



# AILAMERE'S LAIR

BY STEVE FETSCH

## A search for the ghostly dragon of the Deadwaters

Artwork by Craig Huffman

*During the last year, this adventure has had its own adventures. It's been lost in the mail, greatly expanded, lost from disk, reconstructed, resubmitted, revised, re-revised, and finally published. Steve is planning to start writing his next adventure as soon as he's treated for nervous exhaustion.*

"Ailamere's Lair" is an AD&D® adventure that offers mid- to high-level player characters the challenge of encountering an unusual creature in an unusual way. A diverse group of 4-7 PCs of levels 6-9 is recommended (about 41 total levels), although this adventure is equally well suited for just one or two PCs of levels 12-15.

### The Meeting

The adventure begins when a scholar by the name of Rondelle summons the party to her home in the bustling crossroads town of Greenglade. Rondelle may have posted a help-wanted notice, met the party through a mutual acquaintance, or approached them in a public place.

Rondelle is wise for her mere 40 years and is very agreeable in conversation, despite a touch of melancholy in her tone. She has been fascinated with dragons all her life, and until five years ago ardently sought them out to speak with, study, or slay (depending on her inclination—and the dragons'). She has compiled an extensive library of information on the powers, weaknesses, attitudes, and other lore of various breeds of dragonkind, as well as the locations, names, and secrets of some specific dragons. On her last field expedition, Rondelle lost her left leg and several adventuring companions to a blue dragon. She now has a wooden leg and has not gone dragon hunting or formed close friendships since then.

**Rondelle:** AL LN; AC 1; MV 6 (due to wooden leg); Bard 9; hp 26; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; S 9, D 14, C 15, I 16, W 16, Ch 16; CW 20%, DN 65%, PP 25%, RL 65%; permanent *detect lie* ability; short sword, *dagger* +3, light crossbow, *bracers of defense AC 5*, *ring of protection +4*, *ring of spell storing* (containing *haste*, *dimension door*, *fire shield*, and *stoneskin*), *cube of force*, *potion of polymorph self*.

Spells: *charm person*, *color spray*, *unseen servant*; *ESP*, *improved phantasmal force*, *scare*; *hold person*, *wraithform*.

Nonweapon proficiencies: animal lore,

local history, musical instrument (lyre, flute, concertina), poetry, tracking.

Rondelle is also fluent in written and spoken common, elvish, and kobold, and is the keeper of a great deal of dragon lore. (Treat this as a form of the local history nonweapon proficiency, but applied only to dragons and related species.)

### Rondelle's Briefing

The PCs are escorted into a comfortable room and offered tea or brandy; Rondelle opts for the latter. Once the introductions and pleasantries are over, the bard rises from her chair and addresses the PCs:

"I have asked you here because I have a job for you. I have been following your group's progress, and the stories I hear are impressive. Even the ones I believe make me confident that you are resourceful enough for the mission I have in mind. To call it dragon hunting . . . that is too crude a phrase, and largely inaccurate. I want you to *watch* a dragon, observe it for a few days and make notes on its behavior. I've drafted a list of the information I need, which I'll give to you in a few minutes. But first, let me tell you what I already know about this particular dragon.

"I have received a number of third-hand reports from traders and vagabonds, and corroborated their claims by speaking with fugitives who came here from the town of Primsen, 50 miles away. Several people from Primsen and the surrounding hamlets have seen an enormous winged serpent. Even after accounting for the natural propensity of frightened common folk to exaggerate and embellish, I believe that this creature is unlike any that I have encountered or read about.

"Although the witnesses often contradicted each other, there were some commonalities in the accounts. All sightings of the dragon were at night. A few witnesses claim that the creature had legs. Some insist that it did not. Everyone was terrified by the mere sight of the creature. Its body seemed to radiate a shimmering pale blue light—like a ghost, perhaps? Two witnesses claim to have seen the moon clearly *through* its wings, although I consider one of the witnesses entirely unreliable because she insisted that the moon 'gave birth to the

flying snake; and that the creature returns to the moon every morning.

"Many people have fled the hamlet of Weedwater in favor of the security to be found in a larger community like Primsen. Many apparently do not feel safe in that city, either. These refugees invariably claim that most of their crops have been blighted—turned white, brittle, and lifeless."

If any PCs voice the suspicion that this blight could be damage from a breath weapon of cold, Rondelle shakes her head and lectures, "A white dragon in a temperate clime? Unlikely. They become lethargic in warm air and have trouble flying. Besides, a farmer would surely recognize frost damage."

### Rondelle's Speculation

Once the useful facts have been presented, Rondelle asks the PCs whether they have seen any creature that matches this description, or have any speculations about the dragon's nature or origin. She listens with sincere interest to any credible theories, particularly those that agree with hers. Then she offers her own thoughts:

"What do I think it is? Well, if you've ever spent any time in the company of dragons, you know that they have very strong spirits, be they sublimely noble or . . ." Rondelle trails off, apparently searching for the correct word, or perhaps lost in thought. She absentmindedly taps her fingers on her wooden leg. "The human spirit is frail by comparison, yet people plagued with fury or guilt, or thirsting for revenge, have been known to overcome death to fulfill deeds undone or haunt the living. Why wouldn't the powerful wills of these beasts ever carry them beyond their physical existence? In all my years of studying dragon lore, I have never heard of or encountered such a creature. I would speculate that the creature near Primsen is indeed a restless spirit, a dragon ghost! I do not mean to scare you. Please understand that this is all conjecture. Still, I am sure that you can see how important it is to learn as much about this creature as possible. A spectral dragon would be quite a find!"

If requested, Rondelle explains the

reasoning behind this theory: The dragon appears only at night, glows like a ghost, is translucent or transparent and thus might well be noncorporeal, and appears to have sucked the life from living plants. The bard's speculation is incorrect. The dragon is a living prismatic dragon. (See pages 39-40.) Her name is Ailamere.

### The Mission

Rondelle makes it clear that she is interested in hiring the party to gather information, not merely to slay this creature. She wants to know as much as possible about the dragon's activity cycle, feeding patterns, combat abilities, treasure preferences, etc. (If the mission is a complete success, the party would return with all the information contained in a standard *Monstrous Manual*™ entry.)

Rondelle hands the party a neatly printed list (see page 24) and explains, "Here is a list of information we ought to learn about this new dragon. Any unanticipated qualities or powers should, of course, be noted."

The bard does not want such a rare creature to be destroyed, if this can be avoided. However, because she recognizes that it is likely that the party will kill the dragon in self-defense, out of greed, or for some moral imperative (especially if it is undead or attacking established human communities), Rondelle also suggests some things to do with the creature's body, if it should happen to be killed.

"According to legend," Rondelle says, "if you bury a tooth from a red dragon in fertile ground, an armed and battle-ready berserker will spring up and serve you. Some sages claim that, if a dragon's heart is removed immediately upon its death, the dragon will either attempt to possess the slayer's body or grant him three wishes. The infamous warrior Korg the Merciless once told me that a pool of blood from a freshly decapitated gold dragon can be used as a scrying device.

"In one epic poem I recall, a warrior fashions a scale from a T'ien Lung—you may know it as a celestial dragon—into an arrow and fires it into the sky. The arrow transforms into a young dragon, which serves him faithfully for many years before devouring him in his sleep.

## Spectral Dragon Characteristics

### PHYSICAL APPEARANCE:

- Coloration
- Length
- Wingspan
- Does dragon have legs?

### ACTIVITY CYCLE

- Nocturnal?
- Diurnal?
- Does dragon sleep?

### DIET:

- Animal?
- Vegetable?
- Mineral?
- Energy?
- How much and how often does it eat?
- Is dragon a spirit?

### LAIR

- Cave?
- Treetop?
- Burrow?
- The moon? (Ha!)

### TREASURE:

- Type
- Arrangement (apparent value hierarchy)

### COMMUNICATION

- Does dragon speak?
- Is it friendly? Hostile? Indifferent?
- How intelligent does it appear to be?

### OBJECTIVES AND DESIRES

- Treasure?
- Power?
- What does it think of humans?

### ORIGINS

- Where did the dragon come from?
- Why did it come here?
- Are there others of its kind?

### COMBAT ABILITIES:

- Physical modes of attack (clawing? biting? tail strike?)
- Fighting skill
- Severity of each strike
- Preferred tactics

### BREATH WEAPON:

- Type
- Intensity
- Frequency
- What can be done to protect against breath weapon?

### DEFENSIVE CAPABILITIES

- How difficult is it to cause damage to the dragon?
- Is magic needed to harm it?

### MISCELLANEOUS:

- Is dragon undead?
- Can it drain energy?
- Can it survive in sunlight?
- Can it pass through walls?

### SPELLS AND MAGICAL ABILITIES

### SPECIAL VULNERABILITIES

"I do not put much stock in tales like these, but it might nonetheless be interesting to try some experiments if you must slay the creature. I myself had the good fortune of meeting the gaze of a dragon as it perished and have, since then, been aware of every lie spoken to me."

Rondelle does not volunteer the fact that this power came from slaying a lawful-good bronze dragon.

### The Reward

Few adventurers will be interested in furthering the ends of science unless their own interests are also served. Knowing this, Rondelle has devised a system of rewarding the party according to the degree of success of their research. She is willing to offer a number of gems and other items as payment, at the rate of one item per major question on her list. "Physical appearance," for instance, is a major question; to answer it completely, the PCs must learn all the related specifics, such as "coloration" and "length." If the party acquires sufficient information about the dragon's feeding habits, they get one item. If they learn the effects of its breath weapon, they earn another item. Rondelle will grant these rewards in ascending order of value, as follows:

- 1 question 100-gp amethyst
- 2 questions 500-gp pearl
- 3 questions 500-gp topaz
- 4 questions 1,000-gp sapphire
- 5 questions 5,000-gp jacinth
- 6 questions 5,000-gp star ruby
- 7 questions 10,000-gp diamond
- 8 questions 10,000-gp gem-encrusted choker
- 9 questions Six blocks of *incense of meditation*
- 10 questions *Boots of striding and springing*
- 11 questions *Wand of negation*
- 12 questions *Sun blade* (intelligent, at DM's option)
- 13 questions *Robe of scintillating colors*
- All questions A significant favor or one of the items on Rondelle's person

Rondelle thinks it unlikely that more than 11 of her questions will be answered to her satisfaction, so she feels safe in offering the highly valuable items later

on her list. She is willing to part with them only because these items are useless to her and invite the attention of thieves and assassins. (The items once belonged to her fallen comrades.) Her interest in keeping the dragon alive is strong enough that she will promise to give the PCs an extra item (as if they had answered one more question) as an incentive for not killing the creature.

If the adventurers attempt to persuade Rondelle to give them the magical items in advance, to help them complete the mission, she declines. "If I give you these items and you do not survive, I will have nothing to offer another group. Surely you could not have gained the excellent reputation that recommended you to my service if you cannot take care of yourselves. However, if you feel the assignment is beyond your means, I will look for another group willing to accept my offer."

Rondelle does intend to provide some additional help to the PCs, but she will not offer these items until the terms of employment are settled. The bard believes that knowledge can be as formidable a weapon as a sword, so she will arm the party with historical accounts, poetry, prose, and scientific documents that describe the behavior and combat abilities of known dragons. The DM may give the players copies of appropriate pages from the *Monstrous Manual* and selected fiction, such as chapters featuring Smaug in *The Hobbit*. Rondelle stresses that each dragon is an individual; offers that appeal to one dragon (or ploys that fool one individual) might not work on another, even one of the same subspecies.

Rondelle also gives the party a magical amulet that will aid the PCs in their research more than anything else she can offer. Her *fate's charm* allows its possessor and a number of companions to explore a course of action with little consideration of its consequences. This device makes it

possible for the PCs to confront the dragon in different ways. They may try a stealthy approach, attempt diplomacy, and provoke the dragon into using its breath weapon to experience its effects—and live to tell about it. The *fate's charm* makes it possible to both slay the dragon and let it live.

