

Draconis

Draconis is a small island, only about 100 miles long and about 50 miles wide. It is sparsely populated and made up of mostly hills and mountains to the northwest. There are roughly half a dozen villages scattered throughout the land, mostly in the center of the domain. The largest city, Wyrmsgard, is located on the southeast coast. It is the only largely populated city of about 5,000 souls. The central feature to Wyrmsgard is Castle Kor. This massive structure rises several stories above any building. The castle itself is set on a mound with smaller buildings all around it. The overall impression one gets from seeing the castle is a long thin reptilian beast rising to the sky.

Cultural Level: Medieval (Fantasy type)

Draconis resembles 12th to 13th Century France or Britain. Draconis hails from the D&D campaign world of Mystara. It is actually a copy of a province in the Principalities of Glantri.

The Folk

The populace of Draconis are largely human. Also since there is more of a “fantasy” feel to the land, there are also elves and half elves to be found here. There is a small (50-75) population of goblins living in the city, the human population considers them a nuisance, much like rats. There is also a small halfling village located some 5 miles outside of the city limits to the north. Small elf encampments can also be found in the neighboring woods. Most of the people that live in the city gain a living from the nearby sea. Fishing is a big market in Wyrmsgard. The outlying villages make their funds from farming and there is one mining town.

The population is divided up into a rugged, but unspoken, caste system. The Royalty is at the top of the caste. Most of these were converted Dragons. Next are the non-royal wizards, the merchant class, and followed by any tradesman in the fishing or boating industry. A special note, one tradesman class is held above the fishermen and that is the Ice-cutters Guild. Draconis has long hard winters and the waterways freeze up. These Ice-cutters clear the way for water traffic. In the summer months they are treated as other tradesmen. These are followed by other tradesmen, then farmers.

Thieves, beggars and goblins are at the bottom of the caste. Demi-humans are usually outside of the caste but are usually treated like farmers.

There are a fair number of wizards and spell casters in Draconis. Most are members of the Royal class, and therefore, Dragons. There are some purely human wizards, but they are rare.

While for the most part intelligent, almost everyone is superstitious to some degree. Even (or especially) members of the Royal class are superstitious. The DM might want to check to see if the PC develop any odd superstitions while they remain in Draconis. A common gesture is to touch ones heart, then mouth and then forehead with the right hand. This is often used to ward off evil.

The Law

Draconis makes an attempt at parliamentary rule. However only members of the Royal class are allowed into Parliament, and they are all controlled by Prince Kor.

There are some laws that might effect the PC's. First all witches are arrested on sight and burned at the stake the next morning. The “witch” does get a trial, but a guilty verdict is always reached. Who or what is a witch is dependent on the constabulary at the time. Normally any priest, psionic or wizard may be accused of witchcraft. Secondly, any open religious practice is punishable by death. Priests were rare in Glantri, in Draconis they are criminal. Among the laws that can be used to punish priests are possessing a holy book or cannon. Consulting with familiar spirits not sanctioned by the Mage Guild. Possessing a holy symbol or prayer beads is also considered criminal.

Laws are vigorously enforced and justice is swift. It is not uncommon for even minor infractions of the law to be met with heavy fines or imprisonment. All capital crimes are punishable by death, usually with no chance of appeal.

The laws are made by the Parliament, but most come directly from Kor himself. Most members of Parliament are also members of the Mage Guild, making it even more powerful.

Due to ancient custom, people in Draconis cremate their dead, not bury them.

Native Player Characters

Natives to Draconis may choose any class except priest. Most common are warriors and thieves. To become a Draconian wizard one needs to be able to afford the prestigious, but expensive school of magic. Most NPC wizards tend to be more affluent than the average population.

Encounters

Outside of normal villagers, a stray elf or halfling may be encountered, travelers are not likely to run into anything outside of the ordinary. Due to Draconis' cremation rites, undead are very rare for a dark realm. There is a small band of ghouls living in the sewers of Wrymsgard, but they only come out on new moons or the darkest nights.

To the southwest and northwest travelers are more likely to run into a small (2-3) pack of werewolves.

During times of Prince Kor's bad moods, Mist Dragons, can be seen in the air. These are not true dragons, but illusions created by the Dark Powers to further anger Prince Kor.

Dragons in Draconis

The dragons in Draconis have lost most of their dragon-like powers. Namely the ability to cause dragonfear and their breath weapons. Some have been able to hold on their spell use, but most have become wizards to compensate. All the converted dragons have a special "touch" attack. Normally this attack is a variation of their former breath weapon. Unless noted this attack causes 1d6 hp of damage per barehanded touch. The dragon can decide whether or not to use the attack.

Other than these powers, the former dragons are no different than normal humans.

