

GURPS®

Fourth Edition

DUNGEON FANTASY MONSTERSTM 4 DRAGONS



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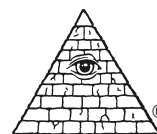
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*But it is one thing to read about dragons and
another to meet them.*

– Ursula K. Le Guin, A Wizard of Earthsea

ABOUT GURPS

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Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the **GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition**. Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.

INTRODUCTION

Boss monsters, like dragons, are meant to challenge the entire party all on their own. They can be superlative in every category!

– *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 2: Dungeons*

Dragons feature so prominently in myth, legend, literature, and games that they don't *need* an introduction. While not necessarily the ultimate combatants – the source material is full of victorious dragon-slayers, too – they're challenging opponents with a legitimate claim to the epithet "king of the monsters," at least among flesh-and-blood creatures (all bets are off if you include beings from other dimensions and Things From Beyond Time And Space). Yet *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* has had no "official" stats for them . . . until now.

What *does* need an introduction is *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 4: Dragons*. This isn't a cyclopedia of mythical dragons from myriad cultures; for that, get *GURPS Dragons*. Rather, it's a guide to the great wyrms found in fantasy settings where rogues, warriors, and wizards hack and slash their way to wealth and power. Challenging delvers takes a special kind of dragon – as violent and varied as the adventurers themselves – and *that* is the focus of this work.

*One dragon put down,
one bag of gold.*

– Bowen,
in DragonHeart (1996)

PUBLICATION HISTORY

This is the first edition of *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 4: Dragons*. It starts with the dragon stats found in the *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game*, adapts them to *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy*, and adds new abilities and options. No text comes from *GURPS Dragons*, despite the similarity in subject matter.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sean Punch set out to become a particle physicist in 1985 and ended up as *GURPS* Line Editor in 1995. In that capacity, he has written, edited, or contributed to some 150 *GURPS* releases, revised the game into its fourth edition (2004), and been a regular contributor to *Pyramid* magazine. From 2008, he has served as the lead creator of the *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* series, which led to his design of the *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game*, released in 2017. Sean has been a gamer since 1979, but devotes most of his spare time to Argentine tango (and occasionally tending bar). He lives in Montréal, Québec.

READING DRAGON STATS

The dragons in *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 4: Dragons* use the stats format established on p. 21 of *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 2: Dungeons* and in earlier *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Monsters* volumes. Character-point values are absent because this isn't a handbook of Allies or Alternate Forms, and because building complicated abilities using advantages would fill space better used to describe monsters.

ST, DX, IQ, HT, HP, Will, Per, FP, Speed, and Move: Basic attributes and secondary characteristics mean exactly what they do for heroes and every other creature in *GURPS*. Dragons often have impressively high scores, but need no special exceptions.

SM: Affects all rolls to hit the dragon. Dragon magic permits a dragon to pay the energy cost for an SM 0 subject when casting spells *on itself*; other casters multiply costs for Regular spells by (1 + SM), as usual. The stats *already* reflect further effects, such as increased reach.

Dodge and Parry: Active defenses are prefigured from Basic Speed and combat skills.

DR: Total DR from natural and supernatural sources. Dragons could in theory wear heavy, costly armor, but in practice almost never do. Many are spellcasters with lots of energy, though, and can cast the Armor spell at no extra cost . . .

Attacks: Listed by attack name. For bites, claws, and other strikes – and for breath attacks – the number in parentheses is effective skill. Damage scores are *final*, and already consider bonuses for Brawling skill, natural weapons (Claws, Striker, Teeth, etc.), and so on.

Traits: Advantages or disadvantages important in dungeon fantasy. For brevity's sake, DR and attacks aren't listed a second time, and "color" traits don't appear at all. Dragons vary widely, and the GM is free to add abilities, additional Languages, and minor color as the encounter requires.

Skills: Minimum skills for a dragon of this type. Dragons live forever and can learn *any* skill at *any* level; the GM is welcome to add anything the scenario calls for.

Class: Dragons are *Mundane* – they are living and free-willed, and have vital areas. Despite their extensive magical powers, they aren't considered "magical" or "extradimensional" creatures for the purposes of being repelled, summoned, banished, etc. They're too intelligent to manipulate with Animal spells; use Mind Control, at the usual energy multiplier for SM. They can be as good or as evil as anybody else, but unlike demons, evil ones aren't intrinsically "truly evil," where that influences what affects them.

Notes: Anything else of importance – including exceptions to listed stats or these guidelines.

CHAPTER ONE

YER BASIC

DRAGONS

Physical descriptions of dragons in myth and legend differ from one saga to the next, and from culture to culture, but the “classic” *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* monster resembles a winged lizard with an arsenal of natural weapons: fangs, a spiny frill (“horns”), four clawed feet, and powerful wings and tail. All such creatures exhale *something* harmful. And thick scales and an equally tough membrane over the eyes offer a respectable defense.

But though the dragons delvers most often encounter share the same general shape, they vary widely in every other respect!

Dragons can have any of several breath weapons, with acid, cold, poison, and other noxious effects being as likely as flame; see Chapter 2. They exhibit a bewildering variety of special abilities, which are discussed in Chapter 3. Last but certainly not least, they come in a range of sizes, which is what *this* chapter is organized around. To prepare a dragon encounter, choose a size below and then use the later chapters to customize.

At each step, bear in mind that dragons never die of old age and *never stop growing*. A youth in a line of colossi might outsize an elder of a smaller subspecies – but *within* a lineage, older dragons are always larger, boasting higher ST, HP, DR, SM, and damage. And with age comes wisdom; dragon IQ increases over time.

Dragons are otherwise as unpredictable as adventurers – be creative! Breath weapons and special abilities aren’t tied to size, age, or bloodline. Parents, siblings, and offspring could be almost nothing alike.

Small Dragon

A young member of a bloodline that grows large, or a mature member of a lesser lineage. Small *relative to dragons*, but still huge from a delver’s viewpoint!

| | | |
|-----------------|------------------|------------------------------|
| ST: 25 | HP: 25 | Speed: 6.75 |
| DX: 12 | Will: 12 | Move: 6 (Air Move 13) |
| IQ: 12 | Per: 14 | |
| HT: 15 | FP: 15 | SM: +3 |
| Dodge: 9 | Parry: 10 | DR: 3 |

A necessary monster.

– Jorge Luis Borges,
*The Book of
Imaginary Beings*

Bite (14): 2d+3 cutting. Reach C, 1.

Breath (14): Choose a breath weapon from Chapter 2. This is *usually* a 2-yard-radius area effect that inflicts standard damage for its type or a standard 1-yard-wide × 10-yard-long cone that inflicts 2d+2 damage. Costs 2 FP per use, with no recharge time or limit on uses/day. See *Area and Spreading Attacks* (pp. B413-414) to handle this in combat. All breath weapons inflict *Large-Area Injury* (p. B400).

Front Claw (14): 2d+3 cutting. Reach C-2.

Hind Claw (12): 2d+4 cutting. Reach C-2.

Horns (14): 2d+3 cutting. Treat as weapon, not as body part, both to attack and parry! Reach C, 1.

Tail (12): 2d+4 crushing or double that for knockback only (no damage). Reach C-3.

Wing (14): 2d+3 crushing or double that for knockback only (no damage). Reach C-3.

Traits: Bad Grip 2; Extra Attack 1; Extra Legs (Four Legs); Flight (Winged); High Pain Threshold; Horizontal; Immunity to Disease; Loner (12); Nictitating Membrane 3; Night Vision 9; Penetrating Voice; Peripheral Vision; Temperature Tolerance 6 (5°F to 150°F); Unfazeable.

Skills: Brawling-14; Diplomacy-12; Fast-Talk-12; Innate Attack (Breath)-14; Tactics-12.

Class: Mundane.

Notes: Can attack *twice*, using each natural weapon just once; see *How Many Weapons?* (p. 16). See Chapter 3 for possible special abilities. Dragon body parts are *valuable*. Roll against Survival to remove scales, horns, etc.; success salvages parts worth \$1d×2,000, weighing 3 lbs. per \$100 of value (the GM may require PCs who desire dragonhide armor to bring back at least the weight of such armor). Success at Thaumatology allows a Surgery roll to extract magical organs worth *another* \$1d×2,000 but weighing just 0.3 lb. per \$100 of value.

Medium Dragon

A “typical” dragon, if there is such a thing – a boss monster that could wipe out ill-prepared adventurers.

| | | |
|------------------|------------------|------------------------------|
| ST: 35 | HP: 35 | Speed: 7.25 |
| DX: 14 | Will: 14 | Move: 6 (Air Move 14) |
| IQ: 14 | Per: 16 | |
| HT: 15 | FP: 15 | SM: +4 |
| Dodge: 10 | Parry: 11 | DR: 6 |

Bite (16): 4d+2 impaling. Reach C, 1.

Breath (16): Choose a breath weapon from Chapter 2. This is *usually* a 3-yard-radius area effect that inflicts standard damage for its type *or* a standard 1-yard-wide × 10-yard-long cone that inflicts 4d-1 damage. Costs 2 FP per use, with no recharge time or limit on uses/day. See *Area and Spreading Attacks* (pp. B413-414) to handle this in combat. All breath weapons inflict *Large-Area Injury* (p. B400).

Front Claw (16): 4d+2 cutting *or* impaling. Reach C-3.

Hind Claw (14): 4d+3 cutting *or* impaling. Reach C-3.

Horns (16): 4d+2 cutting. Treat as weapon, not as body part, both to attack and parry! Reach C, 1.

Tail (14): 4d+3 crushing *or* double that for knockback only. Reach C-4.

Wing (16): 4d+2 crushing *or* double that for knockback only. Reach C-4.

Traits: Bad Grip 2; Enhanced Move 0.5 (Air Speed 21); Extra Attack 2; Extra Legs (Four Legs); Flight (Winged); High Pain Threshold; Horizontal; Immunity to Disease; Loner (12); Nictitating Membrane 6; Night Vision 9; Penetrating Voice; Peripheral Vision; Temperature Tolerance 6 (5°F to 150°F); Unfazeable.

Skills: Brawling-16; Diplomacy-14; Fast-Talk-14; Innate Attack (Breath)-16; Tactics-14.

Class: Mundane.

Notes: Can attack *three times*, using use each natural weapon just once; see *How Many Weapons?* (p. 16). See Chapter 3 for possible special abilities. *Double* the value of body parts relative to a small dragon (p. 4).