To further discourage the permanent killing of this rare dragon, Rondelle stipulates one inflexible condition before she gives the PCs this powerful magical device: Half of any treasure retrieved during their mission must be turned over to her, and she must have the opportunity to thoroughly examine all unusual objects, including magical items, animal bones, minted coins, etc. All PCs must agree to these terms, and Rondelle verifies their good intentions with her *detect lie* ability. To ensure the adventurers' compliance, she may thinly veil a threat in words of trust: "I think that there's no need for any written contract between us, unless you desire one. Dishonesty's not in my nature, and who would betray a bard who could crush the reputation of a king or the holiest high priest by scarcely lifting a finger? No, I am content with a handshake."

Upon completion of the adventure, Rondelle will honor her agreements and pay for all satisfactory answers.

### Encounters

Encounters on the 70-mile journey across lightly wooded plains from Greenglade to the area near Ailamere's lair are not likely to tax a well-equipped party's resources. Check for encounters three times per day and four times each night. Consult the chart below. A roll of 1 on the die listed in the appropriate column indicates that an encounter takes place. Roll 1d8 to determine the type of encounter; the details of each encounter are given below. If any encounter is rolled twice, re-roll or modify the second encounter as logic dictates.

#### Encounters

On Road		Off Road		Ailamere's Domain	
Day (1d6)	Night (1d10)	Day/Night (1d8)	Day (1d10)	Night (1d6)	
1 Farmers	Patrol	Patrol	Wildlife	Wildlife	Wildlife
2 Traders	Patrol	Wildlife	Gorbo	Gorbo	Gorbo
3 Refugees	Wildlife	Wildlife	Gorbo	Feature	Feature
4 Patrol	Wildlife	Horse	Feature	Feature: pit	Feature: pit
5 Wildlife	Horse	Ailamere	Feature	Ailamere	Ailamere
6 Horse	Goblins (6)	Goblins (6)	Ailamere	Ailamere	Ailamere
7 Goblins (6)	Goblins (6)	Goblin camp (12)	Goblins (6)	Ailamere	Ailamere
8 Goblins (6)	Goblins (12)	Goblin camp (12)	Goblins (6)	Goblins (6)	Goblins (6)

### Fate's Charm

Although it appears to be no more than the sort of cheap silver trinket that a little girl might keep as a good luck charm, this magical amulet is potent indeed. At the end of a thin chain hang three tiny female figures that represent the Fates: Clotho holding a distaff, Lachesis with a spindle, Atropos carrying shears. The name of each Fate appears on the hem of her robe.

When one of these names is invoked with the proper incantation, the holder of the *fate's charm* is granted the power to explore a course of action with little risk to life and limb, for he can instantly return himself and his companions to the time and place of the initial invocation. All he need do is utter the phrase, "I do not accept this fate," any time before the power expires, and all events that took place since the invocation of the *fate's charm* simply "un-happen." Wounds disappear, but pre-existing wounds reappear if they were healed during the *fate's charm* period. Lost objects reappear; acquired objects vanish. Damaged items become whole. Magical items regain any charges expended, and spells that were cast reappear on scrolls. Anyone who has died during the *fate's charm* period is alive again.

Only the minds of the possessor of the *fate's charm* and those specifically named in the charm's incantation do not return to their previous state. Their memories of the aborted time line remain intact, and they even earn experience points from combat that "un-happens." On the negative side, spells cast from memory and PSPs expended remain lost. Some mind-affecting spells may remain in effect.

When a person has worn the *fate's charm* for a whole day, she becomes aware of its powers, the verbal incantations that activate them, and the duration of each, but is not informed of the cost of employing the powers. The incantations, durations, and costs are as follows:

"Clotho, though the way on your golden branch be dearly bought, I beseech you to guide my fate and that of these friends I name: [insert names of PCs to be included in the amulet's protection]." Duration: Two turns. Cost: 10,000 gp in nonmagical treasure



currently owned or acquired in the future.

"Lachesis, spin us two threads, that if one should lead to grief, its twin may bring good fortune. Touch my fate and that of these friends I name." Duration: One turn. Cost: None.

"Atropos, a reprise! Lay down your cruel shears this hour. May this charm bring your grace upon its bearer and these friends I name." Duration: One hour. Cost: One minor magical item (*dagger +1*, spell scroll, etc.).

Those to be included under the protection of the *fate's charm* must be within 10' of the caster (who must hold or wear the charm) as the incantation is spoken, this being the only limitation on the number of people protected. At the end of the power's duration, or if the provisional time line is aborted, the figure whose power was called upon vanishes from the charm, and the price exacted for using the power instantly disappears from the belongings of the charm's possessor.

If any wizards, priests, or sages know a method for crafting a *fate's charm*,

they keep the secret well. In every case that has been investigated, the ownership of one of these rare devices has been traced to an adventurer who performed a dangerous and heroic deed against all odds, for the benefit of some human community. The adventurer, usually a warrior, was approached by an old blind woman who thanked him and said, "Take this charm, and the Fates will see to your safety." The old woman then walked off and disappeared without a trace.

If a month passes during which the *fate's charm* is neither used nor given away it vanishes, never again to fall into the same person's hands.

**Farmers.** Ten farmers on three ox-carts are headed to nearby cities to sell their wares. They are escorted by four mounted militiamen for protection from goblins that have been sighted in the area. The farmers are from Primsen and neighboring Greenglade and have never seen the dragon or any of the damage it is supposed to have done. Most sightings, they say, have been near Weedwater, south of Primsen. The militiamen warn the adventurers about the goblins and discourage them from pursuing the dragon "for your safety, and because nobody knows what it will do to our towns if provoked."

**Farmers (10):** AL NG; AC 10; MV 12; F1; hp 6 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 5; clubs, knives.

**Militia (4):** AL LN; AC 6; MV 12; F3; hp 17 each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 10; ring mail, shield, spear, short sword.

**Traders.** Three businessmen are traveling together in two horse-drawn carts, sharing the protection of three mercenary bodyguards.

**Lothmo Paxtor:** AL LE; AC 7; MV 9; F1; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 10; XP 35; studded leather armor, sword cane, 170 sp, 45 gp. Lothmo is leaving Primsen with a load of unsold fox traps.

**Xanthippe:** AL LN; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 8; two daggers, 21 gp. Xanthippe is returning to a nearby city, having arranged for food deliveries to her inn.

**Arvo Glib:** AL NG; AC 4; MV 9; F3; hp 28; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; D 17; ML 13; studded leather armor, spear, 20 sp, 23 ep, 18 gp, 5 pp, two chests of silver jewelry (total value 1,200 gp). Arvo is transporting silver trinkets and jewelry (manufactured in Primsen) for sale in larger cities.

Spells like *ESP* and *charm person* may reveal that the mercenaries plan to subdue or kill the merchants shortly before arriving at the next town.

**Mongdro and Fiftagh:** AL NE; AC 5; MV 9; F4; hp 39, 29; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 17, I 6; ML 13; XP 270; chain mail, two-handed swords, heavy crossbows, 10 quarrels. These two dim thugs had been getting bored with pushing around weaker people and are glad that Salvador has given them some direction.

**Salvador:** AL CE; AC 6; MV 12; T6;

hp 29; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA backstab Dmg  $\times 3$ ; S 10, D 18, C 9, I 16, W 7, Ch 15; ML 11; XP 1,400; long sword, short bow, jar with three applications of type D poison, three potions of *invisibility and scentlessness*. Salvador will give information about the dragon in return for money. He knows nothing about the dragon, but he is a creative liar.

**Refugees.** Three men, five women, and eight children lead a dozen exhausted horses and mules, overloaded with their every possession, away from Weedwater and the dragon that has ruined their lives. They are hesitant to discuss the "spirit" lest they anger or summon it, but will do so with a lot of encouragement or a little gold. They refer to the creature as a "spirit" because Weedwater's priest thought it to be an embodiment of the living spirit of the water, soil, and air that they had somehow wronged.

The refugees know all of the true information that Rondelle has already given the PCs. They add that the dragon has been seen by berry pickers on several occasions as it flew over the Deadwaters. (See map on page 29.) If the PCs ask the next obvious question, the spokesman for the refugees replies, "Yes, they pick berries in the daylight, so that's when they saw the spirit." He can also describe the damage done to their crops. (See page 28.) One woman in this group got a close view of the dragon, as she reluctantly recounts, stopping intermittently to weep:

"Yes, I saw it. My husband, Tal, he went out to check on the horses because they were making a racket like they'd been spooked by something. I told him it might be the dragon everybody was talking about, but he said you can't live your life in fear. Maybe it was more goblins, he said, and he wasn't going to let them get away with his horses because he was hiding from a wyrm that could get us inside the house if it wanted. So he went out with his spear. I was afraid for him, so I found his sword and followed him a minute later.

"It was a foggy night, so I didn't see anything until I almost bumped into him. He was stumbling toward me, real slow, and trying to talk. His face and hands were peeling, and he looked like a week-dead corpse. He

collapsed at my feet. The horses were kicking their stalls, and I could hardly see anything. Suddenly two eyes appeared in the mist, right in front of my face! They stared at me, coming closer and closer until my back was against the house. I didn't even know I'd been walking backward! The creature bent over Tal and put its hands together, like it was praying. There was a bright flash of light and I could see the spirit. It looked like a giant snake, big as the house! It was so bright, and the colors, all moving around, they made me dizzy. When I woke up it was dark and cold. The spirit was gone. Tal was gone. And so was the sword I'd had in my hands."

**Refugees (16):** AL any; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level humans; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (hand tools and daggers only); ML 4.

**Patrol.** These mounted rangers based in Primsen are performing their regular patrol of the area, looking for signs of goblin activity. In recent days, unusually high numbers of goblin sightings have been reported, but no one has been attacked by the creatures. Local authorities blame the dragon for the disappearance of three people in the Weedwater area, but the rangers suspect that these people were abducted by goblins.

Last night, the rangers attacked a party of six goblins that they found camping in the woods. The goblins were no match for the rangers and were easily destroyed. The last goblin screeched its death curse in a gloating tone. Two of the rangers know a smattering of the goblin tongue, and both believe that the repugnant little creature was promising revenge.

If a second encounter with a patrol is rolled, it is with Samset Redwing, an intelligent but impulsive lone ranger. She is quite familiar with this region and will gladly serve as a guide for the PCs if she believes their intentions are good. Her orders from the Greenglade militia captain are to protect the hamlets and monitor the goblins, but she has never had much faith in the wisdom of bureaucracies or their ability to adapt to unusual situations, like the appearance of a dragon. Samset has no interest in going to Kilarken (a mining town that the PCs may want to visit, see page 29

for details). If the party wants to go there, she offers to meet them in Weedwater at an appointed time.

**Rangers (3):** AL LG; AC 7; MV 12; R3; hp 15, 12, 7; THAC0 18; #AT 2; Dmg by weapon type; ML 14; studded leather armor, long sword, hand ax, long bow, 20 arrows.

**Samset Redwing:** AL CG; AC 0 (-2 running with magic boots); MV 12; R8; hp 60; THAC0 13; #AT 5/2 (short sword and dagger); Dmg by weapon type; S 18/51 (+2/+3), D 18; HS 59%, MS 72%; ML 16; *bracers of defense AC 4, short sword +2, dagger +1*, long bow, 20 flight arrows, *boots of speed*. Non-weapon proficiencies: animal lore, blind fighting, tracking, tumbling, elvish, goblin. Spell: *locate animals or plants*.

**Wildlife.** Normal wildlife is common outside of Ailamere's domain. In these areas, the PCs encounter one or more large or exceptional creatures that prefer to avoid contact: an elk, a bear, a giant owl, or a pair of blink dogs. Within the lands claimed by the dragon, most large animals have been eaten or scared away; small, innocuous creatures remain in hiding. In this area, the PCs encounter a squirrel, starling, nonvenomous snake, rabbit, or orphaned fawn.

**Horse.** This domesticated horse was frightened by the dragon. Any information gained from the horse is tainted by its panic and general stupidity. The animal is dragging a plow as it wanders through the wilderness. Thinking PCs will conclude that it must have been spooked during the daytime.

**Draft horse:** INT animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3; hp 13; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SZ L; ML 6; MM/194.

