grant additional spell slots. The item must be held or worn to provide these additional slots; it cannot be used to prepare additional spells and then left behind. It does not allow a caster to use spells they could not normally use (so a 1st-level wizard could not use the *Talon* to prepare a 6th-level spell, but she could use the higher-level slots to prepare lower-level spells).

However, the *Talon* bears a curse: Every time one of the extra slots is used to cast (but not prepare) a spell, the artifact deals 1d6 points of damage to the user. This damage does not disrupt the caster's concentration and does not require any special magic to heal. Several stories exist about how to destroy this artifact, if one were so inclined.

The *Talon* must be immersed in the blood of at least a dozen kinds of true dragons within the same month.

The *Talon* must be struck by a *rod of negation* while it is in contact with six *rings of wizardry*. All items would be destroyed along with the *Talon*.

Glorytongue

Psychometabolism (Str)

Level: Psion 1

Display: Ma

Manifestation Time: 1 action

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: 1 round/level (D)

Power Points: 1

You gain the ability to stretch your tongue great distances and manipulate it as if it were a true limb.

The tongue is treated as a Diminutive construct with 1/2 HD, hit points equal to half your maximum hit points, AC 13 (+4 size, -1 Dex), Strength 1, Dexterity 8, Con --, Int --, Wis 1, Cha 1. It uses your base attack bonus to touch, grab, or attack, but it does not threaten an area and deals no damage with its attacks. It is fully under your control and can manipulate objects like a tentacle. You can use the *glorytongue* to deliver touch spells. You can cause it grow (up to 100 feet long) or shrink (to its normal size) as a free action. It does not interfere with spellcasting or speaking. It can be used to make grapple checks, although its weak Strength makes it difficult to actually grapple a creature. It can wind its way up ropes, walls, and other vertical surfaces, and it is strong enough to suspend up to 10 feet of itself free of any supporting surface (to cross a pit, for example).

The end of the tongue is a primitive sensory organ and can see up to 5 feet away with normal vision. (It does not have blindsight, darkvision, or low-light vision). You perceive everything the tongue perceives. Because it is an extension of your tongue, you can use it to taste things, although poisons and harmful effects do not transmit to you through the *glorytongue*.

If destroyed, all but the original length of tongue that existed before the *glorytongue* power was used collapses into dust.

Hoondarrh, "Red Rage"

Dragon Magazine #241

Most folk who dwell up and down the Sword Coast have heard of the Red Rage of Mintarn. That may make the venerable red dragon Hoondarrh one of the most famous wyrms in history though most folk think he's no more than a fancy tale concocted to scare children.

Yet the Sleeping Wurm of Skadaurak is very much alive. Few villages may be torn apart under his talons these days, and fewer ships burnt to ashes, as the rich and satisfied Hoondarrh begins his second Long Sleep, but his relative absence from the scene doesn't make him dead or a mere legend.

The confusion surrounding Hoondarrh is due largely to his connections with two other famous dragons: Skadaurak, whom he slew to gain his present lair; and Angkarasce the Lost, whose hoard Hoondarrh seized. (Angkarasce was a white dragon whose sorcery and wealth were unmatched in the early days of human settlement of the Sword Coast, and who wore a cloak of splendid legends because of it. He is long dead, consumed by his own sorceries as he sought to enspell himself into immortality.)



Some say Hoondarrh is Skadaurak, or his son; others believe that something is on the isle where Hoondarrh lairs that makes dragons sleep and then awaken revitalized and in new bodies -- and that the Red Rage of Mintarn is really Angkarasce the Mighty in a younger body of a different breed, but with the same fell old wisdom and sorcery.

Growing as confused as the bards and sages of the North? The best way to learn the truth (something Volo never did) is to follow the known life of Hoondarrh down the years. With Elminster's aid, we can trace the career of a dragon whose toll of slain adventurers still rises with each passing decade.

Hoondarrh was born somewhere in the eastern Sword Coast North in the late summer of the Year of Scorching Suns (460 DR). The first hatchling of a brood whose parents quarreled, leaving one dead and the other sorely wounded, Hoondarrh was always large, vigorous, and aggressive. He slew and devoured his fellow hatchlings, and soon he grew bold enough to challenge his remaining parent.

Hoondarrh lost that fight but escaped with his life, fleeing westward into the chaos of chill mists, icebergs, and desolate islands that cloak the northernmost Sword Coast. There he devoured many creatures, growing in size, cunning, and strength, until a fateful night in the Year of Fire and Frost (600 DR), when he swooped down on a human expedition struggling in the snows to find a pass through the Spine of the World and devoured the lot of them. On the body of one expedition member, the wizard Tharilim of Calimport, was a magic gem: an emerald as big as a human fist, the *Ongild* (named for the Halruaan wizard who had crafted it). This gem has the powers of a *ring of regeneration*, and it empowers anyone bearing it to use four particular spells once per day at caster level 18 (Elminster believes they are *delayed blast fireball*, *prismatic spray*, *reverse gravity*, and *spell turning*). The *Ongild* is still lodged somewhere in Hoondarrh's innards, walled away in a canker, and he can call on its powers even today. At the time, the *Ongild's* powers both astonished the dragon and gave him fresh confidence. After experimenting with his new-found magical might (slaying at least one young dragon in the process), he set forth to challenge his surviving parent.

He won the battle this time and found himself owner of a small hoard in a crumbling mountain cave -- just as an orc horde boiled down out of the north. Hoondarrh swooped into their midst, slaying and devouring at will. At first he simply lost himself in the exultation of killing, but then he undertook either to obliterate the horde or to lessen it so that no orcs reached his newly won lair. He succeeded in the latter goal, but his repeated attacks attracted the notice of another wyrm, Naroun the Great White Ghost, who is a legend among orcs for his habit of gliding along very low above the snows, snatching up prey with his talons as he came upon them. Naroun attacked the intruder, and the white wyrm and the red cartwheeled across the sky for two days before the Great White Ghost died in a collision with a mountain peak, and the bloody, sorely wounded Hoondarrh could collapse on a nearby ridge to heal. He lay there for days, twitching feebly, as the *Ongild* did its work -- only to be rudely interrupted one morning when the ridge slid out from under him in an avalanche that carried him down into a cramped bowl valley and laid bare one side of a long-buried cavern crammed with sparkling gems and heaps of ancient coins. The bones of a dead dragon were stretched out atop all this wealth, and Hoondarrh thrust them aside to claim the pile as his own bed.

From magic items among the hoard, as he lay there healing, Hoondarrh learned the bones were those of the legendary Angkarasce the Lost. Many of the magic items buried under the resting Hoondarrh were metal orbs that stored spells, and from them the red dragon gleaned a roster of spells he could cast to augment the four spells of the *Ongild*.

Hoondarrh realized he had at a single stroke become richer than most dragons had ever become and that the cavern, raked by the howling storm winds of winter, was no longer a suitable lair. He had to find or make a better home -- a place to keep safe his new-found hoard.

Elminster believes that gaining this truly awesome hoard early on kept Hoondarrh largely free of the gnawing hunger for wealth that dominates most red dragons, replacing it instead with a desire for security.

It is known that when the red dragon was healed, he brought down the roof of the cavern to bury the hoard once more. Then he set forth on a long and bloody exploration of the Sword Coast North. For years he flew far and wide, battling dragons wherever he found them, but not bothering to pursue those who hid or fled. He was searching for the right lair, learning all the while who dwelt where in this vast land of snows and mountains and endless forests.

The growing settlements of men fascinated Hoondarrh. After destroying a few with almost casual ease, he discovered that lying hidden and watching the deeds of men (with the aid of a long-range *arcane eye* spell gleaned from one of his orbs) was far greater entertainment -- and alerted him to when herds of livestock would be driven north into his waiting jaws.

From this time spent lying on mountaintops overlooking Waterdeep and other human cities came Hoondarrh's love of pranks, bold deceptions, and treachery among humans and humanoids. Occasionally he grew restless or hungry, and erupted from his rests into wild flights of slaughter and devouring, usually ranging up and down the islands off the Sword Coast from the Moonshaes to the Nelanther. The big, brawling red dragon became a familiar sight in coastal skies -- a sight that evoked terror.

Often Hoondarrh wheeled above ships of cowering men bellowing with sky-shaking laughter at their terrified antics and sparing them, but when he became enraged, he'd attack the strongest castles with his talons and spells, bringing mighty fortresses crashing down into ruin.

Thankfully, Hoondarrh usually flew inland when hungry. In his explorations, Hoondarrh had discovered the great fun of flying low over the Shaar with jaws agape to scoop up wild horses and other roaming herd beasts by the ton. Orc hordes occasionally provided him with more local gluttony, but the red dragon hunted the coast itself for food less and less often.

What Hoondarrh was still seeking, as the centuries passed, was a lair. He found it one spring day in the Year of the Singing Arrows (884 DR), when the great red wyrm Skadaurak awakened from a Long Sleep in his cavern on the island that bore his name (the northernmost of the two islands northwest of Mintarn).

Skadaurak had been sleeping for almost 1,000 years, employing *Saldrinur's Slow Gem*, a Halruaan magic item that plunges its wearer into temporal stasis of a set duration (usually two or four centuries, though the user may set any time). Such a sleep may be interrupted by any number of preselected alarm conditions. Its maker, Saldrinar of the Seven Spells, used it to live far beyond his normal span, to a time in which safe and secure alternatives to lichdom had been mastered and escaped into one of them. (Elminster will say no more of this, beyond the curt advice: "Even diligent readers should always be chasing some secrets.")

By use of this magic jewel, Skadaurak also sought to live on until magic to rival that of Netheril rose again among the ambitious, creative, everstriving human wizards, and he might find a sorcerer who'd give him immortality in return for the magic he'd amassed. During his extended slumbers, the Red Terror of Mintarn had become a legend of the dim past, with most folk believing him long dead if they remembered him at all.

They were not far wrong. When he dug his way out of his mountainside cavern and shook out stiff, long-unused wings to fly inland to find food, Skadaurak found instead an old red dragon of unusual size and vigor plunging down out of the sky at him.

He flapped hastily aloft -- straight into spell after rending spell, followed by the teeth and talons of Hoondarrh himself. The younger red dragon tore apart his sleepy rival and descended without delay to examine the newly-revealed lair.

It seemed perfect, and it even came furnished with a respectable hoard; much smaller than that of Angkarasce, but even more rich in magic. Hoondarrh explored it and soon found the *Slow Gem*. Since acquiring the fabled hoard of the Lost Dragon, Hoondarrh had been too rich to care about mere wealth, but here was something that made him hungry again. To live forever. . . .

First he needed to make this lair as secure as any lair could be. He set to work enlarging it and ferrying his wealth hence, and so he spent two solid years before being attacked by adventurers.

Their fate was no grander than to be a quick meal, but their attempt reminded Hoondarrh that the grasping little annoyances known as humans were perhaps his deadliest foes. He set about delving out caverns all around his true lair and flying far afield in search of wizards and artisans, employing spells to spy such folk out and communicate with them from a safe distance.

On the island north of Mintarn, several "false lairs" came into being: newly-dug caves baited with excess treasure and well furnished with traps installed by the mages and dwarven stonecutters Hoondarrh had hired. These artisans were given free rein in developing fiendish waiting deaths for human-sized intruders.

A special team of mages were even paid their own weights in gems to acquire some of the beasts known as deepspawn, and so arrange the rearing of these strange monsters that they spat forth rothé, horses, and cattle. The 'spawn were installed in caves on the neighboring island to furnish Hoondarrh with everyday food.

When he was satisfied that the defenses of his lair were strong (a conclusion reached after two unsuccessful pirate raids and a stealthy dragon attack that ended in bloody disaster for the mercury dragon attempting it), the Red Rage sent away the last of his artisans. Sealing his cavern with boulders and spells, Hoondarrh fared forth across Faerûn, spending a leisurely two seasons hunting down and devouring all of his former employees he could find, to keep his secrets as safe as possible. He'd forgotten that humans could write things down and so pass trouble on down the years.

One winter day in the Year of the Empty Hand (896 DR), the folk of Mintarn were startled by the thunderous arrival of a huge red dragon in the meadows above their harbor. Desperate to protect their meager livestock, they tremblingly took up arms -- but they were astonished when the dragon let it be known he'd come to bargain: If they paid him a gold piece per inhabitant per year, he'd let them all live, and even protect them against pirates.

They accepted -- as the elders muttered, what else could they do? -- and received another surprise when the dragon told the crew of the first tribute ship to stop by his other isle on their way home and take for their own not more than two cows each.

Sages have debated the motives behind the unusual kindness of Hoondarrh for years, but according to Elminster, the Red Rage dealt with the folk of Mintarn as he did solely to gain a reputation. As he happily raided coastal shipping and lands, the folk of Mintarn told all whom they traded with of his vast wealth and trap-guarded lair . . . and the greedy adventurers started to come.

Such visitors provide Hoondarrh with entertainment and magic. He enjoys watching intruders get maimed in his traps before he devours them, and he also likes to gather magic items of any sort -- from gathering *belts of feather fall* to *rods of lordly might* -- and gains a fairly steady flow of such baubles from the adventurers he has lured into his waiting claws. Only Hoondarrh knows the ways around all of the traps on his island and the traps that in turn guard those ways around.

In the meantime, he undertakes decade-long sleeps, using the jewel wrought by Saldrinar. Between slumbers, he entertains himself by watching from afar the activities of humans (in particular, in the city of Waterdeep). He rewards humans and others whose jests, pranks, treacheries and intrigues amuse him by paying them handsomely -- though he'll hunt anyone who dares to steal from him clear around Toril if need be. Always he seeks word of wizards working on magic concerned with eternal life or enhanced longevity. Though the Red Rage suspects the elves of Evermeet and the human mages of Halruaa and Thay have progressed in such studies beyond all others, he fears to approach lands bristling with powerful, well-organized mages, and thus far only tries to pry into goings-on in those places by hiring spies.

Ambitious adventurers are advised that Hoondarrh the Mighty pays well, but he has a habit of devouring agents who fail him, irritate him, or who he thinks are learning too much about him or his lair. They are further warned that his isle boasts a collection of traps unsurpassed in all Faerûn, and has claimed the lives of even powerful mages who prudently sought only to escape it soon after their arrival.

Now a venerable wyrm of increasingly lengthy sleeps and lessening energy, Hoondarrh dreams of a mate and offspring and becomes increasingly impatient for the achievement of immortality, for he dare not allow himself intimacy until he is secure in its everlasting protection.

A fighter of almost unmatched experience and cunning, the Red Rage of Mintarn is known to have defeated foes as formidable as a quartet of beholders who sought his treasure and tried to trick him into a prepared killing-ground with news of immortality spells they were willing to trade.

Hoondarrh also possesses a knowledge of the lay of the land of western Faerûn (as seen from the air) matched by no other living being and is said to be an increasingly accomplished caster of the many spells he has inherited from his various hoards, knowing how to combine magic to devastating effect.

Hoondarrh's Lair

The Red Rage maintains at least two sleeping-caverns stocked with food-producing deepspawn and treasure -- one on a remote island near the Icepeak, and another somewhere inland in the mountains of the Sword Coast North. His main lair on the isle of Skadaurak, however, is a vast complex of subterranean rooms -- in fact, a recently-built "dungeon." It has no less than three shafts where a large red dragon can fly in and out with wings spread; one of them turns back to angle almost straight up into a mountain peak, and there ends in the main treasure cavern.

The rest of the island is honeycombed with trap-filled false lairs. Some of these are even home to a few bold brigands, whom Hoondarrh suffers to live because they amuse him with their furtive diggings, and they have learned not to dare any open assault on his main caverns. From time to time he snatches one up and dumps the man in Baldur's Gate or Waterdeep or Athkatla, to babble tales of the vast and rich lair that sprawls through the very heart of the isle of Skadaurak, and so lure more adventurers hence. Though Hoondarrh is not known to possess any sentient servants, his lair seems alive with golems and gargoylelike automatons of various sorts -- and even with captive monsters that are kept ravenously hungry.

Hoondarrh's Domain

From his lair, Hoondarrh roams Faerûn more or less at will, avoiding magic-strong realms such as Evermeet, Thay, and Halruaa. He also largely avoids combat with other dragons, though he'll humble or cripple a persistent foe. If pressed, he'll try to "flee" out over the Sea of Swords and trick his foe into diving at him before using a *wingbind* spell so they'll plunge helplessly under the waves and drown.

He enjoys roaming the backlands and the Shaar, chasing down food, but his domain is the coastal islands up and down the Sword Coast. He delights in toying with ships south of Mintarn, and only his Long Sleeps have kept humans from abandoning water travel in the region.

The Deeds of Hoondarrh

The favorite prey of Hoondarrh is a creature who has tried to cheat or outwit him. He is contemptuous of most good-aligned dragons and delights in surprising wyrms of all sorts with the strength and variety of his own magic. If he's not sleeping at the heart of his lair, Hoondarrh spends most days scrying events in western Faerûn -- and so is almost never surprised by events or intruders.

Currently Hoondarrh has his eye on certain ambitious rising mages in Tethyr and among the noble families of Waterdeep. Surely some of them will agree to develop spells to keep a dragon young and vigorous for extra years, in return for financial sponsorship and timely magical aid -- if only he can trust any of them and find a way to make that trust binding.

Over the last four decades, the Red Rage has thrice sent illusions that he can speak through, in the shapes of attractive humans, to meet with selected individuals of rising magical power. In such guise he always purports to represent this or that fictitious dragon and requests that the mage develop specific draconic-assistance spells (a magic to swiftly heal torn wings or to regenerate scales) in return for wealth and his protection or at least spell-hurling aid. Hoondarrh feels that anything so blunt as a revelation of his goal of immortality can wait until he's addressing a trusted ally with whom he's worked successfully for a decade or more.

One prospect rejected the offer with a frantic whirlwind of fearful and angry spells. Another, obviously but shyly smitten with the attractive agent, cited overwhelming present pressures of work and oppressive local politics, requesting that he be contacted later. Subsequent overtures yielded a variety of excuses, but never a definite acceptance or refusal. Eventually Hoondarrh allowed himself a snarl, then moved on.

The third wizard, Elquaern Hunabar (of the noble Hunabars of Waterdeep) accepted the offer and set to work. Three spells were duly produced, but the Red Rage detected a flaw in one spell and suspected that the others also contained deficiencies -- small, covert weaknesses. He requested a face-to-face meeting of dragon and mage. Several times the offer was politely accepted, but then delays were always requested. Hoondarrh made thoughtful preparations for the long-awaited encounter . . . preparations he suspected were more than matched in thoughtfulness by his counterpart.

The meeting finally occurred in the Caraww, a large but shallow cavern in the rising hillsides just west of Rassalantar. The gaping-mouthed cave had long been known as a haunt of bears and the occasional leucrotta, but no one had suspected that a dragon made its lair there. When Elquaern left his bodyguard and grimly scrambled up a bracken-cloaked slope into the Caraww, a seemingly solid side wall of the cavern faded away like smoke to reveal a mound of loose coins and the head of a green dragon peering around it. More of Elquaern's patron, who introduced herself as Galarrdratha, became visible as the sorcerer stepped forward. All pleasantries ceased abruptly when the dragon calmly asked Elquaern what treacheries he intended, citing the suspicious details of his spells -- details that a dragon could not help but notice seemed intended to give an informed human some measure of control over any wyrm casting them.

The proud young Hunabar wasted no breath on a reply but activated a spell that cloaked him in multiple defensive spells, then let fly at Galarrdratha with two magic rods. Their fury caused the illusory wyrm no damage, accomplishing little more than sending stone shards slashing about the cavern, but Elquaern's defenses saved him from any harm, so the watching Hoondarrh used a spell of his own to bring down the ceiling of the Caraww. No more has been heard since of Galarrdratha the green dragon, or of Elquaern Hunabar, but the much-enlarged Caraww is sometimes used by shepherds seeking shelter for their flocks against driving storms. Hoondarrh's discreet inquiries continue . . . as does his use of aliases.

Hoondarrh's Fate

Very few dragons have attained immortality, but if no one slays the Red Rage of Mintarn in the next 30 years or so (and he practically goads sorcerers and adventurers to do so), he stands a good chance of becoming some sort of ghost dragon. He's only a few spells away from putting such a disembodied essence into control of a dragonlike mechanical construct or zombie dragon body . . . but he is proceeding cautiously for fear that the Cult of the Dragon will learn of his state and swoop in at a crucial moment to seize control over him.

Hoondarrh: Male great wyrm red dragon; CR 20; Colossal dragon (fire); HD 40d12+440; hp 700; Init +4; Spd 40 ft., fly 200 ft. (clumsy); AC 41, touch 2, flat-footed 41; Atk +50 melee (4d8+19, bite) and +45 melee (4d6+9, 2 claws) and +45 melee (2d8+9, 2 wings) and +45 melee (4d6+28, tail slap); Face/Reach 40 ft. by 80 ft./15 ft.; SA breath weapon (70-foot cone of fire), crush 4d8+28, frightful presence, spell-like abilities, spells, tail sweep 2d8+28; SQ blindsight 360 ft., DR 20/+3, fire subtype, immunities, keen senses, regeneration (as *ring of regeneration*), SR 32; AL CE; SV Fort +35, Ref +24, Will +30; Str 49, Dex 10, Con 33, Int 26, Wis 27, Cha 26.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +48, Bluff +51, Climb +29, Concentration +54, Diplomacy +57, Escape Artist +15, Gather Information +23, Heal +13, Hide -6, Intimidate +17, Jump +59, Knowledge (arcana) +42, Knowledge (Sword Coast local) +23, Knowledge (Waterdeep local) +13, Listen +51, Scry +51, Search +51, Sense Motive +28, Spellcraft +48, Spot +51, Swim +24, Wilderness Lore +13; Cleave, Expertise, Great Fortitude, Hover, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Quicken Spell, Snatch, Spell Penetration, Widen Spell.

Breath Weapon (Su): Hoondarrh can breathe a 70-foot cone of fire that deals 24d10 points of fire damage (Reflex DC 41 half). Once he has used his breath weapon, he must wait 1d4 rounds before doing so again.

Crush: When flying or jumping, Hoondarrh can land on Huge or smaller opponents as a standard action, using his whole body to crush them. A crush attack affects as many creatures as can fit under Hoondarrh's body. Each potentially affected creature must make a Reflex save (DC 41) or be pinned, automatically taking 4d8+28 points of bludgeoning damage that round and every round thereafter that Hoondarrh maintains the pin (treat his attempts to maintain the pin as normal grapple attacks; grapple bonus +75).

Frightful Presence (Su): This ability takes effect automatically when Hoondarrh attacks, charges, or flies overhead. It affects only opponents with 39 or fewer Hit Dice or levels within a radius of 360 feet. Each affected creature must make a successful Will save (DC 38) to resist the effect. On a failure, a creature with 5 or more Hit Dice or levels becomes shaken for 4d6 rounds, and a creature with 4 or fewer Hit Dice or levels becomes panicked for 4d6 rounds. Success indicates that the target is immune to Hoondarrh's frightful presence for one day.

Spell-Like Abilities: 12/day -- *locate object*; 3/day -- *suggestion*; 1/day -- *delayed blast fireball*, *find the path*, *discern location*, *prismatic spray*, *reverse gravity*, *spell turning*. Caster level 19th; save DC 18 + spell level.

Spells: Hoondarrh casts spells as a 19th-level sorcerer.

Tail Sweep: Hoondarrh can sweep with his tail as a standard action. The sweep affects a half circle with a diameter of 40 feet, centered on his rear. Every Large or smaller creature within the swept area takes 2d8+28 points of bludgeoning damage (Reflex DC 41 half).

Blindsight (Ex): Hoondarrh can ascertain creatures by nonvisual means (mostly hearing and scent, but also by noticing vibration and other environmental clues) to a range of 360 feet. Invisibility and darkness are irrelevant, though the creature still can't discern ethereal beings. He usually does not need to make Spot or Listen checks to notice creatures within range of his blindsight ability.

Fire Subtype: Hoondarrh is immune to fire damage, but he takes double damage from cold unless a saving throw for half damage is allowed, in which case he takes half damage on a success and double damage on a failure.

Immunities: Hoondarrh is immune to fire, *sleep*, and paralysis effects.

Keen Senses (Ex): Hoondarrh has darkvision (1,200-foot range) and low-light vision (can see four times as far as a human in low-light conditions and twice as far in normal light).

Regeneration: Hoondarrh's gem allows him to heal damage as though he had a *ring of regeneration*.

Sorcerer Spells Known* (6/8/8/8/8/7/7/7/4; save DC 18 + spell level): 0 -- *arcane mark, dancing lights, detect magic, ghost sound, mage hand, mending, open/close, prestidigitation, read magic*; 1st -- *change self, charm person, expeditious retreat, silent image, true strike*; 2nd -- *darkvision, detect thoughts, fog cloud, invisibility, summon swarm*; 3rd -- *dispel magic, fireball, vampiric touch, wingbind*; 4th -- *arcane eye, charm monster, scrying, stoneskin*; 5th -- *Rary's telepathic bond, sending, stone shape, wall of stone*; 6th -- *mass suggestion, programmed image, project image*; 7th -- *finger of death, reverse gravity, spell turning*; 8th -- *Bigby's clenched fist, discern location, horrid wilting*; 9th -- *foresight, power word kill*.

Because of his magic items, Hoondarrh knows at least two more spells of levels 1-6. Those spells are unknown.

Hoondarrh's Magic

The Red Rage of Mintarn commands a vast arsenal of spells gained from his hoards, and over a score of portable magic items his spells can trigger, to give him magic well beyond the spell levels a venerable red dragon can normally attain.

One spell he often uses is a widened *fireball* (which he calls a "*mirror fireball*"), or a quickened *fireball*, casting them to hedge an enemy in between the spread and his own breath weapon. [Widen Spell is a +3 level metamagic feat from Magic of Faerûn that increases the area of a burst, emanation, or spread by 50%.]

Wingbind

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]

Level: Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V, S, F

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Target: One winged creature

Duration: 1 round/level (D)

Saving Throw: Will half

Spell Resistance: Yes

The subject's wings become paralyzed. The subject cannot use its wings to fly, swim, attack, or anything else requiring movement. If the creature is currently flying, it falls and suffers normal falling damage.

If the creature succeeds at its saving throw against this spell, its wings are only partially paralyzed. Its fly speed is reduced to one-half and its fly maneuverability drops by one category. If it uses its wings to swim, its swim speed is reduced as well. Attacks with the wings have a -2 circumstance penalty.

Arcane Focus: A pair of iron nails.

Hysharr *

the Wurm of the Lake

Hysharr is a young green dragon on the verge of attaining adulthood. He dwells at the bottom of a large lake, where for the past several years his exhalations have been slowly poisoning the water. Dead fish have begun to wash up on the shores, and animals that drink from the lake become ill, and sometimes die. The general location of his lair can be detected by the sickly greenish tinge on the surface directly over it. Even so, he is at the very bottom of the lake, just over 150 feet deep, and reaching him -- and his store of treasure -- is no easy task.

Hysharr: Green dragon young adult; CR 10; Large dragon (air); HD 17d12+68; hp 166; Init +0 (+0 Dex); Spd 40 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor), swim 40 ft.; AC 25 (–1 size, +16 natural); Atk +22 (2d6+6, bite) or +17 melee (1d8+6, 2 claws) or +17 (1d6+6, 2 wings) or +17 (1d8+6, tail slap); Face/Reach 5 ft. x 10 ft./10ft.; SA Breath weapon; SQ Acid immunity, 150-ft. blindsight, 500-ft. darkvision, water breathing, DR 5/+1; SR 19; AL LE; SV Fort +14, Ref +10, Will +12; Str 23, Dex 10, Con 19, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 14.



Skills and Feats: Bluff +17, Concentration +19, Diplomacy +17, Escape Artist +15, Knowledge (arcane) +11, Knowledge (local) +17, Listen +19, Search +19, Speak Common, Spellcraft +19, Spot +19. Alertness, Cleave, Great Cleave, Power Attack, Snatch.

Special Attacks: Breath Weapon. Hysharr can breathe a 40-foot cone of corrosive (acid) gas every 1d4 rounds; damage 10d6, Ref save halves (DC 22).

Special Qualities: Frightful Presence: Hysharr unsettles foes with his mere presence whenever he attacks, charges, or flies overhead. Creatures with 17 or fewer Hit Dice (excluding other dragons) within 150 feet must succeed at a Will save (DC 20) to avoid this *fear* effect. On a failure, creatures with 4 or fewer HD become panicked for 4d6 rounds. Those with 5 or more HD become shaken for 4d6 rounds. On a success, the creature is immune to Hysharr's *fear* effect for one day.

Water Breathing: Hysharr can breathe underwater indefinitely and can freely use his breath weapon, spells, and other abilities while submerged.

Possessions: 1350 gp, 230 pp, eye agate (10 gp), golden yellow topaz (500 gp), jade (100 gp), fire opal pendant on gold chain (1400 gp), solid gold idol (700 gp), silver chalice with lapis lazuli gems (105 gp), chain shirt (100 gp), masterwork halberd, two thunderstones, treasure map, +2 *large steel shield*, *ring of swimming*.

Spells Known (6/5): 0 -- *daze*, *mage hand*, *open/close*, *detect magic*, *read magic*; 1st -- *alarm*, *obscuring mist*, *identify*.

A Treasure-Hungry Dragon

In another three years, Hysharr will be a century old, and it eats at him that he has not amassed as much treasure as he feels a dragon should have. This concern has made Hysharr more sensitive to the fact that adventurers often carry items of great value -- or at least know where to find some. When Hysharr encounters anyone, his first priority is to relieve them of their equipment, treasure, and magic items. Victims with nothing -- and no prospects -- are still good for a quick meal.

Hysharr is so obsessed with collecting treasure that he bargains with adventurers he encounters: their treasure, or their lives. Hysharr's hope is that adventurers who surrender their treasure might come back later for revenge -- carrying more treasure.

But Hysharr also realizes that he is not powerful enough to defeat every party of adventurers that passes by. For such emergencies, Hysharr is also prepared to bargain for his own life. He offers his treasure map (which can lead to any location the Dungeon Master desires), knowing that if the adventurers pursue the treasure, he can follow behind them when he has recovered, and take from them whatever loot they are carrying away -- probably after they have expended most of their energy capturing it.

Hysharr's Magic

As a young adult, Hysharr has become adept at manipulating magical energies, although he realizes that he still has a great deal to learn. For the time being, Hysharr uses spells to make his life easier. He uses *mage hand* and *open/close* to manipulate small objects that would ordinarily be beyond his ability to handle without breaking -- such as the smaller items in his treasure trove, or scroll tubes and wands he takes from foes.

Hysharr protects his lair by casting *alarm* on a half-submerged tree stump just off the shore of the lake, near a particularly prominent beach. In his experience, most adventurers who come to the lake use the area as a campsite or as a staging ground for expeditions under the water. (Groups come periodically to investigate dead fish and sickened cattle and wildlife in the area, victims of the lake's caustic tenant.) Anyone wading more than 10 feet out into the lake activates the mental *alarm*, alerting Hysharr to the possibility of intruders. The dragon then uses his keen senses to determine if someone is approaching his lair, or merely poking about on the surface. If Hysharr ever has to leave the lake, he casts *obscuring mist* and rises slowly out of the water, trusting his blindsight to apprise him of danger. Similarly, just before reentering the lake, Hysharr casts *obscuring mist*, then crawls into the water and sinks slowly into the depths.

The Dragon in Battle

Hysharr is not a particularly powerful dragon, and he knows it. To compensate, he uses magic and his breath weapon, as well as the lake and the air, to overcome foes.

Having recently begun to explore magic, Hysharr is keenly aware that magic can make its wielders far more powerful than they appear, and he has learned to recognize spellcasters by their lack of armor and tendency to seek cover in the center of groups of fighters and similar "heavyweights." Against such opponents, Hysharr first tries his breath weapon, hopefully incapacitating any sorcerers or wizards in the group. If he becomes aware of a rogue trying to sneak up on him, Hysharr uses his *daze* spell to keep that particular foe off-balance until Hysharr can deal with him more directly.

When Hysharr is forced into close combat, however, he employs his breath weapon as often as possible, hoping to scatter his foes apart and leave them vulnerable (or allow him to get away). In melee, Hysharr uses his Snatch feat to attack first armored spellcasters, then more physical combatants (fighters, paladins, rogues, and the like).

Once Hysharr has a firm grip on his target he retreats at top speed, heading either for the lake or into the sky. He prefers to carry his victims under the water, where he can watch them slowly drown. (Note that most player character races are too big for a Large dragon to continue inflicting damage upon them through use of the Snatch feat.)

He's also learned from past experience that friends of his victims often leap into the water in an attempt to rescue their companions, usually arriving just after the poor wretch has drowned, been torn to pieces, or succumbed to Hysharr's corrosive breath -- and just in time to suffer the same attack.

If a foe under the water is still giving Hysharr trouble, Hysharr often simply releases the figure. Those who aren't dragged down by the weight of their equipment find themselves targets of the dragon's next grapple attempt before they can draw another breath. When foes have exhibited an ability to breathe underwater, Hysharr carries them high into the sky, beyond the reach of their comrades' ranged weapons, then drops them. He tries to ensure that they land a good distance away from the rest of their party, so that even if they survive the fall, his victims cannot immediately rejoin the fight. If a foe Hysharr has carried into the air is being difficult, the dragon uses his breath weapon to take some of the fight out of the character.

Finally, although Hysharr has learned to make the most of these tactics, he occasionally forgets them entirely faced with an elf or pixie, whose races are among his favorite foods. Whenever Hysharr encounters either one, he focuses his attacks on that creature, if possible. If he ever succeeds with a Snatch, he breaks off the combat to carry his victim back to his watery lair, where he devours the unlucky morsel at his leisure.

*** Not from the Wyrms of the North series**

Iymrith, "The Dragon of the Statues"

Dragon Magazine #242

The investigations of Volo include some confused notes about a "desert-dwelling giant blue dragon that seems to have some magical link with a . . . way of surviving sandstorms? Special magic?" Elminster has consented to lay bare rather more than such cryptic queries about the Doom of the Desert, Iymrith, the blue dragon of the Chill Sands. Few folk of the North ever see this legendary "Dragon of the Statues" unless they brave the frigid wastes of Anauroch east of ruined Ascore, or dare to explore the Netherese ruins scattered up and down the Fallen Lands along the western edge of the Great Desert. Iymrith roams these regions tirelessly. She is engaged in an extended exploration of the surviving ruins of Netheril and has already gained much old magic from them. She has also developed quite a few unusual spells. Perhaps the most important of these is the magic that has kept her alive thus far: *force burn*, a spell derived from magic left behind by Netherese mages that is deadly to the subterranean race known as the phaerimms. Fear of it has driven them to ignore Iymrith rather than turning their power to the task of destroying her.



Adventurers are warned that Iymrith has developed spells that employ sand as a weapon -- and that apparently confer the ability to use such magic on some of the many gargoyle servants she has created. Iymrith is first heard of in adventurers' journals written circa 570 D.R. as a young and aggressive dragon who smashed a Bedine trading encampment on the edge of the desert, who tore apart a caravan bound for the distant Sword Coast, and who left the camp laden with desert gems.

Iymrith apparently challenged an older dragon somewhere in the vicinity of the High Moor shortly after her emergence from Anauroch -- and had to flee for her life. Sorely wounded, she crashed into some ruins (possibly remnants of fallen Netheril) in the Forgotten Forest and hid for some years, healing slowly and stealing forth only by night to find food. At some point during this time of nighthunting, she somehow gained magic beyond the normal capabilities of even the oldest blue dragons; Elminster believes she was captured by a powerful archmage and modified by him to serve as an intelligent servant. This belief is supported by sightings of a blue dragon flying over the Delimbiyr Vale with a disintegrating, robed human skeleton perched between her shoulders in a high-backed saddle. This was almost certainly Iymrith, who soon began to raid camped caravans and Sword Coast settlements by night, unleashing wizard spells from a roster strong and varied enough that many mages used magic -- in vain -- to hunt down a rogue wizard they believed to be dwelling in hiding somewhere in the Greypeak Mountains.

Iymrith apparently turned to digging apart the ruins along the western Desertsedge when a chance landing to rest yielded her a stone chest packed full of spellbooks. Her enthusiastic digging brought her jaw-to-jaw with her first phaerimm, and her life very nearly ended there, but the narrow escape alerted her to this mighty menace from below, and she redoubled her efforts to find magic, which she carried off to a windswept mountaintop. Inevitably, Iymrith was seen flying back and forth and was confronted by an adventuring band hoping to be rich dragonslayers by the end of the day. They ended up as corpses instead, and Iymrith was goaded into experimenting with certain of the spells she'd already found to make her first gargoyles. Iymrith needed loyal, sturdy servants to guard her lair and dig for her while she kept watch for phaerimms and humans from a safe vantage point. Her gargoyles began as crude, ungainly gliding stone monsters but soon grew more elegant and deadly.

When her gargoyle army was strong enough, Iymrith set them to digging up Netherese ruins, while she spent hours flying high above the western desert and adjoining lands, seeking herds of rothé and the like for food and ruins that might not be visible from the air. The shifting sands of Anauroch soon rewarded her when she unveiled the leaning top of a lone sorcerer's tower. Iymrith tore it open and found her richest magic yet. She made it her lair for some centuries, until one day phaerimms came boiling up out of its depths to slay her. By then, Iymrith was ready for them. Her *force burn* spells and other magic destroyed many phaerimms and sent the rest fleeing -- and in the time she'd won by her victory, the Doom of the Desert set about shifting all of her accumulated treasure north to another ruin she'd found as the restless sands laid it bare: a stone city roamed only by the skeletons of undead Bedine. The dragon has still not learned the city's name but has dwelt in it ever since, driving away all other dragons and phaerimms who approach, and making ever-stronger gargoyles to dig into the city's tombs and cellars for her and to guard what she has already gained. The key to Iymrith's character is her driving, all-consuming ambition. In the words of Elminster, she is "the least lazy and sleepy wyrm I have ever known."

Iymrith's Lair

Though she has several caverns in the Greypeak and Sunset Mountains (caves that have their own pools of water but which she keeps otherwise bare), the Doom of the Desert's lair is the nameless ruined city that lies northeast of Ascore, half-buried in sand. There she

lies atop her hoard of gems in a huge temple or meeting-hall, with her tail filling the entrance to her smaller chamber of magic. All around her are gargoyle guardians, and her lesser gargoyle servants fly patrols to watch for intruders, tunnel the sandchoked chambers and passages beneath her, and tirelessly transport rocks from the nearby mountains to create a permanent "windbreak dune" or wall on the windward side of the city.

At least one adventuring band has reported being fired upon by "stonehurling engines" (trebuchets) that were aimed and re-aimed with great accuracy by gargoyles seeking to dissuade any invasion of the city. These weapons could hurl showers of boulders almost a mile from the crumbling outer walls of the ancient city -- reinforced by gargoyles swooping on the intruders from aloft, dropping boulders on them.

Teeter-totter pitfall traps and spellhurling gargoyles were reported by the only mage to reach the city streets and survive. (He gained entry -- and soon left hastily -- by means of *teleport* spells.)

Iymrith's Domain

From her nameless city, Iymrith roams the western edge of Anauroch as far south as the Greycloak Hills and as far west as the eastern edge of the High Forest (now that Hellgate Keep is no longer the peril it once was). She seems to like colder climes, unlike most blue dragons, and flies occasional forays as far north as where the Ice Mountains meet the glaciers.

The Doom of the Desert regards her city -- and the ways beneath it, as far down as they may exist -- as her exclusive territory. Any phaerimms, drow, human adventurers, or anyone else entering it becomes her food as swiftly as she can bring about such a fate. The rest of the area she flies over she rules lightly by watching events more than enforcing her will. She is known occasionally to make hunting flights (in search of herds of livestock, usually) that carry her far afield.

The Deeds of Iymrith

The blue dragon of the Chill Sands has spells that readily thaw ice into drinkable water. There is ice in plenty beneath her city, and much more only a short flight away in all directions except south or due west. She seemingly eats anything, so long as there's lots of it, but she doesn't seem to grow hungry too often. She spends most days examining magic items brought to her by her gargoyle miners and experimenting with the spells and items she already has to derive new and more powerful magic.

Iymrith creates new servitor gargoyles every dozen days or so, but she is becoming increasingly obsessed with her own survival and has interrupted her usual augmentation of her gargoyle army to experiment with the creation of multiple bodies for herself. At present she can "jump" her essence from her real body to a mechanical body and to at least two statues, but she hasn't yet crafted a second living body.

The statues Iymrith has created are as large as she is, and all six of them look like stiffly-posed blue dragons made of single smooth-finished blocks of stone. (She's actually fused rock together with *flowstone* spells to make them.) When she teleports them about or links with them either to cast spells through them (just as a human mage can make certain spells emanate from a *project image* spell) or to move her sentient self-essence into them, the statues' pupilless eyes come alive with tiny flames.

Iymrith's driving aim is to gain all the magic she can and thereby rise to supremacy over all other dragons, phaerimms, or anyone else who might challenge her. Then she can live forever, crafting ever-stronger magic. No one knows whether she'll ever feel secure enough to think of mating, dwelling elsewhere, or sharing her magic with beings not of her own creation.

Certain Bedine tribes worship Iymrith -- from a safe distance. They leave behind offerings of polished sapphires. Thus far, Iymrith has suffered them to live and even safely approach the city walls until they can see her central hall clearly. She's never rendered them the slightest aid, however, and might just be humoring them idly.

Iymrith has mastered various magical means of teleporting groups of creatures and is known to use this method to capture herds of snow rothé and other edible beasts when her supply of food runs low. (The harsh climate and scant grazing provender causes this shortage to happen fairly often.)

The Doom of the Desert seems to find crafting items tiresome, but tinkering with the casting of spells holds endless fascination for her and consumes most of her days. Perhaps once every eight days or so she momentarily tires of magical experimentation and indulges herself in farscrying Faerûn around her to keep track of what's happening elsewhere. She does this in a whimsical manner rather than taking thorough or defensive care over it.

Less than a decade ago, Iymrith's spells ensnared the Company of the Flame Spider. Named for the exotic dancer who sponsored them, this band of fumbling magelings and disaffected mercenaries was formed in Athkatla. After several unrewarding forays into the High Moor and the ruins of Illefarn, they undertook a commission from the Merchant League to explore the chill northern reaches of Anauroch, seeking a trade route east or at least a series of landmarks that travelers across the shifting sands could rely on.

A dozen Flame Spiders avoided Ascore (whose fell reputation has spread across the North) but set off to travel in a wide ring around it, taking note of any desert landmarks along the way. They soon caught sight of the city that held the Doom of the Desert -- too late to avoid being in turn seen and trapped by her. Iymrith placed no compulsions on the adventurers; she merely makes use of *mass teleport* spells to keep them inside a ring-shaped region of shifting sands around her city, plucking them unceremoniously back into it whenever they try to strike out into the desert or reach the city (which they've dubbed "the Towers Unattainable"). As long as they remain in this indefinite area of desert, Iymrith allows them to wander and act freely. Her gargoyles surreptitiously plant food and items for them to find (even shovels, when the desert storms expose interesting Netherese ruins) to keep them interested in their endless roamings. Whenever adventuring bands, Bedine, or other intruders dare to stray too close to her nameless city, Iymrith uses the Flame Spiders for the purpose for which she entrapped them: as unwitting defenders of her privacy, whisking them into confrontation with the newcomers.

Most Bedine attack the suddenly appearing Amnian warband on sight and fall prey to the spells the two Flame Spider mages can muster, but the Flame Spiders sometimes befriend intruders. *Mass teleport* spells and gargoyles prevent any invasion of the city on such occasions, but if no such activity is mounted, the Doom of the Desert uses her gargoyles to send out a feast, then employs spells to eavesdrop on any over-the-wine conversations, seeking to learn what the wider world knows of her as well as interesting news. Iymrith seems to have adopted the Flame Spiders as pets, in somewhat the same manner as soldiers' develop a casual affection for stray dogs, to whom they toss camp leavings. She uses her spells to snatch the Amnians apart from each other whenever their arguments break into open violence.

Most of the magical experimentations mounted by the blue dragon of the Chill Sands involve altering incantations to change spell effects; after centuries of doing this, she can tinker with spells instinctively and has been known to cast a spell in battle, observe its effect, and alter an immediate second casting to achieve a different result. Magic excites her, but challenges and danger (apparently) leave her icily calm; she has self-control far beyond what most dragons can conceive, let alone achieve.

When not altering or combining spells, Iymrith is usually attempting to infuse some part of an artificial draconic body with a magical property or power. The upper reaches of her central city chambers are crowded with floating sculpted stone body parts and more-or-less complete bodies. On several occasions spell experimentations that went awry have awakened these floating dragon fragments into wild eruptions of movement and magical power, slaughtering gargoyles and causing even Iymrith to retreat and blast anything that comes too close. A lurking Red Wizard deliberately caused one such burst of chaos some years ago, when Iymrith discovered him spying on her. He probably escaped her furious volley of spells, but less swift-to-flee mages (including an ambitious Brotherhood of the Arcane apprentice and several Zhentarim) have paid the ultimate price for daring to peer into the lair of the Doom of the Desert. Farscrying witnesses of at least two of these deaths have discerned a pattern to Iymrithian spell-duels, or at least a favorite attack method: The blue dragon likes to employ an *ice storm* or other area-effect damaging spell that lasts for more than a round and, while a foe is defending against it, launch a spell to destroy any protective shield they might raise. This attack is followed immediately by a spell designed forcibly to change their shape -- usually into something mute and immobile, such as a giant clam.

Iymrithian defenses can best be described as lax. She ignores attacks unless they thrust immediate consequences at her, whereupon she tends to hurl mobs of gargoyles at them and -- if she deems it necessary -- a few devastating spells or combinations of spells to defeat or disable the menace so that she can return her attentions to whatever she was doing when the danger arose. Foes (such as, on one recent and fatal occasion, an overconfident group of Sembian wizards-for-hire) who believe that such hasty reactions give them a weakness to readily exploit are correct, to a point -- but such bold foes had best do their exploiting very fast and very hard, or an aroused Iymrith will begin to unleash the full defenses of her city at them. In earlier days, she evidently placed belligerent creatures, from remorhaz to adventurers, in some sort of magical stasis, then stored them in sealed chambers, safe from hungry creatures, scouring sand, and the ravages of time. She can awaken groups of them en masse as she teleports them into the presence of a foe -- or to a position just above opponents, so as to bring them crashing down on the heads of such enemies.

The mage Tathtlan of Neverwinter, now deceased, discovered Iymrith early in his explorations with an ancient Netherese *scrying stone* and observed her often. His notes (from which much of what Elminster knows of the Doom of the Desert is derived; the Old Mage stresses that although it appears Iymrith became aware of her observer, she took no action against him and did not cause his demise) indicate that, from time to time, doorways and spires in the nameless city changed by themselves. Although their alterations may have been caused or triggered by the magical experiments of Iymrith, she was surprised by the changes on at least two occasions, and Tathtlan believes that some other force was, and is, awake and active in the city. Perhaps phaerimms are slipping some magic past the Doom of the Desert, or older resident magic or hidden beings are at work. These changes never seem to amount to a direct challenge to Iymrith, and their cause and true nature remain mysterious.

Tathtlan was of the opinion that Iymrith is growing more whimsical and carefree as she ages -- more caught up in the exultation of wielding magic and increasingly less caring of the world around her and of her own safety. He compared her behavior to that of some ancient elves, yearning for a oneness with magic that, legends whisper, led some of them to seek other forms of existence -- even, in some ironic cases, dragon-shape. Elminster believes that Iymrith's attempts to transfer her sentience from draconic body to body may have already led her close to a transcendent state of existence as a disembodied, mistlike flying spirit. Although she is yet a long way

from preferring such a state to her familiar and powerful draconic form, the Old Mage believes, an attack that destroyed her body might not slay her, but might instead drive her into a wraithlike continued existence. Accordingly, he watches the future of the Doom of the Desert with interest.

Iymrith: Female ancient blue dragon Sor 7; CR 27; Gargantuan dragon (earth); HD 33d12+231 plus 7d4+49; hp 511; Init +4; Spd 40 ft., burrow 20 ft., fly 200 ft. (clumsy); AC 38, touch 6, flat-footed 38; Atk +44 melee (4d6+12/19-20, bite) and +39 melee (2d8+6, 2 claws) and +39 melee (2d6+6, 2 wings) and +39 melee (2d8+18, tail slap); Face/Reach 20 ft. by 40 ft./15 ft.; SA breath weapon (120 ft. line of electricity, save DC 33), crush, frightful presence, spell-like abilities, spells, tail sweep; SQ blindsight 300 ft., *create/destroy water*, darkvision 1,000 ft., DR 15/+2, immunities, low-light vision, sound imitation, SR 27; AL LE; SV Fort +27, Ref +20, Will +27; Str 35, Dex 10, Con 25, Int 22, Wis 19, Cha 22.

Skills and Feats: Alchemy +13, Bluff +36, Concentration +40, Craft (stoneworking) +13, Diplomacy +34, Escape Artist +20, Hide –12, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (arcana) +43, Knowledge (geography) +34, Knowledge (history) +38, Knowledge (local -- Anauroch) +11, Knowledge (nature) +8, Knowledge (religion) +7, Knowledge (the planes) +8, Listen +24, Scry +39, Search +21, Sense Motive +25, Spellcraft +42, Spot +25; Cleave, Combat Casting, Empower Spell, Enlarge Spell, Extend Spell, Flyby Attack, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Spell Penetration, Twin Spell.

Breath Weapon (Su): Iymrith can breathe a 120-foot line of electricity that deals 20d8 points of damage (Reflex DC 33 half). Once she has used her breath weapon, she must wait 1d4 rounds before doing so again.

Crush: When flying or jumping, Iymrith can land on opponents as a standard action, using her whole body to crush them. Her crush attacks are effective only against Medium-size or smaller opponents, though she can attempt normal overrun or grapple attacks (grapple bonus +60) against larger opponents. A crush attack affects as many opponents of the appropriate size as can fit under her body. Each potentially affected creature must succeed at a Reflex save (DC 33) or be pinned, automatically taking 4d6+18 points of bludgeoning damage on that round and each round thereafter that the character remains pinned.

Frightful Presence (Su): This ability takes effect automatically when Iymrith attacks, charges, or flies overhead. It affects only opponents with 32 or fewer Hit Dice or levels within a radius of 300 feet. Each affected creature must make a successful Will save (DC 32) to resist the effect. On a failure, a creature with 5 or more Hit Dice or levels becomes shaken for 4d6 rounds, and a creature with 4 or fewer Hit Dice or levels becomes panicked for 4d6 rounds. Success indicates that the target is immune to Iymrith's frightful presence for one day.

Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day -- ventriloquism; 1/day -- hallucinatory terrain, veil. Caster level 20th; save DC 16 + spell level.

Spells: Iymrith can cast spells as a 20th-level sorcerer.

Tail Sweep: Iymrith can sweep with her tail as a standard action. The sweep affects Small or smaller creatures within a half-circle with a diameter of 30 feet, centered on her rear. The sweep automatically deals 2d6+18 points of bludgeoning damage (Reflex DC 33 half).

Blindsight (Ex): Iymrith can ascertain creatures by nonvisual means (mostly hearing and scent, but also by noticing vibration and other environmental clues) to a range of 300 feet. Invisibility and darkness are irrelevant, though she still can't discern ethereal beings. She usually does not need to make Spot or Listen checks to notice creatures within range of her blindsight ability.

Create/Destroy Water (Sp): Iymrith can use this ability three times per day. It works like the *create water* spell, except that she can decide to destroy water instead of creating it, which automatically spoils unattended liquids containing water. Magic items (such as potions) and items in a creature's possession must succeed at a Will save (DC 32) or be ruined.

Immunities: Iymrith is immune to electricity, paralysis, and sleep.

Low-Light Vision: Iymrith sees four times as well as a human in low-light conditions and twice as well in normal light.