Large Dragon

An epic monster! Delvers would have to be powerful, well-equipped, and well-organized to stand a chance.

| | | |
|------------------|------------------|------------------------------|
| ST: 50 | HP: 50 | Speed: 7.25 |
| DX: 14 | Will: 16 | Move: 6 (Air Move 14) |
| IQ: 16 | Per: 18 | |
| HT: 15 | FP: 15 | SM: +5 |
| Dodge: 10 | Parry: 11 | DR: 9 |

Bite (16): 5d+6 impaling. Reach C, 1.

Breath (16): Choose a breath weapon from Chapter 2. This is *usually* a 4-yard-radius area effect that inflicts standard damage for its type *or* a standard 1-yard-wide × 10-yard-long cone that inflicts 5d+2 damage. Costs 2 FP per use, with no recharge time or limit on uses/day. See *Area and Spreading Attacks* (pp. B413-414) to handle this in combat. All breath weapons inflict *Large-Area Injury* (p. B400).



Front Claw (16): 5d+6 cutting *or* impaling. Reach C-5.
Hind Claw (14): 5d+7 cutting *or* impaling. Reach C-5.
Horns (16): 5d+6 cutting. Treat as weapon, not as body part, both to attack and parry! Reach C, 1.
Tail (14): 5d+7 crushing *or* double that for knockback only. Reach C-6.
Wing (16): 5d+6 crushing *or* double that for knockback only. Reach C-6.

Traits: Bad Grip 2; Enhanced Move 0.5 (Air Speed 21); Extra Attack 3; Extra Legs (Four Legs); Flight (Winged); High Pain Threshold; Horizontal; Immunity to Disease; Loner (12); Nictitating Membrane 9; Night Vision 9; Penetrating Voice; Peripheral Vision; Temperature Tolerance 6 (5°F to 150°F); Unfazeable.

*There
is no limit
to the age,
intelligence,
or size of
dragons.*

Skills: Brawling-16; Diplomacy-16; Fast-Talk-16; Innate Attack (Breath)-16; Tactics-16.

Class: Mundane.

Notes: Can attack *four times*, using each natural weapon just once; see *How Many Weapons?* (p. 16). See Chapter 3 for possible special abilities. *Quadruple* the value of body parts relative to a small dragon (p. 4).

Gargantuan Dragon

A near-godlike monster, perhaps actually worshipped as a god – or feared as a demon lord – by the locals. Even ridiculously overpowered delvers might want to negotiate (or use guile) rather than stand and fight.

| | | |
|------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| ST: 75 | HP: 75 | Speed: 7.25 |
| DX: 14 | Will: 18 | Move: 6 |
| IQ: 18 | Per: 20 | (Air Move 14) |
| HT: 15 | FP: 15 | SM: +6 |
| Dodge: 10 | Parry: 11 | DR: 12 |

Bite (16): 8d+9 impaling. Reach C, 1.

Breath (16): Choose a breath weapon from Chapter 2. This is *usually* a 5-yard-radius area effect that inflicts standard damage for its type *or* a standard 1-yard-wide × 10-yard-long cone that inflicts 8d+2 damage. Costs 2 FP per use, with no recharge time or limit on uses/day. See *Area and Spreading Attacks* (pp. B413-414) to handle this in combat. All breath weapons inflict *Large-Area Injury* (p. B400).

Front Claw (16): 8d+9 cutting *or* impaling. Reach C-7.

Hind Claw (14): 8d+10 cutting *or* impaling. Reach C-7.

Horns (16): 8d+9 cutting. Treat as weapon, not as body part, both to attack and parry! Reach C, 1.

Tail (14): 8d+10 crushing *or* double that for knockback only. Reach C-8.

Wing (16): 8d+9 crushing *or* double that for knockback only. Reach C-8.

Traits: Bad Grip 2; Enhanced Move 0.5 (Air Speed 21); Extra Attack 4; Extra Legs (Four Legs); Flight (Winged); High Pain Threshold; Horizontal; Immunity to Disease; Loner (12); Nictitating Membrane 12; Night Vision 9; Penetrating Voice; Peripheral Vision; Temperature Tolerance 6 (5°F to 150°F); Unfazeable.

Skills: Brawling-16; Diplomacy-18; Fast-Talk-18; Innate Attack (Breath)-16; Tactics-18.

Class: Mundane.

Notes: Can attack *five times*, using each natural weapon just once; see *How Many Weapons?* (p. 16). See Chapter 3 for possible special abilities. *Eight times* the value of body parts relative to a small dragon (p. 4).

EVEN BIGGER?

There's no limit to dragon size, but anything bigger than a gargantuan dragon (below) is unlikely to escape the violence of the worst of monsters: Civilization. Even orcs and elves might cooperate to slay it! Yet dragons famously sleep for eons, dungeons are deep, and delvers may *be* Civilization's agents. For the GM who wants "super-gargantuans":

SM: +7 or more!

ST and HP: Add +5 to SM, find the sum in the "Size" column of the *Size and Speed/Range Table* (p. B550), and use *half* "Linear Measurement"; e.g., SM +7 gives ST/HP 100, while SM +8 gives ST/HP 150.

IQ: If size reflects old age, IQ can be up to 6 + (2×SM); e.g., SM +7 implies maximum IQ 20, while SM +8 makes that IQ 22. Will, and IQ-based skills, won't be lower than IQ; Per is at least IQ+2.

DR: This is 3×(SM - 2); e.g., SM +7 gives DR 15, while SM +8 gives DR 18. Nictitating Membrane level equals DR.

Physical Attacks: Bite, front claw, horn, and wing attacks do thrust-1 damage, +1 per die for Brawling; e.g., SM +7 does 11d+10, while SM +8 inflicts 16d+15. Hind claw and tail attacks do +1 damage relative to this.

Reach: A fixed C, 1 for bites and horns. For all claws, the range is C to the size of the bonus for SM under *Size Modifier and Reach* (p. B402); e.g., SM +7 gives reach C-10, while SM +8 gives reach C-15. Tail and wing attacks get +1 to maximum reach relative to this.

Breath: Area-effect breath weapons have standard damage but a radius of (SM - 1) yards, while cones have standard size but do thrust damage; e.g., SM +7 means a 6-yard-radius cloud or an 11d cone, while SM +8 means a 7-yard-radius cloud or a 16d cone.

Extra Attack: Level equals (SM - 2); e.g., SM +7 means Extra Attack 5 (six attacks), while SM +8 means Extra Attack 6 (seven attacks).

Body-Parts Value: Find SM in "Size" on the *Size and Speed/Range Table*, divide the "Linear Measurement" value by 7, square the result, drop fractions, and read this as a multiplier relative to a small dragon; e.g., SM +7 gives 18× value, while SM +8 gives 51×.

DX, HT, FP, Speed, Move, active defenses, damage types, and DX- and HT-based skill levels are as for a gargantuan dragon. Bigger dragons usually have more or better special abilities from Chapter 3, however.

CHAPTER TWO

DRAGON'S BREATH

While dragons traditionally breathe flame, there's no shortage of tavern tales telling of wyrms that exhale other harmful effects. Most dragons have just one such weapon, but there are exceptions. Being able to blast enemies with multiple substances is well within the realm of special dragon abilities, and downright common among dragons with Extra Head, who *often* breathe different stuff from each mouth.

What keeps dragons from destroying the world with their breath weapons is the effort required: Each use costs 2 FP. The GM may reduce or eliminate this as a special dragon ability, but that will make the dragon *much* more powerful. A compromise might be to give dragons Energy Reserve (Breath) for their breath, or to let dragons with Energy Reserve (Magical) spend that.

Dragon's breath comes in two basic forms: *clouds* and *cones*. In all cases, it inflicts *Large-Area Injury* (p. B400) – although some substances don't interact with DR at all, making this moot.

*Out of his mouth go burning
lamps, and sparks of fire leap out.*

– Job 41:19

CLOUDS

Some breath weapons are roughly circular clouds that appear directly in front of the dragon's head. Handle them as *Area-Effect Attacks* (p. B413) with a radius equal to the dragon's (SM - 1) in yards – i.e., radius is two yards for a small dragon (SM +3), three yards for a medium dragon (SM +4), four yards for a large dragon (SM +5), five yards for a gargantuan dragon (SM +6).

If height matters, treat the cloud as a cylinder with height equal to *twice* radius if, as is common when fighting foes who can't fly, it's breathed at the ground. If the dragon exhales the stuff in the air, read radius as describing a sphere. For instance, a four-yard cloud forms a cylinder four yards in radius and eight yards high if bounced off a floor, but a four-yard-radius sphere if puffed at a flying foe.

Cloud damage *doesn't* normally increase with a dragon's SM. It remains fixed while the area of effect gets bigger, letting the dragon do the same damage

to more foes. The GM is free to make exceptions; see *Clouding the Issue* (p. 8).

In all cases, the effect persists for one second and then dissipates. Nobody is affected more than once by a given cloud. But if the dragon breathes again, that's a *new* cloud – apply the effects another time!

Acid

Everyone within an acid cloud is considered immersed in acid for one second, taking 1d-1 corrosion damage. As this is large-area injury (p. B400), *all* armor risks losing DR (*Corrosion*, p. B379) and the *face* is considered immersed, requiring a HT roll to avoid eye damage (*Acid*, p. B428).

Even if the GM is fond of increasing damage for clouds in general, the special effects can make that overpowered here! In any case, Essential Acid (**GURPS Magic**, p. 192) or alkahest (**Magic**, p. 220) is as strong as acid can be, limiting damage to 2d-1 corrosion.

Intrinsic Defense: Double the dragon's DR vs. acid.

Frost

A swirling cloud of ice motes. Everyone caught within it takes 2d-2 burning damage as large-area injury (p. B400). This is due to extreme cold, and won't set fires – but roll vs. HT at -1 per 2 points of penetrating damage or be paralyzed (encased in ice) for (20 - HT) minutes, minimum 1 minute, unless thawed with magic before then.

Intrinsic Defense: Double the dragon's DR vs. cold/ice and shift the dragon's temperature comfort zone to -25°F to 120°F.

Intrinsic Defenses

A dragon is perforce resistant or immune to the stuff it exhales – after all, the effect emanates from its *mouth*, right in front of its snout and eyes, and is liable to engulf it in close quarters! To reflect this, each breath weapon comes with DR or other protective traits against that substance. The GM who invents new kinds of dragon's breath should complement each with protection of this kind. All such "intrinsic defenses" are cumulative with the dragon's baseline stats and – in the case of multiple breath weapons – each other.