**Goblins or goblin camp.** No goblin scouting party is likely to be a significant threat to high-level PCs or any sizable community. These encounters are important for the information they provide: The goblins are currently assembling an army of over 400 armed goblins to attack and plunder the nearest human settlements. Past goblin raids have been a nuisance, but the impending invasion could inflict tremendous damage on Weedwater, Kilarlark, and even Primsen. Although the scouts don't know exactly when or how the attack will take place, it is clear that the towns will have little time to prepare an adequate defense or muster

reinforcements from other cities.

The best defense against the goblins is what may seem to be the greater threat: Ailamere herself. The goblin army will not attack if its scouts report that a dragon prowls the area; no goblins have survived an encounter with the dragon. Even if the goblins do come in force, Ailamere can defeat them (but not if she is slain!).

**Goblin scouts (6):** INT average; AL LE; AC 6; MV 6; HD 1-1; hp 4 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ S (4' tall); ML 10; XP 15; MM/163; mace, spear, 1-8 sp, 2-12 cp each.

The goblins may be replaced by gnolls, hobgoblins, norkers, orcs, or any hostile humanoid other than grimlocks, which are immune to the prismatic dragon's sight-dependent powers.

**Ailamere.** Use the "First Contact" table (page 33) to determine the circumstances of the PCs' first encounter with the dragon. Ailamere is described in detail beginning on page 32.

**Gorbo.** See page 30 for a description of this half-dwarf outcast.

**Feature.** This roll indicates some exceptional feature of the landscape that could help the party observe the dragon's behavior or could give clues to its nature and characteristics. The DM may invent a feature, choose from the list below, or determine the feature randomly by rolling 1d10.

**1. Lookout.** This natural stone tower, bluff, or exceptionally tall tree offers an excellent view of the surrounding region, including the Deadwaters lake where Ailamere lives (although not her cave itself). Such a vista is favored by the dragon, too. The PCs have a 50% chance to find dragon tracks or a few scales in the area. Waiting here is a good way to attract the dragon's attention (see "Senses," page 32).

**2. Cave.** Deep and narrow enough to provide good concealment, this cave offers protection from the scouting dragon. A guide who knows this region can point out several caves, including 1-4 within a mile of the dragon's cave (in addition to those described in "The Lair").

**3. Clearing.** Ailamere removed the trees and boulders from this area and swept them into low barricades for concealment and defense. There is a 75% chance of finding claw marks,

droppings, or other signs of the dragon's presence here. If the party encounters Ailamere while lingering here (see the "First Contact" table, page 33), she lands at this very spot and is not merely seen in the distance.

**4. Pit (in woods) or rock slide (in rocky areas).** A quarter of these traps have been triggered. Ailamere knows where all her traps are and often guides large prey into them. Some pits are also refuse dumps for animal bones. Pits are typically 20' in diameter and cause 2-12 hp damage to those who fall in (Dexterity ability check at -3 penalty to avoid falling). Rock slides are often set in dead-end canyons and cause 5-50 hp damage (save vs. breath weapon for half damage).

**5. Dead plants.** When the dragon breathed on these cultivated crops (in civilized areas) or trees (in the wilderness), they were killed instantly but preserved as an odd, whitish patch among otherwise healthy vegetation. The plants' leaves are brittle and whitish-green. Tree bark is peeling off, and the water-carrying interior (phloem) is bursting with tiny crystals that resemble a warm, dry form of ice. Roots are similarly damaged to a depth of 2". The affected patch is 30' wide and 100' long. No plants higher than 10' above ground have been affected.

**6. Footprints.** Preserved in the soft earth, these prints clearly show the marks of talonlike feet. The front prints are 5' long and 3' wide, with three webbed toes and a humanlike thumb. The rear prints are a foot shorter but equally wide, not webbed, and have a rear talon but no thumb. Rondelle or anyone with animal lore proficiency (or common sense) can deduce that the dragon is well adapted for swimming and for snatching prey, and that it is corporeal.

Rondelle would pay well for casts of the footprints. If the PCs do not carry plaster (and most don't), they can fill the footprints with water and coax the dragon into breathing her water-solidifying gas—and carefully avoiding the deadly gas themselves.

**7. Scales.** Two or three scales lie on the ground, are embedded in the bark of a tree, or sparkle at the bottom of a stream. (If you have a holographic picture you don't value much, cut it into several rounded triangles. That's what the scales look like.)

**8. Dropped item.** This may be the wagon that carried Kilarcken's silver (see "Kilarcken") or the broken body of Tal (see "Refugees"). Ailamere dropped the item as she flew home.

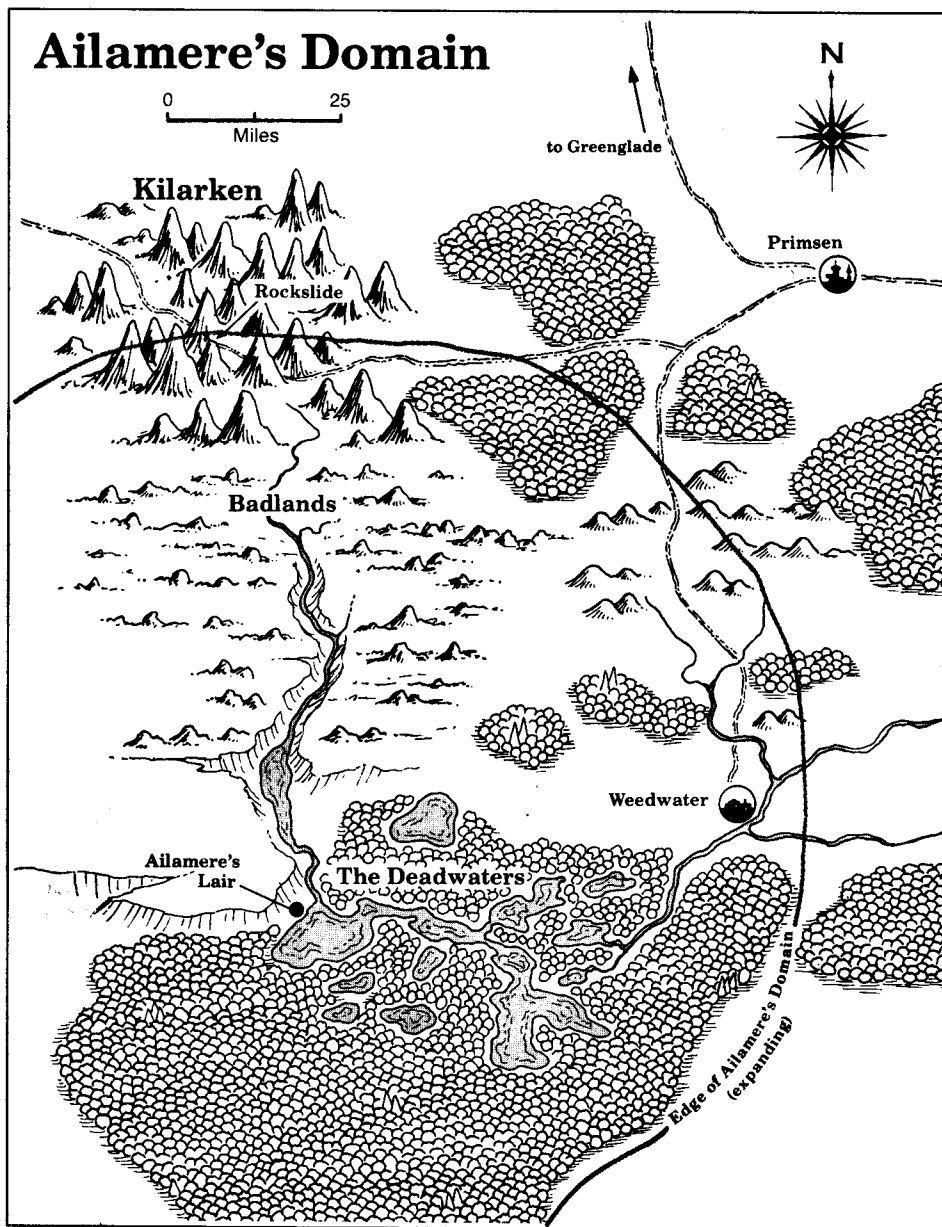
**9. Markings.** Five oddly spaced chevrons scar the earth, a cliff face, or a tree, declaring in the written language of prismatic dragons that this land belongs to Ailamere. If one of the PCs paints this symbol on his shield, Ailamere will be so pleased with the mortal's respectful attitude that she will not demand any tribute from him or his companions. However, if the symbol is drawn vertically or backward, the dragon will be gravely insulted. The correct orientation matches the stripes on Ailamere's face, seen from her right. A *comprehend languages* spell (but not a *rogue's ability*) can determine the symbol's meaning and proper orientation.

**10. Goblin remains.** When the dragon eats prey, it leaves no remains. However, she hates goblins, so she attacks to maim and kill them with her claws and breath weapon. The party comes across the mutilated remains of several goblins. It is unclear how many there were, due to the grisly damage. Among the bodies, the PCs can find 30 cp and one excellent scabbard, but no sword.

### Primsen

This town of over 3,000 people has expanded its economy from farming to include substantial trade and special services. Primsen has an exceptional 60% literacy rate and even supports a handful of writers, artists, and wizards. When questioned about the dragon sightings, the townspeople are rarely hysterical, and often skeptical. The most cynical townsfolk suspect that the tale of a crop-killing dragon is merely an invention by Weedwater farmers seeking deferrals on loans they cannot pay.

It is not difficult to locate refugees from Weedwater whose crops or homes were destroyed. Many have turned to panhandling or worse to make a living. Of these unfortunates, 25% would do almost anything for gold, including serving as a guide for adventurers. Most of them know that the dragon comes from west of Weedwater; 60% know the general topography of the area and that there are many caves near the lakes known as the Deadwaters; 30% are familiar enough with the area to be somewhat useful as guides; 10% falsely



claim to know the precise location of the dragon's lair, and offer their services for no less than 100 gp. A party that naively flaunts its wealth and intentions is automatically approached by a false guide, who takes the money and runs at the first opportunity.

**Con artist:** AL CN; AC 8; MV 12; T2; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA backstab Dmg  $\times 2$ ; S 10, D 16, C 12, I 15, W 7, Ch 12; PP 50%, OL 15%, FT 5%, MS 35%, HS 55%, DN 15%, CW 70%; knife, proficient with short sword and club.

While many refugees have come to

Primsen from Weedwater, there has been no contact with the village of Kilarcken in over three weeks, since a man was brought here for medical attention after falling down a mine shaft. Infrequent traffic from the mines is not unusual and does not worry most Primsenites. Suspicious (or confused) adventurers may investigate this slim lead.

### Kilarcken

One hundred dwarves and 80 stout humans make up the severe and humorless but hospitable population of Kilarcken,



located in a severe, humorless, and inhospitable mountain valley. Their livelihood comes from seemingly inexhaustible silver mines. Most miners live underground or in cliff dwellings for protection from monsters and inclement weather. Grain and other foodstuffs are imported from Primsen, but the miners' diet is supplemented by foraging and hunting.

The last group to leave Kilarcken for Primsen was not the one that transported the injured human (Pequot the Klutz) three weeks ago, but rather a party of eight dwarves and four mules with a wagon load of silver, six days ago.

As the PCs approach Kilarcken, they find the road blocked by a rock slide two miles from the mines. People and mules can climb over the rocks, but horses and vehicles cannot. If the PCs report this obstruction to the authorities in Kilarcken, they discover that the miners already know about the problem but have not begun to clear it, preferring to wait for men from Primsen to contribute labor to this undertaking. They expect help to arrive soon, sent on by the dwarves transporting the silver (who must have gotten through before the rock slide, or they would have turned back). In fact, the miners at first thought that the PCs had been sent to help them in this task.

If any PC mentions that the dwarves and their silver never arrived in Primsen, a party of Kilarcken's strongest laborers is immediately dispatched to search the rubble. They had never thought to do this because it is inconceivable that the dwarves would not have sensed the incipient rock slide long before it became a danger.