Sound Imitation (Ex): Iymrith can mimic any voice or sound she has heard, anytime she likes. A listener must succeed at a Will save (DC 32) to detect the ruse.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/8/8/7/7/7/6/6/6; save DC 16 + spell level): 0 -- *acid splash* (*Magic of Faerûn*), *arcane mark*, *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*, *open/close*, *ray of frost*, *read magic*; 1st -- *identify*, *jump*, *mage armor*, *spirit worm* (*Magic of Faerûn*), *true strike*; 2nd -- *cat's grace*, *eagle's splendor* (*Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*), *endurance*, *Melf's acid arrow*, *shadow spray* (*Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*); 3rd -- *blacklight* (*Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*), *gaseous form*, *Mestil's acid breath* (*Magic of Faerûn*), *wind wall*; 4th -- *flame sands*, *ice storm*, *polymorph other*, *scrying*; 5th -- *Dhulark's*

glassstrike (Magic of Faerûn), magic jar, stone shape, teleport; 6th -- chain lightning, control weather, greater dispelling; 7th -- blasphemy, mass teleport (Magic of Faerûn), Presper's spell matrix (Magic of Faerûn); 8th -- (unknown, presumably the gargoyle-creation spell), horrid wilting, polymorph any object; 9th -- Alamanther's return (Magic of Faerûn), force burn, temporal stasis.

Iymrith's Magic

From the ranks of the many spells wielded by the Doom of the Desert (who seems about the equivalent of a 20th-level sorcerer in terms of spellcasting ability, though she's never without a score or so of magic items that she can trigger at will), here are the spells that adventurers are likely to taste if they encounter any of her gargoyles, and the spell that has kept her alive in the face of phaerimm attacks.

Flame Sands

Evocation [Fire]

Level: Drd 3, Sor/Wiz 4

Components: V

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Target: One creature (or area of water) per round

Duration: 1 round level

Saving Throw: Fortitude half (see text)

Spell Resistance: No

You vomit forth nearly molten sand in a thin, forceful stream, attacking one target per round. Striking a target requires a ranged touch attack. The stream deals 1d6 points of fire damage per level (to a maximum of 15d6 for sorcerers and wizards, 10d6 for druids). If the target fails its saving throw, its exposed equipment is also affected; all glass items break, reflective surfaces (such as mirrors) are dulled, and all gems and crystals become coated with sand (requiring 1 hour of work and a Craft (gemsmithing) check [DC 15] to remove without damaging the gem). A successful saving throw halves the hit point damage and negates any of the spell's effects against equipment.

If fired at an area of water (excluding creatures made of water), the water boils into a momentary cloud of steam. The creature standing in the area of the targeted water must save as normal and all creatures within 5 feet of the target location must save for half damage, as well. If used in this way, the spell does not damage equipment. The boiling does not significantly reduce the volume of water.

Force Burn

Evocation [Force]

Level: Sor/Wiz 9

Components: V

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)

Target: One creature within a path 5 ft. long to the extent of the range

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Will partial (see text)

Spell Resistance: Yes (see text)

You create a glowing cylindrical bolt of force 5 feet wide and 10 feet long. You must make a ranged touch attack to hit with the bolt, but if you miss, you can attempt to strike successive creatures in the spell's path until you finally hit one.

A creature struck by the bolt suffers 1d6 points of force damage per two caster levels (maximum 25d6) and must succeed at a Will saving throw or lose 1d4 prepared spells or spell slots (each determined randomly). Spells or spell slots lost in this manner are available again after a normal period of rest. If a creature has fewer spells or spell slots remaining than the number rolled, this spell targets as many spells as it can and the extras are wasted. Only spells or spell slots belonging to the target can be lost this way; spells stored in items (including *spell storing* items or spell potential within a *rod of absorption*) are unaffected (note that *Presper's spell matrix* from *Magic of Faerûn* says that its spells are treated as prepared spells, so this spell can affect spells stored in a *matrix*). For example, a cleric with a *lesser planar ally*, two *prayer*, and two *sanctuary* spells prepared fails his save against *force burn*. The dungeon master rolls a d4 and gets a 2, so the cleric will lose two spells. The DM then rolls a d4 twice to find the spell level of each spell, getting a 1 and a 4, so the cleric loses a *sanctuary* (level 1) and *lesser planar ally* (level 4). If the cleric had prepared different spells at level 1 instead of multiples of the same spell, the DM would have determined randomly which 1st-level spell would be lost. Bards, sorcerers, and other casters that do not prepare spells lose available spell slots in the manner described above.

This spell was created specifically to affect phaerimms. A phaerimm struck by the bolt takes 1d6 points of force damage per caster level (maximum 25d6) and gets no spell resistance against this spell.

Iymrith's Fate

The Doom of the Desert is unlikely to gain enough magic to feel secure, but if she can survive phaerimm attacks for another decade or so, she might master the ability to move at will from body to body; there are a few dracolich and mechanical monster bodies in Faerûn that she might seize.

This power would probably ensure her survival from a concerted phaerimm or dragon attack -- a good thing for her, because she would also almost certainly come to the attention of the Cult of the Dragon (as more than a dim legend of the North) and face well-organized attacks from multiple dracoliches acting in concert with other Cult forces. Elminster's money will, however, be on Iymrith in any such confrontation -- though he knows more than a few mages who'd like to watch.

Jalanvaloss, "The Wyrms of Many Spells"

Dragon Magazine #243

When in Waterdeep recently, Volo was smitten by a certain enigmatic, dark-eyed lady who whispered to him of rare and strange spells only she knew. It is impossible to say from the wildly boastful notes of the infamous traveler whether their brief dalliance involved any true intimacy, and how fondly (if at all) the lady in question regards Volo the Loose-Tongued now, but it is clear that the florid-quilled Volothamp knew he was in the presence of a shapechanger whose true nature he couldn't fathom. It is also clear from his notes that he had no idea he was flirting with the steel dragon Jalanvaloss -- even though he'd come to Waterdeep to find out all he could about the elusive Wyrms of Many Spells.

Few folk are aware they're dealing with Jalanvaloss until later, because she loves the bustle and intrigues of Waterdeep. As an unlicensed but very active mage, she is always on the run from the Watchful Order of Magists and Protectors. (This deception -- and other similar evasions of bureaucratic money-gouging -- are the only unlawfulnesses Jalanvaloss embraces. She prefers not to break laws or disrupt daily life openly, but she sees nothing wrong in hiring or manipulating others to do so.)

In her youth, this female steel dragon (known also as a "Greyhawk dragon," which is its proper name according to archmage Mordenkainen of Oerth) was a servant of the wizard Rythtalies, a reclusive, white-bearded human archmage who dwelt in a now-ruined mountaintop keep in eastern Amn, and who is now believed dead. Rythtalies used Jalanvaloss as a steed but worked on turning her into his best "secret weapon": a being far too magically weak ever to seriously challenge him but one who could aid him against foes by launching surprise attacks.

Rythtalies worked several mighty magics on his steed, whom he came to regard highly for her keen wits and sly sense of humor. His magical augmentations resulted in Jalanvaloss's acquiring the Spellcasting Prodigy feat long after she should have been able to develop that ability.

This power is apparently permanent, having (probably) outlived the mage himself -- though some folk whisper that Rythtalies lives on in the mind of the Wyrms of Many Spells, perhaps sharing her body, and that the spell expertise she exhibits when wearing the form of a tall, sleekly beautiful human female is actually that of Rythtalies himself. Other folk say that whatever the source of the spells used by the steel dragon might be, the sentience of Rythtalies is either dead or slumbering; in the opinion of most wizards to whom the question is put, Jalanvaloss has made too many mistakes with her spellhurlings to be guided by (or to be the work of) an archmage. Jalanvaloss is known frequently to employ *project image* spells to put a human image of herself in situations that allow her to interact with Waterdhavians (and visitors to the city -- adventurers in particular) without their discovering her true nature. Volo wrote plenty of purple-prose nonsense about his "Dark-Eyed Lady," implying that her loving attentions surpassed all similar pleasures in his previous experience of ladies all over Faerûn, but readers have no way of knowing how truthful the famous scribe was, or how much Jalanvaloss employs magic to deceive or to overwhelm the senses of humans she meets. She is known to manipulate Waterdhavians playfully and out of a sheer love of doing so, and she promotes a general air of mystery to distract attention from her own deeds and to set folk to doing wild and reckless things (something that seems to afford her much amusement).

First mentioned in *A Year of Sorcery: Wizardly Doings in the Year of the Dark Dawn* (a widely-quoted chapbook by the sage Aldiber of Memnon), Jalanvaloss seems to have been the pet or servitor of Rythtalies since her birth. She might well have been reared by him from her hatching. Aldiber writes of her deep loyalty in 1104 DR (at an age when most dragons are particularly headstrong and rebellious or defiant of authority), when she braved the hostile spells of two archmages to swoop in and rescue her master from an ambush.

Rythtalies seems to have disappeared sometime in 1262 DR, though it must be emphasized that this figure is more of an estimation than any record of a specific disaster befalling the wizard. Whatever her master's ultimate fate, Jalanvaloss acted alone from then on, soon abandoning the keep in Amn -- which was often visited by greedy mages and adventurers, and well-nigh destroyed in her battles against them -- for the streets of Waterdeep, the City of Splendors. Jalanvaloss is now a mature adult steel dragon of sleek appearance, whose scales flash with an almost iridescent blue sheen when she's about to change shape into human form. She is a keen observer of people and things around her, never forgetting the smallest details, and she seems to revel in being part of as many intrigues and deceptions as possible. She is an actress of the first rank, and an adequate mimic. Over her years of residence in Waterdeep (in a succession of assumed human shapes, all female), she has become expert in recalling the genealogies, relationships, cabals, and alliances of Waterdhavians both high and low in station.



Jalanvaloss acquired the title Wyrms of Many Spells because of an epic spell-battle she once had with Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun: Discerning her true nature at an evening revel at the Brossfeather family villa, he casually tossed a *wyrmbane* spell her way, to drive her from the city. Jalanvaloss responded by peppering him with a barrage of spells, shifting from human to dragon form and precipitating a panic in the process that sent citizens leaping from balconies and trampling each other in gateways and on the streets of Waterdeep.

Distracted by the need to mitigate damage to the citizenry and the surrounding buildings, Khelben responded with magic designed to contain and hamper rather than to punish or destroy. Jalanvaloss took advantage of this tactic to make her escape. Thus, when the Blackstaff finally brought down a *binding chain of fate* spell on his opponent, seeking to both harm and capture her, it fell harmlessly through a *project image* spell. News of the spell-battle and the steel dragon's escape was all over the city by the following highsun, and the Copper Tongue (a broadsheet of news sold in the streets for a single copper coin; hence, its name) coined the name of "the Wyrms of Many Spells" for "the mysterious dragon who fought the mighty Blackstaff to a standstill." Jalanvaloss secured her fame in the lore of the city when she defiantly reappeared several nights later, flying in dragon form over Blackstaff Tower and raking it with spells (causing no damage and vanishing before the annoyed archwizard could respond or lay any sort of tracing spell on her). According to the sage Velsaert of Baldur's Gate, an expert on Sword Coast dragons, the Wyrms of Many Spells has "shown no signs of desiring the company of other wyrms, nor of dwelling in solitude or defending any sort of territory."

Volo found that while Velsaert's observations might well be true, Jalanvaloss does seem to enjoy wiping out rival dragons who cross her in any way. She is known to have destroyed utterly the blue dragons Calaunthriina and Daereverose (in Amn), and the wicked black dragon Nabalnyth, who briefly laired in the Rat Hills.

The key to Jalanvaloss could be said to be her love of, and outstanding aptitude for, scheming. She always has a few plots to spare and can respond to those who cross her by calling on many (usually unwitting) allies. If she has a main foe, it would be the Cult of the Dragon, whom she would like to destroy permanently in the vicinity of Waterdeep. She has ignored, and will continue to ignore, attempts on their -- or anyone else's -- part, to lure her out of the city. Khelben Arunsun she regards more as an honored opponent, to be teased and frustrated whenever doing so will afford her a means of escape from his seeking magic, and taking up his time won't endanger the security of the city.

The Lair of Jalanvaloss

The Wyrms of Many Spells rents various upper-floor rooms all over the city and owns several shops in Southern Ward, Trades Ward, and Dock Ward. (That is, the buildings are hers, and she rents the premises to various merchants, to run their businesses in.) All of these buildings are crowned with one or two floors of rental apartments, and at least two of them incorporate "secret apartments" (rooms retained by Jalanvaloss herself, which have their own entry stairs linking to cellars -- and thence, to nearby stables -- or the sewers). The Wyrms of Many Spells also owns several houses full of genteel rental rooms in Sea Ward and North Ward; she customarily assumes a different human shape when buying and visiting one shop than she wears for dealings with another. She is known to have at least one secret cache somewhere in the sewers and another in a spell-guarded tomb somewhere in the City of the Dead that contain nothing but clothing, makeup, and accessories that allow her to change one human identity for another. It is hard to say which of her various Waterdhavian properties is her true lair; Jalanvaloss has even been known to curl up for a rest in dragon form on the roof of a tomb in the City of the Dead and use a spell to make her appear to be no more than sculpted -- and weathered -- stone.

In her various human guises, Jalanvaloss is the friend, ally, or business partner of many Waterdhavians, but (so far as is known) she can't be said to have any true servants or kin.

The Domain of Jalanvaloss

Jalanvaloss doesn't patrol and defend a territory as most dragons do, but her domain could be said to be the city of Waterdeep, its underside in particular (though the pretensions and indulgences of its nobles afford her the most fascinated viewing and amusement). She'll happily share the city with other dragons who hide in humanshape and don't disturb city life, and she tolerates the brief visits of such wyrms as Galadaeros (keeping herself hidden), but will reveal herself to savagely fight off any wyrm who dares to attack the city or folk in its immediate surroundings.

The Deeds of Jalanvaloss

Jalanvaloss is both a sponsor and an enthusiastic fan of adventurers. She spends most of her time consorting with such daring folk. Though she admires the most capable, daring, and clever of such persons, her love of watching their exploits (via *scrying* and *arcane eye* spells) doesn't stop her from constantly manipulating them.

The Wyrms of Many Spells uses adventurers to extend her own long-term goals (of which more later); to set the intrigues she loves so much into motion; for practical reasons (such as frustrating local Cult of the Dragon agents as much as possible), and for short-term entertainment.

The Fate of Jalanvalloss

The Wyrms of Many Spells has a long-term dream of founding her own kingdom, with herself as queen, commanding an elite army of human adventuring bands, to protect a cultured, prosperous elven populace. Perhaps in the western High Forest. . . . Realizing such a dream will be very difficult; it is likely to result in Jalanvalloss's death. She knows this danger, and that's why her notion of a realm of her own is a "some-distant-day" vision; she'll pursue it in earnest only when the daily cuts, thrusts, and intrigues of Waterdeep grow wearisome. Judging by her performance thus far, that's apt to be centuries yet and to involve the climbing of one of her human personae to the heights of noble rank. There is always the danger of her true nature being discovered, but it seems unlikely that Jalanvalloss will lose out in many struggles for power, or not have adventurers galore to call upon if something goes seriously wrong. Elminster of Shadowdale, the Lady Mage of Waterdeep Laeral Arunsun, and at least three Harpers resident in Waterdeep know of the presence (if not the precise current human disguises) of Jalanvalloss in the city, but they're quite willing to let her remain part of life in the City of Splendors. In the rueful words of Laeral, "In many ways, she's more Waterdhavian than most Waterdhavians."

Jalanvalloss: Female mature adult steel dragon; CR 11; Large dragon (air); HD 22d12+88; hp 231; Init +4; Spd 60 ft., swim 30 ft., fly 200 ft. (poor); AC 30, touch 9, flat-footed 30; Atk +26 melee (2d6+6, bite) and +21 melee (1d8+3, 2 claws) and +21 melee (1d6+3, 2 wings) and +21 melee (1d8+9, tail slap); Face/Reach 5 ft. by 10 ft./10 ft.; SA breath weapon (40-ft. cone of corrosive gas), breath weapon (40-ft. cone of poison gas), frightful presence, spell-like abilities, spells; SQ blindsight 700 ft., DR 10/+1, dragon traits, immunities (*sleep*, paralysis), low-light vision, minor arcane shield, moderate arcane shield, poison resistance +10, SR 28; AL LN; SV Fort +17, Ref +13, Will +17; Str 23, Dex 10, Con 19, Int 20, Wis 19, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +16, Concentration +27, Diplomacy +28, Disguise +10, Escape Artist +10, Hide -4, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (religion) +10, Knowledge (Waterdeep history) +24, Knowledge (Waterdeep local) +31, Knowledge (Waterdeep nobility and royalty) +18, Listen +28, Scry +27, Search +27, Spot +28, Swim +14; Alertness, Education (Waterdeep history, Waterdeep local), Improved Initiative, Spell Focus (Enchantment), Spell Focus (Illusion), Spellcasting Prodigy (sorcerer).

Breath Weapons (Su): Once every 1d4 rounds, Jalanvalloss can use one of her two breath weapons. One breath weapon is a 40-foot cone of corrosive gas that deals 7d6 points of acid damage to each creature in the area (Reflex DC 25 half), whether or not it needs to breathe. The other breath weapon is a 40-foot cone of poison gas (7 Con/7 Con; Fortitude DC 25 negates).

Frightful Presence (Su): This ability takes effect automatically when Jalanvalloss attacks, charges, or flies overhead. It affects only opponents with 21 or fewer Hit Dice or levels. The affected creature must make a successful Will save (DC 25) or become panicked (if 4 or fewer HD) or shaken (if more than 5 HD). Success indicates that the target is immune to Jalanvalloss's frightful presence for one day.

Spell-Like Abilities: 5/day -- *polymorph self*; 1/day -- *charm person*, *enthrall*. Caster level 13th; save DC 14 + spell level.

Spells: Jalanvalloss can cast spells as a 13th-level sorcerer.

Blindsight (Ex): Jalanvalloss maneuvers and fights by using nonvisual senses (mostly by hearing and scent, but also by vibration and other environmental clues). Invisibility and darkness are irrelevant, though she still can't discern ethereal beings. Jalanvalloss usually does not need to make Spot or Listen checks to notice creatures within range of her blindsight ability (700 feet).

Low-Light Vision: Jalanvalloss can see four times as well as a human in low-light conditions and twice as well in normal light.

Minor Arcane Shield (Su): Jalanvalloss gains a +10 bonus to SR against 1st- and 2nd-level spells.

Moderate Arcane Shield (Su): Jalanvalloss gains a +10 bonus to SR against 3rd- and 4th-level spells.

Poison Resistance: Jalanvalloss gets a +10 bonus on all Fortitude saves against poison.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/8/7/7/7/4; save DC 15 + spell level, or 17 + spell level for Enchantment or Illusion spells): 0 -- *dancing lights*, *daze*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*, *open/close*, *read magic*, *silent portal* (*Magic of Faerûn*); 1st -- *change self*, *charm person*, *know protections* (*Magic of Faerûn*), *mage armor*, *magic missile*; 2nd -- *cat's grace*, *eagle's splendor*, *invisibility*, *life bolt* (*Magic of Faerûn*), *Tasha's hideous laughter*; 3rd -- *hold person*, *major image*, *scattergloom**, *tongues*; 4th -- *arcane eye*, *dimension door*, *scrying*, *steelsting**; 5th -- *dominate person*, *feeblemind*, *persistent image*; 6th -- *mislead*, *project image*.

The Magic of Jalanvalloss

Here are two of the many magics employed by Jalanvalloss in her Waterdhavian life of endless intrigues and deceptions.

Scattergloom

Evocation [Darkness]

Level: Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Area: 100 ft. radius burst

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: No

You create six areas of magical darkness within the area, which randomly and rapidly move about, giving concealment to nearby creatures. The areas of shadow (called "glooms") are the size of a Medium-size creature; they cannot leave the area of the spell. The movement of the glooms gives all creatures within the area one-half concealment (20% miss chance). This concealment applies to attacks made against or by creatures in the area. An attacker may ready an action to attack when he has a clear line of sight to the target, avoiding the miss chance.

Two of the glooms are under your limited control. On your turn and as a free action while the spell is in effect, you can direct a controlled gloom to envelop a particular target and follow it. Each gloom can affect a single target of up to Medium-size in this manner, enshrouding it in total darkness. The target can attempt a Will saving throw to avoid the gloom. Success indicates the gloom goes on a random path like the others and does not remain affixed to the target, failure means the target is surrounded by magical darkness. Once directed at a target, a controlled gloom is out of your control.

You can shape the controlled glooms to resemble a shadowy creature of Medium-size, including an undead shadow. They retain their shape even after you send them after a target, so it appears that the gloom is some sort of incorporeal creature that has enveloped the target. A shaped gloom has no other abilities, it cannot be attacked (*dispel magic* and similar spells affect it normally), and it is not susceptible to turning attempts.

You can see normally through the glooms. This spell is often used to enshroud its caster (to conceal identity), with the second controlled shadow being "set" across a window or to block out light to conceal the presence of the caster.

Steelsting

Evocation [Force]

Level: Sor/Wiz 4

Components: V

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Area: Cylinder 10 ft. wide, 25 ft. long

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Reflex half

Spell Resistance: Yes

You create a brief maelstrom of daggerlike flying darts of force that spin, slice, and rebound within the area. All within the area suffer 1d6 points of force damage per caster level (maximum 10d6). The name is a misnomer, for the spell creates neither steel nor a true sting.

Wyrmfighting Magic

Folk who must deal with dragons can never carry enough spells. To aid such "doomed unfortunates" (as he muttered darkly), Elminster reluctantly agreed to furnish details of a spell Khelben used in his famous "duel" with Jalanvaloss, as follows:

Binding Chain of Fate

Evocation

Level: Sor/Wiz 9

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Effect: Whirling chain of force

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

You create a chain of force links that whirl into a loop above a single creature of your choice, making a metallic rattling sound as it does so. The chain is 10 feet high, 10 feet thick, and forms a loop large enough to completely contain the target. If the creature fails its saving throw, the chain encircles it. The chain has several effects, some of which are redundant.

No magic functions within the chain, as if the chain defined the area of an *antimagic field*. This means that the target cannot use any magic, and no magic from outside the chain affects the creature. Any creature within the area defined by the chain is subject to this negation of magic.

The target creature cannot leave the area defined by the chain. Other creatures can enter or leave the area (although they normally must go over or under the chain, since the chain itself is a force barrier similar to a barred *cage* form of the *forcecage* spell). If the target was in midair (flying, levitating, and so on) when the chain took effect, the chain suspends the target in midair safely as if it had a solid floor.

The chain prevents the target from changing form, including lycanthropic form changes, vampiric transformations, or polymorph or similar effects.

The chain acts as a *dimensional anchor* upon the target.

The chain deals 1d6 points of force damage per round to the target.

The chain cannot be dispelled, but it can be destroyed by more powerful magic such as *disintegrate*, *miracle*, *Mordenkainen's disjunction*, *wish*, or a *rod of cancellation*.

There is a specific but little-known counterspell that prevents a protected target from being enchained. Certain writings in Candlekeep also speak of at least two methods of magically shattering a chain, each employing a different trio of specific 9th-level spells that must be cast at or on the chain (obviously by someone outside of the chain's area) within 3 consecutive rounds.

Material Component: The hair of a creature with at least three spell-like abilities and any magic potion.

Klauth, "Old Snarl"

Dragon Magazine #244

The nasty brutality of this huge old red wyrm has become a watchword in the Sword Coast North, passing into common speech in such expressions as these: "Don't go near him early of mornings; he's apt to be a right Klauth until he's had a mug or two." Or, "Blood and bodies everywhere . . . it looked as though old Klauth himself had come calling!" Or the shorter variant (used to describe butchery): "Regular Klauth work!" The habitual facial expression of this much-scarred wyrm has won him the popular nickname of "Old Snarl."

Klauth is one of the largest and most fearsome red dragons ever to take wing in Faerûn. He spends his days brooding in grim suspicion or lashing out at other wyrms. Velsaert of Baldur's Gate (the sage now recognized as an authority on dragonkind up and down the Sword Coast), describes Klauth as "a grim, nasty, awe-strikingly huge red great wyrm who has slain many rivals in a career spent on the attack, aggressively mauling everyone within reach."

The sage speculates that Klauth is extremely paranoid and always fears that other dragons are rising to surpass him in power, while striking out at those he sees as rivals whenever he judges the time is right. Klauth has also been known to scatter armies, to land atop the orcs of a gathered horde and roll around (crushing thousands), and to swoop down without warning to topple wizards' towers with their owners inside.

Only his unpredictability and great might have kept Klauth from being the sort of menace that archmages band together to track down and destroy in what is known as a Great Hunt. (Such undertakings have been the fate of several titanic beasts in recent centuries, such as the Anglath of Tulmon, a magically-altered captive deepspawn that disgorged only beholders.) Only threats that seem likely to reach out and menace Klauth -- principally other dragons -- are themselves endangered by the Old Snarl.

As his string of triumphs mounts, however, Klauth's reputation becomes ever darker, and he may soon become the subject of the first Great Hunt in over eighty years. At least one mage of note, Malchor Harpell, has called for Klauth's destruction after learning of the dragon's recent magic acquisitions. Klauth's response was to attack the Tower of Twilight, where the wyrm's massive bulk almost carried him through its defensive weblike fields of crisscrossing *lightning bolts* before their combined effects caused his muscles to spasm so uncontrollably that his heart faltered and he could no longer beat his wings to fly. It is reported that Klauth flung himself to one side, crashed to the ground in the meadow below the tower pond, rolled away into the trees, and clawed himself aloft again, fleeing before the wizard could send any spells after him. This sort of sudden attack and disappearance is typical of Klauth's fighting style. Although he prefers to slay any foe he fights, he is not above deferring the threat they pose by inflicting as much damage as he can at no cost to himself, then disappearing before his foe can respond.

Old Snarl isn't an unrelenting destroyer of all he meets, however. He often obeys strange whims that lead him to acts of kindness or aid to creatures he doesn't think can harm him. One such recipient of this surprising charity was the elven sorceress Jhanandra, whom Klauth found weeping amid the ruins of an elven village she'd reached too late to defend against a brigand raid. In Jhanandra's arms was the only survivor of the attack, a dazed infant whose only kin dwelt in distant Evereska. The dragon flew both elves to Evereska cradled in his talons, "with a gentleness I'd hitherto known only from my own kind," Jhanandra reported. She described Klauth as having a huge bulk but graceful, supple movements, as if he were a hunting cat. His snout, head, and body were all covered in old, wicked-looking scars, where scales had been roughly torn away and had never grown back. Volo recorded the words of the sorceress but scoffed at her story. Elminster, however, sternly insists that the tale is true . . . and that the infant rescued that day is rising swiftly to greatness -- and might soon be known to Faerûn at large.

Klauth isn't known to have shown like kindnesses to other dragons. If he has ever mated, no one has taken note of it. Nor does he ever regard red she-wyrms with any visible romantic interest, though he did devour one once, in a roaring, cartwheeling midair struggle above the roofs of Mirabar. Spectators report that Klauth seems to have deliberately initiated the conflict to enhance his reputation across the North.

Klauth is said to possess the usual vanity of his kind, though adventurers have failed to play upon it to goad him into foolish acts; he seems too wise and controlled to allow pride to blind him to perils or lure him into traps. He is also said to allow himself no true friends or even, among dragons, acquaintances. His appearance in the sky sends most wyrms fleeing for cover as quickly as they can hurl themselves through the air. Thankfully for the general peace of the North, such appearances are few.



The key to Klauth's character could be his constant anticipation of potential dangers and the formation of carefully planned responses. Other wyrms might dream of past glories or future triumphs, but Old Snarl spends his time observing, judging potential rivals, and doing something about it. He's not above sneaking near a lair by nightfall and causing a rockslide to entomb a rival alive or literally stealing magic from another dragon like a stealthy thief in the night. Klauth is said to be accomplished in the arts of creeping around with incredible stealth and silence for a being so large.

He's also widely (and Elminster says, correctly) believed to hunt for and devour the eggs and hatchlings of all sorts of dragons -- except for red dragon eggs, which Klauth uses in a secret magical process to increase his size, health, and vigor. He seems an accomplished master in the art of tricking dragons out of their lairs (leaving offspring or eggs unguarded) so he can slip in and snatch away what he seeks.

On at least one memorable occasion, he failed in this task and was trapped in a cavern lair by its returning resident wyrm (the mist dragon Narnardinath, who dwelt in a Sword Coast shoreline cavern near the mouth of the Iceflow). Klauth brought down its roof to make his escape by deliberately ramming several natural stone pillars, shattering them with his bulk. The Bright Broadaxe, a band of adventurers from Neverwinter who'd crept into the cavern to explore, unaware that one dragon laired in the cave and another had stolen into it before them, witnessed the collapse that slew Narnardinath. It took them hours of clambering over the loose rubble that buried the mist dragon and his hoard to find the way the battered red dragon had taken to the freedom of open air.

Even Elminster is a trifle hazy over just how Klauth discovered how to use red dragon eggs to make himself more mighty, but he knows what spell the much-scarred red wyrm employs to do so: a Netherese spell named *Thellar's argauneau*, after the mage who devised it (an archsorcerer who delighted in "bettering" dragons with his experiments, over a long career that produced two-headed dragons and several more stable subspecies).

Klauth's Lair

Klauth was sorely wounded on the fourth day of Mirtul in the Year of the Turret, when he was ambushed by two white dragons and a blue dragon working together. The four wyrms engaged in a spectacular aerial battle that raged across the skies of the Sword Coast North from the Iceflow to the Fell Pass. Though Klauth did slay all three of his attackers and wasted no time in seizing the hoard of the vanquished blue dragon Irdrihkryn, he then went into hiding. Elminster explains that according to an awed young apprentice mage who was practicing his *scrying* spells near Neverwinter, Old Snarl came out of that battle with one wing almost torn off and a great gaping hole in his side: almost half of his body had been frozen solid, shattered, and then struck away.

No one saw just where the crippled wyrm flew or the landing that almost slew him. Klauth used all of his hoarded and freshly seized magic to keep himself alive and to build a lair in which to hide away and heal. He chose a narrow, winding chasm in the mountains east of Raven Rock, which is an unnamed, isolated valley that he filled with sheep, goats, and rothe seized from all over the North. There he yet abides among his ready supply of food, building his strength and practicing his spells, and awaiting the day when he'll be powerful enough to sally forth as the unquestioned master of northern dragonkind.

That day might never come; Klauth has become a wyrm who sees rising rivals in every other dragon who has broken out of its egg -- and his paranoia is not soothed by the many monsters and adventurers who enter his valley to help themselves to the ready food. From these intruders, however, Klauth has gained many magic items, among them several wands. By working on magic of his own and employing a key spell stolen from the hoard of desert dragon Iymrith, he has mounted the wands in his wings and established mental control over them so that he can trigger them as he flies. In this way he has surprised and slain a flying mage and two intruding dragons who were expecting to deal with only a red dragon's breath weapon and perhaps a spell or two. The bodies of the dragons are believed to lie where they crashed: in the depths of the tiny but very deep Orothryn's Well, which is a pond at the heart of Klauth's little valley.

Word of "Klauthen Vale" is now spreading across the North from the taverns of Mirabar, and adventurers may soon become a real headache for Klauth. His hoard is of legendary size, and folk say (accurately) that despite his advancing age, Old Snarl still leaves the valley from time to time to smite potential rivals and to search for the hoards of the two white dragons he slew in the great battle (Aerihykloarara and Ruuthundrarar, both of whom seem to have used several resting-caverns but who kept their treasure hidden elsewhere).

Klauthen Vale isn't known to have any traps or guardians beyond its famous owner (who is known to lie sometimes on a ledge high on one of its walls, from whence he can strike at intruders on the valley floor). The vale walls are broken by several natural caves, at least two of which are large enough for Klauth to shelter in. He keeps his hoard in a small, simple network of tunnels beneath one cavern. The only entrance to this subterranean complex is by lifting a huge slab of stone -- a task only creatures as large and as strong as dragons can easily manage.

Klauth's Domain

Klauth doesn't defend or patrol a territory the way many dragons do; he regards himself as free to roam wherever he desires on his rare forays out of his vale. This isn't to say he doesn't recognize that sightseeing over Waterdeep or Iymrith's desert city would be both

dangerous and imprudent. He invades the domains of other dragons only for specific reasons and performs the tasks he sets for himself as quickly and as efficiently as possible. He acts not out of fear but out of the prudence that has become a foundation of his character.

The Deeds of Klauth

Klauth spends most of his waking time scrying the world around him with his spells. He probably knows more about the deeds and whereabouts of surface-world creatures in the Sword Coast North than any other being alive today. Moreover, Old Snarl thinks more about what he sees than most who spy by means of magic; he's seldom looking for just one thing or person, and he has the wits (and experience in their use) to assess problems and reason them through without hesitation. Seeing carts being loaded with swords in one spot sends him looking for activity among armorers in all the places to which those carts could logically be headed. A mustering of forces in a merchant company compound or noble villa brings his full attention to bear upon the purpose of that activity and the potential results.

Klauth's expertise on the activities and behavior of others in the North is as formidable a weapon as the jets of fire and beams of magic that spurt forth from his wings as he swoops down on foes . . . almost. It also gives him something quite valuable to bargain with when dealing with foes he'd rather not challenge; Old Snarl is thought to have come to a "live and let live" agreement with Alustriel of the Seven in this manner.

Klauth: Male great wyrm red dragon; CR 25; Colossal dragon (fire); HD 40d12+400; hp 722; Init +4; Spd 40 ft., fly 200 ft. (clumsy); AC 46, touch 7, flat-footed 46; Atk +49 melee (4d8+17, bite) and +45 melee (4d6+8, 2 claws) and +44 melee (2d8+8, 2 wings) and +44 melee (4d6+25, tail slap); Face/Reach 40 ft. x 80 ft./15 ft.; SA breath weapon (70 ft. cone of fire, save DC 40), crush, frightful presence, spell-like abilities, spells, tail sweep; SQ blindsight, darkvision 1,200 ft., DR 20/+3, dragon traits, fire subtype, immunities, low-light vision, SR 32; AL CE; SV Fort +32, Ref +22, Will +30; Str 45, Dex 10, Con 31, Int 26, Wis 27, Cha 26.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +28, Bluff +42, Climb +27, Concentration +53, Diplomacy +56, Gather Information +18, Hide -6, Intimidate +22, Jump +57, Knowledge (arcana) +51, Knowledge (Sword Coast North geography) +51, Knowledge (Sword Coast North history) +51, Listen +53, Move Silently +10, Scry +31, Search +51, Sense Motive +18, Spellcraft +48, Spot +53, Wilderness Lore +18; Alertness, Cleave, Delay Spell, Enlarge Spell, Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Snatch, Weapon Focus (claw), Wingover.

Breath Weapon (Su): Klauth can breathe a 70-foot cone of fire that deals 24d10 points of damage (Reflex DC 40 half). Once he has used his breath weapon, he must wait 1d4 rounds before doing so again.

Crush: When flying or jumping, Klauth can land on opponents as a standard action, using his whole body to crush them. His crush attacks are effective only against Large or smaller opponents, though he can attempt normal overrun or grapple attacks (grapple bonus +73) against larger opponents. A crush attack affects as many opponents of the appropriate size as can fit under his body. Each potentially affected creature must succeed at a Reflex save (DC 40) or be pinned, automatically taking 4d8+25 points of bludgeoning damage on that round and each round thereafter that the character remains pinned.

Frightful Presence (Su): This ability takes effect automatically when Klauth attacks, charges, or flies overhead. It affects only opponents with 39 or fewer Hit Dice or levels within a radius of 360 feet. Each affected creature must make a successful Will save (DC 38) to resist the effect. On a failure, a creature with 5 or more Hit Dice or levels becomes shaken for 4d6 rounds, and a creature with 4 or fewer Hit Dice or levels becomes panicked for 4d6 rounds. Success indicates that the target is immune to Klauth's frightful presence for one day.

Spell-Like Abilities: 12/day -- *locate object*; 3/day -- *suggestion*; 1/day -- *discern location*, *find the path*. Caster level 19th; save DC 18 + spell level.

Spells: Klauth can cast spells as a 19th-level sorcerer.

Tail Sweep: Klauth can sweep with his tail as a standard action. The sweep affects Medium-size or smaller creatures within a half-circle with a diameter of 40 feet, centered on his rear. The sweep automatically deals 2d8+25 points of bludgeoning damage (Reflex DC 40 half).

Blindsight (Ex): Klauth can ascertain creatures by nonvisual means (mostly hearing and scent, but also by noticing vibration and other environmental clues) to a range of 360 feet. Invisibility and darkness are irrelevant, though he still can't discern ethereal beings. He usually does not need to make Spot or Listen checks to notice creatures within range of his blindsight ability.

Fire Subtype: Klauth is immune to fire damage, and he takes double damage from cold unless a saving throw for half damage is allowed, in which case it takes half damage on a success and double damage on a failure.

Immunities: Klauth is immune to fire, paralysis, and *sleep*.

Low-Light Vision: Klauth can see four times as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar low-light conditions.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/8/8/8/8/7/7/7/4; save DC 18 + spell level): 0 -- *dancing lights, detect magic, disrupt undead, ghost sound, mage hand, mending, open/close, ray of frost, read magic*; 1st -- *expeditious retreat, identify, mage armor, shield, true strike*; 2nd -- *bull's strength, darkness, detect thoughts, Melf's acid arrow, web*; 3rd -- *clairaudience/clairvoyance, haste, lightning bolt, vampiric touch*; 4th -- *improved invisibility, scrying, solid fog, stoneskin*; 5th -- *Bigby's interposing hand, Mordenkainen's faithful hound, nightmare, wall of stone*; 6th -- *chain lightning, disintegrate, guards and wards*; 7th -- *banishment, ethereal jaunt, prismatic spray*; 8th -- *maze, power word blind, protection from spells*; 9th -- *wail of the banshee, wish*.

Klauth has used *wish* spells to remove spells he knows from his repertoire to make room for different ones, so his spells known tends to change seasonally.

Possessions: *Wand of magic missile* (9th level, 20 charges), *wand of lightning bolt* (8th level, 25 charges), *wand of ice storm* (7th level, 11 charges), *wand of fireballs* (8th level, 31 charges), *wand of polymorph other* (7th level, 16 charges), *wand of hold person* (10th level, 23 charges), *wand of dispel magic* (10th level, 13 charges), *ring of minor cold resistance, ring of wizardry II, ring of protection +5*. Klauth has many more magic items in his lair. If he is prepared for battle and has knowledge of his foes, he arms himself appropriately.

Klauth's Fate

Old Snarl is less likely to die by misadventure than most dragons. Enfeeblement (old age), disease, or a cabal of foes acting together are the dooms most likely to claim him. The last-mentioned cause would probably involve a titanic battle; the others might strike silently or might goad Klauth into one last grand, suicidal flight of destruction across the North.

In any case, once word spreads of the passing of Old Snarl, Klauthen Vale is likely to see a "gold rush" of adventurers hungry for wealth and mages hungry for magic like no other in the modern North. If even one of these seekers recovers an intact *trptych* spell, well . . . as Elminster has observed, "'Twill be a mite too late, then, for the traditional tactic of 'standing back and looking the other way.'"

Klauth's Magic

Old Snarl is thought to have a generous number of magic items and known spells. Although he possesses more wands than his wings usually sport, changing them is a long and tiresome matter of linking and controlling spells that must be broken and then cast anew. From many accounts (given by adventurers, mages, and observers Volo judged not to be fabricating or exaggerating too badly), a tentative "roster" of the wing-wands employed by Klauth can be assembled. It's important to remember that the wing-wand list given here is quite likely to contain one or more errors.

On Klauth's left wing:

1. Outermost: *wand of ice storm*
2. Mid-mount: *wand of fireballs*
3. Innermost: *wand of polymorph other*

On Klauth's right wing:

4. Outermost: *wand of hold person*
5. Mid-mount: *wand of lightning bolt*
6. Innermost: *wand of dispel magic*

The linkages Klauth has established (by still-secret spells developed by the old wyrm) enable him to employ the effects of *Alaunghaer's triptych* spells at will (in other words, activating multiple items without actually casting the *trptych* spell) activate wands #1, #2, and #4 in unison, or trigger wands #3, #5, and #6 together.

These *trptych* spells come from an original that Klauth stole from the lair of desert-dwelling dragon Iymrith (a magic possibly Netherese in origin, and presumably named for its creator), which follows hereafter.

Alaunghaer's Triptych

Transmutation

Level: Sor/Wiz 5

Components: V

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Targets: Up to three magic items
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Special
Spell Resistance: No (object)

You activate up to three items you are wearing or carrying, which together count as a quickened spell (whether you activate one, two, or three items, it counts as a quickened spell for that round, preventing you from casting another quickened spell that round). These activations occur in any order you choose. Only one ability of any particular item can be activated by a particular use of this spell, and the ability must be a spell trigger- or command word-activated ability. The items must be items that you could otherwise activate (for example, you have to know the command word for the item, a character with no cleric levels could not use this spell to activate a *wand of cure light wounds*, and so on), and must be used properly (items that use magic item slots such as bracers and rings must be worn in the appropriate location, a wand must be held in hand, and so on). The items function normally (you choose the target or area, are subject to any limitation of the items, and so on) and do not suffer any penalties due to being activated quickly by the spell. You may aim the items at the same target or different targets. If more than one item generates a touch effect (such as *ghoul touch* and *shocking grasp*), only the last-activated item's touch effect functions, with the other or others having dispersed as if you had cast a spell while holding the charge on a touch spell (in short, activating multiple touch effects is a wasted use of the potential of this spell). A triptych is not completely reliable. Each time the spell is cast, roll d% for each item; a result of 5% or less means the spell fails to activate the item. If the item were the first or second item activated by the triptych, you can attempt to activate it again with your remaining one or two activations from the spell.

Theller's Argauneau

Necromancy

Level: Brd 4, Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 full round

Range: Touch

Target: One red dragon egg

Duration: Instantaneous or 1 hour/level (see text)

Saving Throw: See text

Spell Resistance: No (object)

You drain the life energy from a red dragon egg and absorb it into yourself, which may be used for several purposes.

Healing: Heal 5d6 points of damage as if a *cure* spell were cast on you. This has an instantaneous duration.

Ability Boost: +2 enhancement bonus to Strength, Constitution, and Charisma, lasting 1 hour per caster level.

Refresh Spell: Regain one cast spell or used spell slot of any level you can cast, similar to a *pearl of power* except that bards, sorcerers, and similar casters can also benefit from it. This has an instantaneous duration.

A dragon egg is treated as an object, not a creature, and it does not get a saving throw against the spell unless it is in the possession of a creature (and therefore uses the normal saving throw rules for objects in the possession of a creature). If you are not a creature of the type "dragon," you must succeed at a Fortitude saving throw (DC 14) when you cast this spell; failure means you gain no benefit from the spell, take 3d6 points of damage, and are nauseated for 1 round from the sudden influx of incompatible life energy.

Material Component: A red dragon egg containing a living red dragon embryo, worth 2,000 gp.

Lhammaruntosz, "Claws of the Coast"

(Dragon Magazine #245)

Lhammaruntosz, the "Claws of the Coast," is a famous and often-seen bronze dragon who seems to like the company of humans far more than most wyrms -- even given the small but persistent numbers of adventurers who seize the opportunities provided by encounters with her to launch attacks on the wyrm. Her name brings to the fore something the Old Mage would like summarized before further revelations concerning Faerûnian dragons see print: how dragons are named.

Draconic Names

Volo's notes include some speculations on the naming of dragons, but it has been left to Elminster briefly to set things straight.

Dragons are vain creatures -- in most cases, too vain ever to change their names when assuming new identities, regardless of how many foes they acquire or how ridiculous a reputation they develop. Draconic names begin with a "username" bestowed on them as a hatchling by a parent, sibling, or (if orphaned) either human observers or the named dragon itself. Such names are usually added to over the years as sounds strike the dragon's fancy, until many become overly long and well-nigh unpronounceable. Some dragons guard "secret syllables" of their name to confound hostile magic, or use a short form or even nickname (such as "Mist" or "Bloodbror") exclusively.

Often a well-developed draconic name includes an echo or fragment of the name of a famous ancestor, or an unrelated wyrm the naming dragon desires to claim as a relative, or to be thought of as sharing characteristics with. For obvious reasons, such "namesake" dragons are usually deceased, though there have been cases where dragons seeking to "call out" ancient wyrms have taken on very similar names so as to enrage the missing wyrms into appearing.

This habit accounts for name syllables (endings, in particular) thought of as belonging to one gender, but in use by a wyrm of the other sex. Adventurers are cautioned never to try to guess the gender of a dragon purely from its name. It also explains some of the confusions between one dragon and another, as sometimes bards inadvertently merge the deeds of two or more dragons to feed the flames of growing legend.

The name "Lhammaruntosz," for example, echoes the famous name of Lhammarar, a smallish and much scarred copper dragon legendary for his aggressiveness. Lhammarar was ultimately dragged down beneath the waves and slain by a dragon turtle during a fierce storm; it's not known if he ever mated, and Lhammaruntosz is certainly no blood relation to him. Her name also echoes that of her mother, Tauntzoth, who in turn used the name of a male grandsire of gigantic size and reputation.

The Claws of the Coast

Lhammaruntosz is a bronze she-dragon who runs a merchant shipping line along the Sword Coast. She'll often appear when one of her vessels is endangered, which suggests she magically scrys their progress. She preys on pirates and others who cross her business interests, and her depredations alone have made the Nelander passable to shipping in recent years. Reports of her fleet vary wildly depending on who's doing the telling, but most sources agree she owns over two dozen cogs and caravels and has buyers and cargo-escort agents operating on more than a dozen other vessels.

The kindly and inquisitive dragon Lhammaruntosz avoids combat with other dragons whenever possible, but she reportedly possesses very powerful magic items that can cause acid-ball explosions in midair to harm draconic foes (*wands of energy substititon (acid) fireball*, caster level 10).

Lhammaruntosz often delivers "fast mail" messages and small items by flying them from one of her agents (on a ship just put out to sea) to another (on a ship nearing port), dropping them on a line as she passes over the ship. She holds one end of such a "dropline" in her jaws; its other end sports a hook to catch in rigging or to be caught and secured for crew, and close above the hook is a mesh bag that can hold small, cloak-wrapped bundles of valuables. "Mother Wyrms" (as her crews have dubbed her) prepares and loads such lines by means of *unseen servant* spells.

The sailors who crew Mother Wyrms' fleet love the protection a dragon owner can provide and are proud of flying her "Scaly Eye" banner, though most other Coast sailors think their tales of a bronze dragon fighting for them, towing them away from shoals, or dropping messages to them are so much wild fancy. Merchant rivals aren't so quick to scoff.



The Scaly Eye

The Scaly Eye banner, often seen on ships docked up and down the Sword Coast, is a long blue pennant displaying a single staring eye weeping a spreading fan of tears, above which arches an eyebrow. Both the tears and the brow, if examined closely, can be seen to be made of shaped representations of dragon scales. The artwork, reputed to be that of Lhammaruntosz herself, is impressive, not crude or amusing.

It's a measure of the growing reputation of the Claws of the Coast that certain vessels have recently been seen flying false Scaly Eye banners; the bronze dragon has torn one such ship (a pirate vessel masquerading as one of her fleet) apart at sea and then sent her sailors to forcibly persuade other ship captains to refrain from unauthorized use of her banner -- unless, of course, they plan to turn ownership and administration of their boats over to her. (At least five terrified ship captains have done just that, including the well-known sea merchant Essegn Anarvible of Neverwinter.)

One of the High Captains of Luskan is thought to have crossed swords with the Scaly Eye ships in the past, but he seems to have made his peace with the dragon. Dark rumors of the confrontation and feud between Rethnor Redcloak and Lhammaruntosz abound, but hard facts on this topic have proven as hard to grasp as smoke.

The Rise of Lhammaruntosz

The Claws of the Coast was a hatchling of the crazed she-dragon Tauntzoth of the Rocks, who dwelt in a cave on the bare, windswept Finback, tallest of the Whalebones. Savage and cunning, Tauntzoth slew or drove away all others of her kind as she grew older and spent her days winging far and wide across the Sword Coast North, slaying all large creatures who defied her or whose looks she didn't like.

Increasingly Tauntzoth became convinced that a mysterious overdragon, whom she dubbed "the Unseen" because she could never find any trace of him, was stalking her, intending to enslave her and force her to bear his offspring -- dragons who would be born alive and whole, and would eat and tear their ways out of her, killing her horribly.

No evidence for the existence of the Unseen has appeared outside Tauntzoth's mind, but to her, every creature was an agent of her "Dark Doom," except her own offspring (whose fathers she slew) -- and, to her, they were rebels and potential rivals better slain anyway. One of the last of these unfortunate children seems to have been Rauthra, the future Lhammaruntosz, who spent her formative years spread-eagled and helpless in her mother's lair, anchored down by an extensive web of spell-reinforced chains and manacles.

Tauntzoth developed spells dealing with regeneration and experimented with them on her hapless daughter. Her gift for the art of magic was strong, and to this day Lhammaruntosz swiftly regenerates lost limbs and organs. Tauntzoth regenerated even faster but she couldn't resist augmenting her powers with ever-greater spells until her body grew a wild and endless succession of spare limbs, wings, headless necks, and tails, becoming a clumsy thing that was obviously "the Curse of the Unseen" come down upon her. This process accelerated for some seasons, until her body ultimately collapsed into a boneless mass.

In the final years of her life, the quickening and uncontrollable growth of her body made Tauntzoth a vast and horrifying monster -- a cavern-filling mass of writhing flesh that was continually exuding new extremities. It also made her ache (or "burn," as she often howlingly described it) with continual hunger. Her solution was near at hand: her daughter, the mistrusted and thoroughly cowed object of her experiments. Strengthened regeneration magic made permanent by the most powerful spellcasting allowed Rauthra to survive being eaten more or less continuously.

The young dragon spent at least two centuries as a chained, partly devoured prisoner of her mother -- and decades thereafter as an abandoned prisoner, kept from a death of despair and starvation only by her regenerative magic, her hunger to see the world outside her cave, and whatever vermin she could find nearby to keep her body regenerating. With increasing frustration she awaited the failure of spell after spell until she could burst the last of her chains and win freedom at last.

This cruel rearing has left its scars; imprisonment and personal restraint are threats that make Lhammaruntosz go berserk even today, some six centuries after she first flew out of the Finback and left the horror of her mother's lair forever. The old northern ballad "The Wandering Wyrn," believed to have been the work of the halfling minstrel Aldersound Bucklebar, recounts a few incidents of her wide-ranging explorations of Faerûn at this time.

The Claws of the Coast spent almost four centuries wandering about Faerûn, fighting off and fleeing from all the hostile dragons whose domains she inadvertently entered. She owes her survival to her regenerative powers and her swiftness to flee; never interested in fighting for territory and possessed of very little personal pride, Lhammaruntosz never lingers to destroy a foe but simply strikes to defend herself, end an immediate problem, and be on her way again. She has shown a whimsical side and an impulsive desire to aid lone, beleaguered creatures -- and her "swoop from the sky" rescues earned her fame in human lore and several outstanding debts owed to her by such diverse folk as the mage Malchor Harpell, several senior Harpers, and the priest Tolgar Anuvien of Goldenfields.

Her attacks substantially weakened the Broken Bone orc horde in 1024 DR, and she was the mysterious "wyrms gliding by night" that plucked the shipwrecked explorer Havilar Culdorn (founder of the Blackbacks Trading Coster, forerunner of many of the wealthy trading houses of present-day Amn) from the waves of the Sea of Swords after the pirate-shattering Battle of Blazing Sails in 1211 DR.

Lhammaruntosz seems to have ended her wandering only recently, taking the "resting lair" (an open-to-the elements, hoardless sleeping spot) of the old green dragon Skarlthoon. Known as "Snarljaws" because of her temper, Skarlthoon died in 1348 DR of some disease that ate away her scales and then the flesh beneath, covering her with creeping moss. The Claws of the Coast then seems to have fought some unknown dragon to the death and gained its inland lair; Elminster believes that this hidden hold must lie somewhere south and east of Secomber, in the broken land that marks the edge of the High Moor -- and that its lingering magic is enough to make the wandering Lhammaruntosz feel secure. (She chose the Sword Coast from Neverwinter to Velen as her favorite haunt.)