Incendiary

A swirling cloud of flames and fiery embers, similar to the Fire Cloud spell (*GURPS Magic*, p. 75). Everyone caught within it takes 2d-2 burning damage as large-area injury (p. B400). Enough damage can set fires (*Making Things Burn*, p. B433).

Intrinsic Defense: Double the dragon's DR vs. heat/fire.

Poison (Gas)

Everyone within the cloud is exposed to *respiratory* poison. Those who breathe must roll vs. HT. Success means 1d HP of injury; failure means 2d HP of injury. Anyone who loses

1/2 or more of their HP this way is coughing (-3 to DX, -1 to IQ, and cannot use Stealth) until injury is healed above that threshold. This gas doesn't affect those with Doesn't Breathe or Immunity to Poison. Resistant to Poison grants its bonus to the HT roll. DR has no effect!

Intrinsic Defense: Dragon gains Immunity to Poison.

Poison (Mist)

Everyone within the cloud is exposed to *contact* poison and must roll vs. HT. Success means 1d HP of injury; failure means 2d HP of injury. This mist cannot injure those with Immunity to Poison or Sealed. Resistant to Poison grants its bonus to the HT roll. Doesn't Breathe and Filter Lungs (and holding one's breath) are ineffective, and DR has no effect!

Intrinsic Defense: Dragon gains Immunity to Poison.

Spark

This resembles a miniature thundercloud, crackling with lightning, like a Spark Cloud spell (*GURPS Magic*, p. 196). Everyone within takes 2d-2 burning damage as large-area injury (p. B400) – and wearing *any* metal armor *anywhere* means having DR 1 against it, if that would be worse. This cannot set fires, but anyone wounded must make a HT roll at -1 per 2 HP suffered or be stunned, rolling against HT each turn thereafter to recover.

Intrinsic Defense: Double the dragon's DR vs. electricity.

Steam

Everyone within the steam takes 2d-2 burning damage as large-area injury (p. B400). This cannot set fires but will *extinguish* ordinary fires: candles, lanterns, torches, flaming arrows, etc. The steam is at high pressure; *double* the damage roll and assess knockback (p. B378) for that much crushing damage, away from the dragon. For instance, someone who suffered 6 points of burning would take knockback for a 12-point crushing attack, meaning that at ST 14 or less, they'd be pushed away and possibly fall.

Intrinsic Defense: Double the dragon's DR vs. heat- (but *not* fire-) and water-based attacks.

Vacuum

The dragon sucks all the air *out* of the area – while not strictly a cloud, dust, smoke, and other particles will give the impression of one. Air rushes back in with a sharp clap, and everyone within the area takes 1d-2 HP of injury (minimum 1 HP); DR has no effect.

CLOUDING THE ISSUE

Whereas cone-type breath weapons are usually narrow, letting the GM show more – or less! – mercy to individual delvers, clouds often affect *the whole party*. Making these less or more deadly offers a way to fine-tune dragon encounters to specific groups of heroes.

Less-Lethal Clouds

Reducing injury is trivial: Cut a frost, incendiary, spark, or steam cloud to 1d-1 damage; have acid count as a splash (1d-3) instead of immersion; make poison (either sort) do just 1d, still halved if the HT roll succeeds, or leave it at 2d but let a successful HT roll avoid *all* harm; or have vacuum stun and deafen, but not injure.

Another option is breath weapons that produce the effects of inhaled potions from p. 29 of *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 1: Adventurers*:

Magebane: Wizards who breathe this can't cast spells for one hour. (*Intrinsic Defense:* Dragon gains levels of Magic Resistance (Improved) equal to its DR.)

Sleep: Living beings who breathe this must roll HT-4 or sleep for (16 - HT) hours. (*Intrinsic Defense:* Dragon gains Doesn't Sleep.)

Weakness: Living beings who breathe this have -3 to ST (cumulative to -12) for 1d minutes. (*Intrinsic Defense:* Dragon gains Immunity to ST Reduction.)

Magebane and weakness normally offer no resistance roll, though victims with Magic Resistance get a HT + MR roll. Just as standard poison breath inflicts half the injury of a death potion, however, the GM might tone down less-lethal gases, allowing *all* targets to resist any of these effects with a HT roll, still adjusted for any Magic Resistance.

These breath weapons are less-lethal only in the sense that they don't injure. If the dragon promptly eats sleeping victims – or renders a wizard-heavy group unable to cast spells or an all-warrior squad too weak to overcome its DR – the *overall* results can be deadly!

More-Lethal Clouds

Conversely, the GM might up the ante for distinctively daunting dragons. As noted already, it's inconsistent to have acid go beyond 2d-1 or vacuum exceed even 1d-2. But frost, incendiary, spark, and steam clouds can be as damaging as desired, although higher than the dragon's thrust damage – as for a cone – should be rare. Poison can inflict greater injury, be harder to resist, or both; the suggested upper limit is bladeblack (*Adventurers*, p. 28), which does 6d HP of injury on a failed HT-5 roll.



that isn't the same as saying it can hit only one victim. *Everybody* in the hex where the cone "stops" is affected for full damage. Moreover, if the cone passes *between* two figures, impinging on both of their hexes, both may be hit for full damage, even if nobody behind them will be.

As well, if nearer targets dive for cover, leaving their hexes empty, *they* no longer count as cover for those behind them. A tough front-line fighter who opts to dodge rather than take damage (you can't block or parry a cone) may put a squishy friend in harm's way!

Standard cones inflict large-area thrust damage for the dragon that breathed them – i.e., 2d+2 for a small dragon (ST 25), 4d-1 for a medium dragon (ST 35), 5d+2 for a large dragon (ST 50), 8d+2 for a gargantuan dragon (ST 75). Damage *type* and special effects depend on the substance breathed.

The GM is welcome to make exceptions to everything above; see *Cones of Power* (p. 10).

They must also roll against HT-3 or be stunned *and* deafened. Roll against HT-3 every turn to recover from stun, and against HT every hour to recover from deafness. Protected Hearing gives +5 to these HT rolls.

The above effects are the limit for vacuum. Once there's nothing left, you can't have *less* – and anyway, harm is due to the air rushing in, and limited by ambient air pressure. Even if the GM is fond of increasing damage for clouds, that doesn't make sense here.

Intrinsic Defenses: Dragon gains Protected Hearing *and* double DR vs. air-based attacks.

CONES

Other breath weapons are (relatively) narrow cones that travel in a straight line from the dragon's mouth. They use *Cone Attacks* (p. B413) in combat. The standard cone is 10 yards long by one yard wide – but as cones *start* one yard wide, its shape on a battle map is a 1x10 row of hexes.

Such a cone is too tight to affect many targets, but it does enjoy better odds of a hit. The dragon targets the hex directly in front of its head, at +4, and the cone extends out from there. This is far easier than making a ranged attack on a target 10 yards away (-4 to hit).

While a one-yard-wide cone means even a one-hex figure is big enough to completely screen someone from the dragon,

Cold

A blast of extremely cold vapor. Damage type is **burning**, but due to extreme cold – it can't set fires. Despite causing large-area injury, the effect isn't large enough to engulf a victim and freeze them in place. It *will* blow out any ordinary fire (candle, lantern, torch, etc.).

Intrinsic Defense: Double the dragon's DR vs. cold/ice *and* shift the dragon's temperature comfort zone to -25°F to 120°F.

Ice formed when it breathed. Warmth fled. Fires guttered and went out.

– George R.R. Martin,
The Ice Dragon

Disintegration

A rare and feared effect that causes **corrosion** damage. As this is large-area injury (p. B400), *all* armor risks losing DR (*Corrosion*, p. B379).

Intrinsic Defense: Double the dragon's DR vs. corrosion.

CONES OF POWER

Like clouds, cones can be tailored to the situation.

Adjusting Damage

While the dragon's thrust damage is standard for a cone, this can be scaled as needed in either direction. Suggested limits are thrust damage for the next-biggest and -smallest dragons. When toning down a small dragon, go with 1d+1 (as for ST 15); when beefing up a gargantuan one, use 11d (as for ST 100).

Affecting More Targets

In some fantasy, dragons can blast *lots* of people! This blurs the distinction between clouds and cones, but it also encourages delvers to respect dragons more. Options include:

All-Out Attack (Cone): A dragon can spray around its cone using an All-Out Attack, gaping its maw for an entire turn and moving its head predictably. This uses up just one attack but means no other attacks that turn can be bites with that head. Multiply terminal cone width by 2, 3, 4, or 5, as the dragon wishes – applying *Cone Attacks* (p. B413) as for a cone of that size – but against anyone hit, *divide* damage rolled by the same amount. To avoid math, use this table:

| Dragon Size | Damage by Cone Width | | | |
|-------------|----------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| | 2 yards | 3 yards | 4 yards | 5 yards |
| Small | 1d+1 | 1d | 1d-1 | 1d-2 |
| Medium | 1d+3 | 1d+1 | 1d | 1d-1 |
| Large | 2d+3 | 1d+3 | 1d+1 | 1d |
| Gargantuan | 4d+1 | 2d+3 | 2d+1 | 1d+3 |

Extra Effort: Alternatively, the dragon can breathe a larger *full-powered* cone without an All-Out Attack, but this costs +1 FP per yard of terminal width added to the basic one yard. Maximum width is five yards, costing +4 FP (6 FP total).

Bigger Cones: Some dragons may exhale larger full-powered cones with *no* downsides – no All-Out Attack, no extra FP cost. This should be rare!

Say Hello to My Little Friends

Particularly disgusting dragons – swamp-dwellers, carrion-eaters, etc. – may vomit forth *vermin*. Handle such breath weapons as cones, except that instead of doing direct damage, they deposit an insect swarm (treat as bees, p. B461), a slime (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 2: Icky Goo*, pp. 15-16), or a spore cloud (*Icky Goo*, pp. 17-18). Targets hit by the cone suffer these organisms' attack immediately; if *nobody* is hit, the critters appear 10 yards from the dragon, in the hex where the cone terminates. On later turns, treat them as just another combatant, friendly to the dragon and hostile to its foes.

Intrinsic Defenses: Dragon gains Immunity to attacks from the creatures it spews.

Fire

The classic attack: A stream of burning fuel! Damage type is **burning**, and this *can* set fires (*Making Things Burn*, p. B433).

Intrinsic Defense: Double the dragon's DR vs. heat/fire.

Heat

A blast of extremely hot vapor, like steam. Damage type is **burning**. This cannot set fires, but it's wet and forceful enough to *extinguish* any ordinary fire (candle, lantern, torch, etc.).

