

Living Lore

P R E V I E W

Living Lore examines some of the most fascinating and mysterious figures that history and myth made legendary. Herein find the infamous dragon famously slain by Beowulf in the epic poem that bears his name.

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Acidius, A Dragon of Poison and Vengeance

Characteristics: Int +2, Per +4, Pre +4,
Com N/A, Str +8, Stm +9, Dex +1,
Qik 0

Magical Might: 60

Age: 836 years (at least)

Size +5

Personality traits: Vengeful +6, Guarding
+5, Cruel +1

Weapon/Attack	Init	Atk	Dfn	Dam
Bite	+8	+15	+12	+18
Breath	+13	+8*	N/A	**

* Only a Brawling defense is allowed —
this cannot be parried.

**See below.

Soak +30

Fatigue Levels: OK, 0/0, 0/0, -1/-1,
-3/-3, -5/-5, Incapacitated

Body Levels: OK, 0/0, 0/0, -1/-1, -3/-3,
-5/-5, Incapacitated

Powers:

Breath of Molten Venom, CrIg & PeCo, 5 points. The dragon's fiery breath causes +15 damage to all targets in a circle of radius 10 paces, and any targets affected are also poisoned. Treat the effect as *The Wound That Weeps*, except that the penalties come from the poison rather than blood loss. A Chirurgy roll of 9+ will successfully bleed out the poison, but doing so causes a single further level of fatigue damage. If the creature is inside a confined space (e.g., its home barrow) the breath deals +30 damage. The breath may also ignite flammable things (e.g., houses, robes) that it touches. Characters in the middle of the blast cannot dodge completely. Instead, treat a successful dodge as throwing themselves to the floor, reducing the damage bonus by 10.

Sense the Rightful Heir, InMe, 1 point. Should someone claim to have come to take the treasure, the dragon will employ this to detect whether or not

their claim is true. See story hook below.

Feed from Vengeance, CrAn & CrVi, 0 points. Every time someone enters the area covered by the aura with vengeful intent or commits a notable vengeful act within it, the dragon gains one point of Might. If the act also involves poison it gains five Might. Of course, those who dwell in the aura are naturally vengeful, and so feed and sustain it. This creates an ongoing cycle of vengeance in the area, and is the source of the dragon's long life span. If the creature gains ten Might, the barrow's aura rises by one. If it gains twenty Might, the wider aura rises by one. Note that these acts of vengeance only count if chosen by free will. The creature may influence personality, but it does not compel.

Harmed by Forgiveness, PeAn & PeVi, 0 points. Every time someone enters the aura with a forgiving intent or commits a notable act of forgiveness within it, the dragon loses one point of Might. This can cause a drop in the level of the aura, at the same rate as the gain noted above. This 'power' is not under the dragon's control, triggering automatically and offering a way to defeat it. If it runs out of Might it dies, its body fading away. As above, only freely chosen acts count for this purpose, and magical attempts at control to achieve this do not help. The characters may best succeed by relying on the social skills of the companions. The creature is here because of actions taken by the hand of man, and it is best defeated by the hand of man.

Vis: 4 points of Animál Vis in each of its two horns. 16 points of Perdo Vis in its blood.





Acidius is a 'slick-skinned' creature, the length of six horses from nose to tail. Though capable of winged flight, it spends its days sleeping in the barrow. It is the color of darkest night with an evil glint in its eye coupled with the imperious noble bearing of a thing of Rome.

Acidius normally sleeps, guarding the treasure until the return of its rightful owner. However, should the barrow be disturbed and any of its artifacts taken, Acidius will fly out to terrorize the countryside in vengeful anger. Its breath is 'molten venom,' capable of burning villages and poisoning livestock and people.

The barrow itself is within a magical aura (level 6), as is the surrounding area (level 3). Those who dwell within it become slowly twisted and bitter. In game terms, those who spend a season here gain +1 in the personality trait Vengeful, up to

the level of the aura they are in. This aura level may change as noted below.

Inside the mound lie a number of artifacts. Some of these are the burial goods of the original builders, some the relics of the Roman legion. Of particular note is the glowing standard, sacred to the old Roman gods and crowned with the eagle of Jupiter holding a bundle of thunderbolts. When in the presence of battle, the standard subtly catches the light so as to look impressive (Relg 5). More importantly, it banishes fear from any body of men that carries it at the fore (PeMe 25). The standard may also attract the attention of the Roman 'gods' who reside in the realm of Magic (perhaps even including Hermes), to the extent that they hear any prayers said to them in its presence and may answer as their powers allow.

Many characters (and players) may well assume that this is an infernal creature.



The fact that it is not should serve as a reminder that not all 'evil' comes from the pit. Instead it is from the realm of magic, the same realm that the Magi themselves are tied to by the Gift. To inhumane Magi, it shows them a reflection of what they themselves are or may become. To kinder Magi, it reminds them that magic can be a dark force in the world. Magi who condemn the dragon as an ancient evil of great woe should remember that the common folk say the same things about them and their sodales. Ideas are larger, more pronounced and made manifest in the Magical realm, as this creature demonstrates. Characters may eventually understand that what they face is more a concept than a creature, and come to fight it accordingly.

Story Hooks

- The magi are looking for a site for a new covenant, and find a magical aura that at first seems suitable. However, as they begin construction tempers begin to flare and petty infighting among the workmen becomes commonplace. The magi also start scouting around for Vis sources, and come across an ancient barrow. Is the site still worth using, and can they prevent anyone from angering the slumbering dragon? Perhaps magi will be determined enough to promote vengeful actions so as to have a more powerful aura for their covenant.
- The magi hear of the old legends of Beowulf (perhaps even finding the text that survives into the modern day in our world), and of the hoard of treasure within the Barrow. It is said to include a magical Roman standard that glows with light, perhaps a relic from the Cult of Mercury. Of course, if they manage to slip in and remove it, the dragon will rise and wreak havoc on the entire region, burning down villages. The Quaestores are likely to look unfavorably upon such a result if they trace it back, since the destruction of mundane resources in the region will impact on other Covenants. On the other hand, the player magi could be working to investigate why a dragon is ravaging the countryside, and how they can put a stop to it.
- The Roman Centurion placed the relics there hoping that one day a Roman would return to claim them once more. The Order of Hermes can actually claim to be the rightful heir to old Roman glory, and perhaps one or more magi can trace their family trees (knowingly or otherwise) back to the Romans. One of the player magi could really be the true heir, come to reclaim his lost ancestral birthright. All he need do is have the courage to claim it from its guardian.
- One or more Seekers come across the references in the legend. Some may believe that the 'last survivor of a forgotten race' refers to an Old One, and/or that the dragon is itself the Old One in question. They therefore go to investigate. Through they are set to be disappointed, the treasure could contain some relics from the Cult of Mercury and so offer them another clue in their ongoing search for the Old Ones. However, the relics also depict certain rituals already discovered and keep secret by the Quaestores (see Houses of Hermes), who will no doubt prefer to maintain control of such things and keep them out of the hands of the rest of the Order. However it would be politically difficult for the Quaestores to simply come and claim them from the magi.
- The magi learn that the dragon has endured for centuries, and seek to study it to create or improve upon their longevity potions. After defeating it, they begin to experiment with its blood.