The Lord

Prince Kor, Darklord of Draconis
14th Level Human (blue dragon) Warrior,
Lawful Evil

Armor Class: 8 (Normal), 2 (Plate Mail)
Movement: 12"
Level/Hit Dice: 14
Hit Points: 89
THAC0: 4
No. of Attacks: 2

Damage/Attack: 1d12+4
Special Attacks: Shocking Grasp, spell use.
Special Defenses: Nil
Special Vulnerabilities:
Magic Resistance: 35%
Str: 19
Dex: 13
Con: 16
Int: 10
Wis: 9
Cha: 16

Kor's human appearance is nearly as imposing as his former dragon one. He stands about 6'5" and is heavily muscled. He wears his jet-black hair long and tied back. His beard and moustache are neatly trimmed. His blue eyes seem almost electric. Normally he wears his blue robe of state over his warrior's clothes. He keeps his arms bare, but his hands are gauntleted. When at social functions he wears modest fashion, but his blue gloves remain.

Kor is serious man. Rarely does he laugh or give over to an emotion, even anger. However he can and will get angry. A story is told of a goblin *demanding* that Kor extend rights to the goblins in Wrymsgard. Kor was so angered at a mere rodent's impudence that he grabbed his sword and cleanly split the goblin head to tail.

Kor longs to be a real dragon again, but not as much as his fellow captives. More than anything at all, Kor longs for a son. Not just any son, a perfect one, either fully human or fully dragon. Kor would gladly accept his imprisonment if he could become a father. It is unlikely that the Dark Powers will grant him this wish.

Kor correctly believes that there are those who want his throne. Highest among these is Tiara. He keeps the red dragon around because he believes he may be able to successfully mate with her. He she cannot produce offspring then her fate will be sealed.

Can cast spells as an adult Blue Dragon.

DM's and players should be reminded that Kor is evil. Yes, he does what he does, because he wants a son to call his own, but he has killed numerous people to get to this goal, first among them was his wife. Kor abandons his less than perfect children and murders their mothers. He kills priests, simply for being priests. He fosters an attitude among his dragon-kin that humans

are mere cattle for him, and demi-humans are insects.

Kor can close the borders with a field of charge electricity.

Other NPC's

Duke Kovis
12th Level Human (black dragon) Warrior,
Neutral Evil
Armor Class: 9 (Normal), 3 (Plate Mail)
Movement: 12"
Level/Hit Dice: 12
Hit Points: 67
THACO: 6
No. of Attacks: 3/2
Damage/Attack: 1d12+4
Special Attacks: Acid Touch, Spell use.
Special Defenses: Nil
Special Vulnerabilities: None
Magic Resistance: 20%
Str: 19
Dex: 14
Con: 17
Int: 9
Wis: 8
Cha: 12

Duke Kovis is Kor's right hand man. He acts as the Prince's advisor, general and (although not needed in this function) bodyguard.

As a human, Kovis is an impressive sight. Standing 7 feet tall his skin has the color of polished mahogany. He is completely hairless and speaks with deep bowing voice, that is, when he speaks at all.

Previously he had been an adult black dragon. He can cast spells as an adult Black Dragon.

The Three "Sisters"

While obviously not sisters, these three are always found together and are as ruthless as their dragon personalities were. While they do what they do under the guise of "fun", there is a violent streak to their acts, especially from Tiara, a former red dragon. Tiara is very jealous and wants all of Draconis for herself. She believes Kor has trapped them all here for his own personal gain.

Tiara

7th Level Human (red dragon) wizard, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class: 10 (No Armor)
Movement: 12"
Level/Hit Dice: 7
Hit Points: 40
THACO: 18
No. of Attacks: 1
Damage/Attack: ?
Special Attacks: Burning Hands, Spell use.
Special Defenses: ? (if any)
Special Vulnerabilities: ? (if any)
Magic Resistance: 30%
Str: 10
Dex: 10
Con: 10
Int: 14
Wis: 9
Cha: 17

Tiara is the youngest of the three and the leader. What she lacks in age, she makes up for in will and sheer cruelty. Previously she had been a young red dragon who was only passing through when she was caught in Evelyn's curse. She wants nothing more now than to have Kor pay for her suffering. While some the Draconian royalty have become more human-minded, Tiara has never let go of her dragon nature.

Of all of Kor draconian enemies, Tiara is the most powerful.

Tiara can cast 4 1st level spells, 3 2nd level, 2 3rd level and 1 4th level spells.

Juliet

9th Level Human (white dragon) Warrior,
Chaotic Evil (Neutral)
Armor Class: 9 (No Armor)
Movement: 12"
Level/Hit Dice: 9
Hit Points: 12
THACO: 11
No. of Attacks: 1
Damage/Attack: by weapon type
Special Attacks: Chill Touch
Special Defenses: None
Special Vulnerabilities: None
Magic Resistance: Nil
Str: 13
Dex: 13
Con: 10
Int: 7
Wis: 7
Cha: 15

Juliet, a former white dragon, is the most passive of the group. She speaks only a little and usually

agrees to whatever Tiara has planned. She is also the least evil of the group. She has no spell casting ability.