Intrinsic Defense: Double the dragon's DR vs. heat- (but *not* fire-) and water-based attacks.

Ice

A high-speed column of razor-sharp hail. Damage type is **cutting**.

Intrinsic Defense: Double the dragon's DR vs. cold/ice and shift the dragon's temperature comfort zone to -25°F to 120°F.

Lightning

A huge lightning bolt, far broader than most lightning-based spells. Damage type is **burning** – and wearing *any* metal armor *anywhere* means having DR 1 against it, if that would be worse for the victim. This cannot set fires, but anyone wounded must make a HT roll at -1 per 2 HP suffered or be stunned, rolling against HT each turn thereafter to recover.

Intrinsic Defense: Double the dragon's DR vs. electricity.

Mana

A beam of pure energy, similar to the Magical Bolt power-up (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 11: Power-Ups*, p. 37). Inflicts **injury** (direct HP loss) instead of damage. DR has no effect, and only completely inanimate targets are unaffected. Another rare and dreaded attack!

Intrinsic Defense: Double the dragon's DR vs. damaging magic that's affected by DR – and even against damaging magic that usually bypasses DR, its normal (not doubled) DR applies!

Sonic

A devastating roar with effects similar to a Concussion spell (*GURPS Magic*, p. 26). Damage type is **crushing**, and anyone hit must also roll against HT-3 or be stunned. Roll against HT-3 every turn to recover from stun. Protected Hearing gives +5 to these HT rolls.

Intrinsic Defenses: Dragon gains Protected Hearing and double DR vs. sound-based attacks.

CHAPTER THREE

DISTINGUISHING YOUR DRAGON

A dragon's size and breath weapon are the first things the heroes are likely to notice. Yet if those are the only features that set dragons apart from one another, the players will start to treat all dragons as "huge creatures that fly, do lots of damage, and breathe crud" – and the *delvers* will devise stock countermeasures that reduce even a super-gargantuan dragon to just another monster. That might be clever, and worth rewarding the first time, but the campaign loses a little something if it *always* works.

What makes a dragon *memorable* – and if it's hostile, *scary* – are its other tricks. The most famous of these fall into a few categories.

KEEN SENSES

One of the most celebrated draconic qualities is *perceptiveness* – invisibility and halfling stealth helped Bilbo deal with Smaug, but they weren't enough! *All* dragons have **Night Vision 9** and **Peripheral Vision**. They also have a **Perception** equal to IQ+2 at least, and any amount of that, **Acute Hearing**, or **Acute Taste and Smell** is possible.

Some dragons have special senses, too. The best-known of these are **Danger Sense**, **Discriminatory Smell**, and/or **See Invisible** for detecting thieving delvers; **Dark Vision** instead of Night Vision if they live underground rather than, say, on a mountaintop; and **Telescopic Vision** for use on the wing. And **Discriminatory Taste** seems fitting for a creature that eats everyone.

Beyond that, a dragon might have some form of **Detect**. This is usually specialized to gold, magic items, or other valuables. An old, wise dragon may be attuned to all life, all supernatural phenomena, or something equally broad. If the delvers or their gear qualify, the dragon *will* be expecting them.

FORMIDABLE DEFENSES

All dragons have scales that provide **Damage Resistance**, and an equally thick-but-transparent **Nictitating Membrane**. The GM can easily justify +1 to +3 to both DR and Nictitating Membrane by the rationale that allows martial artists to take DR 1-2 skin as a Chi ability (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 1: Adventurers*, p. 22), barbarians to acquire the same as a power-up (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 11: Power-Ups*, p. 18), or individual dragon-blooded to add DR 1-3 (*Power-Ups*,

p. 40): "*This one is tough.*" At +3 DR, the dragon is as armored as one the next size up.

Dragons *also* have defensive advantages that protect against damage sources similar to their breath weapons. This is usually higher DR, but sometimes a form of **Immunity**.

And there are further options . . .

Damage Reduction

Although general **Damage Reduction** (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 1*, p. 35) primarily suits rubbery and amorphous entities, and Things that exist partially outside the material world, narrower forms make sense for dragons. The most likely varieties affect damage from sources similar to the dragon's breath weapon; e.g., a fire-breathing dragon might have **Damage Reduction (Fire)** and divide fire injury after DR by 2, 3, or even 4. Magic-using dragons may have **Damage Reduction (Magic)** instead or as well.

Everything Else

An individual dragon can have *any* trait alongside the stats in Chapter 1 and the options here and in Chapter 2. That includes higher attributes (but DX rarely exceeds 15, and HT 16+ makes a nigh-unkillable opponent even less killable), advantages not discussed here, and the full range of skills. Removing standard abilities and adding disadvantages are also possibilities, though usually as part of a trade-off; e.g., a serpentine dragon without Extra Legs and Flight (Winged), and that has No Fine Manipulators instead of Bad Grip, might also boast snaky capabilities such as Constriction Attack, Double-Jointed, and a venomous bite.

Specialized Resistance and Immunity

Dragons already enjoy **Immunity to Disease** plus any **Immunity** that goes with their breath weapons. But even a non-poison-breather might have **Resistant to Poison** (+3) or (+8), or full **Immunity to Poison**, because it's *just that tough*. Exceptional dragons may have **Resistant to Metabolic Hazards** (+3) or (+8).

Supernatural resistance is also widespread. **Magic Resistance** is *especially* common, with the **Improved** enhancement if the dragon casts spells; the level typically equals DR (meaning MR 3, 6, 9, or 12 for – respectively – small, medium, large, or gargantuan dragons). A dragon might instead or as well possess **Immunity** to magic resembling its breath weapon, preventing spells of that type from being cast *on* it (this won't affect jets, missiles, and other physical attacks conjured by magic, but a dragon has DR and possibly Damage Reduction vs. those); e.g., a cold-breather may have **Immunity to Cold Spells**, making Flesh to Ice, Frostbite, and Icy Touch ineffective, though Ice Dagger, Ice Sphere, etc. would merely encounter elevated DR.

Lastly, while all dragons are **Unfazeable**, most can be influenced by anyone who can contend with high Will. But many elder dragons are above the words of puny mortals, and possess **Indomitable**. Others merely have extreme **Will**, with levels up to IQ + SM being impressive but hardly rare (that's Will 15, 18, 21, or 24 for – respectively – small, medium, large, or gargantuan dragons).

DEADLIER WEAPONS

Even small dragons deliver respectable damage, yet some wyrms punch above their weight – much like delvers with power-ups, optimized abilities, and magical weapons. Three possibilities are particularly common.

Even Stronger!

Strength tracks size as illustrated in Chapter 1, but those values are “racial averages.” *Individual* ST can vary from just above that of next-smallest size to just below that of the next-largest: ST 16-34 if small, ST 26-49 if medium, ST 36-74 if large, or ST 51-99 if gargantuan. In all cases, **Hit Points** equal ST.

In addition, dragons are ferocious, and candidates for **Striking ST**. Levels as high as 20% of ST, dropping fractions, are likely. Even “average” small, medium, large, or gargantuan dragons might have up to Striking ST 5, 7, 10, or 15, respectively.

In both cases, the dragon's thrust damage increases, affecting the damage of physical attacks as explained in *Even Bigger?* (p. 6). This may or may not boost breath-weapon damage as described there – some brute dragons are strong to compensate for anemic breath weapons, while others are nastier across the board. Higher ST might be linked to the absence of *Dragon Magic* (p. 13), too . . . but don't bet on it.

Bad Breath

A disturbing number of dragons are unusually capable with their breath. See Chapter 2 for the full gamut of possibilities, but keep “DELVE” in mind:

Dimensions: *Clouds* can have larger-than-expected radii; while (SM - 1) yards is standard, a dragon might have “outsized” breath that's SM or (SM + 1) yards in radius. *Cones* can expand to two to five yards wide instead of the usual one yard; see *Affecting More Targets* (p. 10).

Efficiency: The 2 FP per use for breath weapons assumes it takes something out of a dragon to belch forth matter or energy. But just as high-skill spellcasters pay less energy for spells, some dragons might get more efficient with their breath, paying 1 FP or even *no* FP. Or perhaps they can *also* draw on an **Energy Reserve** – the one used for *Dragon Magic* (p. 12) or a special one for their breath – which is typically equal to ST in size.

Lethality: Higher damage is the most obvious possibility; see *More-Lethal Clouds* (p. 8) and *Adjusting Damage* (p. 10).

Variability: A dragon might have more than one breath weapon! Most common are a cloud *and* a cone, related in effect: an acid cloud with a cone of disintegration, a frost cloud with a cone of cold or ice, an incendiary cloud with a cone of fire, a poison cloud with a “cone” of slime (*Say Hello to My Little Friends*, p. 10), a steam cloud with a cone of heat, or a spark cloud with a cone of lightning. Other dragons can kill using a lethal cone or subdue with one of the options in *Less-Lethal Clouds* (p. 8); such combinations are less predictable. But anything is possible – especially for dragons with **Extra Head**. The GM could even roll randomly for each attack (e.g., “1d: 1-2 is cold, 3-4 is fire, 5-6 is lightning”).

THE EXCEPTION PROVES THE RULE

As this supplement strives to make clear, dragons are infinitely variable. Yet expressing every conceivable quality as a by-the-book **GURPS** trait isn't always easy or even *possible*.

To start with, the GM can apply any optional rule described in these pages to some but not all dragons – or to some but not all *attacks* of one specific dragon. Examples are reduced FP cost for breath weapons (p. 7), extra effort to broaden a cone (p. 10), and body parts equivalent to weapons for parries (p. 17).

And because making dragons individually unforgettable means having them be collectively unpredictable, the GM is encouraged to go further! A wyrm might be famed for razor-sharp claws, effectively fine or very fine

blades that justify +1 or +2 damage – or for a long tail, granting extraordinary reach. A swashbuckling dragon that swirls its wings like a cloak may enjoy a Defense Bonus and a Block score, and use its horns with Rapier instead of Brawling to reap the benefits of *Fencing Weapons* (p. B208). *Dragon Magic* (p. 13) is especially fertile ground; it's already hands-free and insensitive to the dragon's SM, so other exceptions seem likely; e.g., modified prerequisites or access to spells that are off-limits to delvers. And so on.

Such exceptions become special abilities in their own right – and as they're for monsters, they don't need “builds” or point costs. For examples of how to play fast and loose like this, see the dragons on pp. 18-21.