This, in turn, allowed her to build a family to oversee and be part of her merchant fleet, the ships of the Scaly Eye, which began to sail sometime around 1361 DR, but only grew to prosperity and reputation after the Year of the Staff (1366 DR), after her battles against pirates earned her the trust of merchant clients. Two keys to the success of the Scaly Eye were the two sisters Draeth: two fat and unlovely, but very astute, women from Leilon, Astlarthe and Dlareen. They brought the bronze dragon enough honest news and opinions of human doings and intrigues to fascinate her with the strivings of humans and to make her want to be involved in such things continuously. The Draeths, though much crippled with arthritis, remain the most trusted, high-ranking, and important agents of the Scaly Eye. Based in Neverwinter and Mintarn respectively, they deal in cargoes and special handling agreements for their "Mother" and can count on her personal protection and financial support in all they do. Beyond a hunger for the company of young and handsome men, they seem to lack vices and weaknesses -- and after encounters with some watchful Harpers and a certain enraged bronze she-dragon, Luskanite rivals have learned not to try slaying them.

Today, Lhammaruntosz is a bronze dragon of what humans call "very old" years, sleek in build but often battered in appearance. Her craggy face is homely for a dragon and always seems somehow more kindly than majestic. The works of her mother have left her with a fear and mistrust of magic, but also with the determination that no one will ever easily overcome her defenses and harm or enslave her with magic again, so the Claws of the Coast gathers all the magic she can, while avoiding both unnecessary spellcasting and all magical experimentation.

Lhammaruntosz finds it hard to trust anyone and keeps her own company; any need to share a small area with other sentient creatures for more than a few hours will make her irritable, suspicious, and constantly on her guard. At the same time, she feels a need to be accepted by a friendly group of beings who share a common purpose. (It is fair to say, Elminster and the "Dragon Sage" Velsaert of Baldur's Gate agree, that the folk of her Scaly Eye fleet serve as the family she never had -- and that her mistrust of other dragons will probably ensure that she never does have a draconic family.)

Lhammaruntosz is gifted with a remarkable sense of direction and distance, honed by her years of wandering, and she can find her way to small and specific locations, even unfamiliar ones, in the dark and in poor weather, with a minimum of fuss and delay. She's often come out of the driving rain of a howling storm, low over the storm-tossed waves, wings beating powerfully among the wind gusts and the lightning, to check on one of her ships. Stricken vessels are promptly towed (all Scaly Eye ships are equipped with long, stout cables for this purpose, consisting of three ropes braided to each other to form one extra-thick length, which is anchored to "keel-trunks" set in the deck and carried wrapped around the inside of the deck-rail) or abandoned, their crews snatched aloft after lashing themselves to one another.

Lhammaruntosz is also developing a shrewd sense of human nature and knows when she's being lied to. The swindles and covert ways of merchants are becoming almost second nature to her, and she's learned to hold her tongue in patience, to test would-be allies and business partners, and to set aside personal feelings when a longtime ally turns sour, or long-term treachery is revealed. This calmness and understanding of others led to the "Mother Wyrms" nickname (coined as a result of her rescues) sticking, even in the face of the fiercer "Claws of the Coast" moniker, which grew out of tavern tales of her tearing apart pirate vessels to defend ships of her fleet. A slightly less respectful (or more unfriendly) variant of this, much heard among sailors, is "Mother Claws."

Velsaert reports that the key to Lhammaruntosz's character is her understanding of humans, but Elminster says her attentive, motherlike caring for other creatures -- many other beings, not just a chosen few partners or allies -- is what sets her apart from most wyrms. She hates pranks and deceptions of all kinds and is always analyzing folk and situations. Her actions may seem to occasionally be born out of imprudence or ignorance, but it is a mistake to assume so -- she has almost always thought (and prepared) several steps ahead.

Lhammaruntosz's Lair

Mother Wyrms has two homes -- a hidden inland hoard-lair whose whereabouts are unknown, and a "resting lair" in a bowl valley in the heights of Orlumbor. She visits the inland lair only when she needs to take shelter from severe winter weather, retrieve magic, or hide and think or heal; she is almost always found on Orlumbor or on the wing, somewhere above the Sword Coast. She visits coastal

agents and informants often, even alighting on the coastal rocks near Lathtar's Lantern every few days to talk to the gruff old retired fisherman Inglass Pholdaruk, whom she pays so well that he's been able to hire spies in many nearby villages to keep a very close watch over travelers, caravans, and local doings. As he put it, "I never thought I'd become someone important in my fireside years -- but bless old Mother Claws, I have!"

Several Cult of the Dragon agents and ambitious adventurers have searched in vain for the inland lair of Lhammaruntosz. She may keep its entrance choked by a rockfall, for it's doubtful it has any defenders to keep folk out when she's not there. Nor do elaborate traps seem to be her style. What is certain is that it must hold some impressive magic items, because Mother Wyrms has swiftly produced such things from time to time, as conflicts dictate, and used them to telling effect.

Lhammaruntosz's Domain

From Orlumbor, Lhammaruntosz ranges up and down the Sword Coast, avoiding the immediate vicinity of Waterdeep and Baldur's Gate, but going so far as to perch beside the walls of Neverwinter and Velen on occasion. Hardened against the ravages of exposure by her regenerative powers, the Claws of the Coast thinks nothing of hard landings or of simply stretching out on bare rock islets to wait out a storm, even when ice and snow cloak her resting form thickly.

Mother Wyrms doesn't think of this territory as her exclusive domain, as most wyrms do; she'll ignore or perhaps calmly greet and pass other dragons who treat her the same way, fighting only those who offer her battle, or attack her property, the Scaly Eye folk, or her friends.

The Deeds of Lhammaruntosz

Lhammaruntosz doesn't need to eat much, but her childhood near-starvation has given her a loathing of hunger. She prefers to eat lightly but often and to vary her diet greatly, firmly deciding to try new things and never to adopt any "favorite fare."

From day to day, Lhammaruntosz busies herself aiding, defending, and watching over the sailors, agents, and merchants who serve under the Scaly Eye banner. She seldom undertakes expeditions away from the Sword Coast these days and prides herself on being very well informed as to coastal news and events. Word of strange magic or armed bands engaging in open conflict brings her immediate interest -- and often a "go and see" flight. Some folk are of the opinion that her presence and habit of swift response have kept forces of Luskan from infiltrating or openly attacking Neverwinter and has kept Leilon safe from brigandry without its citizens lifting more than a few fingers in their own defense.

Lhammaruntosz: Female very old bronze dragon; CR 20; Huge dragon (water); HD 30d12+213; hp 408; Init +0; Spd 40 ft., swim 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor); AC 37, touch 8, flat-footed 37; Atk +37 melee (2d8+10, bite) and +32 melee (2d6+5, 2 claws) and +32 melee (1d8+5, 2 wings) and +32 melee (2d6+15, tail slap); Face/Reach 10 ft. by 20 ft./10 ft.; SA breath weapon (100-ft. line of lightning), breath weapon (50-ft. cone of repulsion gas), crush 2d8+15, frightful presence, spell-like abilities; SQ blindsight 270 ft., darkvision 900 ft., DR 15/+2, fast healing 2, healing burst, immunities (electricity, paralysis, sleep), low-light vision, SR 26, water breathing; AL LG; SV Fort +26, Ref +17, Will +23; Str 31, Dex 10, Con 25, Int 22, Wis 23, Cha 22.

Skills and Feats: Balance +2, Bluff +16, Concentration +27, Diplomacy +43, Escape Artist +10, Heal +14, Hide -8, Intimidate +8, Intuit Direction +22, Jump +12, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (history -- the North) +16, Knowledge (local -- the North) +31, Listen +41, Scry +30, Search +39, Sense Motive +28, Spellcraft +36, Spot +41, Swim +18, Tumble +16, Wilderness Lore +14; Alertness, Endurance, Flyby Attack, Great Fortitude, Power Attack, Snatch, Toughness, Wingover.

Breath Weapon (Su): Once every 1d4 rounds, Lhammaruntosz can breathe a 100-foot line of electricity. Any creature in that area takes 18d6 points of electricity damage (Reflex DC 32 half).

Breath Weapon (Su): Once every 1d4 rounds, Lhammaruntosz can breathe a 50-foot cone of repulsion gas. Any creature in that area must succeed at a Reflex save (DC 32) or be compelled to do nothing but move away from the dragon for 1d6+9 rounds. This is a mind-affecting compulsion enchantment effect.

Crush (Ex): When flying or jumping, Lhammaruntosz can land on Small or smaller opponents as a standard action, using her whole body to crush them. A crush attack affects as many creatures as can fit under Lhammaruntosz's body. Each creature in the affected area must succeed at a Reflex save (DC 32) or be pinned, automatically taking bludgeoning damage during the next round unless she moves off. If Lhammaruntosz chooses to maintain the pin, treat it as a normal grapple attack (grapple bonus +48). A pinned opponent takes crush damage each round if it doesn't escape.

Frightful Presence (Su): This ability takes effect automatically when Lhammaruntosz attacks, charges, or flies overhead. It affects only opponents within 270 feet that have 29 or fewer Hit Dice. The affected creature must make a successful Will save (DC 31) or become panicked (if 4 or fewer HD) or shaken (if more than 5 HD). Success indicates that the target is immune to Lhammaruntosz's frightful presence for one day.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will -- *Speak with animals*; 3/day -- *create food and water*, *detect thoughts*, *fog cloud*, *polymorph self*. Caster level 13th; save DC 16 + spell level. Lhammaruntosz's *polymorph self* ability works just like the spell, except that each use allows only one change, which lasts until she assumes another form or reverts to her own (which does not count as a use of this ability).

Blindsight (Ex): Lhammaruntosz can ascertain creatures by nonvisual means (mostly hearing and scent, but also by noticing vibration and other environmental clues) to a range of 270 feet. Invisibility and darkness are irrelevant, though she still can't discern ethereal beings. Lhammaruntosz usually does not need to make Spot or Listen checks to notice creatures within range of her blindsight ability.

Fast Healing (Ex): Lhammaruntosz regains hit points at the rate of 2 per round. Fast healing does not restore hit points lost from starvation, thirst, or suffocation, but it does allow Lhammaruntosz to regrow or reattach lost body parts.

Low-Light Vision: Lhammaruntosz can see four times as well as a human in low-light conditions and twice as well in normal light.

Healing Burst (Ex): Three times per day, Lhammaruntosz may accelerate her body's fast healing ability, healing 6d4 points of damage. This is a standard action, and works exactly as if she had healed the damage with fast healing.

Water Breathing (Ex): Lhammaruntosz can breathe underwater indefinitely and can freely use her breath weapon, spells, and other abilities while submerged.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/8/8/7/7/5; save DC 16 + spell level): 0 -- *detect magic*, *disrupt undead*, *flare*, *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *open/close*, *read magic*, *resistance*; 1st -- *alarm*, *charm person*, *endure elements*, *expeditious retreat*, *unseen servant*; 2nd -- *darkness*, *endurance*, *invisibility*, *resist elements*, *whispering wind*; 3rd -- *dispel magic*, *protection from elements*, *suggestion*, *tongues*; 4th -- *arcane eye*, *dimension door*, *scrying*, *stoneskin*; 5th -- *cloudkill*, *prying eyes*, *Rary's telepathic bond*; 6th -- *acid fog*, *greater dispelling*.

Lhammaruntosz's Fate

The Cult of the Dragon is increasingly interested in the Claws of the Coast because of her interest in human society, her profitable shipping fleet (which could be turned to enriching them, were she to become a dracolich under their control), and -- most importantly -- her regenerative powers.

Certain individuals within the Cult are secretly researching a means of magically achieving "weredragonhood" (that is, acquiring the means to temporarily take on fully-powered draconic shapes, when desired, though the term is a misnomer because dragons are not animals and thus this ability is unrelated to lycanthropy and the moon), so as to use their abilities against not only the hostile world but against fellow Cult members and rise from the lower ranks to leadership of the Cult. At least two of them (Elminster smilingly refused to furnish names) covet Lhammaruntosz's regenerative powers, seeing them as a means to virtual immortality for either humans or weredragon-humans.

Whether or not what aids her can be made to aid anyone else is a mystery "best left to the gods," Elminster commented, "because it's a rather certain bet that no mortal knows."

If Lhammaruntosz eludes the clutches of all the folk who want to get their hands on her powers, she still risks treachery at the claws of any dragon she dares trust enough to mate with; Elminster sees the chances of her developing any such trust as being extremely unlikely. This would seem to indicate a long and lonely life, with eventual destruction at the hands of a magically powerful foe that can shatter her regenerative powers. The usual candidates for such villainy (such as the Brotherhood of the Arcane, Red Wizards, Zhentarim, and the phaerimm) are all likely to see Mother Wyrms as a useful slave-steed and to try to magically control her mind rather than destroy her utterly.

Lhammaruntosz's Magic

Little is known of the spells wielded by the Claws of the Coast; they seem to be both minor and familiar. She even employs her natural abilities (such as polymorphing into other creature forms) very sparingly. On several occasions, however, she has used her "acid-ball wand" in aerial battle. Elminster says this is an old Halruaan weapon similar to the one used by the wyrm Malaeragoth (and he'll give us details of this particularly wicked wand with that dragon's chronicle).

Malaeragoth, "The Dragon Unseen"

(Dragon Magazine #246)

Somewhere east of Waterdeep
lurks The Dragon Unseen.
Silent now his claws they creep
Rending all; Bodies fall,
Watched by eyes of green
Orbs of patient death,
Sleepless they gleam
Above slaying breath
And jaws of thunder;
Smashing foes under
To further a bloody dream.

Many have chanted those grim lines over a kindling fire in the Sword Coast North, because doing so is supposed to ward off beasts that see the blaze from afar. Most minstrels think "The Dragon Unseen" is no more than an impressive warning phrase, a clever bardic creation . . . but bards -- and all too many corpses -- have found the truth to be very different.

Malaeragoth the Unseen is a wily male sapphire dragon -- "very old" as humans measure the years of dragons -- who is rarely seen outside his lair. He lurks in its depths, devouring creatures of the Underdark (drow warbands, for example) who endlessly blunder into the caverns he calls home. He plots as he paces in the darkness, scheming out how -- without ever leaving his caverns -- he can achieve covert control over the pitiful but potentially dangerous human organization known as the Cult of the Dragon.

Once Malaeragoth served the wizard Uvalkhur the Undaunted as an occasional steed. It was a partnership he enjoyed, for he never ventured out into the sunlit skies of the surface world unless he had Uvalkhur on his back. The sardonic young wizard was an expert guide who didn't mind taking detours to show his curious aerial steed scorching deserts or frigid wastes.

Uvalkhur was the son of a rich Sembian merchant, much enmeshed in the intrigues of the wealthy merchants of that land. As his enemies grew, his need for swift journeys grew with it, and he called on Malaeragoth often. He didn't seem to mind that the dragon beneath him took close and persistent interest in spellbooks and the occasional magic Uvalkhur unleashed.

Over the years, Malaeragoth learned a little about spells, a little more about the use and handling of magic items, and much about Sembian politics and the players in its frenetic and rather dirty games, which Uvalkhur especially hated. The Cult of the Dragon, for instance, were forever hounding young wizards to join the Cult or at least to lend it magical assistance . . . or else face the "righteous and justified wrath" of the Followers of the Scaly Way. Regardless of a wizardling's reaction, they spread the word that he or she was now a loyal Cult member, and all Cultists could call on the wizardling for aid or sponsorship -- and any refusal would make the wizardling subject to Cult justice.

It's expensive to be a wizard in Sembia. Well, it's expensive to be just about anyone in Sembia, but the training and components involved in spellcasting restrict wizardry to the very wealthy or the duly accomplished. That meant most of the rising wizards were young nobles (that is, the sons of established wealthy merchant families).

The Cult of the Dragon, on the other hand, was largely composed of ambitious non-nobles; clawing at every wizard in sight was a good way of weakening the influence of the nobility and increasing the reputation of the Cult. It was also a good way to make enemies -- but if your foes fear you, you can often force them to react in certain ways, giving you a measure of control over them. And as Uvalkhur put it, "the Sembian Cultists love every measure of control they can squeeze out of Faerûn around them."

There came a summer morning when Uvalkhur, no longer young, was attacked in his manor house in northern Sembia by bold Cultists bent on plunder and punishment. The battle that followed brought death to many, but after the Undaunted had been hacked apart on his best carpet at the heart of his spell-chambers, enough Cultists remained alive to shout victorious triumph to the skies and loot all the magic items and spellbooks they could find.

Unfortunately for their continued health, they lingered too long over intricate sliding panels and the wine bottles in the ambries behind some of them, thinking that Uvalkhur's last cries had been vain entreaties and not a summons to the only ally he could call. When



Malaeragoth plunged down out of the sky, he saw at once what had happened and tore what was left of the manor apart as a child tears open the wrappings of a gift to reach the Cultists within.

What he left of the ruined manor house still stands, overgrown by its orchards, northwest of Saerb. Its riven walls have been further despoiled over the years by scavengers in search of magic, but phantom wizards and leucrotta have kept casual explorers away. Not much is left for even the most diligent seeker to find, anyway; Malaeragoth bore away from House Undaunted chests of potions and books, a cabinet full of scrolls, all the items from which he'd recalled seeing Uvalkhur unleash magic . . . and a powerful hatred of the Cult of the Dragon.

The rest of that summer, the sapphire wyrm indulged his rage, hunting down Cultists across Sembia to avenge his sometime master. That ended one autumn night when he was burned and blasted by the frantic spells of three Cult wizards working together. Their magic sent him rolling into a pond, his lashing tail inadvertently flicking barrels of oil into fires ignited in battle. The explosion that followed tore apart the Cult stronghold he'd attacked, sent smoke rising to the stars, and hurled two of his wizard foes to their deaths, broken on the stones of the walled manor where they'd made their stand. None saw the wounded dragon crawl out of the pond and up a rocky slope.

The journey back to his lair was long and painful, and Malaeragoth vowed he'd never stand against wizards in open battle again. As he lay healing and trying to master magic in the dark caverns of his lair, he used Uvalkhur's scrying mirror to watch Cult members and their doings, and he vowed revenge upon them all. Yet his wounds were great, and they kept him idle in the dark for months. Nor did the learning of magic go swiftly, though he found that he understood magic and could divine ways to reshape it to his bidding. It occurred to him, as he lay upon his bed of coins, that he was the very thing diligent Cultists went seeking. To draw them to him was too risky; he'd be inviting a battle into his home and abandoning all safety and privacy forever. Perhaps he could act as the senior Cultists did, issuing orders and sending one group of agents to spy on another. . . .

Malaeragoth set about trying to manipulate the Cult into serving him, and he found that it worked. At first he merely sent them to a variety of fiendish traps for his own amusement. Later he realized that the surviving Cultists could do useful things for him such as carrying out tasks a dragon couldn't and sparing him the danger of long travel away from his lair. His early attempts proved so successful that the Unseen Dragon set to work in earnest on learning impersonations, mind-reading and mind-controlling spells, and the workings of human society (and the desires and characters of humans) in the North. Thus he trained to control Cult members without their being aware of his manipulation. He succeeded with ridiculous ease. Almost disbelieving, he set additional schemes in motion and watched them succeed. Cult members were indeed too chaotic for words.

As he set to work to master magic, Malaeragoth found himself with two pastimes: reshaping his lair and manipulating the Cult. Over the years since, he has largely altered his lair to the way he wants it. Influencing the Cult has progressed to the point where he can see his way clear to controlling it eventually.

Nowadays, Malaeragoth prides himself on leaving no hints to his identity when he destroys Cult members, and on wiping out all tracing spells that might find him by means of the treasure he seizes. Cult members are only now aware that someone or something that does not like them is at work in an area roughly bounded by Scornubel to the Shining Falls, and the Lonely Moor to Uluvín -- but as yet none of them knows it is a dragon.

Malaeragoth takes an almost childlike glee in misleading Cultists as to his true nature and in deftly increasing his influence over them; covertly achieving control of the Cult has become his great passion and entertainment.

More often whispered of in the Underdark than on the surface of Faerûn, Malaeragoth takes delight not in an impressive reputation (as most wyrms do) but in remaining hidden and unknown, truly Unseen. He avoids even the company of his own kind and hides to avoid unnecessary contact. He has a natural aptitude for and grasp of magic, and he knows the general topography of Faerûn from aloft. He is otherwise ignorant of much lore, and his scrying of surface society is almost entirely concerned with the intrigues of Sembia and the activities of the Cult of the Dragon.

Malaeragoth is itching to make use of his knowledge of the Realm of Rolling Coins by means of investments, but he lacks an agent he can trust and doesn't want to spend time away from his caverns -- though he can assume the shape and manners of Sembian merchants with uncanny accuracy, should he be moved to do so. When adventuring bands or exploring dragons come seeking him, he often successfully masquerades as a lost, wandering human in need of their aid -- until the right moment to attack with his full draconic form and powers.

Watching and scheming consume his days. Through years spent in this way, Malaeragoth has developed patience and a sense of humor. The hot rising springs that run through his lair slake his thirst, and he dines on creatures of the Underdark who intrude on his lair, flocks of wildfowl who alight to sleep on the High Moor (scrying them, he swoops on them by night, awakening them and

gulping huge numbers in the air as they flutter aloft in a huge mass), and the creatures produced by eight captive deepspawn that he keeps walled away in a network of mushroom-bedizened caverns that he opens only to enter and feed.

Malaeragoth's Lair

The Unseen dwells in a huge network of caverns beneath the Graypeak Mountains. Some of these subterranean chambers are natural and bring hot and foaming streams up from the depths to join the River Shining. Others are the halls and passages of a long-abandoned dwarven delve, its short and narrow ways blasted to larger tunnels by the spells of the Unseen. Traps and chasms are commonplace, and once-rough walls have been scoured and worn smooth by the passing bulk of the dragon who now rules here, stretching often like a gigantic and restless scaled cat but seldom emerging into the world beyond what he calls his "Realm of Stone and Shadow." Malaeragoth keeps several "arms," which are dead-end strings of caverns walled off with huge rocks, for special purposes. One such arm is flooded and holds reserve water. Another is lit by the endless, silent flashes of many gems: the much-prized beljurils. Scrying mirrors drift slowly along the passages of the Realm of Stone and Shadow, like upright oval stone shields, their soft green-white surfaces flickering. Malaeragoth uses them to spy on the world outside, regularly scanning the lands around his lair, but bending the major part of his attention upon distant Sembia and the deeds of the Cult of the Dragon, wherever he detects or follows them. Skeletons and zombies fetch and carry at Malaeragoth's bidding. If his lair is attacked by large groups of beings, he'll direct these undead to roll waiting, massed crushing boulders down on invaders in particular shafts or areas. The undead are otherwise walled away in unlit side-caverns to keep them out of the way of the Unseen Dragon's slow pacings. He enjoys solitude and taking slow walks through the caverns worn smooth by years of his passage, as he murmurs thoughts, comments, and unfolding schemes aloud (although he'll never do so when he knows guests are anywhere in his lair) and watches a scrying mirror that's drifting along with him. Malaeragoth has no other servitors or allies, although he sometimes poses as this or that human and uses his scrying mirror to seek advice from various distant surface folk (or to manipulate them with offers of deals or the real or false news he imparts).

Malaeragoth's Domain

Save for his extensive lair "realm," Malaeragoth claims and patrols no territory but considers himself free to travel at will around surface Faerûn. He won't hesitate to fight if he encounters anyone barring or disputing his way on his rare forays out "under the sun." He does keep watch over the approaches to his lair, both on the surface and in the Underdark, having developed an intense dislike of surprise guests and visitations.

The Deeds of Malaeragoth

Malaeragoth eats and drinks as he sees the need, but takes no delight in devouring or hunting. He hates no dragons or anyone beyond Cult members, but he feels no need to take a mate or maintain friendships with dragons or other beings.

The dealings of merchants fascinate Malaeragoth, and he never tires of observing them. He hungers to take an ever-greater hand in secretly "steering" events in whatever direction he desires. First, make the Cult of the Dragon his unwitting puppets, then begin to manipulate factions and individuals -- everyone except priests and wizards who might well detect him -- in realms everywhere across Faerûn. . . .

Malaeragoth: Male very old sapphire dragon Wiz 5; CR 24; Huge dragon (earth); HD 29d12+174 plus 5d4+30; hp 404; Init +5; Spd 40 ft., burrow 5 ft., swim 10 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor); AC 43, touch 13, flat-footed 38; Atk +39 melee (2d8+10, bite) and +34 melee (2d6+5, 2 claws) and +34 melee (1d8+5, 2 wings) and +34 melee (2d6+15, tail slap); Face/Reach 10 ft. by 20 ft./10 ft.; SA breath weapon (50-ft. cone of sonic energy), crush, frightful presence, psionic combat modes (ego whip, id insinuation, mind blast, mind thrust, psychic crush; empty mind, intellect fortress, mental barrier, thought shield, tower of iron will), psionics; SQ blindsight 270 ft., DR 15/+2, fire resistance 30, immunities (electricity, paralysis, sleep), low-light vision, planar travel, power resistance 25, psionic power points 101, spider climb; AL LN; SV Fort +25, Ref +24, Will +27; Str 31, Dex 20, Con 23, Int 22, Wis 23, Cha 22.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +12, Bluff +38, Climb +26, Concentration +38, Diplomacy +39, Disguise +16, Gather Information +14, Heal +9, Hide -3, Intimidate +16, Intuit Direction +15, Knowledge (arcana) +21, Knowledge (geography -- the North) +16, Knowledge (local -- Sembia) +10, Knowledge (local -- the North) +20, Listen +22, Scry +31, Search +21, Sense Motive +14, Spellcraft +19, Spot +22, Swim +18, Wilderness Lore +9; Combat Manifestation, Craft Wand, Inertial Armor, Iron Will, Mind Trap, Power Attack, Psionic Metabolism, Psychic Bastion, Quicken Spell-Like Ability, Rapid Metabolism, Scribe Scroll, Sunder.

Breath Weapon (Su): Once every 1d4 rounds, Malaeragoth can breathe a 50-foot cone of sonic energy that deals 18d4 points of sonic damage to every creature in the area (Reflex DC 30 half). Each creature within the cone must also make a Fortitude save (DC 30) or be deafened for 1d4 rounds.

Crush (Ex): When flying or jumping, Malaeragoth can land on Small or smaller creatures as a standard action, using his whole body to crush them. A crush attack affects as many creatures as can fit under Malaeragoth's body. Each creature in the affected area must succeed at a Reflex save (DC 30) or be pinned, automatically taking 2d8+15 points of bludgeoning damage. Thereafter, if Malaeragoth chooses to maintain the pin (grapple bonus +47), treat it as a normal grapple attack. While pinned, the opponent takes crush damage each round.

Frightful Presence (Ex): This ability takes effect automatically when Malaeragoth attacks, charges, or flies overhead. It affects only opponents with 28 or fewer Hit Dice or levels within a radius of 270 feet. Each affected creature must make a successful Will save (DC 30) to resist the effect. On a failure, a creature with 5 or more Hit Dice or levels becomes shaken for 4d6 rounds, and a creature with 4 or fewer Hit Dice or levels becomes panicked for 4d6 rounds. Success indicates that the target is immune to Malaeragoth's frightful presence for one day.

Psionics (Sp): Always active -- sense psychoportation; 2/day -- skate, stone shape; 1/day -- teleport.

Psionic Powers (8/5/4/4/3/3/2; as 13th-level psion [nomad]; save DC 1d20 + power level + key ability modifier): 0 -- burst, control shadow, daze, far hand, missive, my light, telepathic projection, verve; 1st -- charm person, combat precognition, conceal thoughts, feather fall, lesser body adjustment; 2nd -- clairaudience/clairvoyance, detect thoughts, invisibility, psionic lock; 3rd -- dimension slide, lesser domination, remote viewing, time hop; 4th -- detect remote viewing, dimensional anchor, polymorph self; 5th -- mind probe, sending, teleport; 6th -- null psionics field, trace teleport.

Blindsight (Ex): Malaeragoth can ascertain creatures by nonvisual means (mostly hearing and scent, but also by noticing vibration and other environmental clues) to a range of 270 feet. Invisibility and darkness are irrelevant, though he still can't discern ethereal beings. He usually does not need to make Spot or Listen checks to notice creatures within range of his blindsight ability.

Low-Light Vision: Malaeragoth can see four times as well as a human in low-light conditions and twice as well in normal light.

Planar Travel (Su): Malaeragoth has the innate ability to pass instantly between the Material Plane and the Inner Planes.

Spider Climb (Ex): Malaeragoth can climb on stone surfaces as though using the spider climb spell. This ability is always active.

Wizard Spells Prepared (4/5/4/2; save DC 16 + spell level): 0 -- detect magic, ghost sound, light, mage hand; 1st -- burning hands, endure elements, expeditious retreat, silent image, true strike; 2nd -- blur, cat's grace, darkvision, invisibility; 3rd -- dispel magic, tongues.

Spellbook: 0 -- arcane mark, dancing lights, daze, detect magic, detect poison, disrupt undead, flare, ghost sound, light, mage hand, mending, open/close, prestidigitation, ray of frost, read magic, resistance; 1st -- burning hands, endure elements, expeditious retreat, magic missile, silent image, sleep, Tenser's floating disk, true strike, unseen servant; 2nd -- blur, cat's grace, darkvision, endurance, invisibility, Melf's acid arrow, resist elements, web; 3rd -- ball of fangs, breath barb, dispel magic, fireball, gaseous form, halt undead, sapphire psionic shield, tongues.

Malaeragoth's Fate

The Unseen Dragon is playing a dangerous game. His continued success depends on his existence remaining unsuspected, or at least his whereabouts and identity staying unknown. As Elminster observes, "No one -- gods or mortals -- can remain hidden forever." The Old Mage suspects that Malaeragoth of the Realm of Stone and Shadow will come to a violent doom when his meddlings go too far, or when they touch the wrong being. Most of the Chosen know of his existence, and Elminster suspects at least one Red Wizard is watching over the Unseen Dragon in much the same way as Malaeragoth watches over the strivings and intrigues of Sembia and the Cult.

The massed Cult of the Dragon, should it bring all of its force to bear in concert -- and avoid most of the traps of the dragon's realm -- should alone destroy Malaeragoth. On the other hand, Elminster observed in dry tones, it might well take the direct power and guidance of a god to make all the Cult do anything together.

Malaeragoth's Magic

Some of the wands that the Unseen Dragon salvaged from House Undaunted are rare and powerful "acid-hurling death wands," as foes call them (wands of energy substitution (acid) fireball, caster level 10); the same sort of weapon possessed by the dragon Lhammaruntosz. Whereas the Claws of the Coast commands (so far as is known) only one such item, Malaeragoth owns at least four. This may well be the largest collection of this sort of wand anywhere; Elminster says very few such weapons still exist due to their inherent instability.

The Unseen Dragon has developed several interesting spells from the tomes he took from the ruins of his master's house; three of the most interesting of these follow. Due to his research (into spells beyond his present capabilities, in particular), Malaeragoth's understanding and recognition of spells cast by other creatures is extensive.

Ball of Fangs

Evocation [Force]

Level: Sor/Wiz 3**Components:** V**Casting Time:** 1 action**Range:** Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)**Area:** 10-ft.-radius burst**Duration:** Instantaneous**Saving Throw:** Reflex half**Spell Resistance:** Yes

You create a sphere of whirling, fanglike translucent blades of force that burst outward from a single point to a 10-foot-radius sphere. Creatures within the sphere take 1d6 points of force damage per caster level (maximum 10d6).

Breathbarb

Transmutation

Level: Sor/Wiz 3**Components:** V**Casting Time:** 1 action**Range:** Short (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)**Effect:** One crystal lozenge (see text)**Duration:** 1 day/level (see text)**Saving Throw:** See text**Spell Resistance:** Yes (see text)

You cast this spell, and on your next turn if you use your breath weapon, the spell traps the breath weapon into a gemlike lozenge 5 feet long and 1 feet in diameter, which floats and spins in midair. If you do not use a breath weapon before the end of your next turn or the breath weapon is of the kind that does not deal damage, this spell ends without effect. You may handle and move the lozenge as easily as an object of some infinitesimal weight. You must touch the lozenge to move it, and you cannot throw it. If any other creature touches it or if a creature comes within 5 feet of it, it triggers the release of the spell (see below).

When triggered, the lozenge explodes in a 20-foot-radius burst, releasing harmless sparks and the power of the breath weapon trapped within it. Any creature caught in this area suffers the effects of the breath weapon (maximum 5d8 points of damage) as if you had just breathed upon them; normal saving throws apply (using the DC of the breath weapon, not this spell). Creatures with spell resistance can ignore the effect of the explosion if you fail a spell penetration check against them. (Even though breath weapons are not usually subject to spell resistance, the influence of this spell on your breath weapon is enough to allow spell resistance to affect it.)

A breathbarb crystal cannot be used as a normal gem for any purpose (including as a material or focus component for a spell).

Dispelling the spell or otherwise ending the duration of breathbarb causes the gem to explode and release the trapped breath weapon. If the duration expires normally, the gem fades and does not release the breath weapon.

Note: Magic traps such as breathbarbs are hard to detect and disable. A rogue (only) can use the Search skill to find the breathbarb and Disable Device to thwart it. The DC in each case is 25 + spell level, or 28 for breathbarb.

Sapphire Psionic Shield

Abjuration

Level: Sor/Wiz 3**Components:** V**Casting Time:** 1 action**Range:** Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)**Target:** 1 creature**Duration:** 10 minutes/level**Saving Throw:** Will negates (harmless)**Spell Resistance:** Yes (harmless)

You shroud the target in a flickering, heatless, sapphire-colored aura that lights up the target with weak radiation equal to only half the illumination of a normal torch (10 feet). This aura protects the target against possession and mental control exactly like a protection from evil spell. The target also gains a +4 resistance bonus to saving throws against all mind-affecting effects and psionic attacks.

Miirym, "The Sentinel Wyrn"

(Dragon Magazine 247)

She kept to the letter of her bond, even after her body rotted and fell apart. The spells that bound her animated her still, keeping her sentient . . . if not entirely sane.

When he read Volo's notes (a confused cluster of speculatives surrounding little more than a correct name and gender) Elminster nodded, summoned a quill and fresh parchment from some handy otherwhere, and started writing.

Volo's sketchy notes came as no surprise to the Old Mage, because very few folk alive in Faerûn have even heard of Miirym. Though this statement has become a trite truism overused by tale-tellers describing dragons, the reason for her obscurity is indeed that "most who encounter her don't live to speak of it later."

Long, long ago, Miirym was a silver dragon who dwelt near Candlekeep. In her playful hunting, she devoured several scholars and destroyed a score or so irreplaceable books on their way to the abbey, so a mage attached to the abbey bound her to service: She was to defend the monks, buildings, and books of the abbey for some twenty years.



Unfortunately for Miirym, the spellcaster was the archsorcerer Torth, whose spells were so mighty that when he died -- fifteen years along in Miirym's sentence of twenty -- no one could break the bindings. The monks apologetically wrote up a tome describing the situation and all that was known of Torth's spells, then set a copy of it in a crypt beneath the keep, in a casket with the sorcerer's bones and staff.

Miirym was a captive in servitude. Though she kept to the letter of her bond, her attacks on transgressors became savage. This is how Candlekeep acquired its reputation of utter impregnability and that to attempt to steal from it or slip into it unnoticed was futile. Eventually worn out by advanced age and the attacks of foolish would-be intruders -- notably several bands of Calishite wizards, who planned and then tried to carry out elaborate spell attacks on Candlekeep in the Year of the Shieldtree (1181 DR) and the Year of the Tomb (1182 DR) -- Miirym "died." That is, her body rotted and fell apart, losing flesh before bones, and then bone after bone crumbled away to dust, while the spells that bound her animated her still, keeping her sentient . . . if not entirely sane. When all that remained of the Sentinel Wyrn was a malevolent but diligent invisible guardian force, the monks of Candlekeep, fearing for the safety of legitimate visitors to the abbey, hired mages to destroy their strange guardian.

Even these wizards could not prevail against Torth's cunningly woven spells (so linked that the destruction of one serves to strengthen the next, and spawn an eventual regeneration of all destroyed magics), and succeeded only in "driving down" Miirym to a radius of perhaps a quarter of a mile from the remains of Torth. A sacrificial band of monks undertook to carry the archsorcerer's casket deeper into the cellars and natural (volcanic) passages beneath them. Where the last of this band fell, Torth's casket rests, at the heart of a labyrinthine complex of caverns and passages beneath Candlekeep -- and Miirym still lurks there, under the keep, defending it very effectively against intrusion from below.

According to Elminster, Miirym exists today as a pair of spectral jaws that can cast dimension door at will. She still has a vicious bite, her spells, and the ability to use many breath weapons. Miirym defends Candlekeep diligently, but she'd rather talk than fight, and she will trade tales for information about current events in Faerûn. She is very lonely and secretly dreams of regaining her body and flying high and free over all of Toril. Adventurers seeking to seduce her aid or favor by promising such things are warned that it has been tried several times before, and so bitter were Miirym's disappointments that she is cynical about any promises to aid her in her dream - though she never tires of talking about it.

In life, Miirym loved green, growing things. In her mind's eye, she can still vividly picture (and identify) many plants, the Sword Coast topography between Amn and Waterdeep (about as far inland as the western edge of the High Moor) as it was fifteen hundred years ago, and the fierce lightning storms she used to love to fly through. She likes to hear jokes but is saddened by news of changes and daily doings in Faerûn she can't see or be a part of.

Miirym's sanity isn't strong. Although she'll never forget the situation she's in and the identities and locations of potential foes or would-be intruders into Candlekeep, anyone who tries to trick her or launch a sneak attack can expect to have her come screaming and howling after them, hurling everything she can in a savage, furious attack.

She tore one book thief to shreds with her jaws and often shows his resting-place to parties of intruders as a warning: a narrow passage littered with forels, bloodstains, and small dust-heaps that were once small scraps of flesh and bone; nothing larger than the size of a man's fist was left of the thief when the dragon was finished. The books themselves are missing. (Miiryem carefully put them atop Torth's casket, and a daring priest of Candlekeep magically snatched them back to the keep; the Sentinel Wyrms suspects that this was their fate, but she is haunted by the possibility that a force or being she failed to detect somehow reached the books and spirited them away.)

If intruders who come within Miiryem's reach are openly carrying books of any kind (such as their own spellbooks), or reveal such items to her at any time, the Sentinel Wyrms insists that they be surrendered to her for "rightful return" to Candlekeep. She won't believe any protests as to the ownership of the tomes; as far as she's concerned, writings of any sort belong to Candlekeep, period. She has one further grisly warning to share with intruders: in a dead-end passage, a skeletal head and shoulders floats in midair, arms frozen forever raised in futile warding-off gestures, jaw stretched wide in an endless scream. The rest of the skeleton has long since crumbled away; this much remains due to the failing magics of a plain electrum carcanet still encircling the bony neck. Its magics fail entirely if it is disturbed, allowing both it and the remaining bones to crumble into dust. In any case, its power long ago rendered the bones inert to scrying and necromantic magics; nothing of the identity or intentions of the remains can now be learned.

Miiryem willingly supplies all she knows: This was once a beautiful and imperious sorcerer who tried to bargain with the Sentinel Wyrms, offering to surrender a book she'd seized if she were allowed to copy certain writings out of it, unmolested. When the dragon told her both the tome and the new writing would have to be returned to the keep, the mage hurled a meteor swarm at Miiryem -- but she had the misfortune to do so in a section of passage where an earlier intruder had left a glass guardian (defined below), so she felt its full effects herself. (Several of these items still survive elsewhere in the passages roamed by the Sentinel Wyrms.) Staggering and near death, she retreated to where her remains now float and cast her last powerful spell at Miiryem as the floating jaws approached her in slow silence. It was imprisonment, and it had no effect on the Sentinel Wyrms because of her spell resistance. The sorceress gave in to despair but refused to surrender the books when Miiryem asked her one last time -- so the Sentinel Wyrms ate both of her legs. The carcanet held the mage upright as she bled to death.

There's little else of interest in the passages within the Sentinel Wyrms's reach, beyond one seeping spring of drinkable water and the aforementioned scattering of glass guardians; would-be intruders are warned that Miiryem knows every bend and fissure of her "domain" intimately and always knows precisely where she is, and whether anything has changed. (In other words, if an intruder uses magic to appear made of stone and hugs a wall, the Sentinel Wyrms knows that this or that lump "isn't supposed to be there" and confronts it as a disguised intruder.)

Miiryem's Lair

The Sentinel Wyrms hasn't been back to her lair in a little over fifteen hundred years -- and in that time, it has disappeared, sliding into the sea in 788 DR, when the "sea stack" it was located atop collapsed under the tireless pounding of the waves. The pillar of rock had been separated from the shore before Miiryem (one of a large family of silver dragons who ranged across the comparatively dragonless North of the time, to find their own lairs sometime circa 2 DR) ever found it. It stood like a lone dark pillar just offshore from Ulgoth's Beard (which, of course, didn't exist then). Many rocks and islets can still be found in the vicinity today, left behind by a receding shore -- despite the silt brought downstream by the adjacent river, onshore waves scour the coast here and wear it away, year by year. Miiryem's stack stood well out to sea from where the shore is today, but it has been reduced to fist-sized rubble and gravel by the Sea of Swords since its destruction, and her paltry treasure hoard (coins and silver tradebars, no magic) drowned and lost. The lair itself was no more than a long, twisting cave of natural origin, and served as a home to a mated pair of wyverns until Miiryem arrived, was attacked, and slew them.

Miiryem's Domain

Miiryem once roamed the rolling, forested coastal lands between the High Moor and the Sea of Swords (as far offshore as Mintarn), south as far as the Cloud Peaks, and north to Mount Helimbrar. This was so long ago that dragons who now dwell in or near her onetime domain don't know of her existence -- and in the unlikely event she were to emerge into the surface world today and desire to rule over a territory, Miiryem would have to fight for, and win, her domain all over again.

The Deeds of Miiryem

Miiryem spends her endless days wandering all of the passages within her reach, idly widening connecting tunnels and enlarging rooms by casting the few rock-shattering and matter-teleporting spells available to her. She always enjoys a chat, and from time to time an especially bad monk of Candlekeep is sent down to talk to her as an especially cruel punishment; marks on the passage walls clearly show how far they can travel and still remain just out of reach of her spells and jaws. She'll always challenge and try to talk to intruders before attacking them -- and if they offer her violence at first sight, she'll try to converse while battling them.

The Sentinel Wyrms isn't above lurking near intruders, silent and as hidden as possible, and eavesdropping to learn all she can about them (and whatever they may be talking about), before first revealing herself -- or after intruders think they've escaped her.

Miiryum: Female great wyrm silver dragon incorporeal sentinel; CR 21; Medium-size undead (air); HD 40d12; hp 260; Init +0; Spd fly 200 ft. (clumsy); AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Atk +41 melee touch (2d12, incorporeal touch); SA breath weapon (varies), frightful presence, spell-like abilities, spells; SQ blindsight 360 ft., darkvision 1,200 ft., immunities (paralysis, sleep), incorporeal subtype, low-light vision, piercing gaze, restorative dispersion, SR 32, undead traits, x-ray vision; AL N; SV Fort +24, Ref +24, Will +32; Str --, Dex 10, Con --, Int 30, Wis 31, Cha 30.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +53, Concentration +43, Diplomacy +59, Escape Artist** +43, Innuendo +24, Intimidate +14, Jump** +40, Knowledge (arcana) +50, Knowledge (Dalelands local) +30, Knowledge (geography) +44, Knowledge (the North history) +42, Knowledge (the North local) +42, Knowledge (Waterdeep history) +30, Knowledge (Waterdeep local) +30, Listen +55, Scry +30, Search +53, Sense Motive +31, Speak Language (Aragrakh, Chondathan, Common, Illuskan, Thorass), Spellcraft +50, Spot +55; Alertness, Cleave**, Flyby Attack, Great Cleave**, Great Fortitude, Hover**, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack**, Snatch**, Weapon Focus (incorporeal touch), Weapon Focus** (bite).

Breath Weapon (Su): Miiryum can use any of the following breath weapons:

cone of acid gas, cold, or fire

cone of paralyzing gas (1d6+12 rounds, Fortitude negates)

cone of repulsion gas (compelled to move away for 1d6+12 rounds, Will negates)

cone of sleep gas (1d6+12 rounds, Will negates)

cone of slow gas (1d6+12 rounds, Fortitude negates)

cone of weakening gas (12 points of Strength damage, Fortitude negates)

line of acid, electricity, or fire.

Cones are 50 feet long; lines are 100 feet long. She can use one breath weapon (her choice) once every 1d4 rounds. Each of the energy breath weapons deals 24d10 points of damage of the appropriate type (Reflex save for half damage). All breath weapon save DCs are 40.

Frightful Presence (Su): Whenever Miiryum attacks, charges, or flies overhead, every creature within 360 feet of her that has 39 or fewer HD must attempt a Will save (DC 40). On a failure, a creature with 4 or fewer HD becomes panicked for 4d6 rounds and one with 5 or more HD becomes shaken for 4d6 rounds. Success indicates that the target is immune to Miiryum's frightful presence for one day.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will -- dimension door.

Spells: Miiryum knows and casts arcane spells as a 19th-level sorcerer.

Blindsight (Ex): Miiryum can ascertain creatures by nonvisual means (mostly hearing and scent, but also by noticing vibration and other environmental clues) within 360 feet.

Incorporeal Subtype: Miiryum can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, +1 or better magic weapons, spells, spell-like abilities, or supernatural abilities. She is immune to all nonmagical attack forms; 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source (except for force effects, such as magic missiles, and attacks made with ghost touch weapons). Miiryum can pass through solid objects (but not force effects) at will, and her attacks ignore natural armor, armor, and shields (though deflection bonuses and force effects work normally). She moves silently (cannot be heard with Listen checks unless desired).

Low-Light Vision: Miiryum can see four times as well as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar low-light conditions and twice as well in normal light.

Piercing Gaze (Su): Miiryum can see invisible and ethereal creatures in all directions within 120 feet. This requires no action or concentration on her part.

Restorative Dispersion (Su): If Miiryum takes 100 or more points of damage in any 1-hour period (or if she is "destroyed" with positive energy from turning damage), she disperses, remaining helpless and undetectable (including from location spells) for 2d8+8 hours, after which she reappears. She reappears with the same number of hit points she had when she was dispersed and automatically regains hit points every 24 hours as if she had rested. (She can regain hit points normally while dispersed if enough time has passed since her last hit point recovery.) If actually brought to 0 hit points or otherwise destroyed by a spell effect that bypasses hit points (such as undeath to death from Magic of Faerûn), she disperses for 3x the normal duration and reforms normally at the end of that time (recovering hp as normal).

Undead Traits: Miiryum is immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death, effects, necromantic effects, mind-influencing effects, and any effect requiring a Fortitude save unless it also works on objects. She is not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, ability drain, or energy drain; cannot heal damage if there is no Intelligence score, (though fast healing and

regeneration work normally). Negative energy heals her, and she is not at risk of death from massive damage but is destroyed at 0 or fewer hit points (but see restorative dispersion). Miirym cannot be raised; resurrection works only if she is willing.

X-Ray Vision (Su): Miirym can see through solid objects as if wearing a ring of x-ray vision, except that the thickness of material penetrated is three times that of the ring.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/9/9/8/8/8/7/7/5; save DC 20 + spell level): 0 -- dancing lights, daze, detect magic, disrupt undead, mage hand, mending, open/close, ray of frost, read magic; 1st -- cure light wounds, expeditious retreat, forcewave (Magic of Faerûn), Kaupaer's skittish nerves (Magic of Faerûn), magic missile; 2nd -- cat's grace, detect thoughts, invisibility, shatter, Snilloc's snowball swarm (FRCS); 3rd -- dispel magic, greater mage hand (Magic of Faerûn), searing light, shatterfloor (Magic of Faerûn); 4th -- bladebite*, cure critical wounds, locate creature, shout; 5th -- cloudkill, dispel evil, Grimwald's greymantle (FRCS), Mestil's acid sheath (Magic of Faerûn); 6th -- blade barrier, breathball*, disintegrate; 7th -- mass teleport (Magic of Faerûn), power word stun, sunbeam; 8th -- breathdoom*, great shout (FRCS), prismatic wall; 9th -- Bigby's crushing hand, Zajimarn's avalanche (Magic of Faerûn).

** Miirym has a few skills and feats that are useless to her now that she is an incorporeal creature.

* indicates a new spell (see below)

(FRCS) indicates a spell from the **Forgotten Realms** Campaign Setting

The Incorporeal Sentinel Template

The incorporeal sentinel is created when a magically bound guardian outlives its normal lifespan or dies while it is magically bound to serve. Essentially, the magic that bound it provides it with a means of living on, though the creature may not necessarily care to do so. The body of the creature decays over time, and the creature eventually becomes completely incorporeal, while its jaws remain the only visible (but also incorporeal) remnant of it. Only breaking the binding allows it to truly die. Only one example of a creature with this template is known -- Miirym.

Creating an Incorporeal Sentinel

"Incorporeal Sentinel" is an acquired template that can be added to any Colossal great wyrm dragon (hereafter referred to as the base creature) with Intelligence and Charisma scores of 30 or higher. The creature's type changes to undead. The incorporeal sentinel uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Size: The incorporeal sentinel's size drops to Medium-size.

Speed: The incorporeal sentinel loses all previous modes of movement and gains a fly speed of 40 feet with perfect maneuverability.

AC: If the base creature had natural armor, it loses this armor.

Attacks: An incorporeal sentinel loses all natural and weapon attacks, but gains an incorporeal melee touch attack. An incorporeal sentinel also retains its sorcerer-based spellcasting abilities, but it no longer needs material components to cast sorcerer spells.

Damage: If the base creature does not have incorporeal melee touch attacks, use the appropriate damage value based on the incorporeal sentinel's size (see the table below). Otherwise, use the value from the table or the base creature's damage, whichever is greater.

Size Incorporeal Touch Damage

Fine	2d4
Tiny	2d6
Small	2d8
Medium-size	2d12

Special Attacks: An incorporeal sentinel retains all the special attacks of the base creature except for its spell-like abilities and breath weapons. It gains the spell-like ability and breath weapons noted below.

Breath Weapon (Su): Once every 1d4 rounds, an incorporeal sentinel can choose and use one of the breath weapons listed below. A blast from a breath weapon always starts at the incorporeal sentinel's mouth and extends in a direction of the incorporeal sentinel's choice. Creatures caught in the area can attempt saves; the DC formula is 10 + 1/2 HD + Charisma modifier. Each of the energy breath weapons deals 24d10 points of damage of the appropriate type (Reflex save for half damage).

Cone of acid gas, cold, or fire

Cone of paralyzing gas (1d6+12 rounds, Fortitude negates)

Cone of repulsion gas (compelled to move away for 1d6+12 rounds, Will negates)

Cone of sleep gas (1d6+12 rounds, Will negates)

Cone of slow gas (1d6+12 rounds, Fortitude negates)

Cone of weakening gas (12 points of Strength damage, Fortitude negates)

Line of acid, electricity, or fire

Spell-Like Abilities: At will -- dimension door.

Special Qualities: The base creature loses any immunities to energy and damage reduction it had. It otherwise has all the special qualities of the base creature and also gains the qualities noted below.

Incorporeal Traits: An incorporeal sentinel is harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, magic weapons, spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural abilities. It has a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source, except for force effects or attacks made with ghost touch weapons. It can pass through solid objects, but not force effects, at will. Its attacks ignore natural armor, armor, and shields, but deflection bonuses and force effects work normally against them. An incorporeal creature always moves silently and cannot be heard with Listen checks if it doesn't wish to be.

Piercing Gaze (Su): An incorporeal sentinel can see invisible and ethereal creatures in all directions within 120 feet. This requires no action or concentration on the part of the incorporeal sentinel.

Restorative Dispersion (Su): If the incorporeal sentinel takes 100 or more points of damage in any 1-hour period (or if it is "destroyed" with positive energy from turning damage), it disperses, remaining helpless and undetectable (including from location spells) for 2d8+8 hours, after which it reappears. Normally it reappears with the same number of hit points it had when it was dispersed. However, if an intelligent undead, it automatically regains hit points every 24 hours as if it had rested, and it can regain hit points normally while dispersed if enough time has passed since its last hit point recovery. If actually brought to 0 hit points or otherwise destroyed by a spell effect that bypasses hit points (such as undeath to death from Magic of Faerûn), it disperses for 3x the normal duration and reforms normally at the end of that time (recovering hp as normal). It is not known what it would take to permanently destroy the incorporeal sentinel aside from a means to break the binding holding the incorporeal sentinel to existence, though some scholars theorize that closely studying the binding and, once knowledge of the spell used is gained (Spellcraft check DC 100), using a wish spell to break the binding would break the bonds. Some scholars believe that having Torth's book can assist the caster (+20 bonus on Spellcraft check). These are only theories, however. Nobody has yet attempted to break the binding in this manner.