The dwarves and mules are indeed buried beneath the rocks that block the road, but the silver and the wagon are gone.

As the dwarves headed toward Primsen, Ailamere stopped the caravan and demanded tribute for passing through her territory: all the silver they carried. The dwarves wisely obliged, but as the dragon grabbed the wagon in her claws and was about to take off, one of the miners whispered, "Watch where the wyrm goes, boys. We'll get our silver back yet." Ailamere, who has excellent hearing, returned to bury the insolent mortal and his companions under a rock slide she had prepared earlier, to use in case they did not comply with her demand.

Much of what transpired can be learned through divination spells and

examination of the site. The marks of giant claws undermining the stone on the ledge above are unmistakable. When the people of Kilarcken find out about this vindictive act, they clamor for the dragon's death, although they have little to offer as a reward. Their one skilled leather worker is willing to fashion armor out of the dragon's hide. The party's wizards are offered a lifetime supply of quartz crystals, which are regularly unearthed and discarded here. In the past, the miners have done a small but steady trade in these crystals, to wizards who use them in arcane research and practices.

### Weedwater

This hamlet of 250 is located within the territory claimed by Ailamere. Here, a web of tiny creeks and streams supports beautiful groves of trees and ferns, lush blankets of clover studded with brilliant wildflowers, and productive cultivated fields and orchards.

Many of the crops in these fields have been destroyed in a manner that no PC has ever seen before. From the rigid and pale appearance of these damaged plants, it would not be unreasonable to suspect that the life had been drawn out of them, and in a way this is so. The water in all the destroyed plants has been transmuted into solid form (not ice). The plants have assumed a whitish cast throughout and are very brittle; stems and stalks shatter like glass rods, and fruits become as hard as baseballs. The damage always occurs in a path 30' wide and 100' long, though intersecting paths can make the pattern less obvious.

Weedwater is now a ghost town of empty cabins, stables, and granaries. The town's one active inhabitant is Gorbo "the Mule," a half-dwarf outcast from Kilarcken, who is present 75% of the time, enjoying the comforts denied him in his life of exile.

**Gorbo "The Mule"** (half-dwarf): AL NE; AC 11; MV 6; Psi6; hp 30; THACO 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SD +1 to saving throw vs. enchantment/charm; S 9, D 6, C 18, I 14, W 15, Ch 4; SZ S; ML 8; XP 650; spear, knife, backpack, water skin, camouflaged one-man tent.

Psionic powers: 73 PSPs; Psychokinesis (primary discipline): Create Object [major creation], Telekinesis, Animate Object, Control Body [domination], Control Flames, [pyrotechnics], Control Sound [audible glamer], Control Wind

[gust of wind], Inertial Barrier [shield], Levitation.

Psychometabolism: Immovability [wraithform].

Psychoportation: Teleport, Dimensional Door [passwall], Time Shift [no spell], Time/Space Anchor [no spell].

If *The Complete Psionics Handbook* is not available, the DM can use the descriptions of appropriate wizard spells (of the same name or the one in brackets). When Gorbo uses these spells, they require no material, verbal, or somatic components, work only on a roll of 15 or lower on 1d20 (and backfire on a 20), and can be used repeatedly and for any duration that Gorbo chooses, but only until his PSPs (Psionic Strength Points) run out. If this expedient is used, psionic sciences (Create Object, Telekinesis, Teleport) consume 15 PSPs per round of use. Psionic devotions (all others) cost 8 PSPs per round.

Everyone knows that humans and dwarves cannot produce children together, and very rarely try. Gorbo, is, however, the product of such a union, one that both parents deeply regret. He is rude, crude, and obnoxious. His worse qualities are selfishness and cruelty. As if a reflection of his malevolent spirit, his body is ugly and misshapen. He has a hunched back and twisted knobs for fingers. Stiff hairs grow in random patches all over his repugnant body. His skin is wrinkled and sagging, although he is only 16 years old.

The community of Kilarcken tolerated his mischievous use of his strange mental powers until, at the age of 14, he was banished for causing a man to fall to his death. (Gorbo animated a tall ladder while the man stood upon it to repair a roof.) He has spent the last two years menacingly haunting the fringes of Kilarcken and Weedwater, but never actually harming anybody.

Gorbo has seen the dragon enter its cave in the Deadwaters and will guide the party there for the price of a "token" from each adventurer—perhaps one person's sword, another's ring, money from another, and a kiss from a female PC. He is extremely unreasonable in negotiations and is utterly indifferent to threats and coercion; such measures only make him more vocally abusive. Gorbo's speech is extremely hostile and offensive (not to mention his spitting), but he does not want to fight anyone. The only ways to get him to serve as a guide are to *charm* him or to

comply with his demands. The only question he will answer without payment is, "Where are the people who live here?" He answers gleefully, showing pointed, rotting teeth in a twisted smile. "Ain't nobody *living* here but us mules. But I'll tell you because I like you, Ugly. They're down by the river."

Over the last several months, Ailamere has been toying with the people of Weedwater: destroying random fields, stealing or scaring away animals, and snatching up the occasional farmer or destroying his house. In response to the creature's terrorism, Weedwater's priest (actually a druid), Thernan of the Dale, marched around the periphery of the town for two days and nights, calling out to the dragon ("the wrathful spirit of the land") that a sacrifice would be made for it.

Ailamere heard his call and viewed it as an opportunity to conduct some research of her own. She swam up the river to the place appointed for the sacrifice, where all of Weedwater had gathered around a pyre of a substantial portion of their remaining crops.

Assuming that the people themselves were the sacrifice (for in her mind, she deserves nothing less), Ailamere used her *waveform* power to drench the congregation, then rose out of the water and breathed on them, "freezing" them in place by solidifying the water that covered them. (See the prismatic dragon description on page 39.) Most of those who were not caught in the initial burst of gas were mesmerized by its shimmering, swirling colors. They walked into the cloud as it rolled by, and became immobilized and died as they entered it. The few who managed to flee were immediately hunted down by the dragon. Evidence of their fate, made especially grim by its scarcity, can be found nearby: a bloody swath of clothing, a single sandal, an abandoned scythe, footprints that suddenly end.

The remains of the sacrificial congregation can be found near the wide, slow-moving river that runs through Weedwater. Their bodies, encrusted in luminescent shells of transmuted water, resemble weatherworn marble statues. Close inspection reveals small patches of peeling skin exposed where the shells have evaporated (usually on palms and cheeks) or cracked (on the joints of the few villagers who have toppled over).

This is a most eerie scene, especially when two of the statues open their eyes!

Only two villagers were hardy enough to survive the internal damage caused by the dragon's breath: the druid Thernan of the Dale and a laborer named John Tillman. As their nostrils were never entirely filled with water, they were not asphyxiated when the water solidified. These two can still breathe, though only in the shallow breaths that their inflexible shells permit. Because their bodies have remained warm, much of the transmuted water has evaporated from their exposed skin.

**Thernan of the Dale:** AL N; AC 8; MV 12; D6; hp 29 (currently 10); THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 9, D 16, C 15, I 15, W 16, Ch 15; SD +2 on saves vs. fire and electricity, pass freely through overgrown areas; ML 12; *staff of command*, pouches containing mistletoe and other spell components.

Spells: *animal friendship, bless, cure light wounds, locate animals or plants, pass without trace, augury, charm mammal, dust devil, goodberry, speak with animals; hold animal, plant growth.*

Thernan is too weak to break his shell, and cannot even speak or turn his head because of his hardened thick beard and hooded cloak.

Inspired by a vision, Thernan came to Weedwater to teach its people how to serve as benevolent stewards of the land. He does not know what course of action to take with respect to the dragon. It's hard to balance the priorities of his work in Weedwater with the well-being of the dragon, while protecting local ecosystems from the dragon's excesses and the ravages of goblins. Despite his firm druidic beliefs, Thernan is probably the most reasonable and flexible of the major NPCs in this adventure.

**John Tillman:** AL CG; AC 10; MV 12; F2; hp 12 (currently 3); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (currently unarmed); S 18, D 9, C 15, I 9, W 7, Ch 11; ML 14.

As a hired hand in Weedwater, and occasionally Primsen, John Tillman has always had to struggle to provide for his wife and four children. Like everyone else in Weedwater, the Tillman family had faith that Thernan's ceremony would quell the angry spirit that had been disrupting their lives. When the dragon emerged from the river and killed Tillman's family and virtually everyone he knew, that faith ended.

Encrusted in a shell of solidified water, he never tried to free himself, for he thought that he was dead. He believes that his current state—aching, hungry, unable to look away from his dead family and friends—is his eternal punishment for some unknown sin, and it will take some time before he can accept the truth and continue his life.

When he does recover, John's one goal will be to see the dragon dead. He will retrieve his long sword from his home and insist on accompanying the party as they seek out the creature. If the PCs clearly do not want the dragon to be slain, John pretends to agree with their ideas, although his poor acting may not conceal his thirst for vengeance. While he might interfere with the party's plans by attacking the beast at a key moment in negotiations, he can be helpful if the PCs decide to destroy the dragon, even if this demands self-sacrifice (although he will still panic in a dragon's awesome presence).

Each day, 0-5 (1d6 - 1) Weedwater farmers return from Primsen, where they had gone on business. A total of 25 farmers will return to Weedwater; 80 others fled the town before the sacrifice, never planning to return. When word spreads that the dragon has been slain, run off, or neutralized, most of these refugees come back and attempt to resume their lives.

## The Deadwaters

The region known as the Deadwaters gets its name from a network of small, dark lakes and the slow, chilly streams that connect them. Most of these lakes are surrounded by dead trees and seemingly impenetrable hedges of vicious thorny vines. While the name appears to be quite apt, at first, not everything here is dead. The local people come to this uninviting area to gather the plump, sweet berries called pixiehearts that grow only in the wild. They also harvest many medicinal herbs and fish for catfish. Fishermen, however, are advised not to go into the water or hold too tightly to their lines, because these lakes are also home to perpetually ravenous giant gar.

## The Lair

The cave that serves as the entrance to Ailamere's lair is on a mile-wide lake bordered on the west by abrupt sandstone cliffs. The dark, twisted, foreboding

## The Dragon Ailamere

Ailamere's body is narrower than those of most dragons. When she draws her wings and legs against her body to dive down on prey or into water, she resembles a huge serpent. Her scales are bluish silver overlaid with shimmering patterns that make the scales appear to change color depending on the orientation of the viewer and the light source. The skin over her wing bones and her ridge of low dorsal fins ranges from rich green to deep indigo, and the scales near her mouth form distinct chevron stripes of orange and red.

Only another dragon can tell at a glance that Ailamere is female. Therefore, although female pronouns are used in this adventure, the DM should use neutral pronouns until Ailamere's sex is disclosed. If the players consistently use male pronouns to refer to the dragon, the DM should use these also.

**Ailamere** (mature adult prismatic dragon): INT high; AL CN; AC -2; MV 9, fly 30 (C), swim 12; HD 14; hp 69; THAC0 7; #AT 3 plus possible kick, slap, wing, and snatch; Dmg 1d6 + 7/1d6 + 7/1d20 + 9; SA breath weapon, *color spray* at 7th level of ability (9th level in low light and using glowstone) once per day, *waveform* three times per day, *hypnotic pattern* twice per day; MR 25%; SZ H (120' long); ML 16; XP 18,000.

Spells: *audible glamer*, *detect magic*, *unseen servant*; *Maximillian's earthen grasp*; *spectral force*. Ailamere calls the *earthen grasp* spell her "earthen dragon claw," but the effect is identical (see *Tome of Magic*).

Ailamere carries a glowstone (a glass gem with *continual light* cast on it) in a pouch strapped to her wrist; a *rod of security* is lashed to her opposite forearm.

For complete information on prismatic dragons, see page 39.