Exceptions: Stats aren't everything. Players are liable to expect arctic-dwelling and snow-white dragons to exhale cold, frost, or ice – especially if a tavern tale (or another RPG) says so – so why not mix it up and have such a monster breath fire, heat, or steam? It *needs* to stay warm, after all! Or maybe dragon's breath evolves over time; e.g., a storied poison-breather might learn to ignite the gas and become a fire-breather (or be capable of both), or a certain type of dragon could breathe cold in winter and fire in summer (or vice versa).

Venom

Dragons in folklore are venomous at least as often as they breathe flame. This means the dragon's bite – or less often, another cutting or impaling attack – inflicts from 1d to 4d toxic or fatigue damage as a follow-up.

A HT roll to resist is usual, with success meaning anything from half damage to none at all. Smaller dragons need stronger venom to compensate for lower ST, but larger ones inject more, so damage is independent of size and thus of the dragon's other attacks. The HT roll tends to vary, though: HT or HT-1 if gargantuan, HT-1 or HT-2 if large, HT-2 or HT-3 if medium, HT-4 or HT-5 if small.

Venom is more common for poison- or slime-breathing dragons, but it isn't limited to such creatures. And a rare few wyrms produce exotic venoms that inflict unusual damage types, notably burning (for hot, cold, or electrical breath weapons) or corrosion (for acid or disintegration breath).

DRAGON MAGIC

Dragons are *far* more likely than humans or members of most other races (save for elves and faerie folk) to work magic.

Most dragon spellcasters are wizards, with a **Magery** level between 1 and (IQ - 10): 1-2 if small, 1-4 if medium, 1-6 if large, and an impressive 1-8 if gargantuan. There are also draconic clerics who represent the gods of dragons, or the sun-devouring and world-encircling serpent deities of mortals; these have **Power Investiture** at similar levels. A few dragons – especially venomous, poison- and slime-spewing swamp-dwellers – are forces of Nature with **Power Investiture (Druidic)**.

Spells vary as much as they do for delvers. Dragons are often “themed” around their breath: fire-breathers learn Fire spells or the spells of fire gods, lightning-shooters cast Weather spells or the spells of storm gods, and so on. But just as many are scholars who study what's *useful*, almost always including protection against wannabe dragon-slayers (Armor, Shield, Missile Shield, Reverse Missiles, etc.).

Most spells are at IQ + Magery level, with a few favorites at higher levels. High skill reduces casting time and energy cost as usual – and *regardless* of level, dragon magic is always cast “hands free.” At skill 15+, even muting the dragon can't prevent casting.

Another special feature of such magic is that the dragon can cast *on itself* as if it were SM 0, regardless of actual

DRAGON TEMPERAMENT

Dragons in general vary at least as much as heroes in personality. They aren't to the last avaricious, voracious, and evil. Most are indifferent to humanoid life except when such beings annoy them (for instance, when glory-hounds try to kill them); a few are actually *good*, if standoffish.

Thus, their only universal mental traits are **Loner** and **Unfazeable**, which the GM can interpret as “Stay out of my way” and “I don't care about your silly mortal society.” Of course, anything that eats herds of cattle to survive will soon upset people, but that doesn't equate to Bloodlust or Uncontrollable Appetite; dragons are merely as hungry as expected for their size (though that can make **Gluttony** terrifying where in a humanoid it would seem buffoonish). At worst, their mindset makes **Callous** more common if they avoid civilization, or suggests **Selfish** and frequently **Stubbornness** if they reluctantly negotiate with it (add **Bully** if the “negotiations” are really intimidation).

Dragons that cross paths with delvers are another matter! They tend to dwell in dungeons because they value the same thing that draws adventurers there: loot. *These* dragons often have **Greed** (commonly with **Miserliness**, as they tend to hoard). Fighting off treasure-hunters and other monsters can leave them with a nasty case of **Bad Temper** or **Bloodlust**, often **Paranoia**, and all too often **Intolerance** of all non-dragon life. Most fire-breathers develop **Pyromania** to go with these traits (actually, they're prone to it in general).

Despite their considerable clout, dragons rarely suffer from **Impulsiveness**, **On the Edge**, **Overconfidence**, or similar flaws. They have the long view that comes with immortality, and even stupid ones are smarter than most people. If a situation calls for cunning – even stealth – they'll plot, strategize, and then act when they have the upper hand. This combination of power and wisdom is one reason why they're terrifying opponents.

The GM can add whatever fits the encounter. A swamp-dwelling dragon who casts druidic spells may have Sense of Duty (Nature). A sky-darkening colossus worshiped by villagers might suffer from Megalomania. And a bored quest-giver who shapeshifts into human form could be driven by Xenophilia – or Trickster.

size. This doesn't extend to casting on *other* dragons or high-SM creatures.

Finally, spellcasting dragons often have an **Energy Reserve** of a type appropriate to their magic (Magical, Holy, or Druidic). The typical upper limit, if there is such a thing, is ST – that is, 25 if small, 35 if medium, 50 if large, or 75 if gargantuan. Elder dragons sometimes possess energy out of proportion to their size; some are purported to be able to cast the Resurrection spell (300 energy) singlehanded!

COOL ABILITIES

Then there's all the *other* stuff dragons do in fantasy and folklore. Any legitimate “best of” list would have to include:

Alternate Form (Humanoid): Many old, wise, and (especially) spellcasting dragons can take humanoid form. They do so away from witnesses; delvers are most likely to encounter such a dragon *as* a humanoid, possibly in town.

This trick deprives the dragon of its greatest physical gifts (ST, HP, DR, wings, breath, etc.), but *not* its high DX, IQ, HT, Will, and Per, nor Unfazeable or individual mental abilities, nor any magical powers (like Magery and Energy Reserve). While this may seem to make the dragon dangerously vulnerable, it can resume its natural form instantly if wounded – and often, reversion regenerates the injury that triggered it, even returning the dragon to life if slain (treat as **Extra Life**).

Amphibious, Doesn't Breathe (Gills), and Pressure Support: These three traits just about always occur together when they occur at all. They are common for intelligent “sea serpents.”

Compartmentalized Mind: The most adept spellcasting dragons have a level of this trait, allowing them to take a Concentrate maneuver to cast a spell *while* they make their usual number of physical attacks or take a Move maneuver to cruise at the full airspeed allowed by Enhanced Move.

Extra Attack: Some dragons can use most or all of their natural weapons at once, making them capable of facing entire adventuring parties in straight-up melee combat. These have higher-than-usual levels of Extra Attack. The upper limit is typically Extra Attack 8, allowing nine attacks – horns, tail, two wings, four claws, and bite *or* breath – but . . .

Extra Head: Dragons with multiple heads are common. Each head also comes with a level of **Extra Attack** (giving an additional bite, horn, or breath attack per turn) *and* its own breath weapon. **Compartmentalized Mind** isn't guaranteed alongside all this, but it's a likely adjunct.

Flight: All dragons can fly, but some lose the Winged modifier and simply levitate. This ability might be magical, psionic, or something else. Dragons like this lack wing attacks but can go airborne even in the close quarters of dungeons.

Terror: Huge dragons often cause fear on sight; some large, most gargantuan, and nearly all super-gargantuan dragons possess this trait, with a Fright Check penalty equal to (5 - SM): 0 if large, -1 if gargantuan, and so on. The +5 for “heat of battle” (p. B360) *doesn't* apply in most cases – if a dragon swoops down out of nowhere or delvers kick in a door and see a dragon, roll the Fright Check without the bonus. This *can* paralyze an entire party with fear before combat begins!

Universal Digestion (Matter Eater): The ability to eat just about anything that can fit in the dragon's mouth is widespread. Dragons who have it often lack treasure hoards, as they eat victims complete with their gear. Some further possess **Tunneling** and can explode out of the ground or through walls to surprise delvers.



CHAPTER FOUR

DRAGONS

IN ACTION

Even the youngest, most gullible dragon enjoys IQ, Will, Diplomacy, and Fast-Talk at 12; the great wyrms that qualify as boss monsters are cannier. When a dragon negotiates with adventurers (*GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 2: Dungeons*, p. 10) or offers them a quest (*Dungeons*, p. 4), have it behave like any crafty NPC, speaking eloquently to convince the delvers that a course of action would be prudent or profitable (which it will be . . . *for the dragon*). Its respectable IQ and Will mean *Trickery* (*Dungeons*, p. 10) is unlikely to be successful – and owing to Unfazeable, Intimidation (*Dungeons*, p. 12) never works.

Delvers often meet dragons in battle, however. Then it's the GM's job to present a credible threat. *A dragon is only a big sack of Hit Points waiting to have its eyes poked out if the GM plays it that way . . .*

TACTICS

A dragon's intelligence extends to combat: Dragons are born tacticians, with Tactics at skill 12+, and their small-t tactics should reflect this. All seek to exploit every benefit and avoid every drawback discussed in *Size* (below), *Flight* (p. 16), *Weaknesses* (pp. 16-17), *Encounter Design* (p. 17), and *The Parry Problem* (p. 17).

However tough the dragon, it won't *willingly* stay put and go toe-to-toe with a horde of opponents unless defending its young. Especially if it has space to fly – but even if it must scurry – it will exploit *Retreat* (p. B377) when defending and *Step* (p. B368) after attacking, and take periodic Move maneuvers, to open a gap and lure fleet-footed and overconfident heroes into ill-advised one-on-one exchanges.

A dragon usually saves its breath weapon for situations where it can exploit *Area and Spreading Attacks* (pp. B413-414) to target the largest concentration of victims. One that breathes a cloud will use it on tight formations, or when surrounded. One that exhales a cone will target enemy columns, creating a situation where frantic dodging and dropping (p. B377) sees several opponents end up prone – ideally exposing a vulnerable back-line fighter.

Dragons use their special abilities to the utmost. One that breathes a cloud to which it's immune *will* surround itself in the stuff and force opponents to fight there. One with sleeping-gas breath, or Terror, *will* savage slumbering or stunned victims. One with Dark Vision *will* snuff out torches. One that knows defensive spells *will* cast them if its keen senses detect delvers nearby. One with Compartmentalized Mind

will cast spells while taking gap-opening Move maneuvers. And so on.

Lastly, while dragons are sometimes portrayed as “noble” or “honorable,” that's only when fighting dragonkind – or *maybe* a mortal king. Scummy delvers are beneath honor. Against them, dragons *fight dirty*, making diving surprise attacks from above, trampling downed foes, singling out warriors who foolishly All-Out Attack, and the like.

Noble dragons don't have friends. The nearest they can get to the idea is an enemy who is still alive.