Spell Resistance (Ex): An incorporeal sentinel gains a spell resistance equal to the base creature's CR.

X-Ray Vision (Su): An incorporeal sentinel can see through solid objects as if wearing a ring of x-ray vision, except that the thickness of material penetrated is three times that of the ring.

Abilities: Same as the base creature except that, as undead creatures, incorporeal sentinels have no Constitution score. Additionally, incorporeal sentinels have no Strength score.

Feats: The sentinel wurm gains Weapon Focus (incorporeal touch) as a bonus feat.

Climate/Terrain: As a bound creature, the incorporeal sentinel is restricted to the area within which it is bound.

Organization: Most incorporeal sentinels stand watch alone, but some very powerful spellcasters have been known to create a duo of matched sentinels to guard over sacred or important locations.

Challenge Rating: Same as the base creature -4.

Alignment: Same as base creature.

Miirym's Fate

The Sentinel Wurm has passed beyond death and awaits the untwining of Torth's mighty spells to grant her freedom. Thereafter, she would be a wandering, spectral force, free to do great damage in Faerûn if she desired. Azuth knows the means of binding even so powerful a spectral sentience into the helve of a magic weapon or other item. Certain Netherese lichs and senior Red Wizards might also know, or be able to devise, such magical processes, but Mystra is unlikely to provide guidance to any mages or priests requesting inspiration over such matters.

All in all, Miirym bids fair to be around the underways of Candlekeep for another thousand years or more, in Elminster's estimation. If something were to happen to her, he said, one of Mystra's Chosen might even find themselves restoring her to her present state, for Mystra and Oghma seem to share some secret and solemn agreement as to the sanctity of Candlekeep.

Miirym's sad fate is best described in a tome written over a hundred years ago and, ironically, stored on the shelves of Candlekeep. Throughout the book, the writer describes Miirym as "Lonelyjaws." Elminster suggests that any similarly lonely Faerûnian who doesn't mind a little danger -- and doesn't carry any writing materials -- might cultivate her as a friend to talk to. There are worse ways of spending one's time.

Miirym's Magic

Miirym has custody of -- and knows the powers of -- at least seven glass guardian spheres. She moves them to aid her in battle against magically powerful foes if she deems it necessary.

Glass Guardian: These small, translucent glass spheres tend to be green, blue, or near-colorless mauve in hue. Empty and about the size of a large man's fist, they float motionless in midair unless grasped and towed (or thrust along by an impact or force) to a new location; when released, they hang motionless. A glass guardian has 0 hardness and 2 hit points; if destroyed, they fall harmlessly to dust, and their magic is lost.

Their sole purpose, however, is to reflect back at its source any spell that enters or erupts into being within (or partially within) the 5-ft.-radius area around them. Unlike the spell turning spell, a glass guardian can affect area spells (but not touch spells).

They do this unerringly, darkening and shattering the moment they've reflected a single spell. However, they can be clustered in groups to provide more lasting protection; only one glass guardian reacts to a spell, negating it and falling to dust, leaving nearby guardians intact and still operating. Some of these spheres have existed for thousands of years; the spells that create them are ancient. Caster Level: 13th, Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, Heighten Spell, spell turning; Market Price: 30,000 gp; Weight: --.

The Sentinel Wyrn also wields an impressive array of spells. She had little time to devise her own magic before being bound into the service of Candlekeep, but from time to time she has gained spells from writings brought to her by the monks or that she gleaned from books gained from intruders (before they were taken up to the keep proper by the spells of monks scrying her). She's had little chance to alter her spells, but a few of them are rare enough to warrant inclusion here.

Bladebite

Transmutation

Level: Sor/Wiz 4

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Target: One slashing or piercing weapon up to Small size

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Will negates (object)

Spell Resistance: Yes (object)

You transform the target weapon into a sharp-fanged, smooth-bodied serpentine creature that is useless as a weapon and immediately attacks the closest creature. Since it is normally used on the drawn weapon of an enemy, the weapon usually attacks its wielder. The weapon is treated as an animated object of the appropriate size except that it has a speed of 5 and it has a bite attack that deals 1d4 points of damage (adjusted for Strength). It is not poisonous. If the weapon was magical, all of its active properties apply to the animated object, but not abilities where a wielder needs to invoke them. For example, a +1 flaming sword targeted by this spell retains the normal weapon's hardness, has a +1 enhancement bonus to attacks and damage with its bite, and deals +1d6 points of fire damage with its bite. However, if the weapon had the ability to cast vampiric touch 3 times per day at the wielder's command, it could not activate this ability in itself.

If cast on a held weapon, the wielder is not compelled to hold it and may drop it on his turn.

Breathball

Evocation [see text]

Level: Sor/Wiz 6

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 full-round action

Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)

Effect: 5-ft.-radius sphere of wind

Duration: 1 round/level or until discharged, whichever comes first

Saving Throw: See text

Spell Resistance: Yes

You create a 5-foot-radius sphere of opaque cloudy wind. This sphere persists for up to 1 round/level, after which it discharges. It also discharges if you will it to (a standard action) or a creature other than you touches it. When discharged, the sphere explodes in a 20-foot burst. The burst duplicates the effects of any breath weapon you may employ (chosen at the time of casting), provided that the breath deals damage or resembles a spell effect of 6th-level or lower. It does not use your breath weapon, or prevent or delay you from using it. Breath weapons that deal damage cannot exceed 90 points (the normal limit for 6th-level arcane spells). The normal saving throw applies for the breath weapon, though it uses the spell DC instead of its original DC.

The windy sphere has no effect other than to provide concealment as if it were a fog cloud. It does not affect missile weapons (unlike wind wall), knock over or hold at bay creatures (unlike gust of wind) or any other wind- or air-based effects.

Casters who do not naturally have breath weapons must research a way to link an available spell to this one (usually with a custom spell or metamagic feat), otherwise the detonation has no effect.

This spell has the appropriate descriptions for the breath weapon the sphere releases. For example, if used to release a fire breath weapon, this spell has the fire subtype.

Breathdoom

Evocation [see text]

Level: Sor/Wiz 8

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 full-round action

Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)

Effect: 5-ft.-radius sphere of wind

Duration: Permanent until discharged

Saving Throw: See text

Spell Resistance: Yes

As breathball, except as noted above and as follows.

The sphere may be opaque or transparent (noticeable only as a shimmer or ripple in the air). It remains in place until triggered, with triggering conditions set by the caster in the manner of a magic mouth spell. You never trigger your own breathdoom spell unless you meet the trigger conditions and wish the spell to take effect. Casting one breathdoom so that it overlaps an existing one or their blast radiuses would overlap causes the first one to dissipate harmlessly. Breath weapons that deal damage cannot exceed 120 points when triggered by this spell and this spell cannot duplicate breath weapons that have effects greater than 8th level.

Mornauguth, "The Moor Dragon"

(Dragon Magazine #248)

This young adult green dragon is known, to those who pass or dwell near the Misty Forest, to lair to the northeast, in an area of steep-sided, breakneck wooded ravines. She preys on the wild deer that roam the High Moor. Occasionally she spices her diet with a caravan or adventuring band or two, and once a month or so takes wing eastward, disappearing for a tenday at a time. Though adventurers have more than once searched for the Moor Dragon's lair, they've never found any treasure. In reality, Mornauguth is a human transformed, trapped in green dragon shape by rivals. She was once a priestess of Shar -- young, pretty, and possessed of almost reckless ambition. She rose swiftly through the ranks of a temple to the Mistress of the Night located in the backlands of Amn, making many enemies along the way. Some of her rivals within the clergy wove dark spells that bound Mornauguth into dragon form -- whereupon she was attacked by a real dragon into whose lair she'd been lured before transformation. She slew that wyrm, though she was sorely wounded. To this day, Mornauguth seeks two things: revenge on those who transformed her and recovery of her true form through the grace of Shar.



In hopes that the goddess will grant her human form, Mornauguth gives all the wealth she gains to the Dark Embrace temple in Amn, and she flies off at least once a month to perform some daring dark deed (usually a raid on a city's palace, jail, or state building) in the name of Shar.

On rare occasions, clergy from the Dark Embrace request Mornauguth's service as a steed or aid in an attack on a strong target (usually a Selûnite temple), and she has thus far given it willingly. How long she continues to do so without any sign of Shar's favor remains to be seen.

Morna Auguth was a brilliant but willful child. From her earliest days she fought with those in authority whom she -- accurately, if not prudently -- saw as dolts. She grew up as a wild, thieving runaway in the southern backlands of Amn, living on her wits, daring, agility, and (whenever caught) her beauty, until she was captured by a priest of Shar to be his personal slave. This clergyman, Ablaer the Dark Goad, intended to cut out Morna's tongue and blind her once he'd tired of her. He put her in the kitchens of the Dark Embrace to work out her days as a drudge. After several years of servitude, Morna duped Ablaer's superior into believing that the Dark Goad of the Embrace was organizing a coup within the temple, and she had the great satisfaction of seeing her cruel overmaster maimed and broken by temple torturers. Ablaer was a long time dying, and Morna whispered words of triumphant hatred over his helpless form for all the long days of his torment.

She found, however, that she'd merely traded one cruel master for another, when Ablaer's superior, the Coroanim Belvim Natrather, took her as his own plaything. Morna swiftly came to see that she now stood in the shadow of an additional peril: all Dark Embrace clergy considered her a treacherous informant. Every one of them took delight in wounding or mistreating her whenever they could find her alone. Morna began looking for a way out.

Her opportunity to escape presented itself within a year, when the Coroanim journeyed to a smaller, hidden Sharran temple in eastern Amn. Moondown House was a monastic community founded in the crumbling remnants of an old keep near Torbold. Its small but fervent priesthood were planning bloody night raids on the temples of all other gods in Amn, and they were training jaded, outlaw, and homeless youths into a fanatical strike force, the Slayers of Shar. The Coroanim wanted this force to become his own personal "Bringers of the Purge." He came with the might of his rank in long service to Shar, and the mustered magic of twenty-odd senior priests of the Embrace, to persuade the Dolorim of the House to submit to the authority of the Coroanim and make Moondown House a chapterhouse of the Dark Embrace.

The folk of Moondown were outraged but dared not show it. Their eldest clergy made a desperate plan to bring down the Coroanim and his most senior priests by means of slow-acting, subtle poisons -- knowing they faced almost certain discovery and painful death. Morna (sent by her master to spy on them) saw this as a golden chance for revenge, resolving to make the poisonings so frequent and widespread that the entire party from the Embrace would succumb before any confrontation could occur. Without telling anyone, she set about her plan, letting herself be seen at work by the elder Moondown clergy. When all the folk of the Embrace lay dead, Morna presented herself to the Moondown priests, saying she'd been guided by Shar herself in what she'd done.

Grateful and impressed, the Moondown priests adopted Morna into their ranks, immediately testing her by giving her the task of making Morna's former colleagues into zombies under her command and directing them to carry out the dirty drudge jobs of life in a

monastery. Morna accepted the dung-shoveling, floor-scrubbing, and gardening without demur. Over the seasons that followed, she practiced iron self-control, always doing and saying the right thing, rising steadily in rank and influence within the Moondown clergy. Some years later, disease claimed two senior priests. Almost immediately thereafter, a dispute with adventurers resulted in the death of one of the most powerful priestesses of the House. Moondown erupted into a frenzy of intrigues, confrontations, and stabbings in dark corridors. Morna was careful to keep her tongue still and her zombies close, using them to defend her from several murder attempts. Once many of the clergy had fallen, she emerged from her seclusion to challenge and slay her chief remaining rival, assuming the office of Prioress, third in rank over all the House.

Many ambitious priestesses who found themselves suddenly beneath her were furious. Morna survived no less than a dozen attempts to slay her over the year that followed. The tendency of stone blocks to fall from the walls of the ever-growing temple whenever she walked below became a wry joke among Morna and the novices, but she openly struck down two revealed conspirators in a spelltold battle, and she was widely (and correctly) believed to have caused the drowning of a third rival in the monastery cesspool. Morna's superiors eventually tired of the drain on Moondown resources and ordered that all hostilities cease -- upon pain of death. There were grumblings, but almost immediately the monastery found itself locked in all-out war with clergy of Selûne who'd moved into the area. Moondown House was badly damaged, and many of its clergy fled and were forced to adopt a roving lifestyle of striking at foes and then fleeing. Upland Amn became one large battlefield (certain bored merchants in Athkatla began to wager over who would prevail), and Morna became a feared warleader. She was so successful that her Moondown rivals feared that when the struggle ended in a Sharran victory (as all true followers of Shar knew it would), Morna Auguth would rule Moondown House.

They could find nothing strong enough to use against her -- until a local told them the location of a dragon's lair. Guldarath was a very old black dragon, his scales tinged purple with age, who slept for decades at a time. He always awakened ravenously hungry and flew east to the rolling plains beyond Thay where vast herds of wild beasts roamed, awaiting his devouring jaws. Usually he over-ate, then flew ponderously and sleepily home again to return to long, shining, and memory-studded dreams.

When Morna's band happened to be near the lair, one of its priestesses daringly awakened the dragon at dusk by hurling spells at its very nose. Guldarath awakened, too groggy to reflect on what had awakened him, and flew off to feed. The Moondown priestess hurried back to Morna's encamped band to say she'd found a cave she'd played in as a child, one that would serve as an admirable stronghold for them -- and that it was full of heaped treasure.

That last news aroused the Moondown clergy, and even the reluctant and suspicious Morna couldn't keep them camped any longer in the damp hollow they'd retreated to in the face of strong and well-armed Selûnite warbands. Guided by the treacherous priestess, they reached the lair. Morna was suspicious, judging it the abode of a living dragon who'd return to entrap and doom them all, and went off by herself to hide in the deepest reaches of the dungeon, in the dextral of two passages she thought too small for any dragon to traverse. That played into the hands of the traitor, who had a confederate cast a fiery spell at the back of the passage once Morna had fallen asleep.

The sleepy Prioress scrambled out of the passage to get away from whatever danger lay behind her -- straight into a spell-ambush launched by her own clergy. Paralyzed and spellbound, Morna Auguth was forced into the shape of a green dragon by means of a powerful and little-known spell, and that magic was lengthened and strengthened by the spells of no less than fourteen priestesses. While she kept her memories and skills (and feats), she gained the form and abilities of her new dragon form.

Mornauguth still hunts those same clergy members today, seeking to compel each one to remove her binding before she devours them. At the time, she was powerless to prevent them from fleeing, trailing mocking laughter. She was left alone to await the return of the owner of the treasure beneath her, knowing that he could only perceive her presence as a domain challenge.

Her paralysis ended scant moments before Guldarath appeared. A battle erupted that shook the very mountain around the true wyrm and the transformed priestess. Too startled to draw back down the narrow way and let fly with spells from a distance, the ancient black dragon pounced with jaws and fangs, and magic crackled between them as they struggled wing to wing and scale to scale in the dimness.

Morna knew she was fighting for her life, not coins or a cave to hold them, and she cared not if she ruined the lair or buried the hoard. As the two dragons rolled over and over, clawing and biting, lashes of her tail brought down many daggerlike rocks onto her foe, battering him and ultimately breaking his back. Mercilessly she carved and cooked the agonized black dragon, until Guldarath died atop his own hoard. Then she turned to hunt the Moondown clergy who'd trapped her into this battle. She found none that night, or the next day. Over the months that followed, however, she took a heavy toll of Sharran faithful, driven by rage and fear of being trapped forever in dragon form.

Self-control has returned to Morna over the years. Rage still smolders in her heart, but she has begun to use her new dragon form to greater effect. Mornauguth retains her human spellcasting ability rather than that of a green dragon. She is much heartened that Shar continues to grant her magic.

The spell that entrapped her gave Morna the breath weapon and other physical capabilities of a green dragon, and over the years she has grown accustomed to her dragon body. She can even prowls stealthily now; her thirst for secrets and knowing what's happening in the land often drives her to go creeping up to campfires by night to listen in on intrigues. More than one sleepy merchant stumbling into the woods to find tent, trail, or privy has had the -- sometimes final -- fright of his life upon stumbling over the snout of a glitter-eyed green dragon, waiting still, silent, and terrible in the night.

From such nocturnal eavesdropping, Mornauguth often learns routes and timings of livestock drives and herd hunts -- so she can help herself to such abundant food, often under the nose of a dragon whose domain she's poaching on. She's wise enough not always to dine in one locale, which would result in drovers avoiding that area or adventuring bands being hired en masse to deal with her. She knows the backlands of Amn better than most living beings, and she has a shrewd overview of Sword Coast caravan shipping. She dislikes the sea and being spotted while over it by one of the wyrms she has seen flying offshore. When she contemplates fighting above waves she could be dragged into, true fear colors the Moor Dragon's thoughts for she knows that her aquatic ability is less refined than those of native water-dwellers. While exploring, she was once surprised by a dragon turtle that shot its neck up to bite her, almost pitching her under the waves -- where she would have been truly in its clutches.

According to the sage Velsaert of Baldur's Gate, the Moor Dragon's relationships with other wyrms have been "a series of skirmishes between a reckless, ambitious interloper who cares for treasure only as a means to further her schemes, and wyrms defending hoard and domain in the traditional sense." Though Velsaert dismisses reports of the Moor Dragon actually hiring adventurers to aid her, these reports are true: From time to time, to accomplish a daring raid on the foes of Shar, Mornauguth hires established bands of adventurers to carry out diversionary attacks or take-what-they-can raids.

Her chief agent in such dealings is Temrojan Kalnar, an old, retired wine merchant, with no friends and fewer scruples, who dwells on a walled farm northwest of Crimmor. The two can signal each other with *sending stones* placed by Mornauguth (who seized them from a caravan some years ago), but the Moor Dragon often arrives unannounced, or creeps near Kalnar's farm of nights, using her spells to spy on her agent -- whom she trusts about as far as he could throw her, tail and all. . . .

Mornauguth has always swung between a shrewd biding and a bold recklessness that sees her time and again plunge instantly into action to take advantage of opportunity.

Mornauguth's Lair

The Moor Dragon lairs in the broken country of the northeastern High Moor, due east from Daggerford and southeast of Secomber, in "the Rockshaws," a trackless region of sharp stony ridges and narrow, deep gullies linking springs with small cauldron lakes and sinkholes. The Rockshaws has acquired a colorful reputation as the home of many ghosts and much buried treasure. If one believes the bards, every thief or doomed dwarven treasury-guard in the North has headed for the Rockshaws as fast as possible under the weight of their loot, to bury it where monsters roam and inquisitive folk with shovels are thus few. Leucrotta and galeb duhr have always inhabited the Rockshaws, but other beasts come and go. Mornauguth hasn't bothered to seek out whatever treasures may lie in the Rockshaws, but a steady stream of wary dwarves armed with maps suggests at least some hidden gold lies there.

Mornauguth dwells in extensive caverns beneath Greenleaf Vale, at the bottom of a wide, deep shaft (thought by some local gnomes to be an ancient delve rather than a natural feature). This "well" reaches the surface in the heart of a large stand of old trees in the Rockshaws. The Vale of thick oak, walnut, maple, and chestnut trees was so named by exploring elves because they entirely fill a deep bowl valley, and to a traveler on the ground are invisible until one stands almost on the lip of one of the cliff-walls of the valley. Many incautious adventurers have fallen to their deaths (or to sudden, grievous injury) by blundering right over the edge of a Vale wall in the dark; local leucrotta have been known to deliberately chase foes toward the Vale, trying to force them into a fall on the rocks. Several small, winding trails make perilous journeys down the Vale walls, where the overgrown ruins of several long-abandoned cottages can be seen.

One old bardic ballad claims that Roadaeron, an exiled king of Westgate, in the days when that city had kings, dwelt here in hiding for almost forty years, raising his son Blaervaer to be king. The elderly Roadaeron laid down his life storming the city to put Blaervaer on the throne. The ballad claims (truthfully, according to Elminster) that Blaervaer stole away from his throne when he'd grown old (his latter days embittered by the vicious struggles among his four sons for the throne), leaving his crown behind, and fixed up one of the ruined cottages with his own hands, to spend his last few years gardening, reading, and talking with the few elves and mages who knew of his excellent parsnip wine and longsighted conversation.

Mornauguth lies in her caverns only when she needs to take shelter from fierce wintry weather, or when wounded. Sometimes she prays to Shar, rocketing up the shaft to soar at the stars and cry out to the goddess -- but otherwise she is to be found elsewhere, spying on the doings of others or basking on high mountain ledges around Amn, plotting.

The lair itself is said to be little more than a long sleeping mound of smooth sand, gathered from the sandbars washed into the cavern by several springs that traverse them. The water of the springs, according to the Harper explorer Morlden "Silentboots," is sweet, cold,

and drinkable. Morlden saw no guardians, treasure, nor constructions of any kind; if he'd not daringly used a spying-spell to see Mornauguth dig up her *sending stone* from the sand and then lie down for slumber, he'd not have been able to say for certain if a dragon really laired in the large cavern farthest in from the bottom of the shaft at all. He stresses that other items might well lie buried in the bed of sand, which is at least 6 feet deep in all places.

Mornauguth's Domain

Mornauguth seems to ignore the very concept of draconic territory, never defending her own lair or caring if she offends other wyrms by her roamings. Only fear of being caught over water curtails her wanderings, which are concerned with the doings of the Sharran clergy, rival priesthods, and other human intrigues, and are broken by hunting trips and explorative forays far afield.

Mornauguth's domain, if one means which areas she'll defend against draconic foes, would seem to be the Sharran temples of Faerûn (Amn in particular).

The Deeds of Mornauguth

The Moor Dragon's life is devoted to winning back the favor of Shar, thereby regaining her human shape. If she has her druthers, however, she'll end up with the ability to change from human to dragon and back again at will, and live armored in the unfolding fondness of the Mistress of Night as a special agent of the goddess (with special powers to match). Several recent successes have given Mornauguth cause for quickening hope; Shar seems to have her eye on the dragon that worships her at last.

Mornauguth: Female young adult green dragon (formerly human cleric 8 of Shar); CR 12; Large dragon (air); HD 17d12+68; hp 178; Init +4; Spd 40 ft., swim 40 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor); AC 25, touch 9, flat-footed 25; Base Atk +17; Grp +27; Atk +22 melee (2d6+6, bite); Full Atk +22 melee (2d6+6, bite) and +17 melee (1d8+3, 2 claws) and +17 melee (1d6+3, 2 wings) and +17 melee (1d8+9, tail slap); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA breath weapon (40-ft. cone of acid gas), frightful presence, rebuke undead (6/day); SQ blindsense 60 ft., damage reduction 5/magic, darkvision 120 ft., immunities (acid, paralysis, *sleep*), low-light vision, spell resistance 19, water breathing; AL NE; SV Fort +14, Ref +10, Will +13; Str 23, Dex 10, Con 19, Int 14, Wis 17, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +15, Concentration +12, Diplomacy +8, Heal +5, Hide +0, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (religion) +8, Move Silently +4, Spellcraft +12, Swim +14; Blind-Fight, Cosmopolitan (Bluff) (FRCS), Exotic Weapon Proficiency (chakram), Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (chakram).

Breath Weapon (Su): Once every 1d4 rounds, Morna can breathe a 40-foot cone of corrosive (acid) gas. Each creature caught in this area takes 10d6 points of acid damage (Reflex DC 22 half).

Frightful Presence (Su): Whenever Morna attacks, charges, or flies overhead, each creature within a 150-foot radius that has 16 or fewer Hit Dice must make a successful Will save (DC 21). Failure means the subject is panicked for 4d6 rounds if it has 4 or fewer HD, or shaken for the same period if it has 5 or more HD. Success indicates that the target is immune to the creature's frightful presence for one day.

Cleric Spells Prepared (6/5+1/4+1/4+1/2+1; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 -- *cure minor wounds* (2), *detect magic*, *light*, *purify food and drink*, *read magic*; 1st -- *bless*, *cure light wounds*, *endure elements*, *obscuring mist**, *protection from good*, *shield of faith*; 2nd -- *bull's strength*, *cure moderate wounds*, *death knell*, *desecrate**, *endurance*; 3rd -- *blacklight* (FRCS)*, *create food and water*, *cure serious wounds*, *dispel magic*, *protection from energy*; 4th -- *armor of darkness* (FRCS)*, *cure critical wounds*, *freedom of movement*.
*Domain spell. Deity: Shar. Domains: Darkness (free Blind-Fight feat), Evil (cast evil spells at +1 caster level).

- Mornauguth has the skills and feats she had before her transformation into a dragon.

Mornauguth's Fate

The Moor Dragon lives dangerously -- and loves it. Her boldness and quick wits have carried her through many "certain deaths." One day they won't, and she tests them often -- but her chances of becoming a special Servant of Shar seem better with each passing year.

Mornauguth's Magic

The Moor Dragon commands only one notable magic.

Sending Stone: These lumps of natural, unworked stone are magically linked and crafted in pairs. Twice per day each can send a message to the other as if using a *sending* spell, though the two stones must be on the same plane and the person with the stone receiving the message can not automatically answer (he must activate his own stone's power to do so). The price and other information below listed below is for creating a pair of these stones (since creating one stone would be pointless without another stone to link to it).

Moderate evocation; CL 7th; Craft Wondrous Item, *sending*; Price: 17,000 gp; Weight: 10 lb.

Nurvureem, "The Dark Lady"

(Dragon Magazine #249)

For those who enter
Rundreth's gloom
Go willingly
to waiting doom.

-- From My Lady of Shadows
By Inder Braelen
Year of the Wave

On a grassy bank overlooking the long road north of Amphail stands Rundreth Manor, once home to the warrior-adventurer Galath Rundreth (whose bones lie somewhere in the wood that used to be its back garden). A succession of rougher owners followed Rundreth, and most of them used the many-pillared house as little more than a cave to shelter in between raids or hunting expeditions. These included the Brothers Skladdar (who grew wilder than the beasts they trapped, and whose skins they wore) and Emvorele the Gentle Blade (an elven coach robber as skilled as she was small; she stood 4 feet tall in battle-boots and swung a sword the size of a fire-skewer).

About twenty years ago, most of the manor's roof fell in, and a battle between rival adventuring bands both seeking to camp in what was left of the once-grand stone mansion caused two of its pillars to topple, crushing three men beneath their bulk and gaining Rundreth Manor a reputation for being haunted. Inevitably, folk of Amphail and passing merchants saw the ghosts of the dead adventurers watching them from the ruins.

The truth was probably less poetic. Outlaws have done a little howling and a little melting noiselessly away into concealment and have been dubbed "ghosts" before. Yet everyone seems to agree that the Dark Lady who haunts Rundreth Manor now is something different -- something that brings death to many handsome young men, sending others away alive but changed. The survivors return with a faraway look in their eyes and doom riding their shoulders like a dark, tattered cloak that curls and switches of its own volition. It's certain the young male adventurers lured to Rundreth believe they're in the company of someone very much alive -- and that the fearful few who come equipped to slay a vampire find no such foe and are persuaded to set aside their weapons by a friendly lady. Some who've seen this Dark Lady say she's small of stature, catlike in her grace, and clad in too little to conceal any weapon. And yet man after man of the young warriors who enter Rundreth is found dead -- torn apart as if by great jaws and tossed out onto the road, piece by piece, for flies and passersby to find.

If we can believe the ballad of the minstrel Inder Braelen (who returned to the Manor several times before disappearing there four winters ago), the Lady brings men to the ruined house by the score for purposes of seduction -- or to rob and slay them. She usually kills such paramours but lets the occasional one go. Those who spread word of what happened to them, such as Inder, soon disappear. Those who hold their peace and remain friendly to the Dark Lady are suffered to live. Inder claimed that some of these men remain her willing servants lifelong, obviously still fostering a love for her.

Inder's ballad lays bare two secrets of the Lady: Her habits, love of concealment, and the illusion magics she wields conceal her true nature from all save those who become her intimates -- that she is a drow. Inder saw something more. The Dark Lady was more than a dark elf, or else a drow who could shapechange at will.

Certain Harpers -- one lover of the Dark Lady among them -- know rather more about the deadly lady of Rundreth Manor, and between what Volo learned from them and what he'd overheard at a Mage Fair (before his writings made him widely unpopular among mages), he pieced together the truth about the Dark Lady -- facts Elminster has confirmed.

Her name is Nurvureem, and she is a drow . . . and more. In fact, she's a drow song dragon, a drow who can change to a shadow dragon at will. A few veteran Harpers call her "the Drow Dragon."

Her origins are unknown even to her, but some Harpers have speculated that Nurvureem may be the last surviving offspring of an isolated drow enclave who were enslaved by shadow dragons in the remote northeastern Sword Coast North over a thousand years ago, and after many centuries broke free of their servitude by mastering enough magic. It must be emphasized that this "origin" is pure speculation. Nurvureem has more than once revealed that she's been alone and wandering for as long as she can remember, with no memory of parents or even a time when she was young. She does recall a time when she hated sunlight and lurked in caves that come



to the surface somewhere near Triboar, exploring the surface world in tentative forays that occurred only in fog, stormgloom, or the darkness of night.

Nurvureem shuns the company of other drow and worships no deity, drow or otherwise. Only human, half-elven, and elven mages customarily impress her; she treats such individuals with gentle care until she's taken her measure of their power and decided whether she should seduce them, remain hidden, seize items and spellbooks while they sleep -- or simply attack.

The Dark Lady's seductions seem designed to win longtime friends and perhaps a mate. Friends who later prove to be weaklings or who turn against her become coerced allies, fearful servants, or -- most often -- swiftly dead at her hands. Only Nurvureem knows what she truly seeks and whether she can come to trust any other being. From her deeds and words passed on by men she has entertained in ruined Rundreth, we know that Nurvureem is lonely, probably less than sane, and unrepentantly evil. She openly delights in theft and cruel pranks such as misdirecting caravans over cliffs. On at least three occasions she has tricked wizards into attacking the isolated homes of other mages, then tried to slay both wizards while they duelled, or to steal what magic she could during the fray. She exults in slaughter and in viewing the destruction wrought by others, yet she can also be tender and vulnerable, seeking both affection and protection. On one occasion, she offered her throat to a wary Harper, drew his own dagger and put it into his hand, bidding him strike if he thought it best. The Harper found he could not bring himself to slay her. He insists that she had placed herself, tilting her head back over one of his arms and wrapping his cloak around and around her own arms to thoroughly bind them out of the way, vulnerable to a killing stroke had he delivered one. Her submission might have been a clever gamble, but it wasn't a trick -- no change to dragon form or sudden movement could have saved her. Many Harpers who heard the tale consider it clear evidence of her insanity; a few others are more charitable in their views.

All accounts agree that, whenever attacked in earnest, Nurvureem changes to shadow dragon form, though she can use her spell-like draconic powers when in drow shape and when (as a drow) she's maintaining a humanoid semblance through the use of illusion. First mentioned in travelers' journals circa 1304 DR, Nurvureem initially roamed a fairly small area of the North, ranging east and southeast from Triboar as far as the High Forest (never going north or west). In recent decades, she has known to have followed the trade routes as far south as Baldur's Gate, lingering near Daggerford, and up the Delimbiyr as far as Secomber. She stayed in the Bargewright Inn for two seasons, wreaking such havoc that local Harpers persuaded a drow priestess of Eilistraee to join them in ousting her. At their first confrontation, Nurvureem screamed in rage and fled, lurking in the wildlands for almost a year.

A mage who one night conjured the illusion of a drow warband to drive away Nurvureem reported that she was "visibly upset" by the sight, even though she evidently knew it to be only an image and not a real group of dark elves. The Drow Dragon seems to avoid cities, large caravan camps, and anywhere that is home to noise, bustling activity, and lots of folk. On at least two occasions, she has taken rural employment as a "shroud-spinner," preparing the bodies of the dead for burial, so as to gain a ready supply of carrion to dine upon. She has employed a variety of outward appearances and aliases, but she always dwells alone. To all outward appearances, Nurvureem is a very talented seamstress who seems able to see and function perfectly in the dark. When in this guise, she is always prepared for attacks; her cottages have alarm-warning traps, such as balanced buckets of old metal scrap and tripwires, set ready against intrusion.

When in dragon form, Nurvureem is believed to be in all respects an adult shadow dragon. She can employ her draconic ability to converse with any intelligent creature, as well as the spells she gains as a shadow dragon, while she's in any form.

The Drow Dragon has no one true lair but maintains several hideaways and magic caches across the North. One is a tumbledown cottage in the hills east of Red Larch surrounded by monster skeletons to deter casual explorations; another is a dry gulch (large enough to hold a shadow dragon lying flat, and hiding healing potions under tumbled boulders at its heart) in the gently rolling hills west of the High Forest and east of Beliard. A third is known to be a cave high in a mountainside or rocky height somewhere near the area Nurvureem is known to roam -- but just which pinnacle, Volo was unable to learn.

Nurvureem's Lair

To Nurvureem, lairs seem little more than places to hide from prying eyes and keep a little magic hidden for emergencies. Once, sorely wounded, she was observed to "hop" from lair to lair, quaffing healing potions at each until she was strong enough to resume her business: spying on those who'd harmed her, and plotting their imminent doom, which she subsequently brought about. Rockfall traps (employing delicately balanced and wedged boulders that will crush someone approaching a potion cache from the easiest or obvious direction, but which do nothing if someone gets at the potions by another way -- usually a way that involves some climbing or crawling) are in some of these hideaways, but in general the Drow Dragon's lairs are simple shelters, not fortresses studded with spells or other perils and manned by servitor creatures.

Nurvureem uses ruined Rundreth Manor purely as a place to which to lure young human male adventurers, maintaining a hidden cache of wine, clothing, and food there, but little more. If she suspects a man is going to betray her straightaway by summoning adventurers or Waterdhavian patrols to attack her, she often gives him a gift she keeps hidden somewhere in the ruins: the magic sword Blazhserblane (a +1 jumping long sword (see *Magic of Faerûn* for the jumping weapon property) that dates to the time of the

Fallen Kingdom; it can glow with faerie fire when grasped and commanded, and bears a permanent tracer spell linked with a gem that Nurvureem possesses, allowing her to follow the movements and know the approximate whereabouts of anyone bearing it -- and clearly hear all words they speak, regardless of distance.

Nurvureem's Domain

Nurvureem knows every ravine and nameless creek from Triboar to Calling Horns. Her roaming takes her along the verges of the High Forest to Secomber, thence along the edge of the High Moor and the Misty Forest to the Way Inn, and back northward through Daggerford to skirt Waterdeep and Goldenfields, taking in all else to the edges of the Kryptgarden Forest, and thence to Triboar once more. This is more a "stomping ground" than a patrolled and defended domain.

Velsaert of Baldur's Gate calls her "That deadliest of dragons -- the sort who evades battle and all the other outward show of draconic life, to lie low when other wyrms roam or seek to do battle . . . only to rise up when unexpected and strike out of the shadows like a merciless snake." Rotting dragonflesh is Nurvureem's favorite food, and she gets it by slaying adventurer- or weather-weakened dragons and plundering their hoards for all the magic she can find, use, or trade, before dining on her prey. Nurvureem has slain all the dragons to whom she has known to have revealed her true nature. Her victims include Oskalymm the Old, a black dragon who once laired somewhere in the northern High Moor; Andrathanach, a young green dragon who was trying to establish a lair on the western border of the High Forest south of Noanar's Hold; and Surpuryte, daughter of Iurrendeem, a silver dragon who dwelt in Amphail more or less permanently in human form.

The Deeds of Nurvureem

Nurvureem has been alone and wandering the Sword Coast North for at least seven decades. She seems to like drow form, scouting lands by night, lazing in caves or swimming holes by day -- and hunting in dragon form at twilight when she's found prey to her liking, or assuming dragon form whenever she encounters trouble. The Drow Dragon often sports with prey, chasing and toying with them for some time before slaying. Dead victims are often transported to rocky heights to become properly ripe for her liking -- places she can watch from adjacent rock pinnacles, swooping down to kill carrion-eaters drawn to the remains.

After dragons (and their kin, wyverns), humans are the favorite prey of the Drow Dragon. Magic-wielding humans are of the most value to her because of their knowledge and the items they might carry -- but their flesh tastes no better than that of humans who know spells only through folktales. Nurvureem hates other drow and is both fascinated by and fearful of other sorts of elves. Elves who treat her with arrogance never fail to enrage her, but Nurvureem has tasted too many traps to let her feelings goad her into instant attack before she has examined her surroundings and considered the situation. Most plots to slay or capture her amuse her more than anything else, and she seems to view the strivings of adventurers as personal entertainments provided for her by Faerûn. She often spies on adventuring bands she sights in the wilderlands, seeking only to enjoy "the show" (and dining on whatever they slay, once it is suitably rotten).

Nurvureem can be alarmed -- into seething anger -- if she discovers plots against her involving other dragons. She despises dracoliches and the Cult of the Dragon. She destroys Cult members and bone dragons alike when they cross her path, though she doesn't bother pursuing them.

Nurvureem uses the men who leave Rundreth Manor devoted to her to bring her back magic items, potions, and spell scrolls -- and to keep her informed of adventurers and Cult agents active in her domain. Occasionally she'll visit one of her "Faithful Few" unannounced, appearing across their fire at night, or in their bedchamber at an inn or home. She doesn't do this just when she wants something or to check up on them -- often she desires a little companionship more than anything else, and to catch up on news. One of her men was trembling with fear as he revealed his recent marriage and baby child, only to have her glowingly congratulate him and go fetch some treasure as a gift for the babe. On several occasions she's helped her Faithful by "standing in" as a wife or escort.

Nurvureem: Female unique adult shadow/song dragon Sorcerer 1; CR 14; Large dragon (shadow); HD 19d12+57 plus 1d4+3; hp 185; Init +4; Spd 80 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor); AC 31, touch 9, flat-footed 31; Base Atk +19; Grp +27; Atk +22 melee (2d6+4, bite); Full Atk +22 melee (2d6+4, bite) and +17 melee (1d8+2, 2 claws) and +17 melee (1d6+2, 2 wings) and +17 melee (1d8+6, tail slap); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft. (10 ft. with bite); SA breath weapon (40-ft. cone of shadow), frightful presence, spell-like abilities; SQ alternate form, blindsense 60 ft., damage reduction 5/magic, darkvision 120 ft., immunities (energy drain, paralysis, sleep), low-light vision, shadow blend, tongues, true seeing; AL CE; SV Fort +14, Ref +11, Will +18; Str 19, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 20, Wis 20, Cha 22.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +26, Concentration +25, Craft (trapmaking) +9, Diplomacy +32, Escape Artist +15, Hide -4, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (arcana) +25, Knowledge (local -- the North) +25, Listen +27, Move Silently +5, Profession (seamstress) +10, Search +25, Sense Motive +25, Spellcraft +29, Spot +29; Alertness, Blind-Fight, Flyby Attack, Heighten Spell, Improved Initiative, Leadership, Power Attack

Breath Weapon (Su): Nurvureem's breath weapon is a 40-foot cone of billowing, smoky shadows with an energy drain effect. Each creature within the cone gains three negative levels. A successful Reflex save (DC 22) halves the number of levels lost (rounded down). This same DC is used for the Fortitude save to overcome the negative levels 24 hours later.

Frightful Presence (Ex): Nurvureem can unsettle foes with her mere presence in dragon form. The ability takes effect automatically whenever she attacks, charges, or flies overhead. Each creature within a radius of 180 feet that has less than 19 HD is subject to the effect. A potentially affected creature that succeeds at a Will save (DC 25) remains immune to Nurvureem's frightful presence for one day. On a failure, a creature with 4 or fewer HD becomes panicked for 4d6 rounds, and one with 5 or more HD becomes shaken for 4d6 rounds. A panicked creature takes a -2 morale penalty on saving throws and must flee. A shaken creature takes a -2 morale penalty on attack rolls, checks, and saving throws. Nurvureem ignores the frightful presence of other dragons.

Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day -- mirror image; 2/day -- dimension door (DC 20 [object]). Caster level 6th.

Alternate Form (Su): Nurvureem can freely use an ability much like polymorph self to assume human form. Each has a unique human form that she assumes each time she changes shape (Nurvureem's "human" form is that of a female drow). When she changes form, her Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution scores become average for her new form (Str 10, Dex 12, Con 8), but her hit points are unaffected by this change. Nurvureem can employ her dragon spells and special abilities -- except her breath weapon -- in either form. Changing from dragon to drow form requires 2 rounds; reversing the change takes only 1 round. During this time, she cannot move and can use only her spells or breath weapon (if changing from dragon to drow, otherwise the breath weapon is unavailable). Other actions and attacks are impossible. The change rends all known bonds, clothing, and other confinements, without harm to Nurvureem.

Blindsense (Ex): Nurvureem can pinpoint creatures within a distance of 60 feet. Opponents she can't actually see still have total concealment against her.

Shadow Blend (Su): During any conditions other than full daylight, Nurvureem can disappear into the shadows, giving her nine-tenths concealment. Artificial illumination, even a light or continual flame spell, does not negate this ability. A daylight spell, however, will.

Tongues (Su): Nurvureem can communicate in any language through the use of an innate tongues ability that is always active.

True Seeing (Su): Nurvureem has true seeing (as the spell) to a range of 15 feet. This ability is always active.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/8/7/4; save DC 16 + spell level): 0 -- dancing lights, detect magic, ghost sound, light, mage hand, open/close, ray of frost; 1st -- charm person, disguise self, hold portal, shadowgloom; 2nd -- cat's grace, darkness; 3rd -- threesteel.

Nurvureem's Fate

The Drow Dragon is heading for a confrontation with massed adventuring bands, whether she knows it or not. Several adventurers who have escaped her clutches at Rundreth Manor have continued to work for Nurvureem but have told adventuring companions about her. There seems to be a general mood among rulers and adventurers in the Sword Coast North that Faerûn would be better off without her, and that it is fast becoming time to strike Nurvureem down regardless of the price in blood she might exact. The warrior Angrathos "Swordshatterer" of Neverwinter even tried to enlist the assistance of Claugiyliamatar, an ambitious green dragon, in a hunt to corner and destroy the Drow Dragon, but the Dragon of Kryptgarden Forest refused.

Word of a connection between the Dark Lady of Rundreth Manor and the "drow who can turn into a dragon" is spreading fast thanks to several minstrels, but this is a recent notion, not generally-agreed-upon fact (even among Harpers and those learned or at least interested in the affairs of dragons).

A noose seems to be slowly tightening around Nurvureem. She seems almost to savagely welcome it, though whether she's seeking release through her own death or just a glorious fight remains a mystery . . . perhaps even in the clouded mind of the Dark Lady herself.

Nurvureem's Magic

The Drow Dragon commands only a few sorcerer spells but has acquired a useful collection of wands and other battleworthy magic items -- including a ring that can teleport her away from real peril, another ring that can create many illusions, and plentiful magic healing. Two spells she is known to use follow.

Shadowgloom

Illusion (Shadow)

Level: Sor/Wiz 1

Components: V

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)
Duration: 1 round/level
Effect: 10 ft. radius of gloom or one shadowy form of Large or smaller
Saving Throw: Will negates (see text)
Spell Resistance: Yes

You call upon the power of shadow to create one of two effects:

Gloomcloud: You create a cloud of gloom that fills a 10-foot radius. Any creatures within the gloom are protected from the effects of full sunlight and do not suffer penalties for light blindness or light sensitivity from sunlight. Spells that create light (including daylight, searing light, and sunbeam) work normally within the area; the gloom protects only against actual light or sunlight originating from outside the area of gloom. Attacks made inside or into the area suffer a 10% miss chance due to the gloomy conditions (creatures with darkvision and low-light vision ignore this miss chance).

With this variant you may also cause one creature or object of up to Medium size to be obscured by shadows. An affected object gains total concealment in the darkness, and becomes invisible while the effect lasts. A creature is merely disguised by deep shadow that completely obscures the major features of its bodies. The creature remains visible, but its identity and possibly even its race cannot be deduced just by looking at the creature. The disguised creature can still see, and the enveloping shadows do not adversely affect its ability to perform any action. Saving throws and spell resistance applies to a creature that does not want himself or an object in his possession to be affected in this manner. Normally this aspect of the spell is used to disguise a creature or hide an object from scrutiny (including something like concealing a door).

Quickshadow: You create a roughly humanoid shadow (shaped as you choose, so it may resemble a human, a satyr, or a winged creature) of size Large or smaller. The shadow immediately moves 60 feet per round in the direction you indicate until it reaches the maximum range, at which point it fades away. The shadow is harmless and cannot cause harm. It cannot move into a space unless the spell has line of effect to that space. (For example, it could not pass through a closed door into the room beyond, but could move through a portcullis with ease.) This aspect of the spell is normally used to deceive viewers into thinking a message or summoned creature is fleeing or charging them. Of course, since you choose its shape you may use it as a prearranged signal to someone (a halfling shadow meaning one message, a harpy shadow meaning another, and so on).

Threesteel

Transmutation

Level: Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Duration: Instantaneous

Target: One weapon of up to Large size (greatsword, shortspear, and so on) in your possession

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates (object)

Spell Resistance: No

You split the target weapon into three exact duplicates of the original weapon. These duplicates immediately launch themselves at a target or targets of your choice within Close range (you may direct one or more of the weapons at the same target or split them up among three different targets). Make a ranged attack roll for each weapon (using your ranged attack bonus or the ranged attack bonus of a fighter of your caster level, whichever is higher) as if you were proficient in using the weapon in the normal manner. (For example, if used on a greatsword you would make a ranged attack roll as if you were proficient in greatsword, without the normal penalty for using an improvised throwing weapon.) The weapon gains a +1 enhancement bonus on attack and damage if it does not have one already.

Each duplicate that hits deals damage as if you had struck the target with the weapon (including any special effects such as bane, smite evil, critical hits, sneak attacks, Weapon Focus, and so on). Your Strength bonus does not apply, since the force of the weapon comes from the spell, not your own Strength. It does not get a flanking bonus or help a combatant get one.

Casting the spell destroys the targeted weapon to create the duplicates, and the duplicates are destroyed whether or not they hit. Because of this, the spell is rarely used on magic weapons, though it is far more effective with weapons which have greater magic. It cannot be cast on artifacts, natural weapons, weapons animated with animate objects or similar spells, or weaponlike magic creations (such as Mordenkainen's sword).

Nymmurh, "The Wyrn Who Watches"

(Dragon Magazine #250)

The Wyrn Who Watches is known to only a few folk of the North. Almost all of them, outside of a particular Waterdhavian noble family, think he's just a fanciful character in an old fairy tale that purports to explain why some noble families of Waterdeep are so wealthy. Volo learned rather more in a tenday dalliance with the young Lady Ravithara Silmerhelve -- but as Elminster commented, "If Lord Laerlos Silmerhelve ever reads this, there won't be a fortress strong enough or distant enough in all Toril to save the skin of Volothamp Geddarm from the vengeance of the Silmerhelves. I hear Ravithara wants the father of her baby to return to her side, too."

It should be noted before we continue that the child, Emmeros Silmerhelve, is a strong baby boy who'd have to see more than a dozen of his kin die before he ever became head of the house; he'd not be in the direct line of succession even if his father were an honored noble openly married to Ravithara (a fourth cousin to Lord Laerlos). He is, according to Elminster, blessed with Volo's unmistakable, er, "good looks."



Nymmurh is a figure almost as elusive as the father of Emmeros. This ancient bronze he-dragon has crafted several magic mirrors and portraits in the Silmerhelve family mansion in Waterdeep and in several outbuildings of their country estate, Helvenblade House, northwest of Westbridge. These looking-glasses and pictures now serve Nymmurh as constantly operating scrying "portholes." He can see, hear, and speak through them at will, though the mirrors and pictures show no sign of his presence beyond a strong but invisible magical aura.

When Nymmurh desires to show himself to observers "on the other side," he need only perform a simple (and almost instantaneous) manipulation of the permanent scrying magic. The mirror or portrait shimmers for an instant, then reveals the head of the kindly dragon "beyond" the wall.

The portholes provide Nymmurh with a constant source of entertainment, as the Silmerhelves live their lives under his watchful gaze. He reveals himself to at least one family member of each generation, so he can guide the Silmerhelves with timely advice and learn news from them. (Family members in the know often position themselves within view of a known porthole for gossip and important family conferences or confrontations.) Nymmurh's habit of keeping himself secret from most Silmerhelves means that he can surprise treacherous or foolish family members when he acts against them, and he keeps general knowledge of his own existence in the "family legend" category rather than "known family weapon" that outsiders can anticipate. Through the generations Nymmurh has aided many Silmerhelves, usually younger sons who go adventuring, but on many occasions the same individuals when they're in their gray years. Nymmurh has taken more than one family patriarch or matriarch on a magnificent "last ride," flying them on his back through vicious storms over the Sea of Swords until lightning slays them. In return, the Silmerhelves have come to Nymmurh's aid when his lair is threatened or when a marauding dragon has wounded him in battle.

One of the greatest treasures of the Silmerhelves, an elven *stormsword* (described in *Dragon Magazine* Annual #1), is a gift from Nymmurh. Tales of Silmerhelves coming back from the dead to defend loved ones or to protect them during perilous trips are the work of the bronze dragon who is using his magic to take on human form. He is also not above covertly arranging matches for young Silmerhelve daughters.

Nymmurh can scry all of the Silmerhelve *portals* constantly; according to Elminster, their "other ends" ring the main cavern of his lair like so many floating crystal balls. He has *portals* at all gates to Silmerhelve properties, in at least one cellar of each home, and wherever there are ovens, large cooking hearths, or heating-fires (so he can cry alarm if fire, theft, or imminent attack threaten). Sound travels freely through Nymmurh's *portals*, so he can bellow and be heard in the Silmerhelve abode. Often he mischievously speaks in ghostly whispers or imitates someone who's elsewhere, to alarm visitors who are nosing about where they shouldn't be. Sometimes he'll make them think someone is coming or even trick individuals into thinking certain persons are in love with them; he knows reams of love poems and will quote them using the voice of a particular Silmerhelve, addressing them to someone he knows can hear. The Wyrn Who Watches can also allow things to pass through a *portal* by calling on its magic to shape a temporary *portal*. This allows him, another creature, or an object or collection of items smaller in total volume than Nymmurh to travel through the mirror or portrait in either direction. Travel is accomplished merely by touching the mirror or portrait; travelers need not pass (or be able to fit) through its frame. If Nymmurh hasn't activated this ability, nothing happens beyond normal contact with a solid object, when any part of the *portal* mirror or portrait is touched.

Such *portal* travel is always safe but has the side effect of "turning off" any active magic on or surrounding something that passes through a *portal*. Prepared spells, quiescent magical powers, and magical effects that are present but inactive aren't affected, and if

active magic can be made quiescent without ending or destroying them, the *portal* does so. Nymmurh has used this property to whisk beings safely to his lair, send items to a Silmerhelve, and even to enter Silmerhelve homes himself.

If no urgent need exists, the bronze dragon uses other means of transport; making a "*portal* trip" ruins the magical link between the mirror or portrait and its scrying-globe in his lair, causing the latter to collapse. The spells that create a new one and link it to the *portal* once more can be done entirely from Nymmurh's lair, but they are long, exacting, and expensive (in terms of rare, hard-to-obtain ingredients that usually involve hired adventurers -- all of whom Nymmurh deals with while in human form, and some of whom are sent after unnecessary ingredients, to keep the list of crucial ones secret).

As a hatchling, Nymmurh was whimsical, good-natured, and curious, especially about humans. He stumbled on the *portal* magic -- about which Volo could learn almost nothing, and about which Elminster could add scarcely more -- in the lair of an already-dead dragon. Who that dragon was, and where that lair lies, are secrets Nymmurh has never revealed.

The bronze dragon promptly used the *portals* to learn all he could about humans by observation. First mentioned in Silmerhelve family diary entries written in the first year of Northreckoning, The Wyrms Who Watches apparently chose the Waterdhavian family purely at random. Down the years, Nymmurh has from time to time covertly opened other *portals* in other places. Fear of discovery, being traced back to his lair, and the necessity to visit the "other" side of the *portal* to create the link has kept non-Silmerhelve *portals* rare and caused Nymmurh to destroy or close those he doesn't deem necessary. The bronze dragon desired to learn about humans because he saw them as the "great shaping force" that would rule over or influence all of Faerûn during his lifetime and he wanted to know how humans think and act.