Bethany

8th Level Human (green dragon) Thief, Lawful Evil
Armor Class: 9 (No Armor)
Movement: 12"
Level/Hit Dice: 8
Hit Points: 17
THAC0: 14
No. of Attacks: 1
Damage/Attack: by weapon type
Special Attacks: Poison Touch
Special Defenses: None
Special Vulnerabilities: None
Magic Resistance: Nil
Str: 11
Dex: 13
Con: 12
Int: 12
Wis: 9
Cha: 13

Bethany, a former green dragon, is not as ruthless as Tiara nor as docile as Juliet. She holds a secret and deep grudge against Tiara. A while back Bethany was smitten with both a young bard and a laborer. When Bethany mentioned she could not choose between the two, Tiara killed them both, her only response was "now you don't have to choose my dear".

History

Kor was a blue dragon living in the mountains north of Glantri City (in the Principalities of Glantri, on Mystara). He was growing tired of the life allotted to a dragon in a mostly human world. So using his *polymorph* ability he transformed himself to a handsome knight. He went to Glantri City to see what sort of trouble he could stir up.

Passing himself off as a foreign prince, Kor soon found himself deeply involved in the politics and schemes of Glantri's ruling class. For years he played at this game, but soon some things became apparent to him; humans were no less evil or scheming than dragons, and (the most surprising of all) he enjoyed being a human.

After a while even Kor began to settle down and soon his attentions turned to fair ladies of the court of Glantri. Eventually his attention focused on one in particular. Evelyn was a

young, beautiful half-elven princess, and she would have nothing to do with Kor. This infuriated him like nothing ever had before, but his first response was not a draconian one, but a human one. He would win her heart. He pursued her, sent her lavish gifts, took her to the finest operas and plays in Glantri, he even learned to cook for her. Eventually Evelyn was won over, not because of Kor's attempts or even his good looks, but because she felt he honestly cared for nothing else but her. Who was to say she was not at that time correct.

The wedding was a lavish affair and soon Kor and Evelyn moved into her father's estate and began what they thought was going to be a long married life together. Soon the great news came that Evelyn was pregnant. Kor, could barely contain himself. He quickly refurbished his own war den into a nursery. He hired maids, nannies and midwives to be at his wife's beck and call. "Nothing is too good or expensive for my son" he would proudly say when ever any one was within ear shot. His boasting caught the attention of other dragons living within Glantri City. One was Kavis, a black dragon that Kor sometimes associated with. Kavis warned Kor that no good would ever come of this. He told Kor to leave Glantri, that a "human" life was no place for a dragon. Kor ignored this warning, claiming that Kavis could only be jealous.

The day came for the birth and Kor was as anxious as any father would be. He stood in the courtyard, as was the custom, and waited for the call from the midwife. That call never came. Instead he heard only the screams of the women in the nursery. Kor ran to the nursery, thinking only of his newborn. The women cowered in fear when he stormed into the room. He looked around. He could see blood, but not his wife or child. He picked up a nursemaid and demanded to know where they were. When she didn't answer quick enough for him he snapped her neck. He grabbed another, she pointed to the door leading to the grand hall. He tossed her aside, not knowing or caring if he had killed her as well. He ran to the great hall. He saw his wife with a bloody bundle in her arms, she screamed and tried to run away. He followed. Gone was his husbandly or fatherly sense of protection, he was hunting her. Kor finally caught up with her in the courtyard. She stood away from him, her back to the castle wall, and the pile of bloody linens between them. Kor walked to the pile and looked into it. Inside was what could only be called an abomination. The baby was mostly human, but its head showed

signs of dragon, its skin was a pale blue and its hands were fine little dragon claws. Kor, however did not see any of this, all he saw was his own son. But he noticed something else, that the baby had been killed. Evelyn apparently had cut its throat. Kor looked up at his wife and murderer of his son. She was bloody as well, much of it was her own. She was still holding the small pearl handled knife that he had given her when they were courting. She was screaming at him, calling him a “liar” and a “bastard”, but he had not heard any of it. Kor let out a scream that was heard all though Glantri. As he did, he rushed at his wife. All pretense of humanity was shattered. He had fully transformed back to his dragon form by the time he reached her. They crashed through the castle wall to yards beyond. He picked her up in his mighty jaws and tossed her like a house-cat might a mouse. She back flew into the castle wall and dropped with a sickening wet thump. Kor approached her, his mouth open and his electric breath crackling in the air around him. Evelyn pleaded, but not to him, but to her ancestors. She asked them to curse him and his kind to never be able to find happiness, to be cut off forever to what they find most dear. With that said she died and the mists began to seep in and around Glantri.