*– Terry Pratchett,
Guards! Guards!*

SIZE

A dragon's size is an advantage in itself when fighting on the ground, as sometimes occurs in the dungeon. Dragons are sleek, meaning they're just one hex wide on a battle map, but *long*. In terms of *Multi-Hex Figures* (p. B392): SM +3 (a small dragon) is 6-7 hexes long, SM +4 (medium) is 8-10 hexes long, SM +5 (large) is 11-15 hexes long, and SM +6 (gargantuan) is 16-20 hexes long.

Such outsized figures can easily sweep through *many* lesser ones during the course of ordinary movement. Consult *Slam and Overrun* (p. B392) for rules, the most significant of which is this: Smaller figures that get in the way of movement suffer incidental slams that don't count as attacks – such slams are “free”!

Even against a small (SM +3) dragon, a SM 0 or +1 adventurer knocked down by a slam (or lying down for any reason!) is likely to face *Trampling* (p. B404). This isn't merely free but also automatic: no attack or defense rolls. While “only” at half ST, that's 1d-1, 1d+2, 2d+2, or 4d crushing for – respectively – a small, medium, large, or gargantuan dragon.

How Many Weapons?

A typical dragon has 10 natural weapons:

- one bite
- one set* of horns
- one breath weapon†
- one tail
- two sets* of front claws
- two sets* of hind claws
- two wings

* Treat each “set” of horns or claws as a unit, regardless of how many pointy bits it includes.

† Dragons with several breath weapons may use only one per head per turn.

Extra Head adds a bite, a set of horns, and a breath weapon per head; e.g., Extra Head 2 gives 16 natural weapons.

No dragon can attack with all these weapons just because it has them! It may attack once, plus once per level of Extra Attack, plus any additional attacks from Rapid Strike or All-Out Attack (Double). It can use any combination of weapons for these attacks, but it can use each weapon only once per turn.

A dragon’s size also puts its head – and hence its eyes, every swashbuckler’s favorite target – out of easy reach of melee weapons. After any turn on which the dragon doesn’t lower its head to bite, assume that its head towers half its length (see above), rounded up, above floor level: three or four yards at SM +3, four or five at SM +4, six to eight at SM +5 (large), eight to 10 at SM +6. A delver on the ground needs a weapon of reach two yards less than this to target any part of the head: reach 1 or 2 if small, 2 or 3 if medium, 4 to 6 if large, 6 to 8 if gargantuan.

Also don’t forget that a dragon’s size makes Regular spells *expensive* except when it casts on itself. Combatants casting such offensive magic pay 4× (small), 5× (medium), 6× (large), or 7× (gargantuan) the energy. See *Regular Spells* (p. B239).

FLIGHT

Most dragons can – and, if they have the space, *will* – fly. Why face puny groundlings on their own terms?

A dragon that deigns to hover low enough to make melee attacks almost always uses its longer-reach attacks, forcing foes to engage it at the same reach. A small dragon with reach 2-3 is in range of many common melee weapons – but a medium one with reach 3-4 is menaced only by polearms and long spears, a large one with reach 5-6 necessitates pikes, and a gargantuan one with reach 7-8 simply doesn’t have to worry. In all cases, *Combat at Different Levels* (pp. B402-403) applies, meaning among other things that the dragon gets +1 to +3 to defend, depending on relative height, while victims defend at -1 to -3.

Ranged combat is a better bet for adventurers facing airborne dragons (or who want to attack the head of a

grounded one), but warriors on the ground have to shoot upward. This adds to effective range, as explained in *Firing Upward and Downward* (p. B551). Ranged attackers should be wary of spellcasting dragons, who all too often know Missile Shield – or worse, Reverse Missiles. And speaking of magic, magic-wielders will find Regular spells challenging to cast on high-flying dragons, as they’re at -1 per yard (see p. B239).

Dragons that breathe cones are extra-nasty. They can fly 10 yards overhead and blast the ground while staying out of reach of melee weapons and at an effective 20 yards (-6 to hit) for ranged weapons. And they will, too!

The GM should push *Flying Combat* (p. B398) to the limit. In particular, dragons on the wing can retreat *upward*, which adds +1 over and above the normal retreating bonus. This is cumulative with any bonus to defenses for relative height.

WEAKNESSES

A dragon has no weaknesses the GM doesn’t add. Standard disadvantages like Bad Grip and Horizontal are *inconvenient* for the dragon but not exploitable in the same way as traits such as Divine Curse, Dread, Fragile, Revulsion, Susceptible, Uncontrollable Appetite, Vulnerability, or Weakness. Dragons have only the “normal” flaws of living beings, namely the need to eat, drink, and breathe, plus vital areas – and even then, while the skull is obvious, the vitals require a **Physiology** roll to locate.



Which doesn't mean that delvers who roll poorly against skills like **Current Affairs** or **Research** won't *believe* there are flaws to exploit; see *Tavern Tales and Moldy Books* (**GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 2: Dungeons**, p. 17). Many a hero has wrongly assumed that a fire dragon is vulnerable to cold, a magic-using dragon can't survive without mana, and so on. Dragons love to spread such rumors (all know Fast-Talk at 12+). Don't make "It has no weaknesses" a free lunch.

ENCOUNTER DESIGN

Not everything that makes a dragon deadly (or a pushover, come to that) is inherent in the abilities in Chapters 1-3 or the way dragons fight as discussed up to this point. Some things boil down to the GM's planning.

Most crucial is battlefield area. Flight (Winged) gives dragons vast wingspans: 12-14 yards if small, 16-20 yards if medium, 22-30 yards if large, or 32-40 yards if gargantuan. To fly, they need at least this much open space on every side; see *Flight* (p. B56). This makes size a trade-off: Giving a dragon maximum length for its SM helps on the ground (ensuring more incidental slams and keeping its head out of reach; see *Size*, pp. 15-16), but at the cost of limiting where it can fly.

Overhead clearance is related. Even if the area is immense, allowing flight, a dragon who can't fly *high* won't be able to murder delvers with impunity by staying out of reach of their melee weapons while giving large penalties to Regular spells and ranged attacks. A *really* low ceiling may prevent the dragon from retreating upward and gaining a useful bonus.

Dragons being intelligent, it seems unlikely they would lair anywhere they couldn't fly freely – or at least fly *out of*, taking the fight to the great outdoors. Contriving to put them in confined quarters greatly reduces their effectiveness: A small dragon becomes oversized fodder, while bigger ones won't seem very boss-like; either is anticlimactic. It might suit some adventures if, say, an evil wizard keeps a dragon chained or caged – but in that case, why not have the dragon cut a deal?

Thus, the best battlefields for dragons are either the wilderness or *really huge* caves, not dungeons made up of little rooms and corridors.

Encounter distance is also important. Dragons that have to close a huge gap while the scout riddles them with arrows won't do well. Play up a dragon's

keen senses (p. 11) to have it detect the adventurers first, particularly if it has something like Danger Sense or Telescopic Vision, or Information spells. Then have it approach from a blind angle – say, rising into sight when the heroes are mere steps from a sheer drop, erupting from beneath the surface of a lake, or just flying down from behind if the party isn't being clever about watching its back.

Finally, time is of the essence – don't let the players rush the encounter! Combat time starts when the GM says it does. Dragons with Terror get to cause a Fright Check before anybody gets +5 for the "heat of battle"; *talking* dragons with Compartmentalized Mind enjoy the time they need to secretly cast spells while apparently negotiating.

Once combat *does* start, take the time to play the dragon right. It has multiple attacks and isn't fodder. Carefully resolve its movement and any resulting slams, and then match attacks to suitable targets. It's a *dragon*, not an orc or even a troll, and should enjoy the same amount of "spotlight time" as the entire adventuring party!

THE PARRY PROBLEM

One problem dragons face is that aside from their horns – which have short reach but are made of tough stuff – their non-breath attacks put limbs, tail, or the *face* in danger of being parried. Which can hurt. See *Parrying Unarmed Attacks* (p. B376).

At a minimum, the GM should make sure dragons don't needlessly risk being chopped up. They'll use horns and breath – and if they can, spells – rather than expose important body parts to weapons. *Exception:* Gargantuan and larger dragons may take the gamble; DR 12+ is good protection, and per *Parrying Heavy Weapons* (p. B376), their attacks weigh an effective 7.5 lbs. or more, which can snap many common weapons.

If this doesn't suit the GM's vision of how dragons (or one *particular* dragon) should fight, simply extend the note on horns to other attack modes – perhaps all of them. Little justification is needed to say that a dragon's claws are long, hard scythes, or that its tail ends in a massive spiked ball. Wings might not be exempt, but pinions mighty enough to keep a dragon airborne could justify an effective weight equal to *full* ST, in which case adventurers won't want to parry them! The bite should probably stay vulnerable, though, in keeping with dragon mythology.

*My armor is like tenfold shields, my teeth are swords,
my claws spears, the shock of my tail a thunderbolt,
my wings a hurricane, and my breath death!*

– J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit*

APPENDIX

Not Your Average Dragons

Here are several examples of dragons more interesting than “Dragon, Medium, Fire-Breathing.” Use them as-is or as inspiration for encounters of your own. For a couple of others, see *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Adventure 2: Tomb of the Dragon King*.

BROTHER JONAS

Brother Jonas is typically encountered as a jolly human monk, but this is a deception within a deception. First, the “kindly cleric” guise conceals a personality that, while not *evil*, is that of a trickster. Second, Jonas isn’t human.

In his natural form, Jonas is a large dragon, though not a physically impressive one: He’s weak for his size, and mal-adroit at managing his attacks. His breath weapon doesn’t inflict damage; it’s a cloud of sleeping gas. His true gifts lie (and oh, do they lie!) in the realm of the *mind*.

Jonas is wiser – *cannier*, at any rate – than his size and years might suggest. At some point he entered a monastery in human guise and trained as a bona fide cleric of a god worshiped by mortals . . . specifically, a *trickster* god, who was delighted to win the adoration of a dragon and positively tickled at the idea of infiltrating such a creature into human society. While Jonas’ level of Power Investiture is unremarkable, the keen wits, Compartmentalized Mind, and Energy Reserve of a talented draconic adept make him a formidable spellcaster.

Most amusing (for Jonas, anyway) is his ability to detect not life, but *intelligence*. He doesn’t get precise coordinates that are useful in combat, though if he makes his Per roll, he’ll certainly be aware of someone sneaking around nearby. But far more important for a trickster, he can – on a successful IQ roll – know who in a crowd possesses the best *and worst* IQ, Will, and Per. He gleefully abuses this knowledge, influencing the weak-minded to manipulate their associates.