### Senses

In addition to excellent senses of sight, smell, and hearing, many dragons also sense minute variations in temperature (like many snakes), electromagnetic fields (like sharks), and even the presence of sentient life (like some undead). Ailamere's *detect invisibility* ability has a limit of 70'. Still, her powers of observation are exceptional,

so she has a good chance of detecting a party traveling through her territory (see "First Contact") and a fair chance of noticing the signs intruders leave behind. Each day that the PCs spend in the dragon's territory, Ailamere has a base 20% chance of noticing some sign of their presence. This chance is doubled if they use horses or mules, or if they light campfires. The chance is doubled again every day spent within a mile of the lair and with each act of foolish carelessness (such as leaving a campfire unburied). Extra precautions can cumulatively halve the probability of being detected (for example: using a *pass without trace* spell, camping in a deep cave, or sleeping in a *Mordenkainen's magnificent mansion*).

### Communication

Ailamere can communicate with any intelligent creature. Though she speaks most human languages poorly, her ability to understand and converse in another language is augmented by limited telepathy. Using this combination of telepathy and speech, Ailamere has virtually mastered dwarvish and the language of the locathah, which live near the island where she was born. After talking for twenty minutes or so, her halting attempts at speaking the common tongue will sound perfectly fluent. Despite her previous experience with kobolds and goblins, she never learned to speak with them, assuming them to be unintelligent pests.

The dragon also has the following nonweapon proficiencies: astrology, engineering, tracking, and weather sense. If checks are required, assume her incredible experience and sharp senses give her base 18 ability scores for all these skills.

### Ailamere's Background

Ailamere was banished from the island homeland of prismatic dragons, a species that eschews violence between its members, because she scratched out the eye of a cousin who defeated her in a competition of light displays. In the 10 years of her exile, she accumulated a substantial hoard of treasure, only to have much of it plundered from her previous lair by kobolds.

These little creatures came to infest

every tiny cave and crag of the mountain where she laired. They frequently pilfered her treasure in small groups and took refuge in tunnels that sloped upward, where her heavy breath-gas could not climb. She killed many kobolds, but they were innumerable, and their burrows were too deep for her to breathe into or excavate. Moreover, whenever she tried to rout some, others would raid her unguarded treasure.

The dragon is humiliated that she was driven from her old lair by such vermin, and her hatred for them runs deep. She discovered her current lair by accident, while chasing a giant gar underwater.

### Motives and Attitudes

Ailamere would like to return to her species' homeland, and believes that she would be welcomed if she returned with offspring. Therefore, she wants to find a mate. This matter is rather urgent, as she knows that her short period of opportunity for conceiving young will come within the next year. (See "Ecology," page 40.) Clever adventurers may gain Ailamere's favor by fabricating a tale of having met an appropriate mate for her, but woe to the mortal who inadvertently refers to Ailamere as male in her presence!

Like all prismatic dragons, Ailamere is obsessed with the accumulation of treasure. However, objects that she prizes are not necessarily those that humans value. She values silver more as food than as treasure to be hoarded. Prismatic dragons very rarely collect copper, not because it is worthless but because it is sacred. If offered copper, Ailamere demands that the full amount proffered be thrown into the lake in front of her cave. She will not talk with creatures so disrespectful as to hoard precious copper, the "mother metal."

Another treasure of particular interest to Ailamere is art. Dragon aesthetics differs from that of humans; the most beautiful objects (in Ailamere's eyes) conform to one or more of the following criteria: simplicity, symmetry, astrological significance, resemblance to her species. Swords are considered beautiful to see and rewarding to possess. Although she understands that a sword could be used as a

weapon, Ailamere believes that a sword's foremost purpose is as a dragon effigy—a simplified representation of a dragon in flight. Thus, a thick-skulled fighter who raises his weapon in a threat (as John Tillman will do if present and not restrained) might gain Ailamere's favor for his gesture of respectful submission. She would never allow herself to be struck, however.

Ailamere is interested in expanding her domain. She has little competition, so the area under her control has grown considerably since she settled into her lakeside cave. Her desire for more territory will soon result in a conflict with the mining town of Kilarlark. To Ailamere, animals and people in her territory are trespassers whom she has the right to demand tribute from or dispose of as she pleases.

**Activity Cycle**

Prismatic dragons usually hunt during the daytime because light is required for most of their special powers to be effective. However, Ailamere prefers to hunt at night because she possesses a glowstone that allows her to employ her *color spray* ability more skillfully. She does occasionally hunt during the day, however. The table below reflects her usual behavior but makes it possible for her to spend days in her cave or away from her lair. (Note that even where there is no number in the "No Change" column, you may still roll the previous activity.)

Until the dragon's lair is reached, random encounters determine Ailamere's behavior toward the PCs. After the adventurers reach the lair, roll 1d20 and consult this table to determine what Ailamere is doing at any given time. The results are subject to modification by PC action and DM whim.

Immediately before entering or after exiting her lair, Ailamere often (70% of the time) stands atop the cliff overlooking the lake and surveys her territory. There, she considers the locale of her next hunt or revels in the silence of her domain—silence caused by the terror she strikes into the mortal creatures of the earth. While atop the cliff, she has a base 125% chance of spotting anyone wading in the lake, with the following

cumulative modifiers:

- 10% hiding behind a tree
- 10% magically silent
- 15% bathed in lake water or magically scentless
- 30% mostly submerged
- 35% gaseous or ectoplasmic
- 75% invisible
- + 20% whispering
- + 70% talking (including verbal spells)

Atop this perch, Ailamere occasionally (40% chance) expresses her arrogant joy with a deep, awesome bellow that sends ripples across the water and terror through most creatures. All those hearing this cry (audible up to one mile, under normal conditions) must save vs. petrification as if they were within the radius of the dragon's fear aura. Those who fail their save by four or more points flee as quickly as possible for 2-12 rounds. The noise of a person fleeing through water is immediately detected by the dragon; the sound of someone running on dry land has a 60%-99% chance of being detected by the dragon's sharp senses, depending on proximity (20%-33% chance for elves and halflings).

**First Contact**

Roll 1d10 and consult the table below to determine how and where the party first encounters Ailamere if she is rolled as a random encounter. (See page 25.) Add all modifiers that apply:

- Party magically silent or scentless: - 1
- Fewer than four visible PCs: - 2
- Ranger in party: - 2
- Party invisible: - 3
- Each PC in metal armor: + 1
- Party careless: + 3

**Where's Ailamere?**

Time	Out of Lair		In Lair Awake	In Lair Asleep	No Change
	Hunting	Nearby			
Midnight-3 A.M.	1-12	13	14-15	16	17-20
3 A.M.-5 A.M.	1-14	15	16	17-18	19-20
5 A.M.-6 A.M.	1-5	6-11	12-15	16-20	—
6 A.M.-9 A.M.	—	1-6	7-16	17-18	19-20
9 A.M.-Noon	—	1-3	4-7	8-13	14-20
Noon-4 P.M.	—	1	2-3	4-13	14-20
4 P.M.-6 P.M.	1-2	3-6	7-12	13-18	19-20
6 P.M.-7 P.M.	1-4	5-14	15-19	20	—
7 P.M.-10 P.M.	1-12	13-14	15	16	17-20
10 P.M.-Midnight	1-12	13	14	15	16-20

(They sing while they march, travel in open spaces instead of under the cover of valleys or trees, pitch tents on a hill, linger at a lookout point or on ridges, etc.)

- Party has horses or mules: + 4
- Party uses fire: + 5

**0 or below:** Ailamere surprised and vulnerable. (Examples: She is digging a pit or poised on a promontory and observing a distant animal.) Range: 100 yards.

**1:** Ailamere seen in the distance, descending on goblins (1-4) or an elk (5-6) for the kill. Range: ½ mile.

**2:** Ailamere seen flying toward (during day) or away from (at night) her lair. Range: 2 miles.

**3:** Ailamere seen flying near PCs' position. (She doesn't see them yet.) Range: 1 mile at sighting.

**4:** Ailamere is on the ground, following the PCs' trail (like a bloodhound). Range ¼ mile and closing fast. If the PCs hide immediately, a standard surprise roll is made for the dragon when she catches up, modified as the DM deems appropriate. Mounted PCs can outride her (her Movement Rate is 9), but she takes to the air as soon as she hears the cantering or galloping of horses.

**5:** Ailamere encountered on the ground. No surprise. Range: 20 yards.

**6:** Ailamere, flying nearby, clearly notices the party and approaches. No surprise. Range: ¼ mile.

**7:** Ailamere, on the PCs' path, hears or smells them and addresses them as they come into sight. PCs surprised. No terrain advantage. Range: 10 yards.

**8:** Ailamere addresses party from a position of advantage (PCs in a narrow chasm, climbing a cliff, wading through a stream, etc.). She reacts to any overheard threat to her person (“How are we going to kill the dragon, guys?”) by attempting to snatch an adventurer or breathe on them all (with surprise). However, she does not know the common tongue well enough to understand euphemisms. (“I don’t care if that bard doesn’t want the lizard diced, I bet it’s got a heck of a stash!”)

**9:** Ailamere emerges from a deep river or lake and splashes water on the party before she speaks to them. Party is surprised on a roll of 1-6 on 1d10 (+2 to surprise roll if a ranger is present). Save vs. breath weapon to avoid the water, at -8 if surprised.

**10+:** Ailamere addresses party when they are vulnerable to one of her traps (a covered, concealed pit in woods; a prepared rock slide in valley). If the heroes have talked about dragon slaying, she attacks first.

### Observing Ailamere

If the adventurers spot Ailamere without being seen themselves, they can observe her natural behavior. The best way to do this is to pursue her airborne and invisibly, but the resources necessary for such reconnaissance may not be available to the party. Scrying, or *polymorphing* into the form of an innocuous creature could be effective as well, and resourceful players can surely devise other strategies.

Some PCs may find it easiest to find the dragon by letting her find them. This is not the best method, because the discovery of intruders in her territory alters Ailamere’s normal behavior. She becomes extremely cautious and will never allow humans to approach her lair when she is not nearby to protect her treasure. (However, PCs who have agreed to camp at least 10 miles from the dragon’s cave—subject to frequent monitoring by Ailamere—can still explore the lair if Gorbo is around to *teleport* them).

One way to get Ailamere to permit observation of her hunting techniques (a large clue to her combat abilities) is to be honest, if a bit grandiose: “We’re here to spread word of your glorious

exploits across the world!” If the PCs adopt this approach, Ailamere demands compensation for her valuable time, and for the inconvenience and distastefulness of associating with inferior, ugly creatures. Such flattery, however, induces the dragon to show off her varied capabilities more quickly than they could be gleaned from observing her normal behavior. She will not, however, exhaust her breath attacks on animals and goblins, saving at least one breath for defense against the party. Ailamere is so self-absorbed and dracocentric that her questions about human capabilities are few and far between. She will be very interested (and incredulous) if she sees the PCs employ magic.

Use the table on page 33 to determine the dragon’s behavior while the PCs observe her. While “In Lair, Awake,” she spends 25% of her time in the dark and the remainder of these periods in the light of her glowstone, either gazing at her own reflection in her mirrored treasure chest lid, or lying on her back, using her scales to project complex color patterns on the cave roof.

While “Out of Lair, Nearby,” she scouts for intruders, checks her traps, and occasionally (10% of the time) digs or sets a new trap. When Ailamere is “Out of Lair, Hunting,” use the encounter table on page 25 to determine what she is hunting. If she hunts for several consecutive periods, she must travel quite far, so the *Monstrous Compendium*® tables are more appropriate for determining her prey.

Whether or not Ailamere knows she is being observed, the dragon always attacks goblins on sight, swiftly and mercilessly.

### Reactions

Having had very little experience with humans, Ailamere believes they are all as vulnerable as the ones she killed in Weedwater. She thinks that no human could withstand her deadly breath attack or a blow from one of her mighty claws. However, she doesn’t know the offensive capabilities of humans, so she remains wary. She does not know that some humans can cast spells.

Ailamere is hostile to adventurers in

her domain, but she sees no urgency in destroying them. She listens to what the PCs have to say if she is shown appropriate respect. Gestures of respect include offering tribute of a magical weapon, gold crown, large mirror, bag of quartz, or poem about the dragon’s beauty. If she must demand tribute (it is not offered within two minutes of the initial encounter), no fewer than two such tokens will be acceptable. Adventurers who flatly refuse to donate to Ailamere’s hoard or make excuses for not offering gifts are attacked as punishment for their insolence. If the party responds to her threats with even bigger threats, Ailamere is taken aback and might even choose to listen to such spirited mortals, for her amusement and to satisfy her curiosity.