Kor fought against the strangling mists he tried to fly away, but he lacked the strength for flight. Soon he fell to the courtyard, unconscious.

Kor awoke the next day in his bed, in his “human” form. He knew, although he did not know how, he was no longer in Glantri. The land looked the same, but he knew it was not. He was now the lord of a new land called Draconis. Over the next few hours he discovered much. Evelyn was gone and no evidence existed that she had ever had been there. But the most frightful to Kor was he, and all the other masquerading dragons in Glantri, were locked into their human forms. They all had become the royalty of Glantri, but none could use any of their dragon-like powers or change back to their true forms. All of the dragons, like Kor, knew it was Evelyn’s curse, but none know how to reverse it. Also Kor was trapped in his new realm.

Many of the dragons joined Kor in his new court, in particular Kavis and a young red dragon named Tiara. Others have rebelled against the new leader.

Draconis is a medieval/fantasy type setting. Many races can be found here, but the majority

is human. Some of these “humans” are in fact transformed dragons. While they still have the temper and arrogance of their natural forms, they are as human as everyone else. Evelyn’s curse has had one more effect that Kor did not discover till later Kor can only sire monsters. Regardless of the race of the mother the offspring are half-human, half-dragon monsters.

Kor desires are to break his curse, he wants his freedom and he wants his true form back, but he would trade both if he could only have a normal son.

Adventure Ideas

1. The Bargain

Draconis’ laws are very strict. Eventually the PC’s are going to break one. Most likely it will be because of witch-craft or it could be a capital crime with death eminent. However Prince Kor (or Duke Kavis) comes and offers the PC’s freedom if one of the female members will agree to marry him. Kor will always choose a potential wife based on race and not charisma. He will choose full blooded humans first, followed by half-elves and then any others. Two choose between humans he will then relay on age and then charisma. Remember he is not looking for a wife, but a mother to his children.

2. The Outcasts

Several monsters have been reported in the sewers of Draconis. Duke Kavis hires the PC’s to find out what is going on. The PC’s discover that the sewers are filled with Kor’s offspring, horrible human/dragon abominations. They also soon discover that the half-dragons (Children of Kor) are also for the most part good and what only to be left alone. There are monsters here though, ghouls that feed on humans and Kor’s children alike. Of course Kavis knows all of this. He is hoping to rid himself of the Children, the Ghouls and the PC’s.

3. The Seduction

Tirara sets her fancy on one of the PC’s party.

4. The Blue Hand

A group of good aligned dragons are trying to change themselves back to their normal form. They are known as the White Hand and they need the PC’s to get an item from Kor’s castle. However, despite their goodness, they still regard the PC’s as inferior creatures. Plus a splinter group, the Blue Hand, wants to use the PC’s as means of distraction while they try to kill Kor.

Role-playing Notes

My initial use was to create a land my Players were familiar with. Most of the PC's were from a combined Mystara/Greyhawk world. Draconis leads them to believe that they might be home. I once read a quote from Steven King (from around the time I picked up "Salem's Lot", that he attributed to Lovecraft), that for horror to be effective you have to start with the familiar and go from there. So for Draconis to be truly effective in your campaign, then it should be close to world your PC's come from.

About Kor,

Kor is loosely based on Korbendaur, the blue dragon from module CM1: Death's Ride. The old D&D (not AD&D) module gave me some very memorable NPC's to constantly throw against parties. Plus with a little work that whole module could be used as a Ravenloft adventure. Ulslime would make a passable dark lord.

Kor is constantly trying to have children. So a good plot point is falls in love (or lust) with one of the female PC's. Now Kor almost always kills his wife when she can't bare him a true son. Not only is this a big problem for the PC's, but Kor will not let them leave.

About the Dragons.

I wanted to fill the catacombs below Draconis with Kor's offspring. Since they are not perfect he casts them out, but can't bring himself to kill them. I thought of having them evil and hunting down the PC's ala "Aliens", but then I thought, no they should be good despite their monstrous appearance. I still don't know what I want yet.

I thought the human-dragons should all retain their basic dragon personalities. So they are all arrogant, even the good dragons that were also trapped. Also the dragons still feel the need to hoard treasure, so any PC that looks like a walking treasure chest had better watch out! Plus they are all still bloodthirsty, so once a year they feast on the raw flesh of a human. I don't know how that will work out.

In Glantri, all of the rulers are wizards. In Draconis all of the rulers are dragons, and many of these dragons will be wizards as well. Most are working to find an end to their shared curse, but not necessarily together. I have a red dragon, Tiara, who is working on a cure, but only for herself. So all of the dragons are still immune to

everything they were before, and still exude a bit of dragonfear (fear checks apply). But I don't think they can still use their breath weapon.