When adventurers come across Jonas, he’ll try to win their confidence by posing as a helpful cleric – especially if he can single out an easy mark. Then he’ll send them on ill-advised quests for his amusement. If things turn violent, he’ll turn into a dragon. If he’s injured before he can do so, he’ll revert *instantly* and *automatically*, regenerating fully. In his natural

form, he’ll try to send his aggressors to sleep and then eat them, exploiting magic in the process. If he can’t win, he’ll fly off and get revenge by spreading rumors of evildoing delvers who waylay priests.

| | | |
|------------------|------------------|------------------------------|
| ST: 45 | HP: 45 | Speed: 7.25 |
| DX: 14 | Will: 17 | Move: 6 (Air Move 14) |
| IQ: 17 | Per: 19 | |
| HT: 15 | FP: 15 | SM: +5 |
| Dodge: 10 | Parry: 11 | DR: 9 |

Bite (16): 5d+4 impaling. Reach C, 1.

Front Claw (16): 5d+4 cutting *or* impaling. Reach C-5.

Hind Claw (14): 5d+5 cutting *or* impaling. Reach C-5.

Horns (16): 5d+4 cutting. Treat as weapon, not as body part, both to attack and parry! Reach C, 1.

Sleep Breath (16): Sleeping gas with a 4-yard-radius area of effect. Living beings who breathe it must roll HT-4 (plus any Magic Resistance) or sleep for (16 - HT) hours. Costs 2 FP per use, with no recharge time or limit on uses/day; this must come from FP.

Tail (14): 5d+5 crushing *or* double that for knockback only. Reach C-6.

Wing (16): 5d+4 crushing *or* double that for knockback only. Reach C-6.

Traits: Alternate Form (Humanoid; Regenerative); Bad Grip 2; Clerical Investiture; Compartmentalized Mind 1; Detect (Intelligence; Analyzing); Doesn’t Sleep; Energy Reserve 45 (Holy); Enhanced Move 0.5 (Air Speed 21); Extra Attack 2; Extra Legs (Four Legs); Flight (Winged); High Pain Threshold; Horizontal; Immunity to Disease; Nictitating Membrane 9; Night Vision 9; Penetrating Voice; Peripheral Vision; Power Investiture 3; Temperature Tolerance 6 (5°F to 150°F); Trickster (12); Unfazeable.

Skills: Acting-16; Brawling-16; Carousing-15; Diagnosis-15; Diplomacy-17; Esoteric Medicine (Holy)-18; Exorcism-16; Fast-Talk-17; First Aid-17; Gambling-16; Hidden Lore (Spirits)-16; Innate Attack (Breath)-16; Meditation-15; Occultism-16; Panhandling-17; Public Speaking-16; Religious Ritual-15; Research-16; Streetwise-16; Surgery-15; Tactics-17; Teaching-16; Theology-15; Writing-16.

Class: Mundane.

Notes: Can attack *three times*, using each natural weapon just once, *and* concentrate on magic. Clerical spells (from the messenger/rogue priest list on pp. 22-23 of **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 7: Clerics**, all at skill 20) are Armor, Awaken, Climbing, Freedom, Haste, Jump, Light Tread, Lighten Burden, Mage-Stealth, Magic Resistance, Might, Minor Healing, Persuasion, Quick March, Recover Energy, Shield, Silence, Silver Tongue, Spasm, and Vigor. *Quadruple* body-parts value relative to a small dragon (p. 4).

Recovering relics from thieving nobles is risky but hardly dragon-slaying – and the temple pays handsomely!

– Brother Jonas

SSYTHOXX THE VENOMOUS

Ssythoxx (pronounced “sigh tox”) is undeniably a *small* dragon – mostly because she lives in a swamp, where she subsists on giant flies and slime-water. Such a diet does not a gargantuan dragon make. But this unglamorous existence keeps her out of the eyes of adventurers. Indeed, *everybody* avoids the Marsh of Malady, unless – like her – they’re immune to disease.

It would be a fatal error to assume that Ssythoxx is weak, however. Her hard life has made her strong for her size, and as tough as a larger dragon. As well, she has *two* breath weapons that suit a denizen of a foul swamp: poison and *slime*. The former is remarkably deadly, while the latter comes closer to vomiting and costs just 1 FP. And the venom she exhales is present in her bite, where it’s even more virulent.

Ssythoxx is also well-adapted to her boggy home. Although she cannot dive to great depths, she’s as agile in water as she is on land, and has gills that let her survive even in putrid goo. Victims she drags into the swamp learn this as they drown.

As important as these physical qualities are her mental ones. She’s wise for her years, and as tough in mind as in body. She also wields druidic magic – a gift from the Swamp Spirits, for protecting their slimy haunt – and possesses a deep Energy Reserve she can use to power her spells or poison breath (but not slime breath; that fatigue is physical, equivalent to a missed meal). Her zeal to preserve Nature doesn’t extend to *all* life; she treats visitors with cold indifference at best, hatred if they defile the Marsh.

Ssythoxx will remain hidden – aided by her magic – unless the heroes do something Nature wouldn’t approve of. Then she’ll ambush the transgressors by emerging from the fetid water, poisoning as many as she can, and dragging somebody to their doom in her venomous maw. If actively sought – or detected and not attacked – she *might* negotiate, offering aid escaping the Marsh or finding a dungeon within it in return for a concession that protects it, such as assassinating other, less-respectful travelers (ones too tough for a dragon . . .).

| | | |
|-----------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| ST: 34 | HP: 34 | Speed: 6.75 |
| DX: 12 | Will: 16 | Move: 6 (Ground/Water)/ |
| IQ: 13 | Per: 15 | 13 (Air) |
| HT: 15 | FP: 15 | SM: +3 |
| Dodge: 9 | Parry: 10 | DR: 6 |

Bite (14): 3d+4 cutting + follow-up 3d+2 toxic (HT-4 for half damage). Reach C, 1.

Front Claw (14): 3d+4 cutting. Reach C-2.

Hind Claw (12): 3d+5 cutting. Reach C-2.

Horns (14): 3d+4 cutting. Treat as weapon, not as body part, both to attack and parry! Reach C, 1.

Poison Mist (14): Contact poison with a 2-yard-radius area of effect. Inflicts 3d+2 HP of injury, halved on a successful HT roll. Costs 2 FP per use, with no recharge time or limit on uses/day; this can come from FP or Energy Reserve.

Slime Breath (14): A 1-yard-wide × 10-yard-long cone. Deposits a *lethal* slime; see **GURPS Dungeon Fantasy Monsters 2: Icky Goo**, pp. 15-16. Costs 1 FP per use, with no recharge time or limit on uses/day; this must come from FP.

Tail (12): 3d+5 crushing or double that for knockback only (no damage). Reach C-3.

Wing (14): 3d+4 crushing or double that for knockback only (no damage). Reach C-3.

Traits: Amphibious; Bad Grip 2; Callous; Doesn’t Breathe (Gills); Energy Reserve 34 (Druidic); Extra Attack 1; Extra Legs (Four Legs); Flight (Winged); High Pain Threshold; Horizontal; Immunity to Disease; Immunity to Poison; Immunity to Slime; Loner (12); Nictitating Membrane 6; Night Vision 9; Penetrating Voice; Peripheral Vision; Power Investiture 3 (Druidic); Pressure Support 1; Sense of Duty (Nature); Temperature Tolerance 6 (5°F to 150°F); Unfazeable.

Skills: Area Knowledge (Marsh of Malady)-13; Brawling-14; Camouflage-13; Diplomacy-13; Fast-Talk-13; Innate Attack (Breath)-14; Stealth-12; Survival (Swampland)-15; Tactics-13; Tracking-15.

Class: Mundane.

Notes: Can attack *twice*, using each natural weapon just once. Druidic spells (all at skill 16) are Animate Plant, Conceal, Extinguish Fire, Forest Warning, Hide Path, Light Tread, Mystic Mist, No-Smell, Plant Sense, Plant Vision, Recover Energy, Sense Life, Tangle Growth, Walk Through Plants, and Water Vision. Standard body-parts value for a small dragon (p. 4).

THRICE

Thrice’s name comes from the fact that he has three heads, causing the first victim he ever ate to exclaim, “This creature is *thrice* the menace of any normal wyrm!” His birth name in Old Draconic translates as “Great Fanged Southerner,” which he finds long and boring.

Thrice is mid-sized, but his extra heads – and the fact that they’re overdeveloped, making their bite (and only that) nastier than usual – render him more intimidating. All three heads breathe cones: The leftmost breathes fire; the middle one, cold; and the one on the right, lightning.

Working out with multiple breath weapons has paid off. Not only is Thrice a crack shot, but he can widen his cones: A one-yard cone costs the usual 2 FP; two-yard, 3 FP; three-yard, 4 FP; four-yard, 5 FP; and five-yard (his maximum), 6 FP. He has also built up an Energy Reserve and become *extremely* resistant to most energy attacks (Damage Reduction, extra DR, *and* spell immunity). And having more than fire to play with has left him less of a pyromaniac than many fire-breathers.

All those extra eyes, ears, noses, and mouths mean Thrice is exceptionally alert, even for a dragon: Per 20! His over-muscled heads can't twist enough for 360° Vision, but it's nigh impossible to hide anywhere but *directly* behind him, where he's still likely to hear you. Sneaking up on him and living to tell the tale is a challenge to coup-counters and tricksters everywhere.

Having three mouths to feed and a huge Energy Reserve to replenish has a downside: Thrice is always ravenous. This can be bad news for delvers . . . or create opportunities for bribery (and in theory poisoning, but with Smell 20 and HT 15, good luck with that).

Thrice is not gifted in magic. In fact, he's magic-resistant. This mostly works to his advantage, as he meets few friendly casters who can manage five times the usual energy cost to assist him. Resistance rises to full immunity where the stuff of his breath weapons is concerned.

Thrice won't *necessarily* attack adventurers. He knows he's a "glass cannon," with firepower out of proportion to his resistance to swords and arrows. He values what most dragons do: treasure, food (heaps of it), and becoming more powerful. But if forced to fight, he'll cut loose with a storm of full-width cones from a safe altitude.

| | | |
|------------------|------------------|------------------------------|
| ST: 35 | HP: 35 | Speed: 7.25 |
| DX: 14 | Will: 14 | Move: 6 (Air Move 14) |
| IQ: 14 | Per: 20 | |
| HT: 15 | FP: 15 | SM: +4 |
| Dodge: 10 | Parry: 11 | DR: 6 |

Bite (16): 4d+5 impaling. Reach C, 1.