### Dragon’s Death

Some PCs may try to slay Ailamere to learn whether they can gain any unusual powers, as noted in Rondelle’s folklore. In fact, the dragon’s fleeting mystical energy may have several unusual manifestations, but discovering any of them takes imagination, initiative, and a lot of luck.

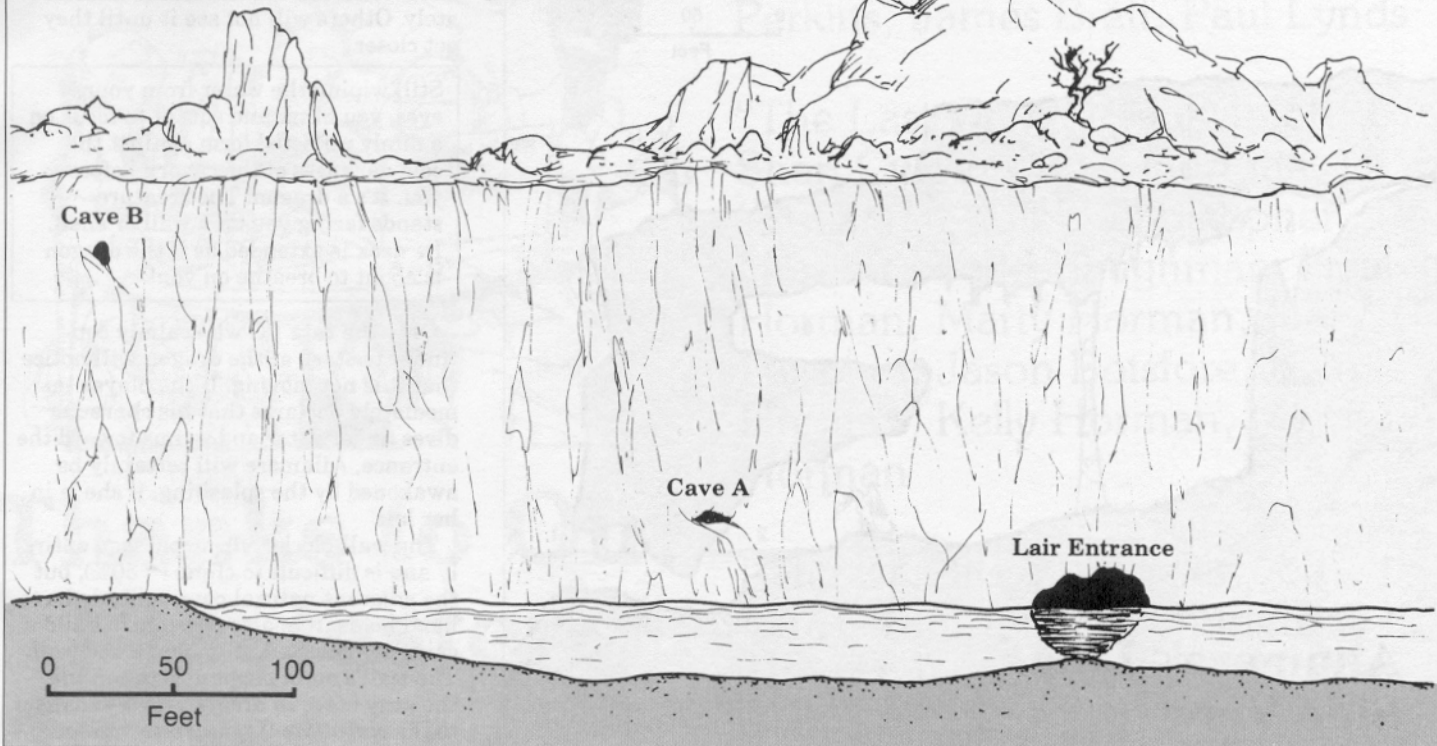
If a piece of the dragon’s skin is fashioned into a mask, it gives the first person to wear it divine beauty and increased Charisma (+2). The recipient of this gift must save vs. spells or become insufferably vain and narcissistic. If this is done in a time reversed by the *fate’s charm*, only the narcissism remains with that person.

If precious gemstones are placed under the slain dragon’s tongue, up to seven of the most valuable stones instantly gain the powers of randomly determined *ioun stones*, although they do not circle the owner.

Any divination spell cast by a wizard or priest in the presence of the dragon within two rounds of its death has the effect of a *commune* spell.

Finally, anyone bitten by Ailamere at the moment she was slain (within 3 of the initiative roll of the mortal blow) gains the ability to transmute liquid water into solid form, like the dragon’s breath weapon, by touch, once per week. This affects 100 cubic feet of water (not a 100’ cube) or one creature.

# Ailamere's Lair Front View



forms of drowned trees blur the rest of the lake's shoreline and provide only minimal cover for anyone attempting to hide. Heroes must wade into the water to see the lake's surface and the dragon's cave.

Each person venturing into water more than 4' deep has a 25% chance per turn of attracting 1-6 giant gar. The gar may even attack those in a boat (10% chance per turn) but will not persist in this. The giant gar never approach closer than 50 yards from the dragon's lair, even when pursuing prey.

**Giant gar** (1-6): INT animal; AL N; AC 3; MV swim 30; HD 8; hp 41, 38, 36 (x 2), 35, 29; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 5-20; SA swallow whole; SZ L-H; ML 10; XP 2,000; MC/117-118 (Fish).

Few animals live within a mile of the lair, and virtually none at the lake itself. Only the occasional raven has the audacity to make itself seen or heard, cawing from a perch over the black waters. These birds can sense the dragon's approach and flee before it is visible. Much useful information can be gained from the birds with a *Speak with animals* spell. The ravens can tell the PCs which cave the dragon occupies, when it most often leaves (at night), and

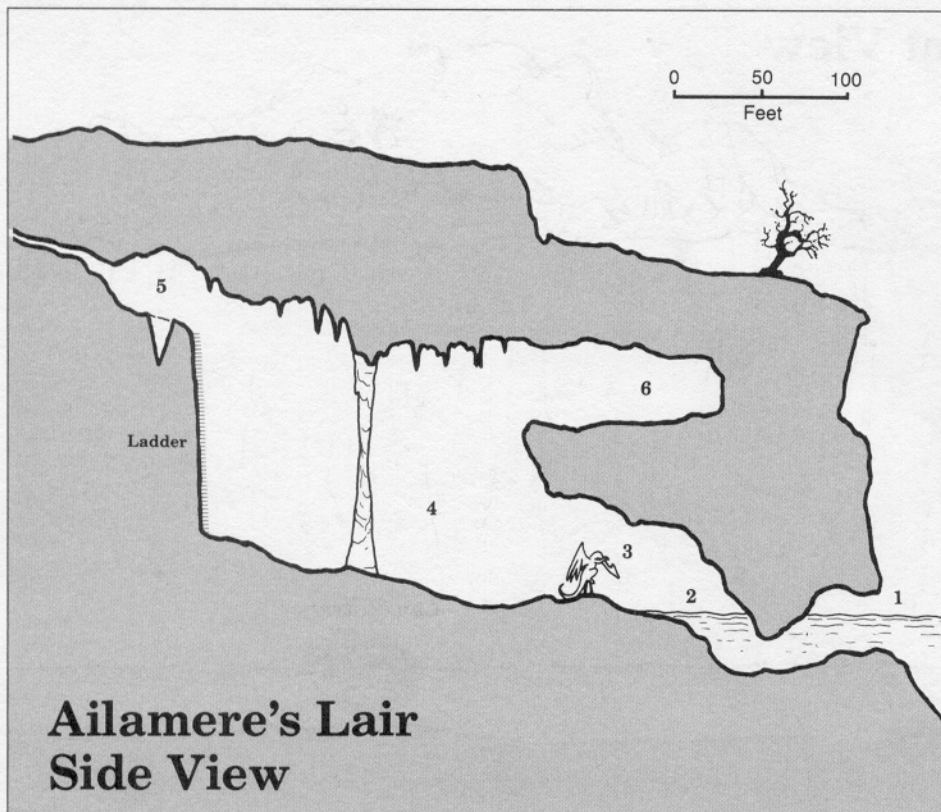
whether it is currently at home. In addition to the water-level cave (area 1) that opens into the dragon's lair, two other caves are visible in the face of the 200'-high cliff. About 50 yards to the south of Ailamere's cave (left as you face it), 40' above the water's surface, there is a horizontal fissure 30' wide, 4' high, and 15' deep (area A). Little natural cover or concealment will aid trespassers here. The convex curve of the cliff makes observation of the dragon's lair difficult, but resourceful adventurers could nonetheless make use of this fissure.

Another hundred yards farther south is a roughly circular cave entrance (area B), 10' in diameter and 160' above the water (30' below the cliff top). From the entrance, this cave appears to be about 60' deep (placing those crouched at the far back end slightly beyond the reach of the dragon's mouth but not her breath attack). A 3'-diameter tunnel at the back of the cave snakes up to the clifftop 30' above. The narrow beach beneath this cave, at the base of the cliff, is just large enough to permit three normal-sized humans to stand side by side out of the water.

It is extremely difficult to enter Ailamere's lair without alerting her to the presence of intruders. Even if she is out when the lair is entered, she can detect signs of intrusion when she returns. Ailamere's chances for detecting the PCs in her lair are as follows:

- Party has light source: 99%
- Hear footsteps or whispers: 80%
- Hear breathing: 5% per PC or retainer
- Trap at area 5 sprung: 30%
- Wet footprints: 90%, -10% per hour since they were made
- Fire used in cave: 99%
- Wall damage (spikes, spells): 80%
- Statue damaged (area 3): 99%
- Gray oozes killed (areas 4-5): 30% each
- Coins stolen: 80%
- Jewels stolen: 90%
- Swords or magical items stolen: 100%

**1. Dead End?** The cave opens directly onto the lake, so there is no way to walk into it. Adventurers must swim, fly, climb, or rappel down the cliff to enter. The cave entrance is 50' wide; the floor of the cave is 30' below the surface of the water at the entrance; the roof is about 15' above water. When the PCs enter this cave, they may believe that



those with *continual light* spells or infravision can see the statue immediately. Others will not see it until they get closer.

Still wiping the water from your eyes, you blink and squint to focus on a dimly reflected form against the cold darkness of the cavern before you. It's a dragon! The creature stands facing you on a wall or shelf. Its neck is extended as if the dragon is about to breathe on you!

Only the rare PC who calmly continues to stare at the dragon will notice that it is not moving. If the player immediately declares that his character dives underwater and swims toward the entrance, Ailamere will certainly be awakened by the splashing, if she is in her lair.

The wall blocks off the passage entirely and is difficult to climb (-50%), but the adjacent natural cave walls do have hand holds. It is also possible to build a cairn of stones and climb over the wall. The wall's main purpose is to confine the gray oozes in area 4. Any vandalism to the statue would infuriate Ailamere when she discovers it (or hears it being done, if she is in the lair) and cause her to seek out and recklessly attack the perpetrators. Contact with or close proximity to flame evaporates the material of the statue. (It does not melt.)

**4. Main Chamber.** The tunnel ceiling rises to 200' in this area, and the space opens up to a broad cavern. Ailamere has cleared away most of the stalagmites that once clustered in the center of the cave, so that it is now safe for her to jump to this level from the one in which she lives (area 6).

Three gray oozes wander in this area, blending effectively with the moist cave floor. There is a 1-in-8 chance per round spent in this cavern that the PCs will encounter the oozes. It typically takes seven rounds to walk straight to the opposite side.

**Gray ooze (3):** INT animal; AL N; AC 8; MV 1; HD 3+3; hp 17, 16, 9; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-16; SA corrodes metal; SD immune to fire, cold, and spells; SZ M-L; ML 10; XP 270; MC/278 (Ooze/Slime/Jelly).