Now a great wyrm of age-paling scales and increasing lassitude (he naps often, sometimes for long periods), Nymmurh is an expert in human nature, including changing fashions and thought among Waterdhavian upper-class humans over a span of more than a thousand years. He knows thousands of human jokes, songs, and rhymes, and has even advised the human sage (and authority-on-dragons) Velsaert of Baldur's Gate about the nature of dragons and recent Sword Coast draconic doings.

According to Velsaert, Nymmurh views other dragons much as he views humans: as potentially dangerous sources of entertainment it's prudent to learn all he can about. Nymmurh tries to hide his existence from other dragons as much as possible, swooping down on his larder-isle to feed by night, and otherwise almost never venturing out of his lair in dragon form. He employs a variety of "favorite" human forms that he sometimes uses when speaking through a *portal* to conceal his draconic nature. If he wants to conceal his true form from someone, he usually takes the shape of a Silmerhelve ancestor and does what he calls "the haunted portrait trick," acting as the long-dead Silmerhelve whose portrait he's staring out of, while wearing his or her face. If he wants personally to visit a Silmerhelve house, he usually takes the form of the mumbling-mad Lady Saerista Silmerhelve (of whom more is said below). The key to Nymmurh's character could be his constant need to learn more about Toril around him, and its human inhabitants in particular. Even after an age of watching and observing, the bronze dragon is still fascinated by what humans get up to, and why and how predictable and unpredictable they can be. He loves to experiment (in a kindly, ready-to-correct-his-own-mistakes manner) with manipulating the Silmerhelves, to see if he can affect human fortunes and make humans more as he'd like them to be: kinder, gentler, wiser, and slower to act before consequences are considered -- and far friendlier to bronze dragons. He also likes to try to guess what lies ahead in the broader sweep of realms rising and falling, advances in trade and technology, and so on, finding it all very entertaining. He has no need to rule or dominate, and he finds no joy in outwitting or trapping others; Nymmurh loves to watch from the background, unnoticed and unmolested by his own kind and other passing predators.

He's known to be an accomplished mimic and a persuasive speaker, able to "convince folk right out of their stockings" (as Elminster put it) and to successfully impersonate folk more or less at will: that is, to make people believe he's a merchant of Amn or an escaped slave from Thay, not the wizard Elminster or Blokskrin Thuulbrin, Fine Fur-Dealer Extraordinaire from Westgate.

Nymmurh's Lair

The bronze dragon's lair is located high among the most inaccessible peaks of Alaron. From there he raids the High Moor and one of the islands in the Korinn Archipelago (which he long ago stocked with hardy goats) for food. The bronze dragon affectionately refers to his cluttered labyrinth-of-caverns home as "the Pit." This has caused some adventurers over the years, a-hunting dragon treasure, to mistakenly seek deeper delvings. (Usually they find meenlock-haunted mines in the vicinity and come to grief if they're not smart enough to flee before being surrounded and overwhelmed in the lightless passages.)

The Pit is a large and intricate network of caverns, a dozen of which are large enough for Nymmurh to laze or glide around in, in his own form. They can be reached by a shaft that leads straight up through the heart of a lofty peak, but which the bronze dragon guards with a large grating of sharp, 40-ft.-long spikes that menace anyone falling or flying down the shaft. The grate can swing downward and into a side-alcove, out of the way, but it is almost always locked in place, a forest of deadly blades that prevents dragons from dropping in uninvited. Made by titans long ago for a now-destroyed fortress of their own, the grate consists of many smaller spears and swords fixed upright between the huge blades, so as to endanger creatures of all sizes larger than a fox or hawk. It is smeared with pitch so as to retain a cloak of powder (a mixture of natural substances that neutralize acids), and it bears a permanent *globe of invulnerability* spell.

The side-passages and caverns of the Pit are smaller -- too small for a full-grown bronze dragon. One of these tangled networks of ways leads some miles away, to a connection with the surface: a small cave-entrance under the waters of a cold, swiftly-flowing mountain river. This cave is inhabited, and guarded for Nymmurh in return for gifts of food, by Annaclathaer, a marl (a snakelike aquatic multilimbed sentient creature). Their long-standing agreement has become a firm friendship, and if the marl breaks a magic glass "signal chime" Nymmurh gave him, and the bronze dragon is at home to hear it, the great wyrm speeds to Annaclathaer's aid, ready to fight any foe.

The smaller caverns of the Pit are crammed with odd, old items of all kinds; Nymmurh is an incurable collector of souvenirs. When he attends a revel, he'll bring back his empty glass or a lace doily; after matchmaking a pair of Silmerhelves into their first kiss, he's quite likely to tear up and take away the stone cemetery bench in the City of the Dead that they met upon. Fragments of boats that were wrecked on the rocky coasts near his home (or upon the isle where he keeps larder) are here, some spilling out their ballast-stones or long-perished cargoes.

Although magic items and true treasure are both rare among all the clutter, they do exist, hidden away in side caverns reached only by dint of a lot of heaving aside items and clambering over others. Nymmurh once helped a foolish young Silmerhelve pay off a debt by showing up with thousands of gold pieces (which he dumped around the creditor in an imprisoning ring while in dragon form, just to impress everyone involved) and has on several occasions gifted Silmerhelve couples, at their nuptials, with small but useful magic items. Two stone golems (salvaged from ruins) stand hidden among all the heaped items, ready to attack intruders at the dragon's command.

Nymmurh's Pit has one other resident: the mumbling-mad Lady Saerista Silmerhelve, rescued by the Wyrms Who Watches from the cooking-spit of the orc patrol who captured her. Saerista can be unnerving, but she's harmless, not a suddenly-murderous maniac. When not in one of her rare lucid moments, she shuffles about whispering to herself, her gown in revealing rags and her hair an unkempt, dusty forest. Saerista has seen some sixty winters and is quite content to remain in the Pit, eating what Nymmurh brings her, reading books from among all the heaped belongings, and exploring those belongings in an endless excavation of wonders. She knows who and what Nymmurh is, and that he's "the Guardian of the Silmerhelves" -- and privately considers him a disguised god who rescued her out of kindness. If she can ever find some way to repay him, she will. Her treatment by the orcs drove her from befuddlement to outright madness, and she's often completely unaware of the world around her. At such times, she's quite likely to speak in many strange voices, as if a dozen different folk were sharing her skull. Anyone who threatens or attacks Nymmurh when she's around, however, might disagree with that judgment.

Nymmurh's Domain

Nymmurh ignores the concept of domains, cheerfully roaming the North (the Sword Coast and its near-offshore isles in particular) regardless of what other dragons may dwell nearby or claim the territories he traverses. The only areas he'll defend against intruding dragons or other creatures are his own lair and his larder island. He regards the Silmerhelves as under his protection, but he won't diligently watch over young wayward family members out seeking their fortunes; he looks after those who aren't engaged in "discovering themselves" and doesn't regard himself responsible for the survival and successes of each individual Silmerhelve. If the family is ever threatened with sudden extinction, he plans to swoop in and kidnap a few family members to hide them far away so they can continue the family line while he makes things safe in Waterdeep for their eventual return.

The Deeds of Nymmurh

Like most of his kind, Nymmurh favors shark meat above other fare, but this only leads him into occasional plunges down to join a "feeding frenzy" shark gathering he observes when flying over. Largely disinterested in food, Nymmurh is content to dine on the goats of his larder isle, though he takes a keen interest in procuring a varied and interesting diet for his "guest" Saerista, so he is constantly trading coins he comes by for bottled sauces and pickled oddities to bring home to the Pit for her. Nymmurh spends more time observing Faerûn through his Silmerhelve portholes than anything else, but he does go on forays every tenday or so, to "gather things" and "get out and breath air as humans do." This air often seems to be the smoky, over-perfumed sort that prevails at revels; Nymmurh loves human parties for all the chatter and how folk behave when they're tipsy or trying to impress or being deliberately catty or outrageous.

So far as is known, Nymmurh has never taken a mate or shown any interest in having offspring or even acquiring alliances with other dragons. Acquiring things is a hunger in him, but not necessarily keeping them -- and the things need not be "treasure" as most creatures regard it. An interesting whittled tankard-coaster would catch his eye over a pile of gold pieces.

Nymmurh: Male ancient bronze dragon; CR 22; Gargantuan dragon (water); HD 33d12+231; hp 445; Init +4; Spd 40 ft., swim 60 ft., fly 200 ft. (clumsy); AC 38, touch 6, flat-footed 38; Base Atk +33; Grp +56; Atk +40 melee (4d6+11, bite); Full Atk +40 melee (4d6+11, bite) and +35 melee (2d8+5/19-20, 2 claws) and +35 melee (2d6+5, 2 wings) and +35 melee (2d8+16, tail slap); Space/Reach 20 ft./15 ft. (20 ft. with bite); SA breath weapon (120-ft. line of lightning), crush 4d6+16, frightful presence, spell-like abilities, spells, tail sweep 2d6+16; SQ alternate form, blindsight 60 ft., damage reduction 15/magic, darkvision 120 ft., immunities (electricity, paralysis, *sleep*), keen senses, spell resistance 28, water breathing; AL LG; SV Fort +25, Ref +18, Will +25; Str 33, Dex 10, Con 25, Int 26, Wis 25, Cha 24.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +16, Concentration +43, Diplomacy +51, Escape Artist +26, Gather Information +20, Hide -12, Intimidate +39, Knowledge (arcana) +38, Knowledge (geography) +33, Knowledge (history -- Waterdeep) +38, Knowledge (local -- Waterdeep) +38, Knowledge (nature) +30, Knowledge (nobility and royalty -- Waterdeep) +38, Listen +43, Search +28, Sense Motive +43, Spellcraft +25, Spot +37, Survival +14, Swim +19, Use Magic Device +21; Arcane Preparation (FRCS), Cleave, Combat Casting, Craft Wondrous Item, Create Portal, Empower Spell, Hover, Improved Critical (claw), Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Snatch, Wingover.

Breath Weapon (Su): Once every 1d4 rounds, Nymmurh can breathe a 120-foot line of lightning. Each creature in the path of the lightning takes 20d6 points of electricity damage (Reflex DC half).

Crush (Ex): When flying or jumping, Nymmurh can land on Medium or smaller opponents as a standard action, using his whole body to crush them. His crush attack affects a 20-foot-by-20-foot area. Each creature in the affected area must succeed on a Reflex save (DC 33) or be pinned, automatically taking 4d6+16 points of bludgeoning damage each round that it remains pinned.

Frightful Presence (Ex): Nymmurh can unsettle foes with his mere presence. This ability takes effect automatically whenever he attacks, charges, or flies overhead. Each creature within a 300-foot radius that has fewer than 33 HD is subject to the effect. A potentially affected creature that succeeds on a Will save (DC 33) remains immune to Nymmurh's frightful presence for 24 hours. On a failure, a creature with 4 or fewer HD becomes panicked for 4d6 rounds, and one with 5 or more HD becomes shaken for 4d6 rounds. A panicked creature takes a -2 morale penalty on saving throws and must flee. A shaken creature takes a -2 morale penalty on attack rolls, checks, and saving throws. Nymmurh ignores the frightful presence of other dragons.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will -- *speak with animals*; 3/day -- *control water, create food and water, detect thoughts, fog cloud*.

Spells: Nymmurh casts spells as a 15th-level sorcerer.

Tail Sweep (Ex): As a standard action, Nymmurh can sweep with his tail, affecting a half-circle with a radius of 30 feet extending from an intersection on the edge of his space in any direction. Each Small or smaller creature within the swept area takes 2d6+16 points of bludgeoning damage (Reflex DC 33 half).

Alternate Form (Su): Nymmurh can assume any animal or humanoid form of Medium size or smaller as a standard action three times per day. This ability functions as a *polymorph* spell (caster level 15th), except that the dragon does not regain hit points for changing form and can only assume the form of an animal or humanoid. He can remain in its animal or humanoid form until he chooses to assume a new one or return to his natural form.

Blindsense (Ex): Nymmurh can pinpoint creatures within a distance of 60 feet. Opponents he can't actually see still have total concealment against him.

Keen Senses (Ex): Nymmurh sees four times as well as a human in shadowy illumination and twice as well in normal light.

Water Breathing (Ex): Nymmurh can breathe underwater indefinitely and can freely use its breath weapon, spells, and other abilities while submerged.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/8/8/8/7/7/5; save DC 17 + spell level): 0 -- *dancing lights, detect magic, disrupt undead, ghost sound, mage hand, mending, open/close, prestidigitation, read magic*; 1st -- *disguise self, forcewave (Magic of Faerûn), know protections (Magic of Faerûn), mage armor, true strike*; 2nd -- *cat's grace, detect thoughts, invisibility, life bolt (Magic of Faerûn), magic mouth*; 3rd -- *analyze portal (FRCS), dispel magic, fireball, hold person*; 4th -- *charm monster, greater invisibility, scrying, summon monster IV*; 5th -- *Grimwald's graymantle (FRCS), jumpgout (see below), Lutzaen's frequent jaunt (Magic of Faerûn), teleport*; 6th -- *acid fog, gate seal (FRCS), greater dispel magic*; 7th -- *greater scrying, power word blind*.

Nymmurh's Magic

The Wyrms Who Watches keeps his interesting, useful, and powerful scrying-link spells secret indeed, but Volo learned something of his lesser magic (spells he passed on to various Silmerhelves, down the years), and one of these follows.

Jumpgout

Evocation

Level: Sor/Wiz 5

Components: V

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Duration: 2 rounds

Area: 5 ft. diameter pillar of flame, up to 30 ft. tall

Saving Throw: Reflex half (see text)

Spell Resistance: Yes

You create a vertical pillar of roaring flame 5 feet in diameter and up to 30 feet tall. Creatures caught in the fire take 1d6 points of fire damage per caster level (Reflex half), to a maximum of 15d6. On your next turn (the second round of the spell) the pillar vanishes and reappears 1d6x10 feet away from its original location. If you maintain concentration on the spell until the time it makes this "jump," you may restrict the possible direction to a quarter-circle of your choice, otherwise its new location is in a random direction. Creatures caught in the area of the fire on the second round take 1d6 points of fire damage per 2 caster levels (Reflex half), to a maximum of 7d6. The pillar then dies away in a swirl of sparks.

If cast underwater, *jumpgout* makes a swirling seam of boiling water that deals half damage (Reflex one-quarter) and remains in the same location both rounds.

Nymmurh's Fate

Nymmurh is likely to continue through the decades much as he is today, until a powerful and merciless dragon or mage (more probably, a cabal of mages, such as wizards of the Arcane Brotherhood or Cult of the Dragon) learn of his existence and launch a concerted attack. Nymmurh could well fall before he could muster defenses enough to stay alive.

He would also suffer acute distress, personal danger -- and at the least, an upheaval of his tidy lifestyle -- if a truly evil and ambitious Silmerhelve arose and kept his or her intentions hidden until a successful attack upon, or manipulation of, Nymmurh could be accomplished. No such Silmerhelve seems likely to develop in the current generation, and the bronze dragon has dealt with overly ambitious Silmerhelves in the past by manipulating their kin to unmask their true natures and to deal with them.

Nymmurh could also die of old age or fall in a chance encounter with a younger and more vigorous dragon. He also just might finally feel the urge to father heirs of his own and begin the dangerous hunt for a suitable bronze dragon mate.

Interestingly, Saerista has (completely on her own) begun to search for the whereabouts of other bronze dragons, employing old maps, lorebooks, and a magical mind-scriving crown (all found among the vast mounds of accumulated oddities in the Pit). Is she reading Nymmurh's mind or responding to wistful things he's said? Does her plot involve changing herself into a dragon? Conceiving the offspring would be impossible without magical aid, and probably deadly to her in any event, but she might not know that or perhaps chooses to deny it. Nymmurh can't have failed to notice her studies, but so far he's pretended not to notice. Volo, Elminster, and so of course we, too, can only wonder why.

Olothontor, "The Minstrel Wyrm"

(Dragon Magazine #251)

Oh, come let me sing of
Olothontor the Old.
Music in thrall this lone
wyrm doth hold.
If you would live to see
sunrise again,
Sing long of love, and
loss, and pain.
Sing as you've never
sung before,
And alive you may be
gently shown the door.



Stanza from "Oh, Come, Let Me Sing," a Harper drinking ballad of anonymous collective authorship

Some Harper legends live and breathe, though they're thought by most to be mere failing figments of fancy or memory. Olothontor "the Old," the Wyrm of Minstrelry, is one such; even many Harpers think him a minstrel-embroidered figure of legend. Yet, as Volo found (very nearly to his ultimate cost), Olothontor lives not far north of Waterdeep. This venerable blue he-dragon keeps to himself save when intruders call, and he has thereby completely escaped the notice of other dragons and -- save as a Harper legend -- of the many residents of Waterdeep.

Olothontor loves music above all else and gives extravagant gifts to lady bards and minstrels whose work pleases him. He dreams of someday finding a mate: a blue dragon who can sing as enchantingly as a splendid human singer. He has sometimes wistfully told intruders who get him to talk about music about this dream, but no Cult of the Dragon member or other intruder has yet empowered a blue she-dragon to sing, even temporarily. Intruders into his lair who play or sing won't be attacked, so long as they furnish good music and plenty of it.

First heard of in trail lore books written circa 570 DR and now collected at Candlekeep, young Olothontor recklessly raided traders encamped at what is now the Rat Hills. Olothontor was observed to break off his attack and perch on the drifting hulk of a ship he'd just demasted (and depopulated) to listen when a trio of spellsingers broke into song. The spell they raised was a defensive dome that twisted incoming lightning bolts into outgoing, stabbing rays of cold -- as the blue dragon discovered to his chagrin when the song ended and he bounded into the air (sinking the ship) to renew his attack. Wounded, he fled, flying raggedly -- but no one there failed to notice that he veered away during his second attack so as not to harm the three humans who'd sung.

Oebryn Evergar, a bard exploring Anauroch some years later, spoke of encountering Olothontor half-buried in the sand, obviously ready to attack. Instead, the wyrm merely raised his head, causing a shower of sand, to listen as the initially unwitting bard sang his way closer. The blue dragon paced along beside the bard like a restless cat on the prowl, demanding more songs until night fell and the bard fled, whereupon the dragon devoured his camels. When morning came, and Evergar grimly set out on foot to meet his doom under the scorching sun, the dragon swooped down and shaded him with a spread wing, all that day, demanding in return more songs. Thus they traveled, Evergar and the dragon, for several days until the edge of the desert was reached and the bard slipped away from the seemingly tireless Olothontor by walking on through the night.

Minstrels who traded ballads around a shared campfire in the Sword Coast wilderlands some years later reported discovering, as they settled down for slumber, that a blue dragon had crept up to the fire to listen, lying flat on the ground less than 10 yards from the flames.

A Harper, leading a song around another campfire in the North a decade later, realized something was amiss when one of the bass voices joining in was so deep that it set the jaws of everyone present to chattering. When he strode away from the fire to investigate, he found himself eyeball-to-eyeball with a blue dragon, its chin on its paws.

"Continue," it rumbled, "just as before, and all will be well." The Harper did just that. A dozen or more similar incidents were recorded until the night in 726 DR when a successful company of adventurers calling themselves Glaerikim's Band set about to lure and trap this dragon who listened to music. They hired an unwitting handful of minstrels to perform in a wilderland forest glade, having first built (and concealed, under hides heaped with leafy tree boughs and mosses) a quartet of loaded ballistae in the trees.

Glaerikim himself sat in the top of the tallest nearby tree as night fell, watching the darkening skies as the music began. When the silhouette of a dragon glided silently overhead, turned, and settled slowly to the ground, Glaerikim slipped down the rope he'd left ready and went to each ballista, helping to unhood it as quietly as possible. When the music ended around the embers of the dying fire, one of the minstrels (as instructed) loudly beckoned the others over to a corner of the clearing, to "teach them a secret song." When Glaerikim saw the dark bulk of the dragon steal nearer, he whistled -- and four ballista-bolts flashed at their target. One missed, one glanced off, one struck and shattered apart -- and one tore through a wing, earning a roar of rage and pain that shook the very trees. The dragon made a wildly flapping ascent into the sky. The adventurers stood their ground, ready to blast the wyrm with their most powerful magic items as the dragon wheeled against the stars.

They never got a chance to wield them. One minstrel alone escaped by plunging into a crevice between two rotting fallen trees and feigning death for hours, and from his telling we know that lightning lashed that glade in crackling bursts as bright as day, hurling cooked bodies high into the air in repeated macabre dances, while the air echoed with howls of rage and savage songs of doom -- snatches of the same triumphant battle-songs that humans were wont to sing all over Faerûn in those days. Awed, the survivor told everyone of the Minstrel Wyrms who'd slain Glaerikim's Band and seven minstrels besides . . . and a new legend of the North was born.

From that day to this, tales of Olothontor have been dismissed as pure whimsy because the dragon is no longer seen crouching near firesides, and because sages scoff at the idea of a desert-lairing blue dragon, lover of hot winds and baking sun and sand, dwelling in the oft-frigid, damp Sword Coast lands. Velsaert of Baldur's Gate (fast becoming recognized as an authority on the history of dragons up and down the Sword Coast), had already investigated a tale told by the lady bard Duthchanna of Athkatla when Volo spoke with him.

Velsaert accompanied the Harper bard Schalalla Irdree on an expedition to find the Minstrel Wyrms (following Duthchanna's directions) and discovered that the dragon was alive and real, dwelling in caverns heated by a volcanic vent and employing magic to listen to music from afar, and even to "hold" the sounds of that music for days (to be heard over and over again). Velsaert and Schalalla escaped with their lives after Schalalla gave a performance that the sage described as "songs that repeatedly moved me to tears, despite the danger -- and more than once did the same, as near as I could tell, to the dragon." The Harper bard promised the dragon she'd return with different songs, a better harp, and alone a season later -- and, the sage believes, she kept that promise. As far as Volo and Velsaert know, the Minstrel Wyrms still lairs near Waterdeep, waiting for the promised returns of various bards and minstrels. The keys to Olothontor's character are his hunger for music and his reported battle-calm; though betrayals enrage him as they do any dragon, he enters anticipated battles with easy, unruffled calm, and is undistracted by outsiders hurling spells into the fray.

Olothontor's Lair

Olothontor dwells in a cavern in Mount Araddyn, just north of Mount Sar along the Coast Road. His lair is easily reached from the highway (up a boulder-studded meadow slope between two weathered rock arms of the mountain that bear many scorings where the blue dragon has sharpened his claws.) The front of the lair is a crumbling, old stone mansion that was once the home of the brother titans Endrigul and Roevryn Taluth -- and was later taken over by the self-styled "Gnome King" Karlus "Goldgoblet" Dlinshoulder to be the seat of his court, only to be emptied by repeated orc raids. Somewhere in its huge but hollow stone pillars are said to be hidden many brass pots full of gnome gold -- coins bearing the grinning, bristle-bearded likeness of Karlus. Today, travelers find the mansion pillaged of all but a few tumbled pieces of massive stone furniture, covered with a thick blanket of dust, bird droppings, and the bones of small animals.

Olothontor has placed spells in the huge central rooms (chambers built to a grand scale by the titans, with high frescoed ceilings balconies, and fluted pillars), so that any living creature entering them causes favorite songs to be heard. These magical "recordings" give the Minstrel Wyrms a warning of intrusion and awes the most timid of intruders into flight from this "haunted" place. The innermost rooms (the last open to the sky, and its shattered ceiling allowing a deft dragon to drop down in a landing that must be more a precise pounce than anything else) run up to meet a cliff-face of Mount Araddyn -- and there lead into the cavern where the dragon dwells.

This cave is warm, wide, and long, and its floor is strewn with gravel (for use with Olothontor's pebble wind spell). Its floor is broken about two-thirds of the way in by a 40-foot-wide chasm that drops down about 400 feet to a volcanic flow and splits the cavern from side to side. Hot air swirls up out of this chasm, and there is a faint, sullen red glow down below.

On the far side of the heated chasm, Olothontor lies at ease on a bed of treasure, his most prized items (magic musical instruments) behind him, well away from the heat. From time to time, as he shifts about, gold coins spill over the edge of the chasm. He'll await most intruders calmly, chin in hand, and demand music before he uses his spells or breath weapons on them. If sorely pressed, he'll leap across the chasm and burst through the intruders, seeking the open air of the mountain (where he'll perch and await emerging adventurers).

Would-be thieves and attackers must cross the chasm somehow, of course, with Olothontor free to strike at them. Well above the main cavern floor where the treasure lies is a high ledge lined with boulders; Olothontor can stretch up to it and bat the boulders at intruders (and when enough of them are gone, he can clamber up onto this ledge so that attackers must climb up to him).

If Olothontor observes a strong band of intruders coming from afar, he often awaits intruders in a side cave that opens into the walls of the chasm a short distance beneath the main cavern. Hidden there, he'll create an illusion of a bound and helpless human captive "standing" on the "solid stone" floor of the cavern. In other words, he'll conceal the empty air where the chasm gapes open with an illusory "floor" of stone, hoping to lure the intruders to their deaths through falling. Olothontor usually depicts a chained, furiously-struggling warrior woman, but he's had centuries to perfect this act and can also provide a very convincing, seductively beckoning princess, despairing merchant, and so on -- complete with detailed life histories, full knowledge of Sword Coast ways and business customs, and a tale of where the dragon has gone. Olothontor can surge up out of the "underneath" cavern with a roar to confront foes, or bound up in near silence. If the majority of a band of intruders fall for his illusion trick -- "The dragon can make himself very small and has gone down there to where he keeps his magic" -- the Minstrel Wyrms races to the opening of that half-mile long crevice and walls it shut by shoving a carefully carved boulder into place. He has three cottage-sized stones, each of which can seal off the end of the crevice -- two precisely, and one leaving small gaps around its edges. Olothontor simply shoves all three boulders in a heap and waits for the trapped intruders to starve or waste any powerful magic they might have in attempts to get out.

No servants or companion creatures dwell in Olothontor's lair, but for about a fifth of each year, cumulative time, various Harpers and other bards can be found there on promised "return visits." Some of them have been making annual appearances for almost 20 years. These visits seldom overlap; Olothontor prefers to have one visitor at a time in his home.

Olothontor's Domain

From his lair, Olothontor roams rarely. When he does, he may wing anywhere between Mintarn and Anauroch, and Neverwinter and Silverymoon to Tethyr, wherever he can hear music. Olothontor is well aware that other dragons regard certain areas as their personal domains, and he flies high or very low to avoid attention. He normally flies this way anyway; terrified, cowering humans seldom create tuneful music.

Olothontor would regard an attempt by any other dragon to dwell or habitually perch on Mount Araddyn as an invasion of his own domain -- and he would ferociously battle any wyrm foolish enough to lair nearby and regard Olothontor's presence as a threat to his or her domain. The Minstrel Wyrms really just wants to be left alone by other dragons -- as well as by rampaging orc hordes, human adventurers with greed and glory in their eyes and sharp swords or waiting spells in their hands . . . and anyone else who doesn't love music.

The Deeds of Olothontor

The favorite prey of the Minstrel Wyrms is anything handy in the way of "hoofed beasts conveniently herded to Waterdeep for sale," which he likes to swoop down on and devour in a lightning-fast, gobbling raid (by night if need be). He goes for long periods without dining but has been known to gorge himself utterly when the opportunity presents itself -- such as the time he flew north to meet a southbound orc horde crossing the Evermoors and imitated the notorious red dragon Klauth by just rolling around on hundreds of orcs before settling down to a feast that lasted four days -- for it took that long for all the orcs streaming south to reach his jaws. Like a hunting cat, Olothontor spends long periods dozing and even more time lounging on his bed of treasure listening to music or considering how best to employ his magic next. Olothontor collects music boxes and other mechanical or magical means of producing tunes, and he has amassed over 600 such items. They occupy various high niches and ledges around the main cavern of the blue dragon's lair, on both sides of the chasm, and Olothontor knows the precise placing of each; if one is missing, moved, or damaged, he'll notice within a matter of hours and devotes all of his energies -- in a maniacal, at-all-costs manner -- to regaining the lost items. Olothontor is believed to have mated only once, with a blue she-dragon of Anauroch. Ingeireirautha is a possessive, ruthless adult dragon who dwells near the eastern edge of the Great Desert and is so self-absorbed that she may have forgotten all about "Olothontor the Dreamer." For his part, Olothontor's disinterest in even meeting other dragons may well be founded in his experiences with Ingeireirautha, despite the three to five offspring they produced (most of whom flew away east or southeast soon after hatching, following -- or defying -- their mother's directions to Raurin).

Olothontor's current keen interest is in finding spells that can capture and reproduce music with ease, so that he can "record" music spontaneously and not have to arrange performances beforehand (or cast a spell and make his own music on the spot). He wants to acquire stray melodies or sounds whenever he hears them and ultimately build a library of joyous music instead of hiring musicians to play a few stilted songs that he must struggle to capture magically under exacting conditions. This drive to achieve faster, better spells consumes his driving energies, and he's thinking of sponsoring or coercing certain brilliant mages into crafting the spells he can see in his dreams.

Olothontor: Male very old blue dragon; CR 19; Huge dragon (earth); HD 30d12+180; hp 375; Init +4; Spd 40 ft., burrow 20 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor); AC 37, touch 8, flat-footed 37; Base Atk +30; Grp +49; Atk +40 melee (2d8+11, bite); Atk +40 melee (2d8+11, bite) and +35 melee (2d6+5, 2 claws) and +34 melee (1d8+5, 2 wings) and +34 melee (2d6+16, tail slap); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft. (15 ft.

with bite); SA breath weapon (100-ft. line of lightning), crush 2d8+16, frightful presence, spell-like abilities, spells; SQ blindsight 60 ft., create/destroy water, damage reduction 15/magic, darkvision 120 ft., immunities (electricity, paralysis, sleep), keen senses, low-light vision, sound imitation; AL LE; SV Fort +23, Ref +17, Will +23; Str 33, Dex 10, Con 23, Int 18, Wis 19, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +29, Concentration +39, Diplomacy +28, Hide +12, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (history -- the North) +14, Knowledge (local -- the North) +14, Listen +37, Perform (sing) +20, Search +37, Sense Motive +34, Spellcraft +34, Spot +37, Use Magic Device +29; Cleave, Extend Spell, Flyby Attack, Great Cleave, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Snatch, Weapon Focus (claw), Weapon Focus (bite), Wingover.

Breath Weapon (Su): Once every 1d4 rounds, Olothontor can breathe a 100-foot line of lightning. Each creature in the area takes 18d8 points of electricity damage (Reflex DC 31 half).

Crush (Ex): When flying or jumping, Olothontor can land on Small or smaller opponents as a standard action, using his whole body to crush them. This attack affects a 15-foot-by-15-foot area. Each creature in the affected area must succeed on a Reflex save (DC 31) or be pinned, automatically taking 2d8+16 points of bludgeoning damage during the next round unless Olothontor moves off of it. If he chooses to maintain the pin, treat it as a normal grapple attack. A pinned opponent takes damage from the crush each round it doesn't escape.

Frightful Presence (Ex): Olothontor can unsettle foes with his mere presence. This ability takes effect automatically whenever he attacks, charges, or flies overhead. Each creature within a radius of 180 feet that has less than 30 HD is subject to the effect. A potentially affected creature that succeeds at a Will save (DC 29) remains immune to Olothontor's frightful presence for one day. On a failure, a creature with 4 or fewer HD becomes panicked for 4d6 rounds, and one with 5 or more HD becomes shaken for 4d6 rounds. A panicked creature takes a -2 morale penalty on saving throws and must flee. A shaken creature takes a -2 morale penalty on attack rolls, checks, and saving throws. Olothontor ignores the frightful presence of other dragons.

Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day -- ventriloquism; 1/day -- hallucinatory terrain. Caster level 11th.

Spells: Olothontor casts spells as an 11th-level sorcerer.

Blindsense (Ex): Olothontor can pinpoint creatures within a distance of 60 feet. Opponents he can't actually see still have total concealment against him.

Create/Destroy Water (Sp): Three times per day, Olothontor can produce an effect like that of the create water spell, except that he can decide to destroy water instead of creating it. This effect automatically spoils unattended liquids containing water. A magic item (such as potions) or any item in a creature's possession must succeed at a Will save (DC 29) or be ruined. This ability is the equivalent of a 1st-level spell.

Keen Senses (Ex): Olothontor sees four times as well as a human in shadowy illumination and twice as well in normal light. It also has darkvision out to 120 feet.

Sound Imitation (Ex): Olothontor can mimic any voice or sound he has heard, anytime he likes. A listener must succeed at a Will save (DC 29) to detect the ruse.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/7/7/4; save DC 14 + spell level): 0 -- daze, detect magic, ghost sound, mage hand, mending, open/close, prestidigitation, read magic, resistance; 1st -- comprehend languages, expeditious retreat, ghostsharp (Magic of Faerûn, normally a Brd 0 spell), , identify, mage armor; 2nd -- amplify (Magic of Faerûn, normally a Brd 1 spell), darkness, detect thoughts, Melf's acid arrow, whispering wind; 3rd -- dispel magic, pebble wind (see below), protection from energy, vampiric touch; 4th -- phantasmal killer, shout, stoneskin; 5th -- cloudkill, wall of stone.

Olothontor's Magic

The Minstrel Wyrm keeps his "recording" spells secret, and most of them seem to be decidedly unstable experimental magic at present, anyway. It should be noted that Olothontor uses sung, whistled, plucked, or hummed tunes to activate many waiting, "hung" spells around his lair -- spells that can trigger darkness effects, cause individual boulders to fall from the ceiling or to swing aside and allow a small avalanche of loose stones to pour down from ceiling cavities, and so on. Some of these spells were apparently cast by mages Olothontor aided during his travels.

Here's one of the more mundane magics that Olothontor uses to defend himself when attacked in the desert or in his lair. When resting far from home, rivermouth gravel bars and quarries are his favorite haunts because of this spell.

Pebble Wind

Evocation [Air]

Level: Sor/Wiz 3**Components:** V**Casting Time:** 1 standard action**Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)**Effect:** 20-ft.-radius spread**Duration:** 1 round**Saving Throw:** See text**Spell Resistance:** No (see text)

As gust of wind, except as noted above and as follows.

Instead of a path of wind, you create a whirling mass of air. The whirlwind carries sand, dirt, and other small objects (nothing heavier than a chicken egg) into the air, creating an opaque cloud of debris. Creatures must succeed at Fortitude saves as described in gust of wind to avoid being checked or moved by the spell. Creatures blown over or moved by the wind are pushed in a random direction. The flying debris causes 1d4 points of bludgeoning damage per caster level (maximum 10d4); this damage is subject to damage reduction and creatures are allowed a Reflex save for half damage. If the debris is primarily composed of soft or very small objects, the spell deals 1d4 hit points per 2 caster levels (maximum 5d4). The spell deals damage to objects within the spread, though hardness will usually negate this damage, and can scour paint from walls and signs if small hard particles (such as sand) comprise the debris.

Olothontor's Fate

It's just a matter of time before someone thinks he has music and magic enough to enter the lair of the Minstrel Wyrms and destroy Olothontor. Right or wrong, any extensive battle might wreck the lair (and even rend Mount Araddyn, if hotrock flows begin), ending the peaceful existence of the blue dragon who loves music. If Olothontor survives and seeks revenge, Waterdeep itself could suffer -- or the High Road could become impassable until adventuring might is whelmed in earnest and the Minstrel Wyrms is destroyed. Claugiyliamatar, the aggressive Dragon of Kryptgarden Forest (a green wyrm) reportedly confronted Olothontor in midair on one occasion, but the blue dragon simply ignored her, continuing on his way. Not quite daring to attack so calmly superior a dragon, Claugiyliamatar circled away but by all accounts was enraged, spending hours in a shrieking, tail-lashing shredding of trees and grassy hillsides. She might well do just about anything to bring down Olothontor if the opportunity presents itself in the future. Certainly the Minstrel Wyrms places himself far more at risk from attacks than most blue wyrms of his age, solely through his love of music. His listening forays may yet bring him to grief, as he crouches silently somewhere enjoying music, well within range of hostile poisoned javelins and blades or spells seeking the doom of a certain tune-smitten blue dragon. On the other hand, Olothontor might not regard such a death as a bad way to die, if die he must -- for not even dragons have learned the secrets of forever enjoying life as they did when youthful.

Palarandusk, "The Unseen Protector"

(Dragon Magazine #252)

Nestled in a high, narrow valley between three of the westernmost peaks of the Sword Mountains, not far from the High Road southeast of Leilon, is Ieirithymbul, a little-known village of gnomes. The peaks are known locally as Mount Stemhelm (the tallest, to the north), Mount Ardabad (on the east), and Mount Pheldaer (to the west). The valley and the stream that flows through it (only to vanish into a sinkhole, Braeder's Pit, a few miles to the south) are both known as Felrenden.

Folk in Leilon know the names of the peaks and that there are gnomes "somewhere in the mountains, and it's not wise to make trouble with them," but most of them couldn't tell you whether Felrenden is the name of their king, their realm, or just the gnome trading band that, save in the depths of winter, comes into Leilon about once a month.

Ardabad, Braeder, and Pheldaer were all heroes of the Ieirithyn gnomes in their days, but the formerly energetic and aggressive gnome presence in the Sword Mountains has declined to what one village elder called "a shameful, sleepy shadow." Despite the rich Felrenden iron and copper lodes, and a huge seam of coal near the Pit, it's likely that this mining village (that can today muster, at most, some 400 adult gnomes) might long ago have vanished altogether under the fangs and blades of passing predators or rival miners had it not been for its "Unseen Protector."



Few folk except the savage Forgebar dwarves (a 60- or 70-strong family of aggressive and well-armed hill dwarves who swiftly slay those who disagree with them and dwell in caves cut into the slopes of Mount Galardrym, a little more than ten miles east of Felrenden) know or suspect that the Unseen Protector of Ieirithymbul is a dragon. Most minstrels and sages believe it's a local guardian spirit. Some cleave to the alternative view that the Protector is the invisible "send-forth" of a gnome wizard who's learned how to travel out of his body in a flying, ghostlike form that can hear, see, speak, and cast spells. All of them ridicule any suggestion that the invisible spellcaster that routs anyone foolish enough to attack Ieirithymbul openly has anything to do with dragons. The Forgebar dwarves know better. Thrice their attacks on Ieirithymbul have led to the near-extinction of the dwarves involved, under the spells and rending claws of a fierce gold dragon whose scales are cracked and pale with age, and who weeps when he must slay -- but slays nonetheless, without hesitation or mercy. Volo recorded this as a clever disguise or magical image assumed by a spellcaster desiring to keep foes at a distance, but Elminster confirmed Palarandusk's true nature.

Palarandusk spends almost all of his time these days as a soundlessly levitating, semisolid, invisible entity who can watch, listen, speak, and move about, but who cannot launch physical or magical attacks in this form. In like manner, the invisible Palarandusk retains the spells, movement rate, hit points, and strength of his solid form -- that of a male gold great wyrm whose eyes are bright and alert, but whose jaws are white with age, and whose scales are pale and cracked from long use and failing vitality. The Unseen Protector regards the gnomes of his chosen village as his children. He spends most of his time drifting along, watching over them. He's attracted to family quarrels, feasts, and other occasions when the normally taciturn gnomes speak freely and at length about their views, feelings, or aims, but otherwise tends to escort gnomes who are on the borders of Felrenden (sheep-herding, gathering edible meadow flowers, prospecting, or mining) or traveling out of the valley to trade. He's swift to act when an Ieirithyn gnome is threatened, but he is wise enough to value eavesdropping on enemy councils above making a show of materializing to strike first at arriving danger, or retaliating swiftly against a foe of the gnomes.

Palarandusk's unique nature leaves him neither desiring nor needing much food; he absorbs moisture (and allows wastes to wash away, as desired) when rains fall or by lying in the icy waters of the Felrenden, and he devours mountain rock, mine tailings, or foes of the Ieirithyn when -- a rare thing -- hunger seizes him.

Orc raids, the misbehavior of visiting adventurers, and monster maraudings along the Coast Road near Leilon make Palarandusk act. Although he primarily defends the Felrenden, he does watch over Ieirithyn trading parties on their way to Leilon or trademoots along the High Road.

The Unseen Protector is wary of adventurers hunting rare dragon trophies or unusual body remnants that can be sold to spellcasters and alchemists, so he is loathe to appear or otherwise reveal his presence unless he deems it necessary. A few wizards know of his existence and have come to Ieirithymbul to trade spells. Unless they bring magic that can make him live on in strength and power, however, Palarandusk is uninterested in long discussions. One spellcaster from Neverwinter did provide him with a spell that successfully drained a magical rod to empower Palarandusk's activities, but the dragon completely drained the item long ago; unless visitors bring him fresh magical rods of particular sorts, he can make no further use of that magic.

Palarandusk never wastes time arguing with or warning intruders; he lurks and watches until action is necessary -- and then materializes and strikes. The Unseen Protector wields spells far beyond the norm for ancient gold dragons and is seldom seen by humans, few of whom will readily discern (or believe) what he has become.

A truly ancient gold he-dragon (mature when Netheril was young), Palarandusk has prolonged his existence beyond the natural death and decay of his body through powerful magic of his own devising. Now the spells that maintain his magically-knit form are failing, and he dares materialize for only a few minutes each day -- usually showing himself for only a few seconds, to proffer something, snatch something, or attack.

The rest of the time, Palarandusk exists as an invisible entity whose "attacks" against any victim cause brief nausea but incur no actual harm -- except to the Protector himself, whose semisolid form suffers damage from this interaction. In his invisible, semisolid form, Palarandusk does not age, the spells that keep him whole do not deteriorate, and he suffers no harm from the elements.

In solid form, Palarandusk has all the powers and properties of a gold great wyrm. He employs many spells forgotten today (learned mainly from the tomes of spellcasters who died in the fall of Netheril and the years of strife and confusion that followed). Palarandusk chafes in his "shadow existence" and dreams of becoming a widely respected power in the Sword Coast North once more.

The Sun Dragon

Palarandusk is first mentioned in a nameless, fragmentary book whose pages are burnished sheets of electrum stamped with characters unintelligible to the sages of today without benefits of magic to divine their meanings. In the days before Netheril was founded, Palarandusk dwelt somewhere along the Sword Coast and hunted such prey as wyverns from what is now Luskan to where Waterdeep was later founded.

Enslaved -- or forced into servitude to avoid a worse fate -- by the sorcerer Mileirigath in the early days of Netheril, Palarandusk spent centuries toiling in obedient obscurity, his longevity and eventually his nature and abilities altered by many spells cast on him by his master and Mileirigath's apprentices. When that realm of increasingly decadent splendor fell, he seized what magic (spellbooks in particular) he could from the ruins and the clutches of plundering illithids and other fell foes, and set about using his augmented magical abilities in freedom for the first time.

Palarandusk has also collected philosophical human writings and has spoken with a few elves and dwarves about their own views of the world, with the aim of forming a personal code. He has collected some monetary treasures, which he hid in several high, remote mountain caves and rifts for his own later use. Sleeping on a bed of treasure and continuously coveting more wealth has no allure for Palarandusk, but he does enjoy beauty, such as that captured in the occasional statue or even painting, which might be found propped up in clefts and beneath sheltered overhangs here and there around the Felrenden today. He sees the value of coinage as rare and precious things for bargaining with humans, elves, and dwarves, or even purchasing magic or aid outright.

Palarandusk lives by his own laws, which he alters rarely, and then only after much internal debate and reflection. He believes that any dragon has a duty to live in harmony with the land, devouring prey only as needful, despoiling things only when ruination can't be avoided, and protecting its domain against damage from such things as floods, fires, and invasions. In Neverwinter, the exploits of Palarandusk (under the name of the "Sun Dragon") are legendary; he protected the city several times from orc hordes and invasions from the northern Moonshaes, and he was seen as the benevolent protector of the city -- a heroic icon to whom some humans even prayed.

The passing years robbed the Sun Dragon of his strength and suppleness, and young dragons arrived to challenge him for his domain with the frequency of vultures circling a stricken beast. With no fitting, trusted successor as defender of Neverwinter in sight, Palarandusk dared not stand his ground and go down fighting, for that proud gesture would leave his chosen home undefended. He had to hide and devote his time to learning enough magic to survive -- and learning it fast.

Therefore the Sun Dragon was seen less and less in Neverwinter. He had already slipped into legend by the time the Arcane Brotherhood arose in Luskan, and fear of their recognizing his magical nature and using spells to enslave him drove Palarandusk to "disappear."

Adopting human form, Palarandusk used some of his treasure to purchase a half-ruined mansion in the countryside not far south and east of Neverwinter, shut himself up in it, and set to work learning all the arcane spells he could. He was still there, decades later, when a band of adventurers who were either extremely fortunate in their choice of spells, or who'd been sent to destroy him by someone who knew his true nature, blasted the house to flaming embers around his ears. The attack came without warning, and it destroyed almost all of the aging gold dragon's spellbooks. Palarandusk escaped destruction by frantic use of his spells -- but not before his body had been so ravaged by magic that it was held together only by a web-work of shattered magical power. Whelming all of his magic to save himself, the Sun Dragon rebuilt his own frame, forming the substanceless body of the slowly crumbling Unseen Protector he is today.

Palarandusk then decided that his lessened abilities made him unfit for his self-assigned post of defender of Neverwinter. The city in which he was now more of a shining legend than a memory now boasted half a dozen wizards of accomplishment and several resident bands of adventurers; it had decidedly less need for a draconic protector. Yet the gold wyrm was a restless wanderer as he toured much of the Sword Coast North, finding old friends and foes gone, and the land much changed from the untouched wilderlands of his youth.

At length Palarandusk decided his unease was because protecting the folk and the land of some small corner of Faerûn was now part of his nature; he could not be content except as a guardian. His sense of whimsy and gentle good nature grew with this realization, as he searched for a new "small corner" to call his own.

He wanted to live somewhere close to a center of vibrant activity, yet in a locale remote and unknown. He wanted to protect essentially honest folk given more to hard work and living with the land than, say, perfecting sorcery and dreaming of ruling other places. Human spellcasters were out, and the gnomes of Ieirithymbul -- almost unknown and yet relatively close to bustling Waterdeep -- were in. Palarandusk used magic to draw several gnome elders out on their own, one after another, to reveal himself to them, offering to defend them if they'd accept his presence. One by one, awed and touched, they agreed, and the long career of the Unseen Protector of Ieirithymbul began.

Down the years since, the body of the aging gold dragon has continued to deteriorate, despite several magical augmentations Palarandusk purchased or traded other spells for. He destroyed one orc horde before it could properly form, frustrating the plans of the cunning orc chieftain Rauragh, whose prize scheme was to bring orc bands through the subterranean ways of the Underdark to assemble in the Sword Mountains, and from there swoop down on Waterdeep, moving by night until the walls could be stormed by surprise. He has also slain several human wizards (including Radiglar "the Worm-tamer" of the Cult of the Dragon) and shattered an adventuring band, Koroaver's Raiders, who sought to establish a mining stronghold that could ally itself with the Zhentarim and give the Dark Network a defensible trading base on the doorstep of Waterdeep.

Already an expert in the flows and consequences of magic, able to predict with fair accuracy the result of two or even more spells clashing on the same target or in the same space, the Unseen Protector has recently learned a surprising amount about current trade alliances and practices along the High Road, whilst lurking undetected in Leilon or on the route the gnomes use between there and Felrenden. He's always alert for news of doings elsewhere in the North that might warn him of orc hordes, displaced war survivors, or migrating monsters possibly soon to be seen in the Sword Mountains.

Palarandusk spends his days in diligent guardianship and contemplating ways in which his body can be magically strengthened. He avoids other dragons whenever possible, and the noted draconic expert Velsaert of Baldur's Gate is unaware of Palarandusk, although he has recorded several "unconfirmed rumors with a shared subject: invisible wyrm melting into visibility and attacking" in the vicinity of Leilon.

The key to Palarandusk's character is his light humor and thorough and sympathetic understanding of human nature, operating through a firm personal code. If paladins learned about him, they could learn much from him. He defends the Ieirithyn gnomes like a bold and benevolent grandfather, never thinking of his own safety, never employing traps or ruses, and never sleeping. In fact, he has no need to sleep, though Elminster believes that the hastening deterioration of the dragon's body is directly related to Palarandusk's ceaseless activity; other wyrms of advanced age seem to spend almost all of their time asleep.

Palarandusk's Lair

The Unseen Protector has no true lair. He keeps things of beauty in several remote clefts and overhangs (for their own protection against the elements, not security) around and about Felrenden, and he has treasure stashed (usually under boulders he placed there) in various rock clefts in the Sword Mountains and in the southernmost Crags, north of Neverwinter. He has no need of personal warmth or shelter and finds the idea of prepared traps abhorrent. Snatching up mountainside boulders to hurl down at a foe during battle is fine, because there's no premeditation in such deeds unless the boulders have been deliberately collected and placed there beforehand.

Palarandusk's Domain

The Unseen Protector rarely leaves Felrenden and a narrow strip of territory linking it to Leilon along the High Road but considers that he has every right to go where he chooses, given the urge or necessity. Other dragons may have their domains and defend them fiercely, but he was here before them all, and (he thinks) will probably outlive most of them. He has no desire to offend a wyrm whose domain he's traversing, but if attacked, he'll defend himself -- and unless the dragon is of good alignment (and thus, merely misguided), the Protector will seek to slay or maim his attacker. Over-aggressive wyrms give all dragons a bad name, endangering all dragonkind . . . and so should be eliminated.

The Deeds of Palarandusk

Palarandusk spends a typical day drifting from one gnome to another like an anxious but silent invisible sheepdog, trying to maintain an overall, ongoing picture of the whereabouts and doings of all the Ieirithyn gnomes. At the same time, he tries to watch out for

creatures of all sorts approaching the Felrenden. Given the prevalence of spellcasters able to magically transform themselves these days, even lone birds can't be ignored.

Palarandusk is not known to have ever mated (though his early days are a mystery to historians and might well have included pairings), and he isn't known to particularly welcome the presence or friendship of other dragons. He worked amicably with other wyrms while in service, in Netheril, but seems never to have sought out other wyrms. A true and contented loner, the Unseen Protector maintains no current alliances.

Palarandusk: Male gold great wyrm dragon sorcerer 9; CR 36; Colossal dragon (fire); HD 41d12+287 plus 9d4+63; hp 638; Init +4; Spd 60 ft., swim 60 ft., fly 250 ft. (clumsy); AC 42, touch 2, flat-footed 42; Base Atk +41 (+45 with epic bonus); Grp +74 (+78 with epic bonus); Atk +55 melee (4d8+17/19-20, bite); Full Atk +55 melee (4d8+17/19-20, bite) and +50 melee (4d6+8/19-20, 2 claws) and +49 melee (2d8+8, 2 wings) and +49 melee (4d6+25, tail slap); Space/Reach 30 ft./20 ft. (30 ft. with bite) ft.; SA breath weapons (70-ft. cone of fire, 70-ft. cone of weakening gas), crush 4d8+25, frightful presence, spectral touch, spell-like abilities, tail sweep 2d8+25; SQ alternate form, blindsense 60 ft., damage reduction 20/magic, darkvision 120 ft., *detect gems*, fire subtype, immunities (fire, paralysis, sleep), keen senses, low-light vision, *luck bonus*, semi-incorporeal form, spell resistance 33, vulnerability to cold, water breathing; AL NE; SV Fort +34, Ref +27, Will +40; Str 45, Dex 10, Con 25, Int 32, Wis 33, Cha 32.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +61, Concentration +60, Diplomacy +56, Disguise +41, Escape Artist +30, Gather Information +31, Handle Animal +31, Heal +31, Hide +5, Intimidate +61, Jump +27, Knowledge (arcana) +63, Knowledge (history) +51, Knowledge (local -- the North) +55, Knowledge (nature) +55, Listen +56, Ride +2, Search +55, Sense Motive +55, Spellcraft +47, Spot +55, Swim +46, Use Magic Device +41; Cleave, Combat Casting, Greater Spell Penetration, Hover, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Critical (claw), Improved Initiative, Improved Spell Capacity, Iron Will, Power Attack, Snatch, Spell Knowledge (x2), Spell Penetration, Weapon Focus (bite), Weapon Focus (claw), Wingover.