Cold Breath (18): A 1- to 5-yard-wide × 10-yard-long cone inflicting 4d-1 burning. Cannot set fires, but will extinguish ordinary fire. Costs 2-6 FP per use, with no recharge time or limit on uses/day; this can come from FP or Energy Reserve.

Fire Breath (18): A 1- to 5-yard-wide × 10-yard-long cone inflicting 4d-1 burning. May set fires. Costs 2 FP per use, with no recharge time or limit on uses/day. Costs 2-6 FP per use, with no recharge time or limit on uses/day; this can come from FP or Energy Reserve.

Front Claw (16): 4d+2 cutting *or* impaling. Reach C-3.

Hind Claw (14): 4d+3 cutting *or* impaling. Reach C-3.

Horns (16): 4d+2 cutting. Treat as weapon, not as body part, both to attack and parry! Reach C, 1.

Lightning Breath (18): A 1- to 5-yard-wide × 10-yard-long cone inflicting 4d-1 burning. Metal armor gets DR 1. Cannot set fires, but anyone wounded must roll vs. HT at -1 per 2 HP suffered or be stunned; roll against HT each turn to recover. Costs 2-6 FP per use, with no recharge time or limit on uses/day; this can come from FP or Energy Reserve.

Tail (14): 4d+3 crushing *or* double that for knockback only. Reach C-4.

Wing (16): 4d+2 crushing *or* double that for knockback only. Reach C-4.

Traits: Bad Grip 2; Damage Reduction 3 (Cold/Ice, Electricity, *and* Heat/Fire); DR 6 (Limited, Cold/Ice, Electricity, *and* Heat/Fire); Energy Reserve 35 (Breath); Enhanced Move 0.5 (Air Speed 21); Extra Attack 4; Extra Head 2; Extra Legs (Four Legs); Flight (Winged); Gluttony (9); High Pain Threshold; Horizontal; Immunity to Cold Spells; Immunity to Disease; Immunity to Electrical Spells; Immunity to Fire Spells; Loner (12); Magic Resistance 6; Nictitating Membrane 6; Night Vision 9; Penetrating Voice; Peripheral Vision; Pyromania (15); Striking ST 7 (Bite only); Temperature Tolerance 8 (-25°F to 150°F); Unfazeable.

Skills: Brawling-16; Diplomacy-14; Fast-Talk-14; Innate Attack (Breath)-18; Intimidation-14; Tactics-14.

Class: Mundane.

Notes: Can attack *five times*, using use each natural weapon just once. *Double* body-parts value relative to a small dragon (p. 4).

*Would I like a warm
lunch or a cold one? Yes!*
– Thrice

THE ANNIHILATOR

This most ancient of super-gargantuan dragons has been known by countless names, among them Eater of Souls, Sky-Darkener, and That Which Comes In The Night. By any moniker, it (nobody knows whether "he" or "she" pertains, as nobody who has asked has lived) is always feared and often worshiped. The mountainfolk who currently kowtow to it call it "the Annihilator."

The epithet is deserved: This dragon's breath *annihilates* living targets. There are no (known) defenses against it besides "don't get hit," and ordinary folk are disintegrated in one shot, though heroes sometimes need two or three. This cone is *big*, too, and powered by the Annihilator's almost inexhaustible magical energy supply.

To target its beam of un-life, the Annihilator uses a sense for life. It detects living things around it (at Per 22), and can fight against them regardless of light level or other obscurity.

Both of these abilities are magical, and the Annihilator is certainly that. It is a wizard of unimaginable power, both in terms of Magery and Energy Reserve (which it can also use for its breath), and knows many spells – including some mortal wizards cannot cast – at ungodly levels. It can work magic regardless of whatever else it might be doing. At the same time, it's *extremely resistant* to magic, with no effect on its own castings.

The dragon is also impressive in mundane terms. It has vast size and strength, a nigh-impenetrable hide, and several near-indestructible natural weapons. Its mind is so alien as to be no more affected by mortals' words than by their magic. Merely *seeing* it paralyzes most viewers with fear.

The Annihilator considers itself a god. Maybe it is. It demands to be propitiated (by worship and sacrifice) or else it cleanses the defiant mortal from the planet – each mortal may choose at first encounter.

Against all but ludicrously overpowered and over-equipped heroes, the Annihilator is a plot device, not a fair encounter – not even close. If the delvers are near-demigods who mock dragons, however, the Annihilator lets them pick on somebody their own size. And probably lose, unless they have an artifact that specifically protects against it.

| | | |
|------------------|------------------|------------------------------|
| ST: 100 | HP: 100 | Speed: 7.25 |
| DX: 14 | Will: 20 | Move: 6 (Air Move 14) |
| IQ: 20 | Per: 22 | |
| HT: 15 | FP: 15 | SM: +7 |
| Dodge: 10 | Parry: 11 | DR: 18 |

Bite (16): 11d+10 impaling. Reach C, 1.

Front Claw (16): 11d+10 cutting *or* impaling. Treat as weapon, not as body part. Reach C-10.

Hind Claw (14): 11d+11 cutting *or* impaling. Treat as weapon, not as body part. Reach C-10.

Horns (16): 11d+10 cutting. Treat as weapon, not as body part, both to attack and parry! Reach C, 1.

Mana Breath (16): A 2-yard-wide × 10-yard-long cone inflicting 11d HP of injury. DR has no effect; only completely inanimate targets are unaffected. Targets killed by this are *gone* – nothing remains to resurrect, though gear is intact. Costs 2 FP per use, with no recharge time or limit on uses/day; this can come from FP or Energy Reserve.

Tail (14): 11d+11 crushing *or* double that for knockback only. Treat as weapon, not as body part. Reach C-11.

Wing (16): 11d+10 crushing *or* double that for knockback only. Reach C-11.

Traits: Bad Grip 2; Bloodlust (12); Compartmentalized Mind 1; Detect (Life; Precise); DR 18 (Limited, Magic); Energy Reserve 100 (Magical); Enhanced Move 0.5 (Air Speed 21); Extra Attack 5; Extra Legs (Four Legs); Flight (Winged); High Pain Threshold; Horizontal; Immunity to Disease; Indomitable; Loner (12); Magery 10; Magic Resistance 18 (Improved); Megalomania; Nictitating Membrane 18; Night Vision 9; Penetrating Voice; Peripheral Vision; Selfish (12); Temperature Tolerance 6 (5°F to 150°F); Terror (-2 to Fright Check); Unfazeable.

Skills: Brawling-16; Fast-Talk-20; Innate Attack (Breath)-16; Intimidation-20; Religious Ritual-20; Tactics-20; Theology-20.

Class: Mundane.

Notes: Can attack *six times*, using each natural weapon just once, *and* concentrate on magic. Wizardly spells (all at skill 30) are Analyze Magic, Armor, Aura, Command, Continual Light, Counterspell, Darkness, Death Vision, Detect Magic, Dispel Magic, Foolishness, Forgetfulness, Glue, Great Healing, Haste, Identify Spell, Lend Energy, Lend Vitality, Light, Major Healing, Mind-Reading, Mind-Search, Minor Healing, Missile Shield, Recover Energy, Reverse Missiles, Sense Emotion, Sense Foes, Sense Spirit, Shield, Skull-Spirit, Soul Jar, Sound, Steal Energy, Steal Vitality, Summon Spirit, Thunderclap, and Truthsayer. Many of these are unavailable to mortal wizards – notably the Healing spells, which the Annihilator uses on itself. *18 times* body-parts value relative to a small dragon (p. 4).



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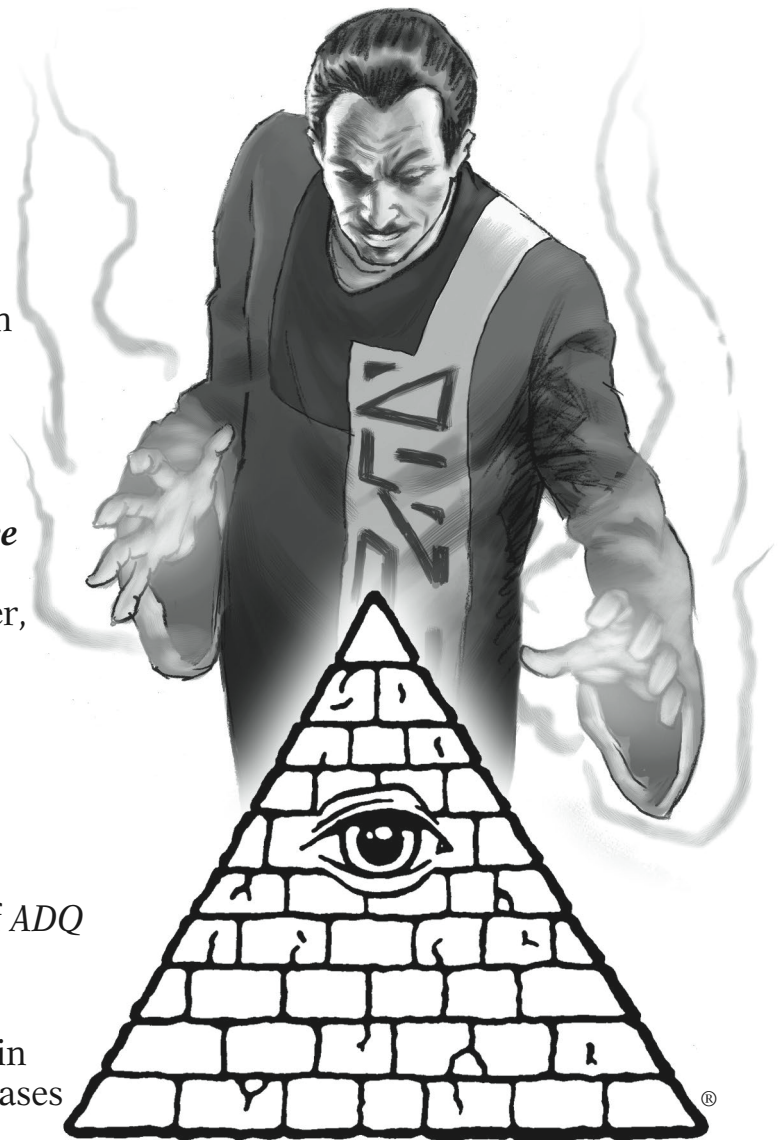


Sleeping on a dragon's hoard with greedy, dragonish thoughts in his heart, he had become a dragon himself.
– C.S. Lewis, The Voyage of the Dawn Treader

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