The cavern walls are pocked with alcoves and narrow fissures, but none are deep and wide enough to protect a full-sized human. Only halflings and

they have been misdirected by Gorbo or were mistaken about seeing the beast enter here. The cave appears to go only 50' into the cliff, where it dead-ends at a wall of slime-covered limestone glistening in the sunlight (or moonlight) from behind the party.

The route the dragon takes is underwater, beneath the wall where the passage seems to end. This is the only entrance, so anyone who intends to enter the lair must use magic or must hold his breath and swim 40' underwater before reaching air on the other side. The side-view diagram of the lair clarifies this feature.

**2. Surfacing.** Anyone entering the lair surfaces here. The cave floor rises sharply until it is 1'-2' below the water level, where it slopes gently again. The passage width increases to about 70'. Stones litter the floor.

Those who surface slowly and as silently as possible have a base 10% chance of not waking the dragon with their noise, modified for race, armor, and Dexterity. Thieves may use their normal chances to move silently. If Ailamere is awake, she automatically

hears everyone except thieves; a thief can surface undetected on a roll under half his Move Silently percentage.

If Ailamere is in her lair and is expecting intruders, she may wait here until they surface, then breathe her water-solidifying gas on them. Those who fail a saving throw vs. breath weapon (at -4) become imbedded in solid water! A PC who saves successfully escapes the breath entirely but cannot resurface within the lair until someone breaks the icelike sheet that covers the water's surface; this requires a solid blow from a blunt weapon, impossible underwater without a ring or spell of *free action* or *airy water*. Even if the dragon does not seal the water surface immediately, heroes entering the cave will be drenched and particularly vulnerable to her breath weapon.

**3. Wall and Statue.** Here, Ailamere used her *waveform* power to shape solid water around a crude stone wall into a perfectly smooth, pearlescent, 7'-high wall capped with a 15'-tall (60' long) statue of herself, rearing in a menacing pose. The wall stands about 50' away from where most PCs surface, so only

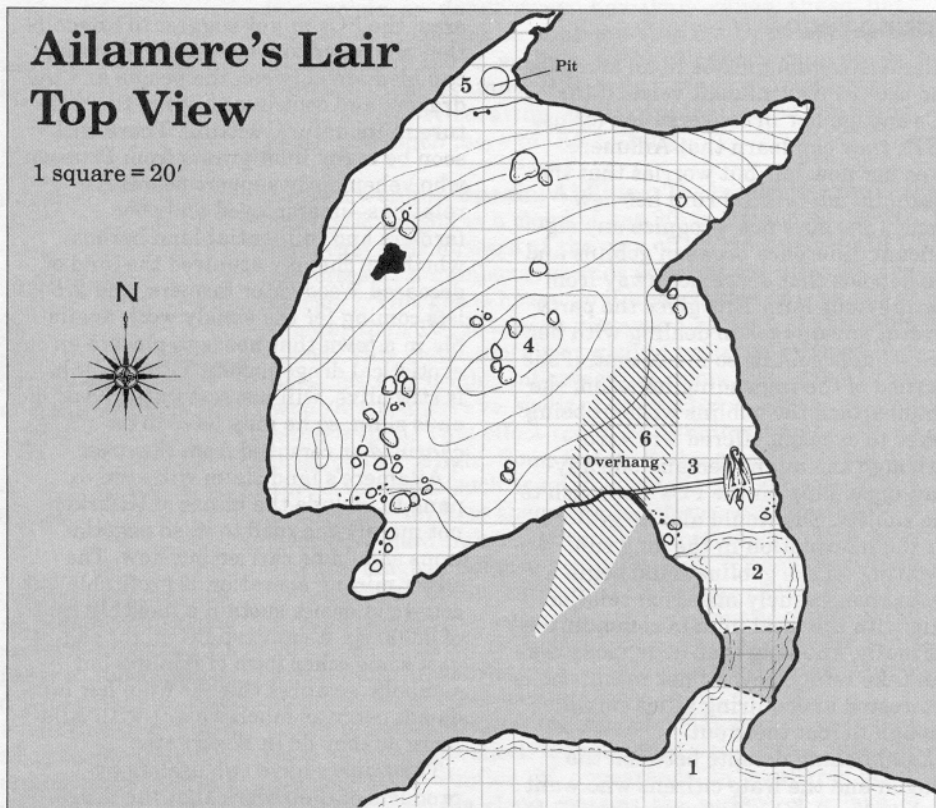
magically diminished characters can effectively take refuge in them. The side of the chamber opposite the entrance is a slippery, nearly vertical wall with a rusty (but sturdy) metal ladder secured to it. The ladder bottom ends 4' from the ground, because of the activity of the oozes.

**5. Trap.** At the top of the ladder, the slope of the wall becomes gentle enough to ascend on foot. The stone here is the lustrous off-white of transmuted water, resembling mother-of-pearl. Here, Ailamere dug a 30'-deep, 20'-wide conical pit. She made the sides smooth with water, her breath, and *waveform*, then placed a **gray ooze** (hp 11; THAC0 5) in the pit and covered it with a thin layer of solid water that will break under 200 lbs. of pressure.

Anyone standing on the cracking surface may jump free with a successful Dexterity ability check. The DM should modify the chance of success according to the PCs' locations relative to each other and to the edge of the pit. (A reasonable range of modifiers would be -6 for a PC alone in the center to +5 for a PC at the edge, next to alert comrades. The floor around the pit is very smooth and difficult to grip.) Falling through causes only 1-6 hp damage, due to the pit's sloped walls, but the walls are very hard to climb (-30%), doubly so while the ravenous ooze attacks. In the confinement of the conical pit, the ooze's attacks are virtually automatic hits, thus the improved THAC0.

Beyond the pit, the cavern closes in to a 3'-wide passage that continues to rise, bend, and narrow. It would be possible for up to eight human-sized individuals to hide here, out of reach of the dragon's grasp or breath. Against a party holed up here, Ailamere may wait (she is very patient), block up the opening, or use an illusion to lure them into range. This tunnel does lead to the surface, but it becomes too narrow for anyone not insect-sized or in gaseous form.

**6. Sleeping Chamber.** This is where Ailamere sleeps and hoards her wealth. About 60' above the cavern floor, the very presence of this deep shelf is difficult to detect from area 4. There are no paths up to this level; one must fly or climb the steep, slick walls. All stone surfaces within this chamber have been



coated with a thin layer of lustrous transmuted water, giving it an ethereal quality. Thirty-three gems of varying sizes (100 gp (x 10), 50 gp (x 12), 10 gp (x 5), 1 gp (x 6)) have been set into this pearlescent patina in a seemingly random arrangement. However, the gems depict the precise representation of the stars of the winter sky, as seen from the island home of the prismatic dragons. An accurate drawing of this starscape, with the observation that a ship's sail is among the treasure, would be most valuable to Rondelle, satisfying her question about the dragon's origin.

The treasure, piled up neatly and systematically, consists of 10,044 ep, 1,100 gp, and 2,500 pp, two bricks of gold (300 gp each) and an open chest full of jewels worth 5,000 gp (x 7), 1,000 gp (x 10), 500 gp (x 14), and 100 gp (x 66).

Standing to one side is a suit of field plate armor (its original owner's skeleton still inside). Other neat piles contain 33 fine swords of various lengths (no curved blades or scabbards, though), a saddle with silver inlay, four horse-shoes, an empty chest with a mirrored interior lid, a folded cloak made of fine silk, four 50' lengths of rope, and a huge

folded sail from a sea vessel. (Ailamere uses this to transport her treasure.)

A walnut box atop one pile contains a *ring of bureaucratic wizardry* (from the *Tome of Magic*) and a *wand of fire*, with its four command words written in *illusionary script*, readable only by good-aligned wizards. The suggestion imparted in an unauthorized reader is to point the wand at a companion and cry, "Bow, infidel, and swear loyalty to Lathander or by the power of Zethopac, this wand shall smite you and turn your worthless bones to ashes!" (A bard, priest, or wizard might know of Zethopac, an invoker who was known for his hot temper and his abundant use of cliches and banal threats. He was a zealot for the god Lathander but gravely misunderstood the humble ways of that order. Lathander can be replaced by any power, or the *suggestion* planted could be entirely different.)

A high alcove, obviously carved out by the dragon, contains 678 sp and five quartz crystals, which she loves to eat. Most of this treasure was not acquired directly from humans, but rather from other monsters.



**Making Peace**

Ailamere communicates in an arrogant and ostensibly confident voice. If the PCs engage her in conversation (or use *ESP*), they can learn that Ailamere likes her new lair but worries that the goblin invaders could ruin her new home. (She does not recognize any significant difference between goblins and the kobolds that drove her away from her previous lair.) This gives the party several advantages in dealing with her.

She hates goblins so much that, if she learned of the impending invasion, she would attack the goblins without being asked to or being offered a reward—although she might demand one anyway, depending on the PCs' approach to the subject. She would also be grateful for the information in the long run. Fighting off the goblins could begin a protective, vaguely maternal relationship with the local human communities.

Finally, knowing that little monsters can take refuge beyond her reach, she is interested in acquiring allies small enough to root them out.

Establishing detente between the dragon and the irate citizens who want it slain but need it for protection can be extremely difficult for the PCs, especially if they are too proud to flatter the creature and give her gifts. Ailamere's self-importance may appear to be a stumbling block, but it is a weakness that can be exploited in negotiations.

Ailamere will allow the residents of Weedwater to remain within her territory in return for 3,000 sp rent per month, which the town (even after being repopulated) cannot afford. However, if the party proposes to Ailamere that "these weak, helpless humans need the protection and guidance of the mighty, most magnificent and benevolent benefactor, Ailamere, Dragonqueen," she will protect Weedwater in return for symbolic gestures such as ceremonies and feasts in her honor, nonhuman sacrifices, songs, paintings, statues made of stone or even corn husks, etc. The artistic community of Primsen could be of great help in designing such decorative but intrinsically valueless gifts.

The surviving citizens of Weedwater are, quite understandably, full of resentment against the dragon that will require strong, persuasive arguments to quell. A bard PC could be instrumental in keeping the people in line. However, unless the bard wants to retire in the

area, the PCs might suggest to Rondelle that she move to Weedwater, where she can mediate between the people and the dragon, and continue to study the creature in its natural setting. There will soon be many immigrants from Primsen who vehemently support peaceful relations—unemployed and poor farmers and influential land barons who have cheaply acquired the land of deceased Weedwater farmers, and artists coming for the steady work available in a town that needs to placate an egotistical dragon. John Tillman, if he is still alive, will not rest until the dragon is slain, so he may have to be *charmed* or removed from the area.

Ailamere's land claim will soon expand to include the mines of Kilarcken, not merely the road to it, so negotiations should be carried out now. The silver-mining operation is profitable but could not easily sustain a monthly rent of 3,000 sp. A creative PC might suggest some other form of tribute, but symbolic gestures this far from her lair do not carry as much weight with Ailamere as they do in Weedwater.

The miners have two useless by-products of their work that the dragon would deem sufficient tribute: Quartz is found in high quantities and discarded, as is the slag from silver refining. Ailamere has never eaten silver slag, and the miners will not suggest it, so it is up to the PCs to offer her this delicacy. If Ailamere takes a bit of the silver slag, she finds it very tasty and mildly intoxicating. If offered quartz only, she demands an additional 100 sp per month.