Breath Weapons (Su): 70-ft. cone, 24d10 fire, Reflex DC 37; 70-ft. cone, 12 points Str damage, Reflex DC 37.

Frightful Presence (Ex): 360-ft.-radius, HD 40 or fewer, Will DC 41 negates.

Spectral Touch (Su): When Palarandusk is in his semi-incorporeal form and attacks a creature with a bite, claw, or other natural attack, the target creature takes no damage but is nauseated for 1 round (creatures immune to critical hits are immune to this attack). This attack is harmful to the dragon as well, and he is affected in the same way as if he had squeezed himself through a space too small for his Colossal body (4d4 hit points of damage, maximum hit points are reduced by 1).

Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day -- *bless*; 1/day -- *foresight* (DC 30), *geas/quest* (DC 27), *sunburst* (DC 29). Caster level 28th.

Tail Sweep (Ex): 40-ft.-radius half-circle; 2d8+25 points of damage, Reflex DC 37 half.

Alternate Form (Su): 3/day -- as *polymorph*, except only Medium or smaller animal or humanoid forms, and no hit points regained for change.

Detect Gems (Sp): 3/day -- as *detect magic*, except that it finds only gems. Caster level 28th.

Keen Senses (Ex): Darkvision 120 ft.; sees four times as well a human in shadowy illumination and twice as well in normal light.

Luck Bonus (Sp): 1/day -- as for a *stone of good luck*, but all good creatures in 120-ft. radius for 1d3+36 hours. Caster level 28th.

Semi-Incorporeal Form (Su): The dragon can assume an invisible and semisolid form (or change from this form to his normal, solid form) as a standard action. This form is less solid than a material creature but more material than an incorporeal one; attacks against him are treated as if he is an incorporeal creature except the incorporeal miss chance is only 25% instead of 50%. While in this form he cannot make physical attacks on material creatures (but see Spectral Touch, below), nor can he carry objects or creatures unless he had swallowed them while in his normal form (in which case they transform when he does). While semi-incorporeal he cannot use his breath weapons or cast spells on other objects or creatures, but can still use spells and spell-like abilities that affect only him. He may interact with incorporeal creatures or ghost touch items as if he were incorporeal. His natural armor bonus becomes a deflection bonus and he has no Strength score. Because he is not truly incorporeal, he cannot pass through solid objects, though he can squeeze through spaces small enough to keep out a Colossal creature but not a Gargantuan one; doing so deals 4d4 hit points of damage to the dragon (incorporeal miss chance does not apply), and his maximum hit points are permanently reduced by 1 point.

Water Breathing (Ex): Can breathe underwater indefinitely and can freely use breath weapon, spells, and other abilities underwater.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/9/9/9/8/8/8/8/7/7/1; save DC 21 + spell level; caster level 28th): 0 -- *arcane mark, dancing lights, detect magic, ghost sound, light, mage hand, mending, open/close, read magic*; 1st -- *cure light wounds, disguise self, mage armor, protection from evil, true strike*; 2nd -- *detect thoughts, eagle's splendor, Gedlee's electric loop (Magic of Faerûn), hand of divinity (Magic of Faerûn), invisibility*; 3rd -- *dispel magic, gaseous form, tongues, whipstrike* (see below); 4th -- *cure critical wounds, freedom of movement, holy smite, order's wrath*; 5th -- *Mestil's acid sheath, monstrous regeneration (Magic of Faerûn), prying eyes, transmute rock to mud*; 6th -- *chain lightning, summon monster VI, true seeing*; 7th -- *fortunate fate, holy word, summon monster VII*; 8th -- *iron body***, *maze, moment of prescience, unknown**; 9th -- *dominate monster***, *prismatic sphere, summon monster IX***, *time stop, undeath's eternal foe** (Magic of Faerûn), unknown**.

* These spells are believed to be two unique spells that maintain the dragon's failing body.

**Extra spells known gained from taking the Spell Knowledge feat twice (two spells each).

Palarandusk's Magic

Elminster gleaned details of only one of the Unseen Protector's spells -- a battle magic that Palarandusk uses sparingly, deeming it "unfair" to use it when he faces only a single foe, but useful in defending gnomes from one foe whilst he's occupied with others.

Whipstrike

Evocation [Air]

Level: Drd 3, Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Target: One creature

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Fortitude partial (see text)

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell creates a whirlwind of solid air, akin to certain of the magic effects that hold Palarandusk together. It forms above a chosen target and stabs down in a single, unerring strike, hammering the victim for 1d6 points of bludgeoning damage per caster level (maximum 5d6). A creature that succeeds at a Fortitude saving throw takes only half damage.

A Medium or smaller target who is on the ground that fails its save is knocked prone by the blast of air. If the target is flying, it is blown downward (1d6 x 5 ft. if Medium, 1d6 x 10 ft. if Small, or 2d6 x 10 ft. if Tiny or smaller, and Tiny or smaller creatures suffer 2d6 points of nonlethal damage from battering and buffeting in addition to the spell's primary damage). Large or larger creatures cannot be knocked prone or moved by this spell.

This spell has no effect if cast underwater.

Palarandusk's Fate

Although the Unseen Protector could well be overwhelmed if the Felrenden ever became vitally important to the Arcane Brotherhood, another cabal of evil mages, or any alliance of three or more dragons, it seems more likely he'll soldier on in obscurity for several more centuries before his body finally falls apart. Whether his magic will enable him to continue on as a disembodied sentence or not is unknown -- but Elminster warns that, if it does, the Protector (deprived of any means of defending anything, and fated only to watch) could well go insane and might then pose either a menace to all . . . or be merely a powerless, unseen shadow.

Raulothim, "The Silent Shadow"

(Dragon Magazine #253)

A century ago, the huge emerald dragon known as "the "Silent Shadow" could be seen at well-nigh every important event in the Sword Coast North -- gliding overhead, just watching. He never spoke (hence his sobriquet) and ignored most attempts to hail or attack him, serenely observing from an aloof distance and flying away when challenged -- but otherwise "always there" and missing nothing. Some barbarians thought him a "watching spirit" who reported to their own totem spirits or to strange gods; some sages and mages considered him a spy in service to some sinister cabal -- a belief encouraged by false confirmations announced by several sorcerous brotherhoods seeking to impress others. In truth, Raulothim served only himself. He loved riding the high winds so prevalent over the North, and he hated missing anything. The Silent Shadow didn't care if he misinterpreted what he saw or never learned the reasons or forces behind the events he witnessed -- he just hated feeling left out (and hence, lonely).



The years changed him, however, as years change all beings. These days, the great emerald wyrm called Raulothim seems more a statue than a gliding shadow. He spends long days lying motionless and gazing out over the North from the lip of his lair in the Pit of Stars, the cauldron of an extinct volcano (known to the Netherese as Xardmount) on the rocky island of Axard, the north-easternmost isle of Ruathym. The pit is named for the many blobs of volcanic glass -- white, clear, and smoke-hued -- that line its walls and gleam in the sun like so many gigantic cabochon-cut gems.

The events that made Raulothim so thoughtful began with his chance encounter with a ship that sailed the skies. The ship's spelljamming crew were seeking to hide treasure on the "uninhabited" outer islets of Ruathym. When they found their treasure-burying efforts watched over by a silently attentive emerald dragon of monstrous size, some of that crew fled through a *portal* they opened into another plane. Those sights shattered what the Silent Shadow thought he knew of the world. Frankly, it scared him. How many hidden realms -- and folk watching Toril from them -- are there? Who are these watchers, and what are their aims? How many mages who can open such *portals* serve masters on those hidden worlds? Can these wizards call on magical aid from their hidden masters? Did the ship's crew guess at his own innocence? Or do they consider him an agent working with a rival of theirs? Pondering such questions, Raulothim sits and broods, mastering all the magic he can. Thus, Raulothim silently waits for the day someone who thinks he knows too much of such things seeks to slay him. Sometimes he steals forth to mages' towers, hoping to find no one home, a ruin to be plundered, or the owner weakened . . . so he can steal more magic. He's even been known to tear apart wizards' tombs, using deft lashes of his tail (and boulders dropped from high aloft) to trigger and yet avoid guardian spells by keeping clear of their ranges.

In Ruathym, little is known about the Wyrm of Axard beyond the bare rumors that his past was a far more active and colorful affair than his life today, and that he guards some of the mightiest magic in all Faerûn. It's also widely reported that the gigantic emerald dragon enjoys hurling spells at those who come too close to his island home. In truth, Raulothim is terrified by how vulnerable his relatively puny magical skills leave him in the face of all these deadly foes. He has therefore set about accumulating the most puissant battle spells and most potent magic items he can find and seize, including things beyond his powers -- if they're hidden where only he knows, they can't fall into the wrong hands and be used against him.

Raulothim currently commands some four hundred battle-related spells, and he can use about three hundred of them (the most useful lower-level spells). He has accumulated thousands upon thousands of coins (to purchase spells he can't gain any other way) and many magic items. Magic items useful in battle he keeps at hand; the others he buries with the coins (beneath tons of gravel at the bottom of the Pit, which rests atop an incredibly hard volcanic "plug" that effectively prevents anyone tunneling up into it from beneath without the Silent Shadow getting lots of warning of their slow, laborious progress), for possible later use trading for magic he desires. Raulothim's collection of battleworthy magic items is known to include *rods of flailing* and *lordly might*, a *mace of smiting*, a *staff of power* and two *staves of evocation*; four *wands of fireball*, three *wands of ice storm*, and at least one each of *wands of lightning bolt*, *hold monster*, and *baleful polymorph*, as well as a *javelin of lightning*, a ring that can unleash one *dispel magic* and two *reverse gravity* spells per day, and several magic swords. Most of these are concealed at various "ready" locations around Axard and are guarded against unauthorized use by guardian spells and by their being engraved with false command words that cause them to strike at (rather than obeying) the utterer.

Raulothim makes extensive use of a spell that enables him to animate wands to "float and fire" at his command (that is, hang in midair, aim, and discharge remotely). He uses the *staff of power* and a few wands to so guard his lair, and he carries other wands with him in a neck-sack for use in any duel he may have to fight (usually setting them to "float and fire" at a foe from one direction, while he attacks from another). The Wyrm of Axard always wears a ring -- or rather, always wears a plain brass ring; some sages believe he possesses, and alternates, several magical rings.

Volo's notes indicate that Raulothim has visited a Mage Fair (in disguise). The dragon was fascinated by what he saw, terrified at being surrounded by so many folk who could destroy him with a few gestures, and reassured that not all mages in Faerûn were part of some vast conspiracy to rule the world together. The sometime tour guide of the Realms also found written references to the Silent Shadow being seen overhead at a minor battle fought somewhere in the Dessarin valley in 1211 DR. Elminster found no earlier mention of the wyrm, but he did uncover the surprising news that Raulothim has traded, down the years, with the Taerserr family of halflings in Holgerstead -- exchanging large and detailed maps of his own making (scratched on great slabs of Axard rock) in return for items of minor magic (such as lanterns whose shuttered interiors hold stones on which *continual flame* spells have been cast, potions of healing, and so on). By all accounts, the dragon is an exacting and thorough cartographer of the Sword Coast North; Blucklo Taerserr's recent "Drawn by a dragon!" claims were hardly necessary to sell the table-sized maps to lordlings, Waterdhavian nobles, and merchants wealthy enough to mount them on the walls of their feast halls -- or upon actual tables.

Raulothim is also a collector of words of activation and magical command phrases (of which he has swift and excellent recall). He's currently engaged in using *crystal balls*, some having powers of *detect thoughts* or *clairaudience*, to spy on active adventuring bands so that he can learn their true natures. Raulothim believes he needs to find adventurers capable and formidable in both intrigue and combat, who above all will be loyal to him. He'll sponsor them (and, if need be, aid them with magic and his own fighting abilities) as they carry out a task that is likely to consume their lives: exploring the *portals* Raulothim has heard about, finding and guarding any such portals near his lair, and devising some method of watching over all known gates for invasions by potentially deadly foes. The Silent Shadow is aware that several adventuring bands will be necessary to replace the inevitable casualties of age and combat -- and that for his own protection, it's best if he somehow keeps the bands from learning of each other (both to keep them from joining forces against him and to prevent any mind-reading menace from learning of one group from captive members of another). Raulothim knows of several baelnorn who watch over portals near the sanctums they guard -- and wonders if he can bargain with such beings to have them monitor a farscrying network of "gatewatch" magics.

He deems such a watch urgently necessary. His own fleeting and sporadic examinations of *portals* have shown the Wyrms of Axard heavily armed creatures of many strange races furtively emerging from, and disappearing into, these *portals* to other worlds. Raulothim worries that Toril may already be a place of arms-storage and weapons-practice for "creatures from elsewhere," and that an unguarded Faerûn may someday, without warning, become a wasted battleground between warring forces from elsewhere . . . someday all too soon.

The Silent Shadow's relations with other dragons have been, according to the dragon expert Velsaert of Baldur's Gate, "a series of avoidances, flights from even friendly overtures, and deadly defenses of his lair." Raulothim has never mated and shows no interest in doing so. His paranoia rules him as surely as a tyrant master, although he's willing to accept allies (such as the baelnorn) under clearly defined conditions, and there seems no reason why a dragon could not be an ally. It should be noted that "allies" to Raulothim are beings who dwell at a safe distance and don't come calling unannounced.

Raulothim's Lair

The Silent Shadow dwells in a large, labyrinthine cave network opening off the ledge above the Pit of Stars where he likes to sprawl. These caverns bristle with traps. Most are *explosive runes* and similar spells, some placed on false spellbooks, and the lair also sports caverns not used by the dragon that feature falling-block traps to doom unwanted intruders.

Raulothim's lair is also defended by magically animated automatons: creatures controlled by his various magic items. Reports of these servitors identify them as golems, gargoyles, or other flying creatures made of "living stone," as well as stationary menaces that resemble the stones of the landscape until approached too closely.

The Pit of Stars is the lone true lair of the Silent Shadow, but the emerald dragon has eight or more "sleeping perches" (high mountain ledges sheltered by overhangs, from which he often has to chase roosting peryton or even wyverns) on various islets up and down the northerly Sword Coast. At least one of these perches leads to a hidden cavern where the dragon caches magic items and spellbooks, in case his main lair should ever be despoiled or destroyed.

It should be noted that Raulothim duplicated many of his most important spells by means of a magic, animated quill pen (possibly of Netherese or Myth Drannan origin) that traced magical writings and then reproduced them exactly . . . a pen that crumbled to dust decades ago when its magic was exhausted. He hopes, of course, to someday find another.

Raulothim is willing to allow mages to copy his spells for their personal use, so long as they also make "second" copies for him -- or would be willing, if he could only find a way to trust wizards or guard against what he sees as their inevitable betrayal. He has found mention of a *bloodfire* spell used by an elven mage in Myth Drannor who took on human apprentices and protected himself by means of this magic. The spell required the recipient to willingly accept the spell, which would remain quiescent for years, defying all attempts to remove it -- until the caster, by a single act of will, either dismisses the spell without harm or causes the spell recipient's blood to boil and burst into flame, immolating him from within. According to the records Raulothim discovered, *bloodfire* was used twice against the mage's treacherous apprentices. The mage married a third apprentice -- and one of their half-elven daughters

disappeared with the spell after her parents died together in a chain reaction disaster of activated magic items that blasted them, and the top of the tall, slender stone tower they shared, to nothingness. Raulothim has been unable to find any trace of spell or daughter, one Maerithlee Ieirmitarym.

For obvious reasons, Elminster notes, many archmages would value this spell highly. "Reluctance to trust" is a condition afflicting most dragons and accomplished wizards; almost all of them would use this spell if they could gain access to it -- and many are so tormented by their loneliness that they'd pay large sums to acquire a demonstrably effective copy of *bloodfire* (thought to be an 8th- or 9th-level wizard spell). "Oh, that I could trust enough to love," the character of the wizard Golothmiir cries out at the climax of the famous play *Argonyar in Amn* -- a scene that has moved many a mage to tears.

A heavily guarded lair passage leads to a cavern where the Silent Shadow is preparing to create a copy of himself . . . if he can ever successfully modify a stolen copy of the *stasis clone* spell used by Manshoon of the Zhentarim. To even begin to do so, Raulothim knows he'll need a *helm of supreme wizardry*, which allows use of spells beyond the normal abilities of a wearer. He's read about these helms in several diaries of humans who learned spellcraft in Myth Drannor but he hasn't yet located one. Still, he can't believe they were all destroyed in the fall of that fair city. (Indeed, the very next wyrm we'll visit in these pages, Saryndalaghlotthor, owns such a helm.)

Raulothim's Domain

The Silent Shadow largely ignores the concept of a domain, though he defends the island of Axard as one. He considers himself free to roam all Toril if he deems it necessary, but he is well aware of other dragons' territorial claims -- and that it's best to escape their notice entirely by avoiding their domains.

Raulothym: Male great wyrm emerald dragon wizard 10; CR 34; Gargantuan dragon (air); HD 39d12+312, 10d4+80; hp 670; Init +5; Spd 40 ft., burrow 5 ft., swim 60 ft., fly 200 ft. (clumsy); AC 45, touch 7, flat-footed 44; Base Atk +44; Grp +65; Atk +54 melee (4d6+14, bite); Full Atk +54 melee (4d6+14, bite) and +49 melee (2d8+7, 2 claws) and +49 melee (2d6+7, 2 wings) and +49 melee (2d8+21, tail slap); Space/Reach 20 ft./15 ft. (20 ft. with bite); SA breath weapon (60-ft. cone of sonic energy), crush 4d6+21, frightful presence, spell-like abilities, tail sweep 2d6+21; SQ blindsense 60 ft., damage reduction 20/magic, darkvision 120 ft., immunities (paralysis, sleep, sonics), keen senses, low-light vision, planar travel, power resistance 31; AL LN; SV Fort +34, Ref +29, Will +34; Str 39, Dex 12, Con 27, Int 29, Wis 27, Cha 26.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +19, Autohypnosis +28, Bluff +29, Climb +24, Concentration +60, Craft (cartography) +29, Craft (trapmaking) +31, Decipher Script +31, Diplomacy +24, Escape Artist +30, Hide -11, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (arcana) +57, Knowledge (North geography) +54, Knowledge (North local) +54, Knowledge (psionics) +51, Listen +52, Psicraft +30, Search +41, Spellcraft +33, Spot +52, Survival +17, Swim +22; Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Extend Spell, Hover, Improved Counterspell, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Magical Aptitude, Quicken Spell, Reactive Counterspell, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Snatch, Spell Mastery*, Spell Mastery*, Still Spell, Wingover.

Raulothym has the Spell Mastery feat twice, and his Intelligence at the times these feats were selected give him fourteen spells he can prepare without a spellbook. Though these spells are unknown, draconic sages believe *analyze portal*, *dimension door*, *fireball*, *lightning bolt*, and *magic missile* are five of these spells.

Breath Weapon (Su): Once every 1d4 rounds, Raulothym can breathe a 60-foot cone of sonic energy. Each creature in the area takes 24d6 points of sonic damage (Reflex DC 37 half). In addition to the saving throw against sonic damage, each creature within the cone must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 37) or be deafened for 1d4+12 rounds.

Crush (Ex): Whenever Raulothym flies or jumps, he can land on opponents as a standard action, using his whole body to crush them. His crush attack affects Medium or smaller opponents within a 20-foot-by-20-foot area. Each potentially affected creature must succeed on a DC 37 Reflex save or be pinned, automatically taking 4d6+21 points of bludgeoning damage during the next round unless the dragon moves off. If Raulothym chooses to maintain the pin, treat it as a normal grapple attack. Pinned opponents take damage from the crush each round if they don't escape.

Frightful Presence (Ex): Whenever Raulothym attacks, charges, or flies overhead, each creature in a 360-foot radius that has 38 or fewer HD must make a DC 37 Will save. Failure indicates that the creature is panicked for 4d6 rounds (if it has 4 or fewer HD) or shaken for 4d6 rounds (if it has 5 or more HD).

Psionics: At will -- *object reading*; 3/day -- *augmented invisibility*, *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *control sound*, *fog cloud*, *nondetection*, *shield of prudence*. Manifest level 19th; save DC 1d20 + power level + key ability modifier. Raulothym manifests powers as if he were a psion with Clairsentience as his primary discipline.

Tail Sweep (Ex): Raulothym can sweep with his tail as a standard action. The sweep affects Small or smaller creatures in a half-circle with a radius of 30 feet extending from an intersection on the edge of the dragon's space in any direction. Each potentially affected creature in the area takes 2d6+21 points of damage (Reflex DC 37 half).

Keen Senses (Ex): Raulothym can see four times as well as a human in shadowy illumination and twice as well in normal light. He also has darkvision to a range of 120 feet.

Planar Travel (Su): Raulothym has the innate ability to pass instantly between the Material Plane and the Inner Planes.

Wizard Spells Prepared (4/7/6/5/5/4; save DC 19 + spell level): 0 -- *daze, mage hand, open/close, read magic*; 1st -- *burning hands, color spray, forcewave (Magic of Faerûn), Kaupaer's skittish nerves (Magic of Faerûn), mage armor, magic missile* (2); 2nd -- *blur, cat's grace, cloud of bewilderment (Magic of Faerûn), levitate, summon undead II (Magic of Faerûn), web*; 3rd -- *analyze portal, blink, dispel magic* (2), *Khelben's suspended silence (Magic of Faerûn)*; 4th -- *confusion, Ghorus Toth's metal melt (Magic of Faerûn), greater invisibility, polymorph, Tirumael's energy spheres (Magic of Faerûn)*; 5th -- *cloudkill, cone of cold, Grimwald's graymantle (Magic of Faerûn), teleport*.

Spellbook: Raulothym has all of the spells listed above as well as all spells of 5th-level or lower listed in the *Player's Handbook*, *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*, and *Magic of Faerûn*. He has books or scrolls with several dozen spells of 6th-level or higher as well, though the exact number and nature of these spells are unknown.

Psionic Powers (8/5/5/5/4/4/4/3/2/2; 19th-level psion; clairsentience primary discipline; 236 power points; save DC 1d20 + key ability modifier + power level): 0 -- *burst, catfall, detect psionics, know direction*, missive, telepathic projection, trinket, verve*; 1st -- *combat precognition*, compression, destiny dissonance, grease, vigor*; 2nd -- *augury*, body adjustment, control body, ectoplasmic cocoon, sever the tie*; 3rd -- *claws of the vampire, dimension slide, greater concussion, ubiquitous vision*, whitefire*; 4th -- *aura sight*, dimensional anchor, dismissal, mass concussion*; 5th -- *ectoplasmic armor, energy barrier, greater domination, true seeing**; 6th -- *disintegrate, improved vigor, remote view trap*, trace teleport*; 7th -- *divert teleport, energy conversion, sequester**; 8th -- *foresight*, mind blank*; 9th -- *metafaculty*, true telekinesis*.

Attack/Defense Modes (Sp): At will -- *ego whip, id insinuation, mind blast, mind thrust, psychic crush/empty mind, intellect fortress, mental barrier, thought shield, tower of iron will*.

*Clairsentience power.

Raulothim's Magic

Here are a pair of battle spells drawn from the Silent Shadow's ever-growing collection. The second spell is a modification of one known to be in use by human wizards in Neverwinter decades ago; several nondraconic variants of it may well be in circulation.

Forcebarb

Evocation [Force]

Level: Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Effect: 1 force object

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Fortitude partial (see text)

Spell Resistance: No

You create a cylindrical glowing beam of force 10 feet long and 3 feet in diameter. One end of the *forcebarb* is a hook, while the other end is capped in a 5-foot-diameter sphere. It cannot be created to appear within a creature or solid object, though it is sufficient to occupy a 10 foot by 5 foot by 5 foot area (as if it were a creature with a space dimension equal to this amount). The *forcebarb* is immobile and sheds light as a candle.

A creature that touches the *forcebarb* or passes through the area it occupies must save or be stunned for 1 round and take 1d6 points of electricity damage per caster level (a successful save avoids the stunning but still deals half damage; maximum 10d6).

A *shield* spell that contacts a *forcebarb* is dispelled instantly if its caster level is less than yours, at no harm to the *forcebarb*. A *forcebarb* automatically destroys any *dispel magic* or *minor globe of invulnerability* effect whose area contacts it, destroying both the opposing spell and itself harmlessly in a spectacular burst of colored lights. Greater versions of these spells (such as *greater dispelling* or *globe of invulnerability*) negate a *forcebarb* instantly but are not destroyed by doing so.

Shimmermantle

Abjuration

Level: Sor/Wiz 4

Components: V

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: Up to 10 minutes/level or until discharged (see text)

You create a shimmering aura that protects you from attacks, both physical and magical. While the spell lasts there is a 20% chance that any attack of harmful effect that might affect you fails to do so. This works just like a miss chance, except that it also applies to magical effects, including spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural abilities. When an area attack fails to affect you, its effects against other subjects remain unchanged. For example, a foe blasts you and your party with a *fireball* spell. There is a 20% chance that *shimmermantle* will protect you completely from the spell. If so, you take no damage from the fireball, but your companions gain no benefit at all.

Once the spell has prevented a total of 10 points of damage per caster level (maximum 150 points), it is discharged. If an attack allows a save for reduced damage, roll a saving throw to determine how much damage *shimmermantle* prevented. When *shimmermantle* prevents a nondamaging attack from affecting you, the attack has an effective damage rating that you must deduct from the *shimmermantle*'s protection. A nondamaging attack's effective damage is equal to its saving throw DC -10. For example, a carrion crawler's paralyzing touch (DC 13) counts as 3 points of damage, and a *command* spell from a Wisdom 11 cleric (DC 11) is a 1-point attack. For weapon attacks that also have a nondamaging component, combine the actual damage and the effective damage. For example, a stunning attack from a 2nd-level monk with Wisdom 16 (DC 14) counts as a 4-point attack, and if the monk's unarmed strike dealt 6 points of damage, the total damage deducted from the *shimmermantle* is 10 points. Likewise, a mummy dealing 13 points of damage with a slam also carries *mummy rot* (DC 16, for 6 point of effective damage) and drains 19 points from a *shimmermantle* spell.

Raulothim's Fate

The Silent Shadow seems to be a waiting, sitting target -- and this is deliberate: If adventuring bands and wizardly cabals come calling, they must do battle on his prepared ground. Most intruders notice the mound of gold coins and tumbled chests at the center of the Pit of Stars; a lure, of course. Raulothim dropped the treasure there because the Pit was once (before the last crumbling caldera walls fell away, leaving it open, as it is today) the lair of a powerful beholder. That eye tyrant is now an invisible doomsphere lurking deep in the Pit, awaiting intruders it can slay.

With the aid of his arsenal of magic items and such defenders as the doomsphere and his automatons, the Silent Shadow is known to have brought about the doom of two score formidable bands of attackers (including a dozen Zhentarim magelings who styled themselves the Robes of Doom, and the chartered adventuring companies of Bendever's Talons and The Bold Broadwords of Mirabar), as well as an unknown but large number of independent thieves.

Raulothim commands items that can levitate the remains of fallen intruders away from the doomsphere for his leisurely examination, plundering, and then tasteful arrangement around the Pit as lures and decoys. (A favorite is a chest containing an explosive trap or cursed magic items, surrounded by the bodies of fallen adventurers, which the Silent Shadow pretends to defend fiercely.) Whether this dragon perishes under the attacks of treasure-seekers or the portal-hopping "overfoes" he so fears is anyone's guess, but if neither prevail over Raulothim in the next two decades, Elminster expects the emerald dragon to find a magical means of creating a *stasis clone* or otherwise prolonging his existence (such as lichdom). Though the Old Mage seems to admire the Silent Shadow's striving, Mystra's desire to have magic abroad in Faerûn rather than hoarded keeps her Chosen busy spreading rumors and treasure maps that bid fair to keep the Wyrms of Axard battling treasure-seekers often, until the day Raulothim is no more.

Saryndalaghlothtor, "Lady Gemcloak"

(Dragon Magazine #254)

The dwarves dubbed the moody but essentially gentle dragon "Lady Gemcloak" for her glittering appearance . . .

Until the night of the dragon duel, many citizens of Mirabar, longtime mining capital of the Sword Coast North, were unaware that they'd acquired a dragon protector. It was a still, damp evening in spring (of the Year of the Tankard, 1370 DR). The proprietors of the Watchful Axe alehouse were just about to harness their mules to the "round-and-rounds" that turned the blades of large fans that cooled patrons of their rooftop beer garden, when a golden glow appeared in the air overhead. It rapidly became a line of fire, "as if a scimitar was carving an arc out of the sky, and letting fire beyond spill through," as one watcher put it.

The line became a rift -- an opening in the air -- and widened until it was as large across "as the length of the largest ships calling at Luskan to carry away the wares of Mirabar." Out of this fiery mouth flew a red dragon: an individual not seen before in the North, sages believe. None can agree on where it flew from or by what means it opened such a large portal in the sky (though the opinions most often muttered concerned the "crazed Cult of the Dragon mages" and "dabbling Red Wizards"), but all agree that it was large, sleek, and hungry.

As the rift that had brought it closed like a purposeful eyelid, the red dragon clapped its wings, reared upright in triumph, and swooped down on the city like a playful child. Roaring and banking over the tiled rooftops to slap tiles and slates alike into ruin with its tail, it laid waste to a dozen homes before the frantic booming of a bell was heard from the Craggs just southwest of the city (specifically, from the bald height known as Crostar's Vigil). Moments later, another dragon erupted into the air from somewhere behind that sentinel pinnacle, "glittering like a shower of gold" in the sunset, and plunged down upon the red wyrm, taking it completely by surprise and pouncing on it with such fury that the red dragon was driven onto the flag spires of no less than six residences and transfixed.

The red freed itself with frantic thrashings, but not until after the newcomer, a crystal dragon, had bitten and torn viciously and enthusiastically at its underbelly. Dragon blood fell smoking into the streets as the red wyrm rose heavily into the air, flapping its wings in grim and obvious pain, and tried to fly away east up the Mirar.

The crystal wyrm pounced again, demonstrating its agility to the watching citizenry by folding its wings and dropping like a stone to avoid a sudden gout of fire and a furious midair charge, then buzzed around the red dragon as a small bird harries a crow out of its territory, biting and raking until its foe turned away. The crystal dragon darted after it, striking again and again, until the red dragon, trailing ribbons of blood, fled at last out to sea.

The crystal dragon followed, presumably to watch and prevent the red dragon's return, until its exhausted foe plunged into the waves and drowned. That red wyrm has been seen no more in Mirabar.

Speculation in the city as to the identity and whereabouts of the crystal dragon was intense, and normally shunned prospectors and miners were gifted with copious drinkables and questioned about the mysterious wyrm. The story that emerged, once corroborations had been made and the more obvious fancies discarded, is thus: The crystal dragon Saryndalaghlothtor was now lairing in the Craggs just southwest of Mirabar, so close as to overlook the city. Her recent arrival was connected to the cessation of goblin raids on outlying steads and caravan encampments in the vicinity.

This unaccustomed peace befell shortly after overeager goblin mining caused an entire shoulder of mountainside to collapse into an underlying cavern (no doubt crushing scores of goblins in the process), and popular belief in Mirabar was that the "lurking goblins of the Craggs" (long the bane of local dwarves) had well-nigh exterminated themselves. The truth was less tidy, but as dramatic: The collapse created a huge cave mouth in the side of one of the Craggs, laying open a vast cavern that had hitherto been the center of the gem mine inhabited by the Kreeth goblin tribe.

That cavern led into a string of large caves, from which many mining tunnels ran outwards into soft, damp rock pockmarked by many geodelike natural chambers lined with gem crystals. For years the goblins had tunneled steadily onwards and outwards, mining abundant gems of many sorts; rubies and beljurils were among their most numerous yields. The spawn of Kreeth tunneled slyly into the cellars of Mirabar, too, and made many night forays into the city, in disguise, whispering into the ears of the most desperate and impoverished humans. After many unsuccessful attempts to subvert citizens, the goblins reached secret agreements with some of the



more impoverished Mirabarran gem-traders (in particular, the once-proud but now poor human families of Gulathkond and Jammaer), supplying them with gems brought directly into their cellars. In return, the humans paid the goblins handsomely in food, weapons, furs, leatherwork, and mining tools, covering their activities with false words of new alliances with prospectors working out of the Ten Towns.

Freed from the need to undertake dangerous hunts for food on the surface and in the Underdark, the Kreeth goblins flourished, striking against any dwarves or human prospectors of Mirabar unwise enough to investigate the Crag too closely. Tales of their savagery and traps spread around the city, and few folk felt moved to investigate matters personally. "Breakneck" pits -- deep, narrow clefts equipped with sharpened stone spurs and covered with old tarpaulins concealed under handfuls of gravel, and held up with rotting saplings -- were commonplace Kreeth work, and they still stud the heights of the Crag within sight of the city, awaiting the unwary. The appearance of the cave changed all that. It occurred at a time of year when many young, displaced, or simply restless dragons wandered the vast wilderlands of the North, hoping that the legends of the mighty wyrms who claim them as domains were overblown or out-of-date, and that new territories could be carved out of the seemingly endless forested hills and crags.

One such wanderer, an adult crystal she-dragon, found the raw, new scar in the rock almost at the gates of Mirabar and boldly dove down into the dazed remnants of the goblins, whom she slaughtered at will. They were too few and too terrified to strike at her from their small side tunnels as Saryndalaghlothtor roamed the larger caves, devouring exposed gem deposits and thinking she'd found some sort of crystal dragons' paradise. It had been a long and storm-wracked flight from the wastes of northern Raurin, but the ordeal, it seemed, had been worth it.

The arrival of the dragon had gone unnoticed in Mirabar, but the rumbling collapse that preceded it by a day or so had not. Many Mirabarran dwarves thought it imperative that the tumult be investigated, but the known menace of the goblins made necessary the whelming of a warband; eager younglings were sternly prevented from "just hiking up for a look" by their elders.

In the end, the armed dwarven force reached the cave at about the same time that the surviving goblins began to dart out of the smallest crawl-tunnels, where the dragon could not go, and strike at her in vicious counterattacks. A few dwarves swung their axes and charged the dragon, seeking glory, but their elders wrestled them down with the harsh command, "Goblins first!"

The battle that followed was a long and bloody rout of dodging and chasing through the riven Kreeth mine, but in the end the last of the goblins were driven out or slain, and the dwarves warily approached the crystal dragon. One of the boldest, Haelbaran Stormshoulder, bade his fellows give him some time for parley, and then strode out and shared a dream with the wyrm: If she'd grant the Mirabarran dwarves permission to mine freely in her lair, defend it against intruders, and even to dwell in certain of its reaches, they'd feed her all the gems and metals she desired.

The dragon considered Stormshoulder's words, then accepted the bargain with calm language. Not quite believing their good fortune, and knowing that many Mirabarrans would be rather less accepting of a dragon dwelling nigh their gates, the dwarves elected to keep word of the deal as quiet as possible. Many told relatives in the city, but it's likely that not a single human heard of it. Humans, in particular, regard Mithral Hall as a foe endangering their traditional prosperity; it's likely they'd be even more furious with a dwarven hold right next door. So in the city, the returning Mirabarran dwarves gave out the grim news that the Crag held no new mine, but only "goblin despoil and devastation" that would take years to cleanse, and was best avoided. Mirabar heard and believed, and the House of the Axe was founded.

The dwarves dubbed the moody but essentially gentle dragon "Lady Gemcloak" for her glittering appearance, and later "The Axemother," as they came to see her as the "mother" under whose protection they could found a new city or tribe. She seemed happy to eat flawed and shattered gems and low-grade, leaden metal ores and rust scraps, and she and the dwarves soon came to trust each other. Word is spreading among dwarves across the North (and as far south as Waterdeep and Daggerford) of "a new hold" where dwarves of no famous clan or lineage can win a place among fellows in prosperity and ever-growing power. If the swelling ranks of dwarves dwelling all around her bothers Lady Gemcloak, she gives no sign of it.

The only thing that does seem to irk her is her feeble magic. When unaided by magic items, she can cast only a handful of low-powered spells without aid, though she has quite a roster of such spells to choose among. Dwarves who've talked long with her (in particular, Tarltus Ulforge, and his sister Shaelee) say that one of the things that caused Saryndalaghlothtor to roam the north in the first place was the legend of Argaut's Brain.

Briefly put, this recurring belief holds that anyone who finds and eats the brain of this long-dead (but magically preserved) archwizard gains his mastery of magic. Elminster confirms that this legend was born of wild apprentices' tales and given strength by an even more fanciful ballad; as far as he knows, the resting place of Argaut is lost, and he was no better preserved than most men who die suddenly. Moreover, the central belief, he insists, is false.

Volo also believes the tale is wishful thinking. Some secret writings happened to briefly fall into his hands at a recent nobles' revel in Waterdeep: a report of experiments carried out by certain members of the Arcane Brotherhood. Their conclusions indicate that devouring dead mages' brains leads sometimes to illness or even insanity and sometimes transfers confused memories (scenes of places, people, or even events), but never coherent information or lore.

Just how seriously Saryndalaghlothtor searched for Argaut's brain, or believed the tale, the dwarves know not . . . and Lady Gemcloak isn't telling.

She is one of the crystal dragons who can communicate with any intelligent creature -- and, according to the dwarves, she is in no hurry to roam again or to acquire a mate. Saryndalaghlothtor considers a very small area (Mirabar and a modest stretch of the Crag) her domain, but she defends it fiercely. Other dragons, predators of all sorts -- including greedy humans -- and anyone the House of the Axe dwarves don't want around are considered unwanted intruders and dealt with accordingly. Lady Gemcloak is vicious in battle and enjoys maiming and spectacularly slaying foes. (Dismemberments and crushings are favorite tactics.)

Saryndalaghlothtor's Lair

As is the way of dwarves, the inhabitants of the House of the Axe have named the larger caverns, strategic passageways, and waymoots of the ever-expanding gem mine. Most of these names they keep secret from outsiders, but Volo learned that Saryndalaghlothtor can traverse at least six linked caverns. The westernmost (and innermost) the dwarves call "Home-hold," and it serves as their meeting place and staging/work area. Moving eastward, one comes to "Wyrmslumber" (where the Axemother likes to curl up and sleep on a bed of gems; it is the largest of all the caverns, but it has an eastern opening that is a tight squeeze for Saryndalaghlothtor and would halt the passage of any larger dragon), "Theller's Anvil" (though Theller and his anvil are now elsewhere, in smaller caves to the west), "Blackrun," "Eldock's Rest," and "The Maw," where the cave mouth created by overzealous goblin mining looks east out of the shoulder of Bryn Crag.

The dwarves have left undisturbed the various goblin pit traps on the surface slopes around the lair. In addition, they added a few of their own, including "roll-boulder" deadfalls on high ledges all around the Maw (a succession of large rocks that can be rolled off a ledge to plunge down on intruders below) and "rockfalls" (stone slab ceilings on the major passages leading away from the Maw -- including the Slither, the main route used by Saryndalaghlothtor -- that can be winched aside to allow tons of loose rock above them to fall and block the way).

An underground spring feeds pools in the southwesternmost reaches of the mine, and the dwarves are thought to cache many of the best gems to the northwest. Although the House dwarves have fewer elders and "old rank" families than established dwarven realms, a few "Dwarves of the Ring" hold absolute authority. Prominent among the more active and warlike are Corthold Flamehand and his sister Ieilhalla; strong among the more stay-at-home and artistic are the master forgers Theller and Auldrymbrei. They seldom bark commands unless the House is at war, but dwarves who disobey or ignore them are expelled from the House. The Ring has kept iron control over the release of gems, keeping prices high and reducing the chance that some greedy human force or other -- the Arcane Brotherhood of Luskan, for example -- might learn how rich the House is and decide to seize it for their own. For the same reason, the Ring absolutely forbids visitors to penetrate the House beyond the Maw or to take up residence in the mine.

The dwarven accommodations are located in smaller outlying tunnels, mainly to the north (where anyone tunneling or skulking in from Mirabar is noticed), and they are always guarded by way-sentries equipped with alarm gongs and warhorns. Many sentry posts are equipped with small rockfall devices that the sentries can trigger to bar the way they guard and prevent invasions.

Saryndalaghlothtor's Domain

The Maw opens to the surface on the eastern face of Bryn Crag, which stands just west of the Long Road, shielded from the view of travelers by Old Man Crag (so named for its resemblance to the weathered face of a giant buried in the earth up to his neck, staring endlessly east across the road at Barlaerl's Crag). From this point, Saryndalaghlothtor roams the water-meadows of the River Mirar north over the city as far as the eye can see (about six miles), as well as a sweep of the Crag from Tannath's Tor in the southwest to Ammirar's Blade to the northeast (a length of some nine miles and forty or so pinnacles and peaks).

The Axemother cares little about human or dwarven activity in her domain that doesn't actually involve invading her lair with raised weapons and threatening words, but she reacts to any dragon or goblin incursion by bursting from her lair in all-out attack. She loves to pounce, but she isn't as reckless as she seems, and she can seldom be duped into plunging into a waiting trap or a situation where she can be cornered by a prepared and alert foe.

The Doings of Saryndalaghlothtor

Lady Gemcloak, like all of her kind, enjoys dining on metallic ores and gems of all sorts, but she indulges in occasional "blood meals" of goblins, wyverns, or other creatures who challenge her. She hunts the skies over Mirabar and down the Mirar valley and does not hesitate to pursue foes out to sea or over the Evermoors. The Mirar is her favorite watering-hole, though she often drinks from meltwater pools high in the Crag or the many small lakes that lie in the bogs to the north of the Mirar.

Saryndalaghlothtor spends a typical day dozing on her bed of gems chatting with dwarves (who bring her news of doings in Mirabar and the wider Sword Coast North, and who focus on traders passing through her domain in particular). She'll take to the air for a short "wingstretch and sniff the wind" flight (often at twilight or in concealing mists or rain) once every day or two if she can, and she takes an active interest in the development of the mine and her dwarven "children."

Saryndalaghlothtor: Female adult crystal dragon wizard 1; CR 14; Huge dragon (air); HD 20d12+100, 1d4+5; hp 237; Init +2; Spd 40 ft., burrow 5 ft., swim 40 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor); AC 29, touch 10, flat-footed 27; Base Attack +20; Grp +34; Atk +24 melee (2d8+6, bite); Full Atk +24 melee (2d8+6, bite) and +22 melee (2d6+3, 2 claws) and +22 melee (1d8+3, 2 wings) and +22 melee (2d6+9, tail slap); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft. (15 ft. with bite); SA breath weapon (50-ft. cone of brilliant light), crush 2d8+9, frightful presence, psionics; SQ blindsense 60 ft., damage reduction 10/magic, darkvision 120 ft., fire resistance 15, immunities (cold, paralysis, sleep), keen senses, low-light vision, planar travel; AL CN; SV Fort +17, Ref +16, Will +15; Str 23, Dex 14, Con 21, Int 16, Wis 17, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +14, Concentration +29, Diplomacy +28, Escape Artist +17, Hide -6, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (North local) +8, Knowledge (psionics) +25, Listen +26, Psicraft+13, Sleight of Hand+6, Spellcraft +9, Spot +26, Swim +29; Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Flyby Attack, Hover, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack, Power Attack, Scribe Scroll, Wingover.

Breath Weapon (Su): Once every 1d4 rounds, Saryndalaghlothtor can breathe a 50-foot cone of brilliant light. Each creature in the area takes 12d6 points of damage and is blinded for 1d4 rounds. A successful DC 25 Reflex save halves the damage and negates the blinding effect.

Crush (Ex): When flying or jumping, Saryndalaghlothtor can land on Small or smaller opponents as a standard action, using her whole body to crush them. A crush attack affects as many creatures as can fit in the 15-ft.-by-15-ft. area under her body. Each creature in the affected area must succeed on a Reflex save (DC 25) or be pinned, automatically taking bludgeoning damage during the next round unless Saryndalaghlothtor moves off of it. If she chooses to maintain the pin, treat it as a normal grapple attack. Pinned opponents take damage from the crush each round if they don't escape.

Frightful Presence (Ex): When Saryndalaghlothtor attacks, charges, or flies overhead, each creature within a 360-foot radius that has 19 or fewer HD must attempt a DC 23 Will save. On a failure, it becomes panicked for 4d6 rounds if it has 4 or fewer HD or shaken for 4d6 rounds if it has 5 or more HD. Success renders the creature immune to Saryndalaghlothtor's frightful presence for 24 hours.

Psionics (Sp): 3/day -- charm person (DC 1d20 + 4). Manifest level 5th. Saryndalaghlothtor manifests powers and gains additional attack and defense modes as if she were a psion with Telepathy as her primary discipline.

Blindsense (Ex): Saryndalaghlothtor can pinpoint creatures within a distance of 60 feet. Opponents she can't actually see still have total concealment against her.

Keen Senses (Ex): Saryndalaghlothtor sees four times as well as a human in shadowy illumination and twice as well in normal light. She also has darkvision to a range of 120 feet.

Planar Travel (Su): Saryndalaghlothtor has the innate ability to pass instantly between the Material Plane and the Inner Planes.

Psionic Powers (4/3/2; 15th-level psion; telepathy primary discipline; 19 power points): 0 -- burst, detect psionics, far hand, missive** (DC 1d20+3); 1st -- empathy** (DC 1d20+4), grease (DC 1d20+4), lesser mindlink**; 2nd -- brain lock** (DC 1d20+5), detect thoughts** (DC 1d20+5).

Attack/Defense Modes (Sp): At will -- ego whip, id insinuation, mind thrust, psychic crush/empty mind, intellect fortress, mental barrier, thought shield, tower of iron will.

**Telepathy power.

Wizard Spells Prepared (3/2; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 -- detect magic, disrupt undead, read magic; 1st -- forcewave (Magic of Faerûn), know protections (Magic of Faerûn).

Spellbook: Saryndalaghlothtor has the following spells, as well as other rare spells of 1st and higher levels. 0 -- acid splash, arcane mark, dancing lights, daze, detect magic, detect poison, disrupt undead, electric jolt (Magic of Faerûn), flare, ghost sound, Horizikaul's cough (Magic of Faerûn), light, message, open/close, prestidigitation, ray of frost, read magic, 1st -- alarm, animate rope, burning hands, cause fear, charm person, color spray, comprehend languages, detect undead, disguise self, endure elements, erase, expeditious retreat, forcewave (Magic of Faerûn), grease, hold portal, hypnotism, Kaupaer's skittish nerves (Magic of Faerûn), know protections (Magic of Faerûn), mage armor, magic missile, obscuring mist, protection from chaos, protection from evil, protection from good, protection from law, Shelgarn's persistent blade (Magic of Faerûn), shield, shocking grasp, silent image, sleep, spirit worm (Magic of Faerûn), summon monster I, true strike, unseen servant, ventriloquism.

Saryndalaghlothtor's Magic

Among Lady Gemcloak's store of written spells are many beyond her mastery and a huge array of 1st-level spells. Most are old spells that are rarely found these days. She commands only a modest hoard but is known to possess a rare and powerful item, described hereafter, which she keeps well hidden, knowing she can't herself use its full effects but that they could be used against her to devastating effect.

Helm of Supreme Wizardry: This ornate, fluted "sallet"-style helm is of steel plated with a silver alloy and alters to fit the head of any creature donning it.

A helm of supreme wizardry allows any being already able to cast wizard spells who wears it to temporarily cast two additional spells of spell levels 6-9 (8 spells per day total). These are treated as bonus spell slots (as if from a very high Intelligence) and therefore can be used only by those already capable of casting spells of those levels (though such a caster can still use the slots to prepare lower-level or metamagicked spells). Casting a spell from one of these bonus slots deals 1d6+1 points of damage to the wearer (which can be healed normally or through magic); the caster takes the damage the instant she completes the spell. If the helm is removed, any bonus spells prepared with it are immediately lost.

The helm has several drawbacks. First, if all of the extra spells prepared with the helm are not cast within 12 hours of their preparation, it causes the wearer to lose all prepared wizard spells at the end of that period (affecting the bonus spells from the helm and any other wizard spells the wearer had prepared normally). The spell slots for those lost spells are considered cast (the wearer must rest again to use the spell slots). Note that only the bonus spell slots used by the wearer need to be expended to prevent this from happening. For example, a 12th-level wizard with the helm has access only to spell slots of 6th-level and lower. She can use only the two bonus 6th-level spell slots from the helm, and if she casts both of those within 12 hours of preparing them then this drawback is not triggered. (In other words, she is not penalized for not being able to use the 7th- and higher-level bonus spell slots granted by the helm.)

The second drawback is if the helm is ever used (not merely worn, but actually used to prepare spells in its bonus slots) by the same wearer twice in a tenday, it deals 1 point of permanent Intelligence drain upon the wearer, and the attempt to use the extra slots fails. The third drawback is if the helm is ever used twice in the same 30-day period by the same wearer to prepare spells of the same school, the preparation succeeds but the wearer immediately suffers 1 point of permanent Intelligence drain and permanently loses 1 hit point. Despite this great price, as long as it is worn, the helm allows the wearer to cast these bonus spells, even if the Intelligence loss means the wearer could not normally cast spells of that level any more.

For example, if the wearer uses the helm to prepare antimagic field and chain lightning, then twenty-eight days later uses the helm to prepare greater dispel magic (the same school as antimagic field), the wearer would incur those losses. If she persisted in her folly and used the helm to prepare Bigby's forceful hand (the same school as chain lightning) she would suffer the losses again. If her Intelligence was originally 16, she'd be reduced to Intelligence 14, normally not enough to cast greater dispel magic or Bigby's forceful hand, but the power of the helm allows her to still cast those spells (but not any other spells of that level prepared normally). Strong transmutation; CL 20; Weight 3 lb.

Saryndalaghlothtor's Fate

Lady Gemcloak is likely to receive severe battle-testings at the hands of greedy adventurers (sponsored by Mirabarran mining families or the Arcane Brotherhood of Luskan, if by no one else), and might also be a magnet for dwarves desiring to join a "new" hold (free of old feuds and bitter clan memories) and goblins desiring revenge . . . and where goblins rush in, orcs usually follow.

Saryndalaghlothtor might swiftly perish if she rejects offers of alliances and aid from the Dragon Queen or other friendly wyrms (for instance, the reclusive Thalagyr -- whom we'll look at next month -- possesses a spell, gemfire, that the Axemother would find very useful), dwarven adventuring bands, and the like -- for news of the whereabouts and gem-rich properties of her lair is certain to reach unfriendly draconic ears eventually. . . .

Thalagyrt, "Old Lord Memory"

(Dragon Magazine #255)

This prissy and pedantic mist dragon might not like being disturbed, but he knows where the loot is buried.

This very old mist dragon lairs in a damp, dripping network of caverns on the shore of the Sea of Swords, north of Port Ilast. He keeps to himself as much as possible, and many folk who dwell nearby don't even know he exists. His hobby is collecting and remembering lore valued by the intelligent races that dwell in the North, such as singular items of treasure and magic items. One must trade information to obtain the desired knowledge from him, and both generous offers of interesting lore and a persistent but pleasant manner are needed to overcome his distaste for being disturbed. Thalagyrt long ago earned the nickname "Old Lord Memory" both for his prissy, pedantic character and his utter fearlessness. No threat is known to have moved him, and attacks -- even by obviously formidable foes such as beholders and other dragons -- always evoke gusty sighs of boredom and grumblings at being disturbed. No one, save perhaps Thalagyrt himself (and he isn't telling), remembers who coined this term, which is usually uttered by human sages, notably those of Waterdeep. These learned folk often send adventurers with unusual lore queries to him, with a mixture of affection and exasperation, as a "court of last resort." The mist dragon's character can best be described as doleful and grumpy, but those who often have dealings with him say that he can become a loyal friend to beings of all races and may well be a romantic at heart. His rare, unexpected, and sudden rescues of favorite friends can be attributed only to genuine caring and energetic magical spying from afar. Many of these are adventurers, which suggests that the dragon derives entertainment from his farscryings and chooses as favorites those who do the most interesting and exciting things.



The keys to Thalagyrt's character could be said to be his undying interest in other intelligent creatures and pleasure in witnessing and recording their deeds. He views all creatures with compassion and humor and probably understands "human nature" better than most humans. He can outwit foes who try to dupe him (his intellect is prodigious), but he finds riddles and games intended to impress others tiresome, and he would never himself try to deceive anyone maliciously.

Old Lord Memory is a foe of adventurers, orcs, and other marauders who attempt to slay, despoil, and steal. He also despises aggressive dragons; he thinks dragonkind fell from mastery of Faerûn because of the arrogant, ruthless, and self-interested behavior of wyrms in the past. "They're all deservedly dead now," he observes with gloomy satisfaction, "not that their passings improved anything."

Thalagyrt's Lair

The nameless caverns where Old Lord Memory dwells possess a variant *wardmist* laid down by a previous, unknown owner. This feature is the dragon's reason for choosing these cold, wet, coastal caverns as his home; he can control the wards to hide himself behind mists almost as solid as stone, change illumination and temperature in areas it encloaks, and so on. He's still learning some of its powers, so he keeps its secrets to himself as much as possible, but visitors to Thalagyrt's lair have witnessed the effects equivalent to *cloudkill*, *dancing lights*, *dispel magic*, *shadow conjuration*, *solid fog*, *telekinesis* (of both "visiting" items and of a large spike-studded rectangle of metal bars that the mist dragon drops from above on especially energetic intruders), *wall of fog*, and *wall of force*. The *wardmist* "scrambles" all mind-influencing magic, psionics, and spells from the school of enchantment, negating their effects within the caverns -- and thus protecting Thalagyrt from them. It also "fogs" *arcane eye*, *scrying*, and other magical farscrying attempts to spy into the lair from outside, though this property -- for unknown reasons -- is unreliable and intermittent. How this *wardmist* acquired so many powers is a mystery . . . and Old Lord Memory would like it to remain so.

Most of the lair consists of long, curving tunnels that Thalagyrt can barely fit down without scraping the walls, but its landward reaches feature a large circle of natural caverns that contain food, monetary treasure, books, stone markers salvaged from lands lost to the sea, and even lore-tablets from elder realms. Several caves around the circle are connected to a central sleeping-cavern reportedly large enough for several dragons to move around in simultaneously. It holds a glowing sleeping mound of soft, thick mosses studded with phosphorescent mushrooms.

Thalagyrt's Domain

Thalagyrt ignores the draconic concept of domains and avoids fighting any other wyrms he meets, whenever possible. "Just leave me alone" might well be his watchphrase. This means he is timid, but certainly not craven. If forced to fight, he can call, from afar by magic, swift and powerful aid from the Chosen, the Heralds, Malchor Harpell, and others who value the lore he preserves.

A foolish upper prelate of Candlekeep, now dead, once offered a large reward for the capture and delivery of Thalagyrt, alive, into the keeping of the "Learned by the Sea." Many adventuring bands tried to earn the reward and were routed either by Thalagyrt or his powerful allies, until Dove Falconhand grew weary of these demands on her time and asked her sister the Simbul to pay a visit to Candlekeep to personally persuade Most Learned Archprelate Rheldryn Uoulmpurt to rescind his reward offer publicly and add the firm advice that calling on the mist dragon Thalagyrt with weapons and forceful intent was not only foolish but apt to be fatal. It's said that "Rheldryn was tearfully eager to comply."

The Deeds of Thalagyrt

The favorite foods of Old Lord Memory are buttered fried snails and the green, slimy, soft Chultan jungle tree slugs that reach 8 feet or more in length, but he considers any slug or turtle to be a delicacy, even dragon turtles. Mist and shorewash algae are his staple dietary items, but they don't thrill him -- as, indeed, very little does. Visitors have brought him sweets and liqueurs, and they report that he loves these but hates being "bribed with food." Attempts to do so could easily backfire on would-be lore-seekers seeking to ply the dragon with edibles.

Thalagyrt is said to have the constitution of a mountain: He can eat anything, even deadly poisons or mist-dragon flesh, without apparent revulsion or ill effects. It's likely that past exposures to several poisons have engendered in him a strong inner resistance, if not immunity. Thalagyrt eats prodigiously, but not often (perhaps twice a month), though he glides almost daily through the spray of waves crashing on the shore, deriving nutrients from them. He exists in a state of perpetual dampness and is not bothered by this in the least. He can and does drink seawater without ill effects, but he prefers to "drink" the mists.

Old Lord Memory spends most days watching and listening to events all over Faerûn -- in particular, human and elven societies within the Sword Coast North. He never seems to forget anything, though his recall can be slow, and the lore he imparts to others is seldom extensive. He believes that, for most folk, "less in their heads is better."

Thalagyrt can employ spells of his own devising to "project" (as three-dimensional images) scenes that live in his memory -- and his mind holds thousands upon thousands of memories. Some are surprisingly important or private moments to humans or allied races. (Thalagyrt has made a career of collecting mind images from dying folk and others who desire to share and preserve recollections of events.)

A visitor who persuades (usually by payment of large amounts of gold coins) Old Lord Memory to yield up a choice memory can, for example, see and hear the confrontation in the throne room in Suzail where the risen Azoun confronted the traitors who sought to murder him; an elven conversation in the green fastnesses of Evermeet; or a tender, murmuring love-meeting between the great mages Elminster and the Simbul, Witch-Queen of Aglarond. These are but a few examples of literally thousands of scenes, some of them crucial to an understanding of now-crumbling treaties and long-dead heroes, rulers, and villains.

What Thalagyrt does with those payments is hire agents to learn and report tiny, apparently insignificant things to fill in gaps in his knowledge. Wherever possible, he prefers to gain such lore from primary sources -- that is, folk who were there or directly involved, not proxies or written records. Occasionally, Thalagyrt hires adventurers to rid himself of persistent attackers or bribe these attackers to go away and leave him to think and observe. He views bullies and fools with contempt, for he can't be blackmailed or successfully threatened. None know his earlier life; he's simply "always been there" in his dripping coastal caverns. He has never, to anyone's recollection, mated or consorted closely with other dragons.

Old Lord Memory has a shrewd grasp of human character, has studied human conspiracies, and has learned how to hire help to best wrinkle out human secrets. He knows such things as the identities of the current Lords of Waterdeep, which noble families of that city have had secret meetings with the Brotherhood of the Arcane or the Cult of the Dragon, and the fate of Gondegal the Lost King. His information is more accurate the older it is, and (always) runs out entirely about a year ago. Whether he reveals these or other things to casual or persistent visitors is another matter; Thalagyrt has his own code and makes his own judgments of those who seek him out. He may volunteer much, sell what is desired dearly, or give only cryptic hints or warnings -- or act befuddled with age and yield nothing useful no matter what coercion is applied.

Thalagyrt: Male very old mist dragon; CR 17; Huge dragon (aquatic, water); HD 27d12+162; hp 337; Init +0; Spd 40 ft., swim 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor); AC 34, touch 8, flat-footed 34; Base Atk +27; Grp +45; Atk +35 melee (2d8+10, bite); Full Atk +35 melee (2d8+10, bite) and +30 melee (2d6+5, 2 claws) and +30 melee (1d8+5, 2 wings) and +30 melee (2d6+15, tail slap); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft. (15 ft. with bite); SA breath weapon (50-ft. cone of scalding steam), breath weapon (100-ft. line of caustic slime), crush 2d8+15, frightful presence, spell-like abilities, spells; SQ blindsense 60 ft., damage reduction 15/magic, darkvision 120 ft., immunities (acid, fire, paralysis, sleep), keen senses, low-light vision, mist form, spell resistance 23; AL N; SV Fort +23, Ref +15, Will +21; Str 31, Dex 10, Con 23, Int 20, Wis 19, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +24, Concentration +31, Diplomacy +22, Gather Information +8, Hide -8, Intimidate +18, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +20, Knowledge (geography) +15, Knowledge (North history) +35, Knowledge (North

local) +35, Listen +34, Search +35, Sense Motive +34, Sleight of Hand +4, Spellcraft +16, Spot +34, Survival +8, Swim +30, Use Magic Device +8; Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Flyby Attack, Great Fortitude, Hover, Iron Will, Power Attack, Wingover.

Breath Weapons (Su): Once every 1d4 rounds, Thalagyrt can breathe a 50-foot cone of scalding steam or a 100-foot line of caustic slime. Each creature in the area of the scalding steam takes 10d6 points of fire damage (Reflex DC 29 half). Each creature in the area of the caustic slime must make a DC 29 Fortitude save or be sickened for 1d6+9 rounds.

Crush (Ex): Whenever Thalagyrt flies or jumps, he can land on opponents as a standard action, using his whole body to crush them. His crush attack affects Small or smaller opponents within a 15-foot-by-15-foot area. Each potentially affected creature must succeed on a DC 25 Reflex save or be pinned, automatically taking 2d8+15 points of bludgeoning damage during the next round unless the dragon moves off. If Thalagyrt chooses to maintain the pin, treat it as a normal grapple attack. Pinned opponents take damage from the crush each round if they don't escape.

Frightful Presence (Ex): Whenever Thalagyrt attacks, charges, or flies overhead, each creature in a 270-foot radius that has 26 or fewer HD must make a DC 27 Will save. Failure indicates that the creature is panicked for 4d6 rounds (if it has 4 or fewer HD) or shaken for 4d6 rounds (if it has 5 or more HD).

Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day -- *fog cloud*, *gust of wind* (DC 16), *sleet storm*, *wind wall*; 1/day -- *solid fog*. Caster level 13th.

Spells: Thalagyrt casts spells as a 13th-level sorcerer.

Blindsense (Ex): Thalagyrt can pinpoint creatures within a distance of 60 feet. Opponents he can't actually see still have total concealment against him.

Keen Senses (Ex): Thalagyrt can see four times as well as a human in shadowy illumination and twice as well in normal light. He also has darkvision to a range of 120 feet.

Mist Form (Su): At will as a standard action, Thalagyrt can assume a misty form. This power works just like a gaseous form spell (caster level 13th) except as follows: Thalagyrt loses his +26 natural armor bonus, but gains a +18 deflection bonus to AC. While in mist form, he is indistinguishable from mist or fog and gains total concealment when in any kind of natural or magical fog or mist. His damage reduction increases to 25/magic. He can fly at a speed of 75 feet with perfect maneuverability. He cannot use his natural weaponry or breath weapon, but he can use his spell-like abilities and spells. He can dismiss the effect as a standard action.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/7/7/6/4; save DC 14 + spell level): 0 -- *acid splash*, *arcane mark*, *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *mage hand*, *message*, *read magic*, *resistance*; 1st -- *chill touch*, *expeditious retreat*, *gemfire* (new spell, see below), *shield*, *unseen servant*; 2nd -- *cat's grace*, *detect thoughts*, *invisibility*, *mistclaw* (new spell, see below), *Muritho's randomscatter* (new spell, see below); 3rd -- *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *hold person*, *Mestil's acid breath* (*Magic of Faerûn*), unknown memory projection spell; 4th -- *backlash* (*Magic of Faerûn*), *lesser geas*, *scrying*, *stone shape*; 5th -- *contact other plane*, *prying eyes*, unknown memory-absorbing spell; 6th -- *greater dispel magic*, *mislead*.

Thalagyrt knows many other spells beyond those of a sorcerer of his power through use of a secret spell (see below). ***Skills:** Can move through water at swim speed without making Swim checks, +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard (included in the above totals), can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered, can use the run action while swimming in a straight line.

Thalagyrt's Magic

Old Lord Memory has access to almost all known human sorcerer/wizard spells of 1st-through 7th-level (through scrolls, spellbooks, and other sources) and a fair smattering of 8th- and 9th-level magic. Although spells of 7th-level and above are beyond his personal mastery, he possesses many memories (gained, of course, from other beings, by use of a unique spell that transfers not only memories, but spell knowledge) of the specifics of casting them, and of their effects. Of the spells the dragon can use, three appear hereafter. One of Thalagyrt's 1st-level favorites is of particular interest. A rare magic believed to have descended from a Netherese apprentice's spell (another copy lies in a well-guarded and hidden tome in Candlekeep), the *gemfire* spell would prove very useful to many dragons, Saryndalaghlothtor (described in last month's issue) in particular. Thalagyrt uses his *gemfire* spell on a false gemstone (a rock crystal as large as a man's head, facet-cut in the same manner as many valuable stones) that rests on a flimsy, mostly submerged stick spanning a pool of flammable oil which, when ignited, triggers an explosion that sprays in all directions; creatures within 15 feet are likely to take 1d6 points of damage from flaming oil splashes (Reflex DC 15 negates).

Gemfire

Transmutation [Fire]

Level: Sor/Wiz 1

Components: V

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Targets: All nonmagic gems or crystals of Tiny size or smaller within a 15 ft. radius burst, or a single crystalline creature

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates (object) and Reflex half (see text)

Spell Resistance: Yes (object)

This spell causes all nonmagic gems or rock crystals (such as quartz) within its range to explode, destroying them. The exploding gems deal damage to all creatures nearby. Half this damage is piercing and half is fire. The size of the gem determines the amount of damage and the size of the blast, according to the following table.

Size	Damage	Explosion Radius
Fine	1	0 (same square only)
Diminutive	1d2	5 ft.
Tiny	1d4	10 ft.

Creatures in the explosion area can attempt a Reflex save to reduce the explosion damage by half. Multiple gems in close proximity are treated as a single larger gem for the purpose of the effects of this spell. For example, a diamond ring with ten Fine stones is treated as a single Diminutive gem rather than ten Fine gems, and a Diminutive bag filled with Fine gems is treated as a single Diminutive gem. An item with a gem inset (such as a jeweled ring) is not destroyed by the exploding gem unless the damage from the explosion would destroy it. A collection of Tiny gems explodes in 10-foot burst for 1d6 points of damage.

The spell has no effect on noncrystal stones or magic items. If cast on a creature made of crystal (such as a gemstone golem from *Monsters of Faerûn*) it takes 1d4 points of damage per caster level (maximum 5d4) and deals damage to nearby creatures as if it were a Tiny gem. The target creature gets a Fortitude saving throw to negate all effects of the spell.

A 4th-level variant of this spell, *Gharradin's slow gemfire*, causes gems to explode 1 or more rounds after the spell is cast, similar to using the Delay Spell feat (this variant deals a maximum of 15d4 points of damage to a crystalline creature).

Mistclaw

Conjuration (Creation)

Level: Sor/Wiz 2

Components: V, F

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Effect: Small draconic claw made of mist

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes

You create a disembodied dragon claw made out of shadowy translucent mist. It moves within range as you direct it (a free action).

The claw can pass through any opening that would allow fog or mist to pass through it. It can be used in one of two ways, and you can change the way that you use the claw each round.

Directed Attack: As a standard action you can direct the claw to attack a creature in range.

Supplemental Attack: As a free action you can direct the claw to assist you in fighting a creature you are attacking in melee. The claw does not interfere with your attacks, nor you its (for example, neither you nor the claw suffer any penalties for fighting with two weapons).

The claw always uses your melee attack bonus and deals 1d4+4 points of slashing damage. It is treated as a magic weapon for the purpose of bypassing damage reduction. It does not get iterative attacks. It always attacks from your direction and cannot flank or gain the benefits from flanking with another creature. The claw does not convey spells (unlike *spectral hand*). If not directed to attack on a particular round, the claw returns to you and hovers. If an attacked creature has spell resistance, you make a caster level check against that spell resistance the first time the *mistclaw* strikes it. If the creature resists the spell, the claw is dispelled, otherwise it has its normal full effect on the creature.

The claw can be attacked. It is treated as a Small creature (+1 size bonus to AC) with a natural armor bonus equal to your Intelligence (if a wizard spell) or Charisma (if a sorcerer spell) bonus. It has 10 hit points +1/caster level. Destroying the mistclaw does not harm you. It is not incorporeal and does not have an incorporeal miss chance, and it does not ignore the miss chance of incorporeal targets (though it can harm incorporeal creatures because it is treated as a magic weapon).

The wizards Cardatha of Silverymoon and Baerdrunsun of Alaghon are known to have independently demonstrated versions of the *mistclaw* spell at recent magefairs.

Focus: Mist, fog, or steam, whether present naturally in the environment, created by magic, or trapped in a closed container possessed by the caster. Nondraconic casters must also have a dragon scale or talon as a focus.

Muritho's Randomscatter

Abjuration

Level: Sor/Wiz 2

Components: V

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Creature touched

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

You create a scintillating chaotic aura of random magical arcs, flashes, and other minor effects. This display looks very impressive but is entirely defensive in nature; creatures touching the target suffer no ill effects.

This spell has three effects that operate simultaneously. First, the target gains a +2 resistance bonus on saving throws against magical effects. Second, it provides acid, cold, electricity, fire, and sonic resistance 5. Third, each time the recipient is subjected to force damage from an effect of 1st level or lower (such as *magic missile*), that damage is reduced by 5 points before being applied to the creature's hit points.

Due to a quirk of the spell's formula, it ends instantly if cast on a creature already protected by a spell or effect that creates a visible aura (such as *entropic shield*). The aura is fragile, and any use of magic by the target causes the *randomscatter* to end instantly. Muritho is a long-dead human mage of forgotten origin. Old Lord Memory uses this spell without modification -- and therefore it is also usable without modification by humans who examine Thalagyr's spell scrolls. There is also a 5th-level spell variant, *Muritho's spell-shield*, that negates all *magic missile* damage, gives energy resistance 10, lasts for 1 minute/level, and requires as its material component a flame ignited by any means from combustibles (typically wood, bone, or charcoal) that bear some sort of magic.

Thalagyr's Fate

Word of Old Lord Memory's existence and location is slowly spreading in Waterdeep. Nobles discuss him with fair accuracy at revels, while commoners hear rumors of "a dragon in a seashore cave who sees all things and remembers everything . . . and so can reveal just who murdered so-and-so, or tell what became of vanished Uncle Auldo." Waterdhavian noble houses have begun sending messengers (heavily laden with gold) to Thalagyr's nameless lair. Almost all of them seek answers to family queries, such as "What became of the lost heir to the house, who wandered off some eighty years back? Did he have offspring -- and if so, who and where are they?" or "Who really stabbed Lord Hrimm at the revel? An agent of his rival Lord Alandalar, or someone else -- and if the latter, why?" or "Who stole Lady Jamarra's tiara, and where is it now?" The dragon finds them entertaining diversions and helps as best he can in return for payment. Although he cares little who learns such secrets, Thalagyr finds the second or third identical query tiresome, and if he's already told the heirs of Lord Palschane the Lord's fate, he's quite likely to give less accurate or extensive answers to sages, agents of rival houses, or creditors. (Readers who find the names in these examples unfamiliar are advised that they are first names; surnames have been omitted on Elminster's advice to protect the privacy of the noble families involved. As the Old Mage commented, "This precaution cuts down on assassination attempts against periodical columnists and editors who are too clever for their own good, helping the hired daggers to meet the demands of their already-crowded schedules . . . a thoughtful consideration, ye see, for all concerned.")

Thalagyr is less welcoming to the adventurers and wizards who follow. He's uneasy about spreading magical information, and he has already rebuffed several overly demanding mages and Cult of the Dragon deputations. His worst disputes, however, have involved members of the Arcane Brotherhood of Luskan, and someday they might well bring about the mist dragon's doom by slaying or imprisoning him.

Thus far, Old Lord Memory has sent two ambitious Arcane underlings to their deaths by providing the whereabouts of archmage's tombs they desired to plunder -- by neglecting to mention traps and lingering spells he knew to wait therein. A more formidable

Brotherhood mage died in Thalagyr's lair when he defied the dragon and opened a trapped chest. It released a "ravening force that incinerated him" (as farscrying Arcane wizards described it). This was actually a *wand of fireball* triggered by a watchghost (an undead being described in *The Ruins of Undermountain* boxed set) hiding in the chest.

In life, the watchghost was Norlatha Saundshauloe (LN human female Wiz7). A woman of surpassing ugliness and tall, gaunt build, Norlatha was usually thought to be a man by most who met her. She dwelt in Baldur's Gate, where she made a living casting spells for hire: leakproofings, building constructions, rust and mold removals, and the like, not adventuring magics. She's now a firm friend of Thalagyr and serves as his "butler" -- the hands that (unseen by most visitors) set traps, move treasure, and otherwise see to the cleanliness and maintenance of his lair. She remains insubstantial and as invisible as possible most of the time, existing only as a soft, sarcastic voice with whom Old Lord Memory bandies words. Most Brotherhood spies think the dragon is less than sane and talks to himself often, but a few have observed "the gloomy servant-man" and wondered as to her origins, nature, and identity.

Tostyn Alaerthmaugh, "the Silver Flame"

(Dragon Magazine #256)

Who needs the Bat Cave? This mercurial wyrm has the most fascinating lair in the North.

Best known as "the Silver Flame" for his spectacular swoops and banks in the air above the trade roads of the North, this young adult male mercury dragon often features in the "current clack" of the Sword Coast because he wants to be in the center of everything important. Tostyn is curious, proud, and reckless, and he often charges into encounters with older, larger dragons, archmages engaged in spell-battle, and similar perils. He flies into and out of rages quickly, holding no grudges and considering no one a lasting foe. His every attitude, belief, like, and dislike change as often as the northern winds. Tostyn has shown more gallantry than most other living dragons -- and more open, roaring laughter. Lighthearted and enthusiastic by nature, he spends his time dashing about the Sword Coast North and can often be found in the vicinity of Waterdeep. "Stealth" is not a word he understands; when he's not dancing or looping across the skies, he's diving playfully at creatures on the ground or streaking along dodging treetops, executing corkscrew aerial rolls, as he hurtles along near the ground. More than any other known dragon, Tostyn cares nothing for the future; plans and food stores and building up treasure hoards don't concern him. He spends his days plunging into a succession of fresh delights, helping adventurers tear apart a ruin here, chasing some raiding wyverns there, pouncing on a pirate ship over here, then dodging among the storm clouds. The Silver Flame remembers beings he has met before (and particular powers or abilities he has seen them use), but he hates only those he has seen use poison or magical deception to bring misfortune to others, those who exhibit viciousness or cruelty, and those who greet him with treachery.



Until spells were put in place specifically to drive him off, Tostyn made quite a habit of "crashing" the country parties of Waterdhavian nobles. He still attends those he can slip into while in human form (thanks to a magical pendant he possesses), but he has learned not to grandly assume his true form during the revels; the spells that guard against his arrival act when he reveals his presence, blasting him from all sides. Such onslaughts have caused him enough painful crash landings to dissuade him from taking his true form within sight of the city of Waterdeep.

Tostyn Alaerthmaugh is a strong flyer and aerial acrobat, as well as a good mimic. He seems to have a natural gift for sensing deceptions, disguises, and "when things aren't right." His sense of humor and restless enthusiasm define Tostyn; setting traps and considering consequences aren't for him.

He's the boldest of an overlarge brood of dragons birthed by the gigantic, venerable mercury dragon Thmaughra, on a huge island far to the southwest of Evermeet. Thmaughra's brood soon proved too large for the wild beasts of the isle to sustain. (The island has few metallic ores and has been grazed heavily by generations of dragons, until forage for only a half-dozen or so was left.) So Tostyn (his surname means "son of Thmaughra" or, literally, "Acknowledged hatchling of many in not the first brood of Thmaughra, male of her blood"), the most bored of the brood, took wing eastward in search of new lands to explore. The way was long, and he would probably have perished by drowning after becoming too weak to fly, but he caught a favorable storm wind and rode it for many, many leagues. He then chanced upon a large, abandoned ship drifting on the waves and rested atop it until he was ready to fly on. Chance brought him to Ruathym and then ashore south of Neverwinter, where he roamed the North until he stumbled upon possibly the best lair any wyrm of the North can boast.

Tostyn Alaerthmaugh's Lair

The Silver Flame lairs in the depths of the Everlake, at the heart of the Evermoors, but spends little time at home. Tostyn made his lair where he discovered a "hole" in the waters at the heart of the lake: a magical shaft of air in the water, where magic keeps an invisible column of air free of the damp, offering an entrance to a mansion beneath the muddy lake bottom.

This nameless abode was probably once the home of a powerful wizard (it was simply bristling with magical wards and defenses, most of which Tostyn has left unaltered), but it was long abandoned when the Silver Flame discovered it. He found a "control amulet" that allowed him to command the powers of the mansion, tore apart some of its interior walls to give himself room to move about in comfort, and made himself at home. Today, that amulet is hidden somewhere in the lair, and its location is known only to the dragon. Tostyn tries never to enter the shaft of air when there are creatures nearby to see him (and he usually flies over the Everlake looking for humans or other beings on the shores of the lake before plunging into his lair). However, flocks of birds flying across the lake often unintentionally find the lair; from time to time an unseen spell in its depths comes to life and sucks fresh air down the shaft, swirls it around, and drives out stale air (which then comes shooting up the shaft as the suction ends). Small flying creatures could well find themselves making an unexpected journey either up or down the airshaft. At least one adventurer employing a *fly* spell discovered the lair in this way, but fled from its depths without investigating beneath the lake bottom. Several incorporeal creatures

have deliberately stolen into the lair and survived their visit; Volo assembled a fragmentary picture of its interior from their accounts. The shaft enters the lake bottom, descends for 80 feet or so, and then curves to rise up again some 20 feet, emerging into a large entry chamber. Six "gargoyle golems" await here; they'll attack any intruding creature who isn't Tostyn or accompanied by him, pursuing as far as the "safe passage" (see hereafter). They know the nature and precise locations of traps beyond their chamber and avoid them at the last instant, giving no sign of breaking off pursuit or proceeding tentatively until they reach real danger.

Four 60-foot-high archways in the walls of the entry chamber open into high and wide passages that run straight into the rock, fanning out like the fingers of a human hand for several hundred yards before beginning a succession of bends, right angles, and archways. Three are "false" ways that wind through a succession of mechanical traps (blades that snap out of walls, falling stone blocks attached to chains that immediately draw the blocks back up into their ceiling sockets, and so on).

The fourth route is the only safe one (Volo hasn't been able to determine just which of the four arches opens into it), and it soon reaches a passage lined with magic stone statues that move in reaction to the presence of intruders (raising arms menacingly, turning to always face creatures moving along the passage, and so on). The statues are designed to frighten intruders into turning back, but they cause no harm even if touched or attacked. Many are broken and have been strapped together with metal bands or have been propped up on stone blocks; they are ancient relics salvaged from a Netherese ruin elsewhere.

Between each pair of statues, a door is set into the wall; all of the doors are huge, 40-foot-high ovals with barbed points protruding from their centers, like so many giant spike-bossed shields. Almost all of the doors are false; just one can be made to open, swinging on counterweights so that even a lone halfling can operate it. The bosses on all of the fake doors are really wards, and they fire at any intruding creature that moves two doors beyond the real one, unleashing cold, electricity, or hold effects for as long as any living creature remains "beyond" the real door.

The "safe passage" behind the real door forks; one branch leads to a chamber heaped with Tostyn's "treasure," and the other rises to a sleeping area. The sleeping chamber almost reaches the surface; if his lair were ever flooded, Tostyn could claw his way through the ceiling to freedom, destroying a small, bare rocky islet in the process. (The waters of the Everlake would then pour into the lair through this new route.) The only feature of this sleeping chamber is a huge mound of earth covered with soft, lush mosses collected and planted by the dragon.

The dragon's treasure consists of a pile of shiny rocks (metallic ores, largely copper, destined for future meals); a much larger pile of items Tostyn deemed "junk" when he rearranged the lair to meet his needs -- mainly broken furniture and rotting scraps of fabric, but there are many vases, stools, and the like that possess minor (perhaps even powerful) magic. Their soft glows give the room an eerie appearance and light enough for any intruders to see what floats above the treasure: a gigantic brain trailing ten tentacles beneath it, its parrotlike beak opening and shutting soundlessly from time to time. This is a dead grell preserved, held aloft, and animated by magic already in place when Tostyn first entered the undertake mansion. It has no powers or sentience, is not undead, and reacts to intruders only by turning to face them and working its beak. The Silver Flame considered it trash and brought it here from elsewhere in the mansion; the purpose for which it was enspelled is now lost and unknown.

There are a few unfinished "digging chambers" open off the passage that climbs to the sleeping area. These rooms have been left unfinished, ending where digging for future expansion was obviously proceeding until an abrupt halt. Tostyn uses these to house his slowly growing collection of trophies. Accounts vary as to which things are in what rooms, but the contents are known to include magic automatons (mainly various sorts of golems), "devices" (grinding gears from a horse-powered mill; a siege tower; the broken remnants of a gigantic -- over 300 feet across, when whole -- orrery depicting the movements of known celestial bodies in Realmspace; the steering vanes of a crashed Halruaan skyship; and so on), vessels (ships, wagons, and aerial craft the dragon has pounced on and captured), and other oddities.

This last category is known to include the following items: a levitating, upright, massively armored metal "lich's coffin" from Tashluta that Tostyn has never been able to open (he still isn't sure of the contents); the complete, intact skeleton of a green dragon encased in clear, thick, articulated glass akin to the armor worn by warriors of Nimbral; a mummified beholder, still on the human-sized throne Tostyn found it slumped on, with all sorts of curious-looking wands, rods, and hose-like things clipped to a frame that encircles the grand seat; and a magic net that holds together a drifting, chiming collection of glass spheres, each one holding a different body part of a slain, bloodless male human in robes with one of his severed hands still clutching a wand, and his torso clad in robes worked with winking stars.

A rather tattered "dragon disguise" designed to be strapped onto a giant or titan, who could then operate the false wire-and-silk dragon wings, claws, and tail by means of long rods (like a marionette) has also found a home in Tostyn's lair. Another curiosity consists of a massive, 10-foot-long stone pedestal with four arching arms reaching up from its sides to hold aloft above it a small, round stone slab. Three apparently identical clusters of controls, each consisting of raised stone studs made to fit the four spread fingers of a human hand, run down one edge of the table. Tostyn brought it hence from a shattered, abandoned wizard's tower somewhere in the Spine of the World mountains because of his interest in a fading note, which the dragon brought along. (It lies on the main slab, weighted down

with a rock.) The note reads: "Ringforge; Netherese? Crafts *rings of spell storing* in upper tray when a proper creature is drained of life on main slab. Plain rings of any metal work, but instructions lost. Creature possibly draconic or undead." Tostyn has never attempted to find the lost instructions or experiment with the controls; he simply wanted such a device hidden away in his keeping, not out where some overly clever wizard might decide to experiment with its powers on a certain mercury dragon.

The Silver Flame doesn't bother to bar or conceal the doorless arches of these rooms, and enough of their contents are still magically animated to give the appearance of ongoing life and activity.

Tostyn Alaerthmaugh's Domain

Domains mean nothing to the Silver Flame, but he's (just) thoughtful enough to avoid blundering into the faces of larger, older dragons. It never enters Tostyn's head to respect any peculiar notions of ownership creatures may have, beyond a lair. After all, are there visible boundaries in the air, on the waves of the sea, or on the land itself? (Not counting the various, puny human-made walls and markers.) Of course not -- and neither should there be. Tostyn flies where Tostyn wills.

The Deeds of Tostyn Alaerthmaugh

Like all of his kind, the Silver Flame prefers metal ores to other food but won't hesitate to devour large quantities of red-blooded mammals he can get without a lot of hunting, digging, or chasing. This usually means penned herd animals or armed forces on the move (in the North, usually ore hordes or goblin raiding bands). The ferocious defenses mounted by the hired watch-mages of Luskan and Mirabar have dissuaded Tostyn from swooping down to snatch trade-bars or forge-ingots (though he still dares to make dead-of-night pounces on ore-barges away from harbors). Sometimes he also seeks out mine tailings and crumbling mountainsides in search of raw ore.

Beyond these needs, Tostyn Alaerthmaugh devotes his time to avidly pursuing whatever entertainment presents itself, dashing across the North on the trail of his latest enthusiasm. He shows little interest in fighting or befriending other dragons, let alone forming alliances or mating.

Tostyn Alaerthmaugh: Male young adult mercury dragon; CR 8; Large dragon (fire); HD 15d12+45; hp 142; Init +8; Spd 60 ft., fly 200 ft. (poor); AC 27, touch 13, flat-footed 23; Base Atk +15; Grp +23; Atk +18 melee (2d6+4, bite); Full Atk +18 melee (2d6+4, bite) and +13 melee (1d8+2, 2 claws) and +13 melee (1d6+2, 2 wings) and +13 melee (1d8+6, tail slap); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft. (10 ft. with bite); SA breath weapon (80-ft. line of light), frightful presence, spell-like abilities, spells; SQ blindsense, brilliance, damage reduction 5/magic, darkvision 120 ft., immunities (fire, paralysis, sleep), keen senses, low-light vision, protected sight, spell resistance 17, vulnerability to cold; AL CG; SV Fort +12, Ref +15, Will +9; Str 19, Dex 18, Con 17, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +7, Concentration +10, Diplomacy +11, Disguise +12, Hide +0, Intimidate +4, Jump +31, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (geography) +7, Knowledge (nature) +9, Knowledge (Waterdeep local) +17, Listen +14, Search +14, Sense Motive +15, Spellcraft +9, Spot +18, Survival +5, Use Magic Device +12; Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Wingover.

Breath Weapon (Su): Once every 1d4 rounds, Tostyn can breathe an 80-foot line of intense light. Each creature in the area takes 5d8 points of fire damage (Reflex DC 20 half).

Frightful Presence (Ex): Whenever Tostyn attacks, charges, or flies overhead, each creature in a 150-foot radius that has 14 or fewer HD must make a DC 19 Will save. Failure indicates that the creature is panicked for 4d6 rounds (if it has 4 or fewer HD) or shaken for 4d6 rounds (if it has 5 or more HD).

Spell-Like Abilities: At will -- *gaze screen*; 3/day -- *mirror image* (DC 14). Caster level 5th.

Spells: Tostyn casts spells as a 5th-level sorcerer.

Blindsense (Ex): Tostyn can pinpoint creatures within a distance of 60 feet. Opponents he can't actually see still have total concealment against him.

Brilliance (Ex): As a standard action, Tostyn can use the mirror-bright membranes of his wings to reflect and concentrate available light into a beam of dazzling brightness. To use this power, he needs light as bright as an overcast day or a clear, moonlit night. Torchlight or candlelight is insufficient. The power creates a thin beam the dragon can aim at a single target within 150 feet. The target is blinded for 1d4+1 rounds (Reflex DC 21 negates). If not using this technique as a weapon, Tostyn can create a cone of light as bright as a daylight spell up to 300 feet long. The cone lasts 3 rounds.

Keen Senses (Ex): Tostyn can see four times as well as a human in shadowy illumination and twice as well in normal light. He also has darkvision to a range of 120 feet.

Protected Sight (Ex): Tostyn is immune to any effect that would blind or dazzle him. He also gains +3 racial bonus on saving throws against any light or pattern effect.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/5; save DC 12 + spell level): 0 -- *detect magic, detect poison, mage hand, mending, read magic, touch of fatigue*; 1st -- *charm person, comprehend languages, Kaupaer's skittish nerves (Magic of Faerûn), Laeral's cutting hand (Magic of Faerûn)*; 2nd -- *eagle's splendor*, unknown minor healing spell.

Conditional Skill Synergies: Tostyn Alaerthmaugh gains a synergy bonus to some skills under certain conditions. These are Disguise checks to act in character, Survival checks to keep from getting lost or for avoiding hazards, Survival checks in aboveground natural environments, Survival checks when following tracks, Use Magic Device checks involving scrolls.

***Skills:** These skills are available to mercury dragons at 1 skill point per rank: Bluff, Disguise, and Survival. Mercury dragons have the Jump skill for free at 1 rank per Hit Die. These are in addition to the skills noted in the dragon entry in the *Monster Manual*.

Tostyn Alaerthmaugh's Magic

Though he has come to possess several spellbooks of age and interest, the Silver Flame as yet can use only the paltriest of the magic within them. In practice, he casts but a handful of fairly common spells and a few mending spells and unknown arcane healing magic his adventures (and misadventures) make necessary. Of more interest and importance to adventurers having contact with him are the magic items he employs.

The control amulet for Tostyn's lair isn't detailed here, since Volo could learn nothing about its appearance or apparently extensive powers. The Silver Flame is known to wear a *ring of the ram* and the pendant detailed hereafter, which he recovered from the skeletal remains of its maker on a mountaintop somewhere in the North.

Chassabra's Pendant (Minor Artifact): Crafted by the long-ago sorceress for whom it is named, this piece of jewelry appears to be a delicate diamond-shaped piece of polished copper, chased with a design of three closed, long-lashed human eyes set in a triangle (one eye below two side-by-side eyes), and hung around a small-linked necklace chain. The spells laid on the pendant render it terrifically strong and nonmetallic (it is no longer affected by magnetism [though copper is nonferrous and usually isn't magnetic] or spells that work on metal, and it is no longer a conductor of heat or electricity) and make it automatically alter to fit a wearer. It is as hard as adamantine (hardness 20, 5 hp).

When donned, *Chassabra's pendant* mentally communicates its powers to its wearer (it is a self-identifying item), who can activate them by silent force of will alone (a standard action that provokes an attack of opportunity). Powers awaken almost instantly, but only one can be in use at a time; "turning on" one extinguishes another. The exceptions to this are the three automatic, always-functioning powers of the pendant, which affect only the wearer; these are *see invisibility*, *feather fall*, and immunity to *magic missiles*. It also has the following powers: 4/day -- *faerie fire* (when the user activates this power, creatures and objects within a 5-foot radius, centered on the user [but not the user himself] become outlined with *faerie fire*; the effect lasts 10 minutes; other than the duration and the very short range, this power works just like the *faerie fire* spell.); 3/day -- *dimension door*; 2/day -- *polymorph*; 1/day -- *regenerate* (as the spell, except regenerates all missing tissue in a single round whether or not the severed body parts are present and attached).

Strong (abjuration, conjuration, divination, evocation, transmutation); CL 15th; Weight 1 lb.

Tostyn Alaerthmaugh uses the *polymorph* power of *Chassabra's pendant* often to visit revels and gatherings (usually nobles' parties in Waterdeep) in human form; he loves to flirt, gossip, and mix with exciting folk who have interesting things to say or dreams and schemes afoot.

Gaze Screen

Abjuration

Level: Clr 2, Drd 2, Sor/Wiz 2

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Duration: 10 minutes/level

Range: Touch

Target: 1 living creature

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

You create a shimmering, mirrorlike area in the air before the recipient's eyes. The area moves with the recipient and does not affect the recipient's vision. If the recipient is subjected to a gaze attack while the spell lasts, there is a 50% chance that recipient does not need to make saving throw against the attack (just as if the recipient had averted his eyes). The foe with the gaze attack does not have

concealment from the recipient (see Gaze Attacks on page 294 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). The recipient gets no additional protection from averting his eyes while the spell lasts, though he can shut his eyes and entirely avoid the gaze.

Tostyn Alaerthmaugh's Fate

The Silver Flame is not likely to reach a happy old age; he takes too many chances to flourish in a region of winter weather, where the inhabitants include periodic orc hordes and such perils as the other dragons described in earlier "Wyrms of the North" installments, the Brotherhood of the Arcane in Luskan, and Cult of the Dragon agents that keep growing in numbers, reach, and hunger.

If luck favors him at critical moments, however, he may live long enough to leave his mark; he combines more energy than any ten other dragons of the North with keen wits and a growing understanding of human society and intrigues (particularly in the Waterdeep area). When his restless dabbling in human schemes and affairs grows either more prolonged or more effective, Tostyn will begin to make formidable foes -- and be approached by others to become an ally.

These relationships might enmesh him more deeply in human affairs, and it's likely that although he'll always be a capricious dilettante, the Silver Flame will also begin to enjoy "doing something that matters." The right adventuring band or power group could steer his considerable energies toward achieving their own goals, from destroying the outposts of their enemies to kidnapping, rescuing, or harassing individuals. Tostyn already knows that wizards have spellbooks and magic items that interest him; he'll need little persuasion to attack wizards he takes a dislike to (those who attack him, for instance). As for Tostyn's own fate, Elminster suggested that an old Northern saying applies: "A good war arrow can shake a realm, or even sweep it away, with but a single well-aimed flight . . . but if that strike comes in a time of war, against an armored foe, that strike tends to be hard on the arrow."

Valamaradace, "the Dragon Queen"

(Dragon Magazine #257)

The Wyrm Regent of the North is a benign monarch, but only a fool would test her powers.

Valamaradace is a living legend of the North. The Dragon Queen of Silverymoon is seldom seen (in her own shape, at least) by humans, but many have felt the warmth and aid of her power and decrees. With her consort Deszeldaryndun Silverwing, the Guardian Worm of Everlund (an adult male silver dragon covered in an earlier "Wyrms of the North"), Valamaradace reigns over a domain as absolutely as any human ruler. Thankfully for the future of civilization in the North, she's chosen to further Alustriel of Silverymoon's dream of the Silver Marches by allowing that realm to take in her own domain.

That's not to say the Dragon Queen has renounced her self-appointed duties of guardianship over her domain or become a lackey of the Silver Marches. Instead, Valamaradace has dedicated herself not only to maintaining her personal standards over conditions in her domain, but also to continually testing the fledgling realm of the Silver Marches, ferreting out deceit and treachery among its rulers and agents. For such work, the ancient female gold dragon takes on many guises. Her favored form when making one of her rare forays into cities is that of Targarda, an agile, diminutive female human possessed of "elfin" looks and a little magic; only the Chosen of Mystra and a few Harpers know that this beautiful mageling is in truth the Dragon Queen.



When in disguise, Valamaradace considers herself "on holiday" so far as surface inclinations and manners are concerned. Though she clings always to her goals and views of how the world should be, she'll act out a chosen role to the hilt, straying far from her true nature in words and apparent actions if need be. When appearing as herself, however, she reverts to her own gentle, soft-spoken ways. The Dragon Queen quietly and calmly thwarts violence, stops cruelty, and rebukes pride and arrogance whenever she encounters it. Often she is forced to remind "good" beings that they cheapen themselves when they adopt the fierceness, bad graces, and attitudes of the creatures they struggle against.

Valamaradace did not confer a title on herself; rather, it was given to her sometime around 826 DR by the dying Dragon Queen Mairogra, a red dragon who'd ruled a domain centered roughly on Everlund but hunted vigorously elsewhere. Mairogra was laid low in the end by the concerted attacks of many adventurers. Valamaradace came upon the mortally wounded Queen and cast the only spell she had that could help Mairogra: a painquench magic that made the red dragon's last hours easier. Many sages suspect she agreed to act as a monarch because nurturing an area of countryside to be "the way she wanted it" is the task she most wanted to do, and the way she wanted to spend her life.

The keys to Valamaradace's character are her kindness, empathy, and desire to understand the beings she encounters and cater to their needs as long as she doesn't harm other living creatures. She finds the concepts of traps, vandalism, and wanton destruction abhorrent, and she is a foe of arsonists, orc hordes, and others who visit destruction upon a whim or for their own pleasure. Prudence for the maintenance of her own reputation (and therefore, that of her territories) leads her to engage in snooping or fighting in disguise, rather than openly as the Dragon Queen. She and her consort are working to give the impression that many other dragons besides themselves patrol their domain, attacking predators and aiding others in Valamaradace's name. They often do this by assuming other forms, and the Dragon Queen in particular has become an accomplished mimic. Valamaradace loves acting, and her subtle sense of humor comes through when she's "being someone else" more than it does when she's playing the role of the gently regal Dragon Queen.

Valamaradace knows more about the doings of humans, humanoids, and other civilized creatures (dismissed by many wyrms as no more than loud, swarming "small prey") than almost all other dragons. Her desire to understand other beings leads her to converse with them and really listen to what they say, remembering almost all of it without the distortion wrought by the egos of most dragons. Her relationships with other wyrms have been, in the words of the human sage Velsaert of Baldur's Gate (fast becoming recognized as an authority on the history of dragons up and down the Sword Coast), "a series of avoidances while in dragon form and careful observance from disguise. Trust comes slowly to the Dragon Queen -- the sole exception is Deszeldaryndun Silverwing, now her consort. He won her heart after a courtship that followed on his thrice rescuing her from the attacks of other wyrms. Many red dragons down the years have coveted the territories Valamaradace now commands, thanks to a legend widespread among dragons that claims Mairogra had amassed a half-mile deep pit entirely filled with gems." If there ever was any such pit, it's been covered over with a deep layer of earth and never sought out by the Dragon Queen, and most sources (including both Volo and Elminster) agree it probably never existed . . . but its lure remains strong.

Valamaradace's Lair

The Dragon Queen and her consort Deszeldaryndun dwell in the Floating Mountain. This gigantic, hollow, oval rock is kept aloft by the Dragon Queen's magic, which also enshrouds it in mists, and directs it wherever she desires. Usually it hovers low over the woods due west of Everlund, or south of there on the verges of the High Forest. The dragon couple refers to it as "Softwing."

Valamaradace inherited Softwing from her predecessor Mairogra, who left it in a resting bed of deep sand (a natural sandpit) southwest of Everlund when she didn't have it aloft. Old Northern legends of wandering children "kidnapped by a dragon who moved its lair with them inside" are believed to have stemmed from human encounters with the Floating Mountain.

Today, the Floating Mountain looks like a large, mottled gray potato riddled with gaping holes. Inside are a series of tunnels and chambers with silky smooth walls. Spells concealing "cupboard" holes are set high in the caverns, where some treasure -- including magic items -- is kept. (In particular, the Dragon Queen seems to delight in collecting two sorts of trophies from foes who battle her: magic armor and any magic items carried by wizards.) Other spells are known to warn the draconic couple from afar if intruders have entered the lair and to awaken the equivalent of long-range arcane eye spells that can transmit what they see to Valamaradace no matter how distant from her lair she might be.

The Dragon Queen keeps no servitor creatures at her lair and rarely invites anyone into it, but enemies seeking to sneak in and steal have sometimes met Harpers and others waiting to meet Valamaradace. These guests vigorously defended the Floating Mountain against intrusion.

Valamaradace's Domain

The Dragon Queen determines the borders of her domain. In recent years its boundaries have changed little. They take in the entire Moonwood to the north, running southeast to Sundabar and back southwest along the River Rauvin to Turlangtor (westernmost of the rocky heights that run south of the river and east to Turnstone Pass). From there her domain extends southwest through the Woods of Turlang to the Lost Peaks, then west along the Dessarin to a point south of Flint Rock. At this point, her border turns to run due north across the Evermoors to the River Surbrin, then along its banks back to the northern tip of the Moonwood again.

Within this area, Valamaradace tries to change the bounty of the land and activities of inhabitants and visitors to her will; she and her consort patrol often and watch diligently over unfolding events -- and all intrusions. She knows that her work has made this area even more attractive to predators (orc hordes, for instance), and she is always warily looking for the approach of raiding forces.

The Deeds of Valamaradace

The Dragon Queen gathers, grows, and markets (in Everlund and Silverymoon) many sorts of food crops, herbs, and their seeds in her domain. She maintains several "root cellar" storage caverns (their temperature modified by control weather spells) in the wilds west of Everlund. A resident colony of sprites guards them against depredations by rodents and more intelligent foragers.

Valamaradace treats her entire domain as a gigantic garden, patrolling its borders and planning how best to tend its growing things. Her consort Deszeldaryndun deals with most intruders and "civilized" beings within the territory, while Valamaradace sees to removing diseased trees and plants, planting new ones, balancing light and shade, marsh and dry land, altering drainage, and so on to create as lush and stable a land of plenty as she can. She's constantly busy "adjusting the balance" of living things and refining her spells to give her greater control over the domain. Neutral-aligned beings are tolerated as travelers in her territory, but not as settlers; evil beings are destroyed or driven out when detected (which has led some Harpers and other Good-aligned beings to dub the domain "the Haven"). Good creatures discover that though temples and abbeys are few and far between, many hermit-priests and other healers dwell in the Dragon Queen's domain, and that it's largely free of strife. Wounded and sick beings often tarry in the Haven to recover. Valamaradace uses her skills and gifts for the benefit of all so that none might go hungry or needy in the Haven. Beings who misuse her bounty, however, to laze away their days in her domain expecting free food and handouts are visited by superiors, creditors, or their agents (sent by the Dragon Queen), to be "sent back to productive tasks."

Valamaradace: Female ancient gold dragon; CR 24; Gargantuan dragon (fire); HD 35d12+315; hp 542; Init +0; Spd 60 ft., swim 60 ft., fly 250 ft. (clumsy); AC 40, touch 6, flat-footed 40; Base Atk +35; Grp +63; Atk +48 melee (4d6+16, bite); Full Atk +48 melee (4d6+16, bite) and +43 melee (2d8+8, 2 claws) and +42 melee (2d6+8, 2 wings) and +42 melee (2d8+24, tail slap); Space/Reach 20 ft./15 ft. (20 ft. with bite); SA breath weapon (60-ft. cone of fire or weakening gas), crush 4d6+24, frightful presence, spell-like abilities, spells, tail sweep 2d6+24; SQ alternate form, blindsight 60 ft., damage reduction 15/magic, darkvision 120 ft., detect gems, immunities (fire, paralysis, sleep), keen senses, low-light vision, luck bonus, spell resistance 30, vulnerability to cold, water breathing; AL LG; SV Fort +28, Ref +19, Will +28; Str 43, Dex 10, Con 29, Int 28, Wis 29, Cha 28.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +28, Concentration +47, Diplomacy +51, Disguise +47, Escape Artist +10, Gather Information +13, Hide -1, Intimidate +28, Knowledge (arcana) +47, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +24, Knowledge (geography) +34, Knowledge (nature) +39, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +24, Knowledge (Silver Marches local) +47, Listen +47, Move Silently +10, Perform (act) +19, Sleight of Hand +7, Spellcraft +32, Spot +47, Swim +43, Use Magic Device +34; Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Enlarge Spell, Extend Spell, Flyby Attack, Greater Spell Penetration, Power Attack, Spell Penetration, unknown druidic feat*, Weapon Focus (bite), Weapon Focus (claw).

*Valamaradace has a feat (exact benefits and prerequisites unknown) that allows her to take some druid spells as arcane spells in the same manner that gold dragons may select spells from the Good, Law, and Luck domains as arcane spells.

Breath Weapon (Su): Once every 1d4 rounds, Valamaradace can breathe a 60-foot cone of fire or weakening gas. Each creature in the area takes 20d10 points of fire damage (Reflex DC 36 half) or 10 points of Strength damage (Fortitude DC 36 half).

Crush (Ex): Whenever Valamaradace flies or jumps, she can land on opponents as a standard action, using her whole body to crush them. Her crush attack affects Large or smaller opponents within a 20-foot-by-20-foot area. Each potentially affected creature must succeed on a DC 36 Reflex save or be pinned, automatically taking 4d6+24 points of bludgeoning damage during the next round unless the dragon moves off. If Valamaradace chooses to maintain the pin, treat it as a normal grapple attack. Pinned opponents take damage from the crush each round if they don't escape.

Frightful Presence (Ex): Whenever Valamaradace attacks, charges, or flies overhead, each creature in a 300-foot radius that has 34 or fewer HD must make a DC 36 Will save. Failure indicates that the creature is panicked for 4d6 rounds (if it has 4 or fewer HD) or shaken for 4d6 rounds (if it has 5 or more HD).

Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day -- bless; 1/day -- geas/quest, sunburst (DC 27). Caster level 15th.

Spells: Valamaradace casts spells as a 15th-level sorcerer.

Tail Sweep (Ex): Valamaradace can sweep with her tail as a standard action. The sweep affects a half-circle with a 30-foot radius extending from an intersection on the edge of her space in any direction. Each small or smaller creature in the swept area takes 2d6+24 points of damage (Reflex DC 36 half).

Alternate Form (Su): Valamaradace can assume any animal or humanoid form of Medium size or smaller as a standard action three times per day. This ability functions as a polymorph spell cast on herself (caster level 15th), except that she does not regain hit points for changing form and can assume only the form of an animal or humanoid. The dragon can remain in her animal or humanoid form until she chooses to assume a new one or return to her natural form.

Blindsense (Ex): Valamaradace can pinpoint creatures within a distance of 60 feet. Opponents she can't actually see still have total concealment against her.

Detect Gems (Sp): This divination effect is similar to a detect magic spell, except that it finds only gems. Valamaradace can scan a 60-degree arc each round. By concentrating for 1 round, she can determine whether there are any gems within the arc; 2 rounds of concentration reveal the exact number of gems; and 3 rounds reveal their exact location, type, and value. This ability is the equivalent of a 2nd-level spell, and Valamaradace can use it three times per day.