**Experience**

On a research expedition like this one, it would be inappropriate to grant experience solely for foes vanquished. Here are some guidelines for awarding experience points on a group or individual basis, as appropriate:

Per question answered: XP equal to the gp value of Rondelle's reward for each question

Ailamere slain permanently: 0 XP  
Party defeats Ailamere nonlethally: 10,000 XP

Party slays Ailamere in *fate's charm* period: 5,000 XP each time

Ailamere prevents goblin invasion: 3,000 XP

Ailamere makes peace with Weedwater: 3,000 XP

Ailamere makes peace with Kilarcken: 3,000 XP  
Salvador, Mongdro, and Fiftagh stopped (see page 27): 1,000 XP  
Gorbo's help enlisted: 500 XP  
Rondelle persuaded to move to Weedwater: 500 XP

**Final Note to the Dungeon Master**

Much of the information presented here may not actually come into play when you run this adventure. It is not as important that you know every nuance of the adventure as it is that you understand Ailamere's psyche and play her appropriately. She is your player character in an environment where you do not know what is going to happen. You should be impartial and not guide the adventure in any preconceived direction, although the goblin invasion is a device that you may have to take some control of, especially if the PCs are being indecisive. Let things happen and don't be disappointed with your players if they don't think of things that seem obvious as you read this. It's hard to learn a dragon's ways, and discovering a greater danger beyond the original mission's scope may be harder still. Ω

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<b>CLIMATE/TERRAIN:</b>	Any temperate or tropical
<b>FREQUENCY:</b>	Very Rare
<b>ORGANIZATION:</b>	Solitary or clan
<b>ACTIVE TIME:</b>	Any (especially day)
<b>DIET:</b>	Omnivore
<b>INTELLIGENCE:</b>	High (13-14)
<b>TREASURE:</b>	See below
<b>ALIGNMENT:</b>	Chaotic Neutral
<b>NO. APPEARING:</b>	1 (2-4)
<b>ARMOR CLASS:</b>	0 (base)
<b>MOVEMENT:</b>	9, Fly 30 (C), Swim 12
<b>HIT DICE:</b>	11 (base)
<b>THACO:</b>	9 (at 11 HD)
<b>NO OF ATTACKS:</b>	3 plus special
<b>DAMAGE/ATTACK:</b>	1-6/1-6/3-22 (1d20 +2)
<b>SPECIAL ATTACKS:</b>	Breath, spells, tail, wing, kick
<b>SPECIAL DEFENSES:</b>	Fear
<b>MAGIC RESISTANCE:</b>	Variable
<b>SIZE:</b>	G (30' base)
<b>MORALE:</b>	Fanatic (16 base)
<b>XP VALUE:</b>	See below

Prismatic dragons are closely related to the gem dragons, although some of the characteristics of prismatic dragons and their almost superstitious reverence for copper dragons suggest that they are somehow related to that subspecies as well. While all dragons are greedy and self-important, prismatic dragons take these traits to the extreme. Sustained flattery and gifts of precious metals and gems can influence and cloud the judgment of a prismatic dragon more than one would expect from so intelligent a creature. A gift that exploits the dragon's boundless vanity, such as a mirror or a song exalting its wisdom and beauty, can make this creature forget almost any wrong done against it.

While not actually evil, prismatic dragons quickly grow impatient with talk that is not of immediate interest to them, and will silence such banter in the most expedient way possible, typically with a spell or a fierce tail slap.

Prismatic dragons are true dragons, having four legs, two wings, a long neck and tail, and a breath weapon. Their eggs are pale pink to yellow, with many copper flecks. At birth, a prismatic dragon's scales are a bright, mirrorlike silver except for several distinct bands of color—red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple—in its midsection. Over time, the colors spread and fade, and the shiny scales give over to pastel hues with dazzling refractive qualities (much like the holographic dragon on the cover of *DRAGON® Magazine #200*).

As its natural pigmentation fades, the dragon also achieves greater control over its shimmering scales. By the adult stage, the dragon's scales are a fairly homogenous translucent blue-gray, with patches or bands of color confined to the wing tips, claws, and face. At this stage, a prismatic dragon develops its *hypnotic pattern* power. This power increases with age; great wyrms are virtually invisible and can project complex illusions simply by manipulating their scales.

Prismatic dragons speak their own language, which is 30% intelligible to speakers of the copper dragon tongue. They do not share a language with other dragons, although many (10%, +5% per age category) can converse with any intelligent creature.

**Combat:** A prismatic dragon prefers to use its breath weapon and spells to kill, wound, or incapacitate its enemies before engaging in direct combat, lest it run the risk (however slight) of having the beauty of its magnificent hide diminished by the weapons of "mortal pests." Insult-

ing words or deeds may, however, cause these hot-tempered creatures to abandon this cautious approach. Prismatic dragons eschew enchantment/charm spells, viewing them as unnecessary for beings as awesome as themselves. Alteration and conjuration/summoning spells are much more to their liking.

**Breath weapon/Special Abilities:** The breath weapon of a prismatic dragon is a cloud of gas 30' in diameter and 10' high that rolls forward at the rate of 10' per round until it disperses in a number of rounds equal to the dragon's age category. This gas is heavy, so if it is exhaled at a height of greater than 10', it travels downward as well, at the same speed. This cloud contains swirling patterns of sparkling particles and bright, interweaving colors, requiring those who view it to save vs. spells or be affected as if by a *rainbow pattern* spell. This effect requires illumination at least as bright as torch light. Some factors that modify a PC's saving throw vs. spells (such as an illusionist's +1 bonus for spells of the same level, or the magic resistance associated with a dwarf's or halfling's Constitution) do not apply to this save, but the magical defense bonus for high Wisdom does help PCs avoid becoming enthralled by the gas cloud. Even the dragon itself can be vulnerable to the hypnotic effects of the cloud—on a roll of 1 on 1d20, a prismatic dragon below adult age is enthralled by its own cloud for one full round, whereupon it gets another saving throw.

The prismatic dragon's breath attack has an even more unusual and dramatic effect: It transmutes water into a milky, luminous solid similar in appearance to mother-of-pearl. Wherever the gas cloud contacts the surface of a lake or stream, the water solidifies to a depth of 1/2" per age category of the dragon. This material is not ice; it is not cold and does not melt. However, it does evaporate under the same conditions as liquid water. Exposed to sunlight, a mass of solid water will eventually break up and dissolve. Under most conditions, solid water shares all saving throws with wood of the same thickness. (See the *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide*, page 39.)

When exposed to a prismatic dragon's gas cloud, creatures made entirely of water (such as water weirds or water elementals) must save vs. breath weapon or die. Any water creature that survives suffers 1-12 hp damage per age category of the dragon and is *slowed* for 1-4 turns. On the other hand, a solidified water creature inflicts 50% greater damage with all physical attacks for as long as it is *slowed*.

Creatures whose bodies consist primarily of water (such as humans) are also vulnerable to a prismatic dragon's breath weapon. The gas permeates their skin, making it crack and flake off like peeling bark. The vapor causes severe trauma to organs and muscles, making any motion extremely painful. In game terms, victims suffer three effects:

1. An initial 4d6 hp damage when exposed to the gas. Prolonged exposure does not inflict additional damage.
2. The equivalent of a *slow* spell for one round per age category of the dragon.
3. While *slowed*, an additional 1d8 hp damage per round of strenuous activity (such as running or melee combat), and 1d8-4 hp damage per round of milder activity (walking, spell-casting, firing a bow). A negative number indicates insufficient pain to disrupt a spell. A successful saving throw vs. breath weapon halves the initial damage and the duration of the *slow* effect but does not change the lingering damage for straining traumatized muscles.

Prismatic dragons usually live near large bodies of water, where they can use their breath weapons to maximum advantage. They often lie in ambush in a lake or deep river, and use their wings or their *waveform* power (achieved at

the juvenile age) to drench prey with water. This done, their victims are vulnerable to one additional power of the dragon's breath. If a victim's saving throw fails, all saturated clothing, hair, etc. hardens into a solid shell, much like a body cast. The shell must be broken before the person can move freely again.

Wet surfaces that do not absorb water well (leather, bare skin, metal) become covered with a very thin, brittle layer of solid water, as easily broken as an egg shell. Most people will have no difficulty speaking or moving their hands. Hardened clothing must be shattered; a successful bend bars roll indicates that the shell on one limb is cracked enough to permit movement. An immobilized, statuelike victim can tip himself over, shattering the shell if it fails to save vs. crushing blow.

No amount of tapping from within the shell can break it. However, a solid blow against the coated victim (AC 6, minus magical bonuses) will free one limb or the torso if the shell fails its save against crushing blow. The shell absorbs 5 hp damage from a blow; the rest affects the victim within. When one part of the shell shatters, the shell covering an adjacent limb is 50% likely to crack as well.

Prismatic dragons are not born with any exceptional abilities, but they soon develop some formidable powers. At the very young stage, they are adept enough in the manipulation of the color of their scales to simulate the *color spray* spell once per day, cast at the level of their combat modifier (two levels higher if the dragon has control over the primary source of illumination). **Juvenile:** *Waveform* three times per day. (*Waveform* allows the caster to mold a 10' cube of water per level into various forms, such as enormous waves. On solidified water, this power operates like a *stoneshape* spell.) **Adult:** *Hypnotic pattern* twice per day, even while attacking or spellcasting. **Old:** *Camouflage* ability—50% invisible plus 10% per age category beyond old. **Venerable:** Any of the following illusions, in addition to attacks and spells, up to 20 rounds per day altogether: *spectral force*, *hallucinatory terrain*, *vacancy*, *change self*, *mislead*, and *displacement* (as per the cloak). **Great wyrm:** All of the above powers at will.

**Habitat/Society:** Most prismatic dragons come from an uncharted island in a tropical sea, where dozens of their kind live in an anarchic but rarely violent society in which power and prestige are won by competitions of magic, innate powers, and physical beauty. At the center of this island is a huge volcanic crater lined with immense crystals and

precious gems. According to the legends of prismatic dragons, they and all other gem dragon species originated here. They say that the Creator Dragon (often described as a copper dragon great wyrm) carved dragon forms out of the native crystals of this island and breathed life into them. As she dug deeper, the Creator Dragon found increasingly precious gems from which to shape her likeness. Eventually, she found the most precious and beautiful crystal she had ever seen. The other gems—emerald, sapphire, ruby, diamond—were flat and ugly by comparison, so the Creator Dragon threw those dragons into the sea to drown, but some escaped their fate, and their descendants now live a wrongful existence against her will. From this most beautiful gem the Creator Dragon carved the first prismatic dragon and gave it life with her last breath.

**Ecology:** Like most dragons, prismatic dragons can eat almost anything, although they prefer to hunt and eat large fish and marine mammals and wash down their meal with quartz, sometimes cleansing the palate with some silver. In general, prismatic dragons consider the gem dragons their enemies and use lesser species (like humans) to destroy them.

Strangely, prismatic dragons never mate on their home island, so young adult dragons are encouraged to go out into the world. Females are welcomed back only if they return with young, but males may never return. Every 20 to 22 years, a prismatic dragon female (young adult to very old) living abroad becomes overwhelmed by her mating instincts. The urge is very strong, for she can mate successfully for only two weeks. During this time, she exhausts herself by flying as high and as long as possible during the day, releasing powerful pheromones that can travel up to 200 miles, and reflecting the sunlight in urgent (but graceful) rhythms and color sequences.

This light is a mating beacon that no male of the species can resist. When a male prismatic dragon smells the pheromones, he neglects his regular duties (guarding his treasure and defending his territory from enemies) and scans the horizon for the beacon. If the pattern of the lights is clumsy, he may not respond. If more than one male responds, they compete with mating lights of their own.

When more than one prismatic dragon is encountered, it is invariably a mother and her young, never a mated pair.

Age	Body	Tail	AC	Spells W/P	MR	Treasure	XP
1	2'-5'	1'-5'	4	Nil	Nil	Nil	3,000
2	5'-11'	5'-12'	2	Nil	Nil	Nil	5,000
3	11'-22'	12'-21'	1	1	Nil	Nil	8,000
4	22'-33'	21'-28'	0	2	Nil	½ H	11,000
5	33'-45'	28'-36'	0	21	15%	H	15,000
6	45'-60'	36'-45'	-1	31	20%	H	16,000
7	60'-74'	45'-54'	-2	311	25%	E, H	18,000
8	74'-90'	54'-62'	-3	421	30%	E, H	19,000
9	90'-117'	62'-75'	-4	422/1	35%	T, H (× 2)	20,000
10	117'-120'	75'-81'	-5	4321/11	40%	T, H (× 2)	21,000
11	120'-127'	81'-89'	-6	4322/21	50%	T (× 2), H (× 2)	23,000
12	127'-131'	89'-92'	-6	44321/321	65%	T, H (× 2), Z	25,000