Keen Senses (Ex): Valamaradace can see four times as well as a human in shadowy illumination and twice as well in normal light. She also has darkvision to a range of 120 feet.

Luck Bonus (Sp): Once per day, Valamaradace can touch a gem, usually one embedded in her hide, and enspell it to bring good luck. As long as she carries the gem, she and every good creature in a 100-foot radius receives a +1 luck bonus on all saving throws and similar rolls, as if she had a stone of good luck (see the item description in the **Dungeon Master's Guide**). If she gives an enspelled gem to another creature, only that bearer gets the bonus. The effect lasts 1d3+30 hours but ends if the gem is destroyed. This ability is the equivalent of a 2nd-level spell.

Water Breathing (Ex): Valamaradace can breathe water as easily as she can air. She is fully at home underwater, and she takes no penalties there (as if under the effect of a freedom of movement spell).

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/9/8/8/8/8/7/5; save DC 19 + spell level): 0 -- detect magic, detect poison, disrupt undead, light, mage hand, message, ray of frost, read magic, resistance; 1st -- alarm, ironfists (Magic of Faerûn), know protections (Magic of Faerûn), painquench (exact effects unknown, possibly similar to the rosemantle spell from Magic of Faerûn), shield; 2nd -- alter self, cat's grace, invisibility, soften earth and stone, wood shape; 3rd -- diminish plants, plant growth, slow, suggestion; 4th -- arcane eye, dimension door, freedom of movement, holy smite; 5th -- dispel chaos, Mestil's acid sheath (Magic of Faerûn), mind fog, transmute rock to mud; 6th -- greater dispel magic, mislead, prismatic eye (Magic of Faerûn); 7th -- greater scrying, Presper's spell matrix (Magic of Faerûn).

Valamaradace's Magic

The Dragon Queen wields an impressive roster of spells, but they pale beside the most powerful item at her disposal, the crown of the mountain.

The Crown of the Mountain: This ancient artifact appears as a crown or spike-studded circlet of rough, unadorned stone that can't be shattered by any known means. It alters to fit the brow (or wrist, or tail) of its wearer and seems immune to most spell effects (and all divinations and destructive magics thus far applied to it).

The true origin of the crown is in dispute. Some say it was a gift of the dwarven gods to their people, others that it was yet another powerful tool devised by a Netherese sorcerer-king, and there are even some who hold to the view that it was brought to Toril from some other world, suffering the loss of its primary purpose and some of its greatest powers in the process.

History

The first reliable record of the crown (as opposed to the disputed, fanciful tales of it being bestowed upon mortals by various gods, or worn by a Netherese archwizard as he went down fighting a titanic spell-battle against over forty hostile mages) occurs in three separate adventurers' diaries, all of which mention a hitherto-unknown wizard by the name of Larbrand "from southern lands" who used the crown in a quarry in the Tashalar circa 336 DR. The writers hailed from different cities around the Shining Sea; their attribution of a more southerly origin for Larbrand has led many to think he came from Halruaa or perhaps even Zakhara. The truth is now lost; even Larbrand's fate is unknown, beyond his later encounter with the sage Hoarmandar, whose description of the crown is Elminster's main source.

What is certain is that two dwarven scouts exploring the Underdark near Chessenta in 523 DR (they reported "a realm of spiders" and similar unpleasantnesses thereabouts) met with a human merchant, one Urabbastrar Tholokh, who was busily using the crown to carve out ever-larger storage cellars, with plans of perhaps establishing a mine if he could find an ore-vein. Horrified at the thoughtlessly large and unstable cuttings Tholokh had already made, the dwarves agreed to steal the crown away from him -- even if they had to slay him on the spot to get it. A few breaths later, Tholokh broke through into an existing cavern and was swarmed over by carrion crawlers so numerous and so energetic that the dwarves were forced to flee. When they dared return, days later, the dwarves found no sign of whence the human had gone.

The crown surfaced once more, this time in 811 DR, where it came into the possession of the Dragon Queen Mairogra. A priest of Talos was using it to hollow out a pinnacle-shaped island in the Nelanther to create a large temple-citadel. Unfortunately, he either stumbled upon or attracted the attention of someone or something magically powerful, and one night lightning rained "down into the sea like white, crackling fingers" from the sky. In the morning, the temple was no longer a pinnacle of rock, but only a few drowned fingers jutting out of the rolling waves . . . and the crown was hidden again.

How the first Dragon Queen acquired it remains a mystery, as are its original purpose and possible additional, related powers -- and Valamaradace shows no interest in seeking these out or letting anyone experiment with or even touch the stone circlet.

Campaign Use: The crown does possess other powers not revealed here; Valamaradace is aware of some, but not how to access or control them -- and will never do so, since certain of these powers can be awakened only by wearing the Crown in the right location (ruins outside the Dragon Queen's domain) and undertaking the proper processes. It's rumored among sages who study such things that Candlekeep and even some far humbler libraries might hold hints of the procedure. It's also rumored that the Crown can control other items besides the Floating Mountain, including certain "floating" ruins or downed flying ships, castles, or even cities. At least one lorebook warns that using the Crown for such purposes forever changes the mind of the user or brings him under the fell influence of some ancient, malignant sentence.

Any being(s) wearing, holding, or directly touching the crown of the mountain can withstand (ignoring all damage and effects) all natural and magical forces that normally do harm due to extremes of temperature, precipitation, and wind. For instance, a wearer could walk normally into a gale-force opposing wind, breathing and conducting feats of careful manual dexterity (such as writing a note) where others would be swept away or reduced to clinging helplessly to a rock or other immovable object.

The crown also protects its wearer from being buried, struck, or injured in any way by the impact or weight of stone missiles (even magic ones), avalanches, rockslides, and deliberately-telekinesed or dropped rocks, including sand, mud, and gravel. It surrounds the wearer with an aura of protection that is only about 2 inches deep but turns aside even stone spears, fired stone-headed ballista bolts, shards of rock from explosions only feet away from the crown-wearer, and even collisions between the wearer's falling, flying, or hurled body and jagged stone spars. This can allow a crown-wearer to deliberately leap off a cliff and land without taking any falling damage -- so long as that landing is on rocks. The magic of this item allows even a bound and blindfolded wearer to land without harm on rocks upright and on "safe" footing . . . even if that footing is a tiny ledge on the face of a cliff, or a pinnacle with empty space on all sides. If such a perch collapses into an avalanche, the magic of the crown keeps its wearer "riding" the avalanche without being buried and can bring him or her to any number of other "safe standings" during the slide, if circumstances (not the deliberate will of the wearer) call upon it to do so.

The crown has many powers that can be activated as a standard action. Some of its powers are categorized as "limited" and others are "unlimited." Activating any power automatically ends any active "limited" effect, while "unlimited" are not affected and can have multiple activated at once.

The limited powers are as follows: 6/day -- greater teleport, stone shape; 3/day -- telekinesis, 2/day -- move earth, stone tell; 1/day -- control weather, disintegrate, invisibility.

The unlimited powers are: At will -- focal stone (see below), greater levitate (see below). Through the use of these two spells, the Dragon Queen keeps the Floating Mountain aloft.

Curse: Any creature of less than 8 Hit Dice or levels who attempts to invoke a power of the crown (as opposed to merely benefiting from its "constant" properties) is affected as if by an imprisonment spell for 1d6 years. (The crown falls to the ground, and the user vanishes into the earth, trapped until a freedom spell is properly cast on the spot or the curse expires, whereupon the earth returns the being to where the user was standing when the curse took effect.)

Any being who invokes the control weather, disintegrate, greater levitate, or telekinesis powers of the crown must immediately make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 22) or be affected by a hold monster spell (heightened to 9th-level and made persistent) for 24 hours. The being's intellect and senses remain unaffected, and both the power invoked and other crown powers remain under the being's control, insofar as the being can function while immobile and unable to speak. Removal of the crown from a paralyzed being doesn't end the paralyzation, and neither does any attack affecting a paralyzed crown-wearer, but attacking that being after the crown has been removed ends the paralysis instantly.

Suggested Means of Destruction

The crown of the mountain melts away harmlessly if cast into a flow of molten volcanic rock and then targeted by six disintegrate spells simultaneously.

The crown can be crushed by the blow of any hammer or tool with an enhancement bonus of at least +1 if struck while on an altar dedicated to Grumbar or any dwarven or gnome deity. A furious release of wild magic accompanies such a passing.

The crown can be destroyed by enclosing it together with no less than six earth elementals inside a sphere of magical force (several spells afford usable barriers; only trial and error can determine which dwomers are insufficient), then causing the sphere to dwindle to a fist-sized or smaller extent. This results in an explosion in which the elementals perish, wild magic is hurled forth in all directions, and the ground and immediate surroundings are shattered, pulverized, or hurled away. The blast deals 20d6 points of force damage to all creatures within a 60-foot radius (no saving throw). Elementals and objects take double damage. Strong (conjunction, transmutation); CL 22nd; Weight 1 lb.

Focal Stone

Transmutation

Level: Sor/Wiz 5

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 minute

Range: Touch

Target: One clear or translucent gemstone up to 1 inch in diameter (see text)

Duration: Permanent until discharged

Saving Throw: Will negates (object)

Spell Resistance: Yes (object)

You transform the target gem so it is capable of storing magic in the manner of an attuned gem (see the Attune Gem feat in Magic of Faerûn). On your next turn, you or another spellcaster can cast a spell into the gem, transforming it into an attuned gem (as if it had been crafted with the Attune Gem feat). The gem and spell must meet all the criteria of the Attune Gem feat and gem magic. The person casting the spell to be stored must spend XP as if a potion were being created with the Attune Gem feat.

Unlike the Attune Gem feat, using this spell causes the gem to glow with a soft internal radiance (insufficient to light an area but enough to notice the gem in a shadowy or dark room). Also, the only way to release the stored spell is to shatter the gem (a standard action). A successful dispel magic against your caster level causes this spell and the stored spell to dissipate harmlessly.

Material Component: A pinch of any sort of opal dust.

Levitate, Greater

Transmutation

Level: Sor/Wiz 5

Target: You or one willing creature or one object (total weight up to 1,000 lb./level)

As levitate, except as noted above.

Valamaradace's Fate

The Dragon Queen is too tempting a target to avoid attacks from evil Faerûnians who are truly mighty in magic. Elminster foresees a grim future for her but pledges that he and the Seven will do what they can to see that "her shining presence remains as long as possible."

Voaraghamanthar, "the Black Death"

(Dragon Magazine #258)

In the heart of the Mere of Dead Men, the vast saltwater swamp that lies along the Sword Coast between Leilon and Waterdeep, dwells the savage black dragon Voaraghamanthar, the "Black Death." This wyrm is said to have strange powers and avoids other dragons who intrude into the swamp or claim it as part of their domain. Most tales say the Black Death can burst from beneath long-placid swamp waters, read and reason intelligently, and be in two places at once.

This latter power is due to the true nature of this dragon: "Voaraghamanthar" is, in fact, two identical twin, adult male, black dragons who pose as one dragon in their dealings with both intruders and allies, the latter of which includes a Cult of the Dragon cell based in Leilon. Their actual names are Voaraghamanthar and Waervaerendor (who impishly styles himself "the Rapacious Raider"), but they address each other by the short-names "Weszlum" and "Wulzour," respectively, when they speak at all. The twins share an empathic link and work together with unshakable loyalty.



Faerûn, however, knows of only one deadly, legendary Wyrms of the Mere: a flitting black ghost of claws and jaws that strikes out of nowhere. The black swamp waters hide the dragons and the rotting bodies of victims they wait to dine upon -- or keep prisoner, helpless in the cold muck, for fell purposes.

The Mere of Dead Men

Twisted trees, vines, and thick vegetation cloak the mist-shrouded surface of the cold saltwater swamp. Its air is foul with rotting stench, and its water is black and opaque. Visibility, given fogs and rolling topography, is rarely more than half a mile. For flightless creatures, travel in the Mere is slow and dangerous. Its dark waters are deep enough to permit a flat-bottomed skiff to pass, but many small islands rise from the swamp islands tangled with strange vegetation. The overgrown bones of long-fallen creatures lie everywhere. Quicksand is rare but mud all too common. Given the thick growth and frequent need to wade (and flounder), skiff-borne travelers can cover about eight miles in 10 hours.

The Mere of Dead Men is known for its monstrous denizens. Travelers on the High Road skirting its eastern verges often travel for three days and nights without stopping, to avoid camping within reach of "dark, wet, clutching things raiding out of the swamp." Bobbing will-o'-wisps are common night sights from the road. Sword Coast lore speaks vividly of floating islands moving in the Mere, lizardfolk commanded by liches, a penanggalan of monstrous size, drowned ships swarming with sea zombies, gigantic darktentacles, yuan-ti slavers, temples to inhuman gods, giant leeches with bullywug riders, a huge will-o'-wisp that pulses with dark energy, and many other horrors.

Monsters proven (by adventurers' kills) to dwell in the Mere include aballins, behirs, bullywugs, flying fangs (see *Races of Faerûn*), giant frogs and toads, gibbering mouthers, giant leeches, hydras, lizardfolk, meazels, monitor lizards, nyths, scrags (aquatic trolls), shambling mounds, snakes, and will-o'-wisps.

The taint of the dead god Myrkul's power in recent history animated many of the dead drowned beneath the western Mere, creating a profusion of strange undead and many sorts of ghouls, skeletons, and zombies now found in groups wandering the swamp and the lands around, attacking everyone they encounter.

Mere History

In the Year of the Shattered Scepter (614 DR), orc hordes attacked the realm of Phalorm and defeated its armies. A year later, the orcs besieged a rallied remnant of Phloem's defenders at Iniarv's Tower, onetime abode of the long-vanished Mage Royal of Uthtower. The battle disturbed and enraged Iniarv (who'd become a lich and retreated into the tower's crypts).

Iniarv hurled mighty spells against his arouers, but the seemingly endless orcs soon invaded long-sheltered Uthtower. A desperate King Uth VII beseeched the lich to honor his ancient alliance with Uthtower and destroy the invading orcs. With cruel humor, Iniarv honored the request by unleashing titanic spells that caused the ocean to rise and inundate the land, drowning humans and orcs alike. When the waters receded, a sprawling saltwater mere lay in place of hitherto verdant realms. (Recent scholars believe the Curse of Iniarv was a powerful *wish* that magically bound the eastern border of the Mere to the High Road -- ensuring its expansion whenever the road is rerouted.)

The few human (and human-ally) survivors fled. The orcs retreated to the Sword Mountains, where centuries later their descendants founded the realm of Uruth Ukrypt. Phalorm soon collapsed when the elves of Ardeep withdrew from it, to be replaced in the Year of the Ensorcelled Kings (616 DR) by Delimbiyan, the Kingdom of Man.

Over the centuries, the Mere of Dead Men grew ever larger, inundating all land between the sea and the High Road no matter how far the road was moved inland. Attempts to resettle the former Uthtower uplands were thwarted by the greedy waters of the Mere time and again. Former routes of the High Road are marked by such flooded sites as Castle Naerytar, Holk House, Mornhaven Towers, and Wolfhill House.

From its creation, the Mere harbored all manner of monsters, both living and undead -- captured beasts and monstrous experiments released by Iniarn among them -- and so was largely avoided by civilized beings. The first dragon to settle in the Mere was Chardansearavitril, "Ebodeath" to the Fair Folk, an old male black dragon who seized the crumbling ruins of the Uthtower and its catacombs as his lair in the Year of the Lone Lark (631 DR).

Over the centuries, Chardansearavitril ruled the Mere, preying primarily on Sword Mountain orcs. In the Year of the Spouting Fish (922 DR), he vanished, giving rise to tales that he'd died, relocated, or withdrawn into seclusion in the heart of the swamp. The dragon had actually heeded the entreaties of Strongor Bonebag, a charismatic Priest of Myrkul with ties to the Cult of the Dragon, and been transformed into a dracolich. The Cult cell headed by Strongor had its own interpretations of the teachings of Myrkul and Sammaster; Strongor blended the tenets of both into a dark creed that venerated the Sacred Ones as divine servants of the Lord of Bones, who would one day undergo apotheosis. There would come a time, Strongor preached, when Myrkul would absorb all Toril into his realm. On that day, the gods of the living would be swept away by the claws of the rightful gods: an ascending pantheon of dracolich powers.

To serve the faithful during the long years until Myrkul's triumph, the Uthtower (Chardansearavitril's lair, almost sixty miles west of Iniarn's Tower) was transformed into the Mausoleum of the Ebodeath, a great temple of stone and scoured bone wherein the Ebodeath Sect could dwell while venerating their god-to-be.

Strongor's sudden death less than a decade later ended his efforts to extend the sect across the North, but his followers held to his teachings. Ebodeath, who cared more for gaining personal power than for Strongor's vision, was slavishly served by the cultists (each of whom, upon death, was transformed into an undead servitor by his fellows). Chardansearavitril's isolation from wider Faerûn was deepened by the emergence of the orc realm of Uruth Ukrypt circa 930 DR and the subsequent collapse of trade along the High Road. (The end of the dragon's raiding had allowed the orc population to soar and the followers of Uruth to establish their own kingdom.) Over time, Ebodeath became mere legend. When Uruth Ukrypt fell in the Year of Crimson Magics (1026 DR), his name and deeds were largely forgotten. For nearly two centuries Chardansearavitril slumbered in the heart of the Mere, venerated by his cult, rousing himself only to defend his domain against intruders. This drowsy existence ended abruptly in the Year of the Dragon Altar (1202 DR). The power of Myrkul, the Lord of Bones, waxes when the Eye of Myrkul appears in the night sky. This rare celestial event involves the passage of a new moon through a certain ring of seven stars otherwise associated with an old symbol of Mystra. Under the Eye's baleful glare, Chardansearavitril's body collapsed into a heap of bones and drifting dust atop the altar of Myrkul. (Ebodeath survived as a spirit tethered to his physical remains and might linger in that same state today.)

The remaining cultists hailed Ebodeath's sudden transformation as the long-heralded second stage of divine ascension Strongor had foretold. Worshipers of Myrkul flocked to the temple at the heart of the Mere, and the Ebodeath Sect grew strong, awaiting the night when once again the Eye of Myrkul would grace the sky. Over the years, Sect members prepared for the next stage of Chardansearavitril's ascension, in accordance with a series of visions unveiled to their highest ranking priests by the Lord of Bones. In particular, the cultists worked to create *rings of Myrkul*, unholy items the Reaper said would be needed in years to come. However, the Sect collapsed when Myrkul perished in the Time of Troubles, and the Mausoleum sank into the swamp. Fleeing Myrkulites yielded their lives -- and magic rings -- to the monsters of the Mere.

Upon Myrkul's death, the god's avatar exploded high above the Sea of Swords. Much of his might rained down on the waters to slowly collect on the sea floor, and the god's essence survives in the Crown of Horns, but a small fraction of the god's power coalesced atop the waves. This floating patch of bone dust drifted north, and -- perhaps by chance, perhaps by dark design -- recently entered the Mere, where Myrkul's fading power animated a leaderless legion of undead from the countless fallen bodies that lie unburied beneath the dark waters. These "risen dead" displaced many swamp monsters, who've taken to raiding the lands around. Some of the "risen" are Myrkulites who fled the sinking Mausoleum, and many of the *rings of Myrkul* they bore have passed into the possession of others. Those others included the leaders of the Dragon Cult cell in Leilon, who remembered legends about the Mausoleum. They commanded their agents to search for the sunken temple and its dracolich and induced Voaraghamanthar (a black dragon whose settlement in the Mere had greatly worried the cultists but who fortunately seemed approachable) to assist in the search.

Voaraghamanthar gave his aid in exchange for the promise of much treasure and many magic items, including the *Twinned Crown of Yarlith* (a magic crown created by Iniarv in 191 DR and recently discovered by Cult members exploring flooded Mere ruins), which was given to the dragon to seal the bargain.

The Black Brothers

Unknown to the Cult, Voaraghamanthar has an identical twin, Waervaerendor. The brothers have long pretended to be a single being (using only Voaraghamanthar's name in "public"), since this deception provides them with a powerful weapon against foes who think they face but a single dragon.

The Black Brothers were born in a large clutch of eggs in the Mhair jungles. Draconic twins are rare indeed (one typically kills the other in the egg before hatching), but Voaraghamanthar and Waervaerendor share an empathic link that bonds them into an unshakable team. Together the hatchling twins slew their siblings and fled before their parents could in turn destroy them. After many years of lurking in swamps and moors throughout Faerûn, the Brothers found a "home" they deemed fitting and took the Mere of Dead Men as their domain.

The twins were attracted by its isolation (far from traditional black dragon haunts, making lair challengers fewer) and its legends of lost magic and treasure: the hoard of Chardansearavitiol and the treasures of flooded Uthtower and other realms. Writings about treasures lost in the Mere found in tombs they plundered described the *Twin Crowns of Myrmoran*, reputed to have enhanced the empathic bond between the fraternal monarchs of Uthtower and Yarlith and afforded them magical powers. The Brothers saw no reason such powers shouldn't benefit them.

The twins have long striven to increase their power by acquiring magic, specifically spells leading to a means of creating loyal, formidable servitor creatures to serve them as warriors, guardians, and drudges.

Like most dragons beyond youth, thoughts of their own deaths weigh ever more heavily on the brothers, and they've begun -- earlier in life than many wyrms -- to seek immortality energetically. They share the fear that the death of one of them might render the other insane through their empathic link.

Both brothers see undeath (dracolichdom) as a fool's road, doomed to fall shy of immortality and unworthy of consideration. Nevertheless, when approached by the Dragon Cult, they forged an alliance in hopes of gaining lore amid the details of dracolichdom that might provide a means of prolonging their lives and preserving their (living, vigorous) bodies. Cultists are also "useful tools" to spy and work for the twins outside the Mere. They still pretend to be tempted by dracolichdom but are completely insincere about the alliance (and suspect the followers of the Scaly Way are no more true).

On their own, the brothers unearthed a collection of dark sermons probably written by Strongor Bonebag. Reading these sermons (which they've kept secret from the Cult), they've come to believe Chardansearavitiol underwent a process different from that which the Cult uses to create most dracoliches. They also believe the *Twinned Crown of Uthtower*, second of the *Twin Crowns of Myrmoran*, still lies in the Uthtower. Once each brother wears a crown, they presume, they'll command great powers not evident while they have only the Yarlith coronet. Seeking to win both the second crown and Ebondeath's bones without damaging their Cult alliance, the Brothers hope to sway adventurers entering the Mere into securing both for them. Waervaerendor destroyed a Helmite base in ruined Iniarv's Tower and took captives; the brothers intend to bargain their lives for the things they want retrieved -- before the Dragon Cult recovers these treasures. The dragon, calling himself Voaraghamanthar, keeps the Cult's interest and his brother's existence secret from adventurers he bargains with.

Encountering the Wym of the Mere

The Black Brothers see most creatures as food or annoyances to be dealt with efficiently. The exceptions are dragons and heroes (whom they view as "tools too useful to be destroyed out of hand"). The brothers lurk underwater when other dragons are near -- not out of fear but to conceal the fact that they are twins, and because they have utterly no interest in disputes with other dragons . . . unless they try to settle in the Mere.

If heroes approach, Voaraghamanthar typically withdraws, alerting his brother. Waervaerendor habitually shadows and observes them, remaining hidden thanks to his *ring of invisibility*. Against large groups or formidable foes, Waervaerendor might also employ *dust of disappearance* for an opportunity to observe the intruders thoroughly, seeking magic and hidden weapons and abilities.

Once future minions or meals are assessed, Waervaerendor reveals himself in a manner that terrifies and heightens his negotiating advantage. The dragon has a flair for cruel dramatics. If he knows intruders have previously triggered an *Iniarv's unseen voice* in the ruins of Iniarv's Tower, he positions himself behind them and softly asks (mimicking the lich's voice), "Now where did I hide that dragon?" Alternatively, he might circle adventurers on muddy ground, creating footprints that appear "out of thin air."

Once he has made his presence known, Waervaerendor tries to negotiate a deal for the heroes' services. Depending on their reactions, he might or might not become visible, calling himself by his brother's name to sow confusion. Though not easily provoked, Waervaerendor realistically fakes emotional reactions to enhance his negotiating position. The Wyrms of the Mere is ever alert for treachery, fully expecting others to act as he would and preparing accordingly. He is malicious, conniving, and unscrupulous; he employs any tactic that gives him an advantage. Voaraghamanthar's disposition is similar, and he is always close enough to render aid when needed.

If negotiations completely fail to gain him an edge, Waervaerendor fights without hesitation, but -- after demonstrating the folly of fighting him -- tries to resume negotiations. If adventurers don't attack but refuse any deal, the dragon observes aloud that those who do not serve him are simply prey, then proceeds to treat them accordingly until they are defeated or offer to negotiate. The brothers' objectives are to induce adventurers to find and retrieve treasures: magic items and books of magic outside the Mere; valuables submerged in the swamp (magic of the flooded, fallen kingdoms in particular); and what the Mausoleum holds -- the bones of Chardansearavetriol and Ebondeth's hoard. The dragons avoid explaining why they want these things. If pressed for guarantees, Waervaerendor gives his word as bond and acts insulted if more is desired. (If pressed, he'll swear an oath to do as agreed or forfeit his entire hoard to Task, the draconic power of greed and selfishness -- but he will expect the adventurers to swear similar behavior -- binding oaths invoking their own gods.)

The brothers typically bury creatures slain for food and battle captives in the underwater mud at the heart of the Mere, far from prying eyes. The former are left to rot (for such is the favorite fare of black dragons); the latter are stored for use as decoys and bargaining tools. Captives are stripped of magic, armor, and weapons; they are bound, forced to ingest *air spores* (a magic item which grants 2d4 days of breathable air regardless of the surrounding environment), and buried in the muck.

Black Claws Up Close

Both wyrms are experienced in battle, prefer to study opponents beforehand, and like to begin a fray with a clawing, biting pounce, thereafter breathing as often as possible, kicking and tail-slapping as opportunities arise. Each flees if brought to fewer than half hit points. If the other brother is close, either twin tries to entice foes into reach of his sibling's breath weapon.

The brothers prefer aquatic combat to aerial or dry-land fighting and are well versed in drowning foes by beating opponents down into the mire or using grappling to pin opponents under the water. Both dragons are also comfortable fighting perched on stony heights, employing *spider climb* when needed.

When battling another wyrm in the skies, either brother employs his breath weapon to damage a foe's wings, then draws the enemy into the nearest swamp or open water. In water, the brothers use wing buffets to drive huge sprays of (preferably previously corrupted) water at foes. Waervaerendor wears a *ring of invisibility* and a *ring of mind shielding*. In a small pouch strapped to his left rear leg he carries three packets of *dust of disappearance*, six doses of *air spores*, and a *portable hole* (used to ferry treasure and prisoners). Voaraghamanthar wears the *Twinned Crown of Yarlith*. On his left front claw, he wears a *ring of wizardry* (1st-level spells). On his right front claw is a *ring of fire resistance (major)*. He habitually casts *shield* before combat and uses *confusion* to draw foes from cover.

The brothers resent intrusions into their affairs or domain. When they let self-control slip, they fight with unbridled fury. Cunning and amoral, they're never needlessly cruel or destructive. They've little interest in displays of power or acquiring territory, considering discretion the better part of valor and their lives more important than victory.

Waervaerendor is more outgoing, preferring to acquire information face-to-face, while Voaraghamanthar prefers to study and deduce from dusty tomes and ancient ruins. Waervaerendor relishes the hunt more than his twin and is more apt to tackle difficult quarry for the challenge. Both brothers are practiced actors, can read and reason, and thirst for magical knowledge.

Voaraghamanthar and Waervaerendor: Male adult black dragons sorcerer 9; CR 20; Large dragon (water); HD 19d12+76 plus 9d4+36; hp 257; Init +4; Spd 60 ft., swim 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor); AC 27, touch 9, flat-footed 27; Base Atk +19; Grp +29; Atk +28 melee (2d6+6, bite); Full Atk +28 melee (2d6+6, bite) and +26 melee (1d8+3, 2 claws) and +26 melee (1d6+3, 2 wings) and +26 melee (1d8+9, tail slap); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft. (10 ft. with bite); SA breath weapon (80-ft. cone of acid), frightful presence, spell-like abilities, spells; SQ blindsight 60 ft., *corrupt water*, damage reduction 5/magic, darkvision 120 ft., immunities (acid, paralysis, sleep), keen senses, low-light vision, spell resistance 18, water breathing; AL CE; SV Fort +19, Ref +15, Will +20; Str 23, Dex 11, Con 19, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +15, Concentration +21, Diplomacy +19, Hide +20, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Listen +23, Move Silently +24, Search +24, Sense Motive +19, Sleight of Hand +4, Spellcraft +16, Spot +23, Swim +14; Combat Casting, Extend Spell, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Multiattack, Power Attack, Silent Spell, Spell Penetration, Stealthy.

Breath Weapon (Su): Once every 1d4 rounds, Voaraghamanthar and Waervaerendor can breathe an 80-foot line of acid. Each creature in the area takes 12d4 points of acid damage (Reflex DC 23 half).

Frightful Presence (Ex): Whenever Voaraghamanthar or Waerværendor attacks, charges, or flies overhead, each creature in a 180-foot radius that has 18 or fewer HD must make a DC 22 Will save. Failure indicates that the creature is panicked for 4d6 rounds (if it has 4 or fewer HD) or shaken for 4d6 rounds (if it has 5 or more HD).

Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day -- *darkness*. Caster level 12th.

Spells: Voaraghamanthar and Waerværendor can cast spells as 12th-level sorcerers.

Blindsense (Ex): Voaraghamanthar and Waerværendor can pinpoint creatures within a distance of 60 feet. Opponents they can't actually see still have total concealment against them.

Corrupt Water (Sp): Once per day, Voaraghamanthar and Waerværendor can stagnate 10 cubic feet of water within 180 feet, making it become still, foul, and unable to support animal life. The ability spoils liquids containing water. Magic items (such as potions) and items in a creature's possession must succeed on a DC 22 Will save or become fouled. This ability is the equivalent of a 1st-level spell.

Keen Senses (Ex): Voaraghamanthar and Waerværendor can see four times as well as a human in shadowy illumination and twice as well in normal light. They also have darkvision to a range of 120 feet.

Telepathy (Ex): The dragons can communicate with each other within 100 feet using telepathy. In addition, they are constantly aware of each other's emotional state through a limited empathic form of this telepathy, which works as long as they are on the same plane. They've developed enough control to convey simple prearranged messages (such as danger, food, treasure, yes, no, come, and stay away) by mental "flavor" of these empathic messages.

Water Breathing (Ex): Voaraghamanthar and Waerværendor can breathe underwater indefinitely and can freely use their breath weapons, spells, and other abilities while submerged.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/13/7/7/6/5/3; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 -- *dancing lights*, *daze*, *detect magic*, *electric jolt* (*Magic of Faerûn*), *flare*, *ghost sound*, *ray of frost*, *read magic*, *touch of fatigue*; 1st -- *charm person*, *ice dagger* (*Magic of Faerûn*), *shield*, *summon undead I* (*Magic of Faerûn*), *true strike*; 2nd -- *Aganazzar's scorcher* (FRCS), *daze monster*, *death armor* (*Magic of Faerûn*), *eagle's splendor*, *spider climb*; 3rd -- *dispel magic*, *fireball*, *summon undead III* (*Magic of Faerûn*), *vampiric touch*; 4th -- *backlash* (*Magic of Faerûn*), *confusion*, *wall of ice*; 5th -- *shadow hand* (*Magic of Faerûn*), *summon undead V* (*Magic of Faerûn*); 6th -- *fire spiders* (*Magic of Faerûn*).

Skills: Hide, Move Silently, and Swim are considered class skills for black dragons. Voaraghamanthar and Waerværendor can move through water at swim speed without making Swim checks; they have a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard (included), and they always can choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered, and can use the run action while swimming in a straight line.

Zundaerazylym, the "Laughing Wyrn"

(Dragon Magazine #259)

Few have heard of Zundaerazylym, but this last Wyrn of the North (in Volo's researches, at least) should be famous -- or infamous -- from one end of Toril to the other. She's not, however, a seeker of publicity. This ancient steel dragon (called by some a "Greyhawk dragon") has been hiding in human form for years in Neverwinter. She has taken her true shape only to fight off a raiding mage of the Brotherhood of the Arcane -- Aerlandan "Shadowtalons" Mardilaer, whom she tore apart over the Sea of Swords in the Year of the Wave (1364 DR) -- and to devour a pair of wyverns who some forty years earlier made the fatal mistake of deciding to lair in the southernmost Crags.

In her human existence, Zundaerazylym is Amundra Nelaerdra, a plump, gossiping, happy laundress and seamstress who makes stylish everyday gowns and cloaks for the ladies of Neverwinter. She also repairs and cleans all the exotic costumes and flashy garb worn at the Moonstone Mask, the most famous inn, restaurant, and festhall in the City of Skilled Hands.

Nelaerdra is pudgy, stooping, and going gray (in attractive streaks), but Zundaerazylym does spend occasional nights in more attractive human guises, taking the shape of sick or weary lady staffers at the Mask. The owner of the Mask, the sorceress Ophala Cheldarstorn, has led her staff to believe her own spells transform a "skilled but aging courtesan" to take their places. Ophala and Zundaerazylym are firm friends, and the sorceress knows Amundia Nelaerdra's true nature. Ophala aids the steel dragon from time to time with her spells, and she keeps Zundaerazylym's hoard magically hidden in an undisclosed place. It is not buried underground, in the Mask, or in Nelaerdra's Bright Weaves Laundry.

Zundaerazylym often helps out Ophala in return. More than once the "Laughing Laundress of Neverwinter" has smuggled prominent guests out of the Mask in her gigantic baskets of laundry, enabling them to avoid embarrassing confrontations with rivals, murderous foes, spouses, superiors, or admirers. She has also, on several memorable nights, flown important agents and members of the Lords' Alliance out of Neverwinter on her back when they needed to be elsewhere in a hurry.

Zundaerazylym claims no domain, but she considers Neverwinter her territory. She defends it against other dragons who dare to reveal themselves openly and aggressively in or above its streets or try to dominate its folk (rather than dwelling among them as she does). Battle so excites her that she chortles and hoots almost constantly during combat -- hence, her nickname, "the Laughing Wyrn." So far, no one has connected the Laughing Laundress with the Laughing Wyrn . . . but then, there's no reason they should. Amundra Nelaerdra doesn't behave proudly or as if she has secrets apart from the latest juicy gossip.

Zundaerazylym likes adventurers (though she's wary of large mercenary companies and secretive organizations), is wary of unfamiliar wizards, and dislikes blusterers and tyrants -- whether they be children lording it over their fellows in alleys or kings who mistreat their subjects or try to conquer new territory. She often seeks out drunken, brawling, or bullying sailors who have come to port (Luskanites are habitual offenders), or haughty or overly cruel visiting adventurer-mages, and teaches them a lesson. She usually lures them into private places by posing as a flirtatious tavern wench, then changes to dragon form with clashing jaws and wild laughter. Usually Zundaerazylym lets those she has terrified flee unscathed, but she has been known to tear a mage's staff, cloak, and garments away (to remove his magic), or break a sailor's sword-arm and the sword with it.

Zundaerazylym might seem to do no more than take the usual whimsical interest in humans that any steel dragon "gone human" does, but she has more secret schemes and hushed achievements than most dragons can imagine. Zundaerazylym follows a bright dream of her own. She wants dragonkind to live in harmony with humanoids -- perhaps as the champions and defenders of realms peopled and governed by (as she puts it) "the teeming, so-called 'civilized' races." This, she believes, would result in happier, better lives for all. To accomplish this, wyrms have to see themselves as guardians of a common treasure, not "their own" hoards. Rapacious dragons must be slain, and all dragons must find food that is not the creatures they hope to dwell with (or great numbers of these same creatures' livestock). Some dragons will always feel the need to hunt, but hunger mustn't force them to eat their allies, friends, or fellow citizens.

Longbite

The edible fungi that makes cavern-dwelling orcs so energetic, fertile, and hardy is a brown, fissured, rather fuzzy-textured yet crunchy substance that grows in even the coldest, dampest caverns. It needs no light, but it flourishes when light is present and expands at a riotous rate in the presence of volcanic or other heat. Found growing in striations or parallel, horizontal "ridges" on rock walls, it is called *arantym* by the dwarves and (thanks to its appearance) "ripplebark" to humans, though it isn't bark at all. This nut-flavored, woody fungus spreads by means of spores. These spores are harmless to humans; when inhaled or ingested, they simply pass through the body like other wastes, and can thus be carried as humans travel. The spores can consume living or dead



wood, plant material, other fungi, and even airborne nutrients (from mists). Ripplebark can lay dormant for long periods of drought, extreme cold, or lack of nutrition; to remain alive, it needs to "feed" only about every eight years. Scorched or dead ripplebark turns black but is still edible, and it alters disease germs as it absorbs them, rendering them harmless. Orcs thrive on this unexciting but abundant fare.

In her search for a lasting replacement food source for dragons, Zundaerazylym seized on ripplebark and for many years tried to modify or augment it. At length she hit upon a still-secret mixture in which she soaks ripplebark fragments for a month to create what she calls "longbite." (Formally, the substance is known as *routhduin*, which is a word concocted from elven, dwarven and draconic roots, combined to mean something akin to "improved to achieve satiation" or "bettered to be satisfying."

Her process renders the ripplebark able to sustain all but the most terribly wounded or most active dragons for months on a small meal. "Most active" includes those rare dragons who spend a third of their time fighting or hunting. "Small" in this case means a volume of longbite roughly equivalent to the bodies of three average-sized humans.

Zundaerazylym's mixture -- an iridescent syrup -- is known to be predominantly water and include an *elixir of vitality* (a magical draught that removes fatigue, exhaustion, poison, and disease, and sustains the drinker without food and water for seven days), dissolved *air spores* (a magic item that grants 2d4 days of breathable air regardless of the surrounding environment), the sap of oak or ash trees, dissolved pearls and at least a dozen other ingredients, many of which are powdered. Soft Claw agents believe that the ground bones of some creature are one of these and have learned to their cost that the mixture is poisonous if drunk (even sipped sparingly) by elves, half-elves, or humans.

The Laughing Wyrms keeps her agents so busy retrieving large varieties of strange substances for her (some of which are undoubtedly continuing experiments aimed at creating a successful "Softscale Soak," another one of her creations), such as pumice, pine nuts, chicken livers, lamb kidneys, and bulrushes, that no one has been able to set down a definitive ingredient list for "longbite." Zundaerazylym is even known to have made large profits by cornering the market on particular goods, then reselling them in bulk when shortages occur.

Some of her acquisitions -- many of them stored in hidden caverns under the Neverwinter Woods and garrisoned by the Soft Claws -- may not be for alchemical purposes at all.

The Softscale Soak

Not so different in appearance from the current incarnation of the "longbite" mixture, the "Softscale Soak" is an experimental healing and restorative bath for dragons. It is intended to keep the scales supple, the senses keen, and otherwise slow the physical side effects of age, allowing the complete regeneration of sorely wounded dragons. Ingredients of the current Soak, which is thought to have accomplished Zundaerazylym's first and lesser healing aim, are known to include the discarded shells of hatched dragon eggs, as well as dissolved dragon bones and scales (though just what was used to dissolve them, the Laughing Wyrms keeps secret).

At least once, Zundaerazylym has plunged into the heart of an orc horde in the mountain vales and deliberately lingered in battle until badly wounded. She was then snatched back to a disused quarry near Conyberry by the spells of Ophala Cheldarstorn and lowered into a bath of her own preparation. Most of these Soaks failed to do more than soothe her, but the Laughing Wyrms still believes a successful, sovereign healing bath for dragons is possible, if she can just hit upon the right formula for it.

The Dreaming Wyrms (as her agents, the Soft Claws, call her; just to confuse things, they also refer to her as "the Never Wyrms") is quick to say "Dreamers are dangerous," but she's become that most deadly force for change: a being who energetically tries to make her dreams become real. She's set about trying to protect civilization in the Sword Coast North and create the alternative food source she deems necessary.

Protecting Civilization

Zundaerazylym sees two great dangers to the North: the harsh climate and orc hordes. The first must be endured (magical attempts to meddle with the weather, in her opinion, lead only to disasters), but the Dreaming Wyrms believes she can do something about the orc problem.

Orcs are fecund; and periodically they grow too numerous for their homes in the labyrinthine mountain-heart caverns of the North. When this happens, they boil forth and sweep down on all surface settlements and creatures in their path, pushing onward (usually south, toward warmer, more lush lands) until they are eventually destroyed, leaving great destruction in their wake.

What if the most evil, hungry, and aggressive dragons held lairs in the path of the emerging orc hordes, so that the one would be forced to fight the other? Somehow such dragons must be manipulated into relocating their lairs in the right places. Zundaerazylym tries to do this through her agents, the Soft Claws, with carefully planted legends and rumors about lost dragon hoards and vacant dragon lairs that slowly confer magical powers to wyrms who dwell in them.

The Soft Claws

To gain materials for her immersion projects, to keep watch on orc populations, and to gather information on the whereabouts and deeds of dragons throughout western Faerûn, Zundaerazylym needs a band of capable but nondescript undercover agents. She began recruiting such from the ranks of local traders, woodcarvers, and failed adventurers some forty years ago, and the dedicated folk she is pleased to call her Soft Claws now number over sixty humans, elves, halflings, and half-elves. These agents operate as far east as Suzail and as far south as Baldur's Gate.

The Laughing Wyrms suspects there are both Heralds and Harpers in the Soft Claws, but she worries more about infiltration by the Cult of the Dragon, the Arcane Brotherhood, or mages bent on gaining power over dragons. This concern has deepened in recent years, since more than one of her agents have gone missing -- and their *nevertokens* with them. *Nevertokens* are magical recognition badges carried by all Soft Claws, given to them by Zundaerazylym. She has a cache of identical items, for the entire cache of Halruaan family trading-tokens was given to her in the Year of the Watching Cold (1320 DR) by Ensible Mritavvalan, the dying last member of that family.

The Soft Claws have many duties beyond spying and fetching. They try to "relocate" active dragons by improving or even creating lair-caverns in desired locales (remote northern mountains; perilously close to orc colonies); daringly planting maps (usually in the packsacks of "recovered treasure") near known dragon lairs; or even posing as adventurers and using farhailing spells to talk to one another about rich dragon lairs they're heading for, so that a dragon in its lair "accidentally" overhears them. They also plant rumors in the ranks of the Cult of the Dragon to manipulate the activities of that evil organization.

Some prominent members of the northern society are Soft Claws. Bruldin Oldturret (NG male human Ftr6) is a trader of plain appearance, stolid expression, and wide knowledge of northern forest trails and backlands. Tamaer Shiversword (CG male half-elf Ftr9) is a flamboyant failed adventurer with a knack for mimicry and a love of pranks, bold gambles, and disguises. Jhavaerra Erbrand (CG female human Rog4) is a well-traveled "finder" or talent scout for the Mask who serves the Claws by establishing trading contacts among merchants in distant cities, gathering information on dragons and the Dragon Cult, and so on. Finally, Iorl Skyndul (CG male human Rog6) is a Calishite thief, smuggler, and fence of stolen goods who delights in all the minor magics Zundaerazylym has given him over the years and the deceptions he can accomplish using them.

The Soft Claws use the Moonstone Mask as their primary covert rallying place and regard the Laughing Wyrms as a kindly mother. This is fitting, when one considers that she nurses them back to health, occasionally comes winging to their rescue, arranges careers for them, and dispenses advice as well as unofficial salaries. These payments come irregularly but often; Zundaerazylym is never short of money thanks to her trading acumen, the efforts of the Claws on her behalf, and the legacy left to her by the last of the Mritavvalans, whom she rescued from family foes and guarded for the last three decades of his life. She always has time to sit with her agents and discuss their own dreams and goals.

Nevertokens

The origin of these family tokens is now unknown. Many early Halruaan families possessed similar devices, but newer families have none. Elder families now either profess no knowledge of such things, or simply ignore queries regarding the items. All of Zundaerazylym's *nevertokens* appear as identical, glossy-smooth, silvery blue, four-pointed metal stars. Each is 1-inch thick and about 4-inches across from point to point. They're lighter than their volume suggests, pierced in the center to allow a neckchain or keepstrap to be passed through them, and their points and edges are rolled and blunt. They are constructed of an unknown alloy that is extremely durable and resistant to damage. In fact, it's hard to mark a *nevertoken* with anything short of a forge hammer; when broken, a token typically bursts into a harmless flaring flame and falls to dust in seconds. All *nevertokens* are protected by a *blueshine* treatment (see *Magic of Faerûn*), and all emit a pleasant four-tone metallic chord, like a quartet of bells, when struck (a property difficult to fake without careful spellwork).

Nevertokens constantly function as a *glove of storing*, *ring of feather falling*, and *ring of mind shielding*. All other *nevertoken* powers function when the item is grasped with bare flesh and a power is willed into action (a standard action). Handling a token doesn't yield any hint of its abilities; Zundaerazylym instructs her agents in token powers, yielding information about the strongest abilities only when she comes to trust a particular Soft Claw.

Each of the listed powers can be used once per day. The tokens are known to have the following powers (they may have more, but the dragon has not revealed them):

sending

teleport

trace nevertoken -- as *know direction*, except pointing to the nearest *nevertoken*.

Strong conjuration; CL 9th; Craft Wondrous Item, *feather fall*, *know direction*, *nondetection*, *sending*, *shrink item*, *teleport*; Price 67,000 gp; Weight 1 lb.

Zundaerazylym: Female ancient steel dragon; CR 15; Huge dragon (air); HD 31d12+186; hp 387; Init +4; Spd 60 ft., swim 30 ft., fly 200 ft. (poor); AC 38, touch 8, flat-footed 38; Base Atk +31; Grp +48; Atk +38 melee (2d8+9, bite); Full Atk +38 melee (2d8+9, bite) and +33 melee (2d6+4, 2 claws) and +33 melee (1d8+4, 2 wings) and +33 melee (2d6+13, tail slap); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 (15 ft. with bite); SA breath weapon (100-ft. line of corrosive or poisonous gas), crush 2d8+13, frightful presence, spell-like abilities, spells; SQ blindsight 60 ft., damage reduction 20/magic, darkvision 120 ft., immunities (paralysis, sleep), keen senses, major arcane shield, minor arcane shield, poison resistance, spell resistance 34; AL LN; SV Fort +23, Ref +19, Will +23; Str 29, Dex 10, Con 23, Int 25, Wis 23, Cha 20.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +21, Concentration +30, Craft (alchemy) +23, Diplomacy +25, Escape Artist +10, Gather Information +7, Heal +11, Hide -8, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (arcana) +41, Knowledge (geography) +17, Knowledge (history) +17, Knowledge (nature) +17, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +12, Knowledge (North -- local) +22, Listen +38, Perform (act) +21, Profession (laundress) +8, Profession (seamstress) +8, Search +39, Sense Motive +28, Spellcraft +27, Spot +40, Swim +17, Use Magic Device +39; Brew Potion, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Craft Wondrous Item, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Magical Artisan (Craft Wondrous Item), Power Attack, Snatch, Spell Focus (Enchantment), Spell Penetration.

Breath Weapon (Su): Once every 1d4 rounds, Zundaerazylym can breathe a 100-foot line of acidic gas or a 100-ft. line of poisonous gas. Each creature in the area of the acidic gas takes 10d6 points of acid damage (Reflex DC 31 half). The poisonous gas is inhaled, Fortitude DC 31, initial and secondary damage 10 Con.

Crush (Ex): Whenever Zundaerazylym flies or jumps, she can land on opponents as a standard action, using her whole body to crush them. Her crush attack affects Small or smaller opponents within a 15-foot-by-15-foot area. Each potentially affected creature must succeed on a DC 31 Reflex save or be pinned, automatically taking 2d8+13 points of bludgeoning damage during the next round unless the dragon moves off. If Zundaerazylym chooses to maintain the pin, treat it as a normal grapple attack. Pinned opponents take damage from the crush each round if they don't escape.

Frightful Presence (Ex): Whenever Zundaerazylym attacks, charges, or flies overhead, each creature in a 300-foot radius that has 30 or fewer HD must make a DC 30 Will save. Failure indicates that the creature is panicked for 4d6 rounds (if it has 4 or fewer HD) or shaken for 4d6 rounds (if it has 5 or more HD).

Spell-Like Abilities: 5/day -- *polymorph*; 1/day -- *charm person* (DC 16), *enthrall* (DC 17), *mass suggestion* (DC 21), *suggestion* (DC 18). Caster level 19th.

Spells: Zundaerazylym casts spells as a 19th-level sorcerer.

Blindsense (Ex): Zundaerazylym can pinpoint creatures within a distance of 60 feet. Opponents she can't actually see still have total concealment against her.

Keen Senses (Ex): Zundaerazylym can see four times as well as a human in shadowy illumination and twice as well in normal light. She also has darkvision to a range of 120 feet.

Minor Arcane Shield (Su): Zundaerazylym gets a +10 bonus to her SR against 1st- and 2nd-level arcane spells.

Moderate Arcane Shield (Su): Zundaerazylym gets a +10 bonus to her SR against 3rd- and 4th-level arcane spells.

Poison Resistance: Zundaerazylym gets a +10 racial bonus on Fortitude saves against poison.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/8/7/7/7/6/6/6/4; save DC 15 + spell level or 16 + spell level for enchantment spells): 0 -- *dancing lights*, *daze*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*, *message*, *read magic*, *resistance*, *touch of fatigue*; 1st -- *charm person*, *Horizikaul's boom* (*Magic of Faerûn*), *identify*, *know protections*, *sleep*; 2nd -- *Balagarn's iron horn* (*Magic of Faerûn*), *cloud of bewilderment* (*Magic of Faerûn*), *eagle's splendor*, *resist energy*; 3rd -- *deep slumber*, *healing touch* (*Magic of Faerûn*), *hold person*, *lightning bolt*; 4th -- *charm monster*, *Darsson's potion* (*Magic of Faerûn*), *spell enhancer* (*Magic of Faerûn*), *Tirumael's energy spheres* (*Magic of Faerûn*); 5th -- *feeblemind*, *Grimwald's greymantle*, *shadow hand* (*Magic of Faerûn*), *teleport*; 6th -- *analyze dweomer*, *greater dispel magic*, *hardening* (*Magic of Faerûn*); 7th -- *delayed blast fireball*, *mass hold person*, *Zajimarn's ice claw prison*; 8th -- *great shout*, *iron body*, *power word stun*; 9th -- *dominate monster*, *foresight*.

Zundaerazylym's Fate

The ambitious dreams pursued by the Laughing Wyrms, along with her spying on nearby dragons, seem likely to lead her into disaster. Most evil dragons will slay or capture her to gain her longbite secrets if they learn of them, and for Zundaerazylym's schemes to come to fruition, she must sooner or later reveal longbite to all dragons. Even if this is somehow accomplished so quickly and widely that one dragon can't gain an advantage over another, the Laughing Wyrms and her comparatively puny force of Soft Claws will still be

faced with the problem of a dragon -- or the Cult of the Dragon (in the face of a crushing blow to their influence over dragons) -- moving enthusiastically to try to control most of the easily reached ripplebark.

Even hints of a partially successful Softscale Soak would spell the same peril for Zundaerazylym. The Soft Claws know they are in for a dangerous ride in the years ahead -- and more than one of them knows what Zundaerazylym only suspects: Certain Harpers, and probably some of the Chosen, know of the Laughing Wurm's activities. They might at any time choose to act against her or sweep in to seize what she has crafted.

Zundaerazylym knows of the increasing danger and seems to sense her remaining time might be short. With increasing daring, she is seeking out passing adventurers to carry her secrets to other places and custodians of lore, notably Candlekeep. Her gamble is a long shot indeed. If she succeeds, however, Faerûn will be changed forever . . . and that's more than many tyrants or gods accomplish.



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Ed Greenwood's Wyrms of the North column ran from Dragon 230 through Dragon 259, detailing over two dozen unique dragons of Faerûn. These articles reprise the originals but include game statistics for the new version of D&D.

To use this supplement, a Dungeon Master also needs the *Player's Handbook*™, the *Dungeon Master's Guide*™, and the *Monster Manual*™.

A player needs only the *Player's Handbook*.



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