

# MEDIEVAL BESTIARY





# The Medieval Bestiary™



*A Complete Handbook of  
Medieval Beasts*

*by Tim Carroll and Ken Cliffe*



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## SPECIAL THANKS

**Ken** "Get out of my office, I'm nearly done." Cliffe, for not blowing his stack too many times.

**Stewart** "Okay, here's what happens. . ." Wiecek, for having story ideas when everyone else was stumped.

**Sam** "God of caffeine." Chupp for providing liquid sustenance to weary laborers.

**Mark** "You're on my list!" Rein•Hagen, for mastering the tao of Four Square.

**Travis** "Go Bear!" Williams for showing us how funky beasts can be

**Mike** "You're lucky you caught me, I was just going to bed." Weaver, for adjusting his biological rhythm to stay within deadline.

**Tony** "Hello. . . Yes. . . Yes, Ken. . ." Ackland, for putting up with phone callers not used to overseas communication.

**David** "I enclosed a couple extra pieces so you have a choice." Transue, for whipping out dozens or pieces of art, and some more on the side.

**Eric** "Jack-of-all-trades." Hotz, for mastering so many art forms and juggling them all at one time.

**Richard** "Yeah, I can do it." Thomas, for accepting assignments between bouts of convention babe scoping.

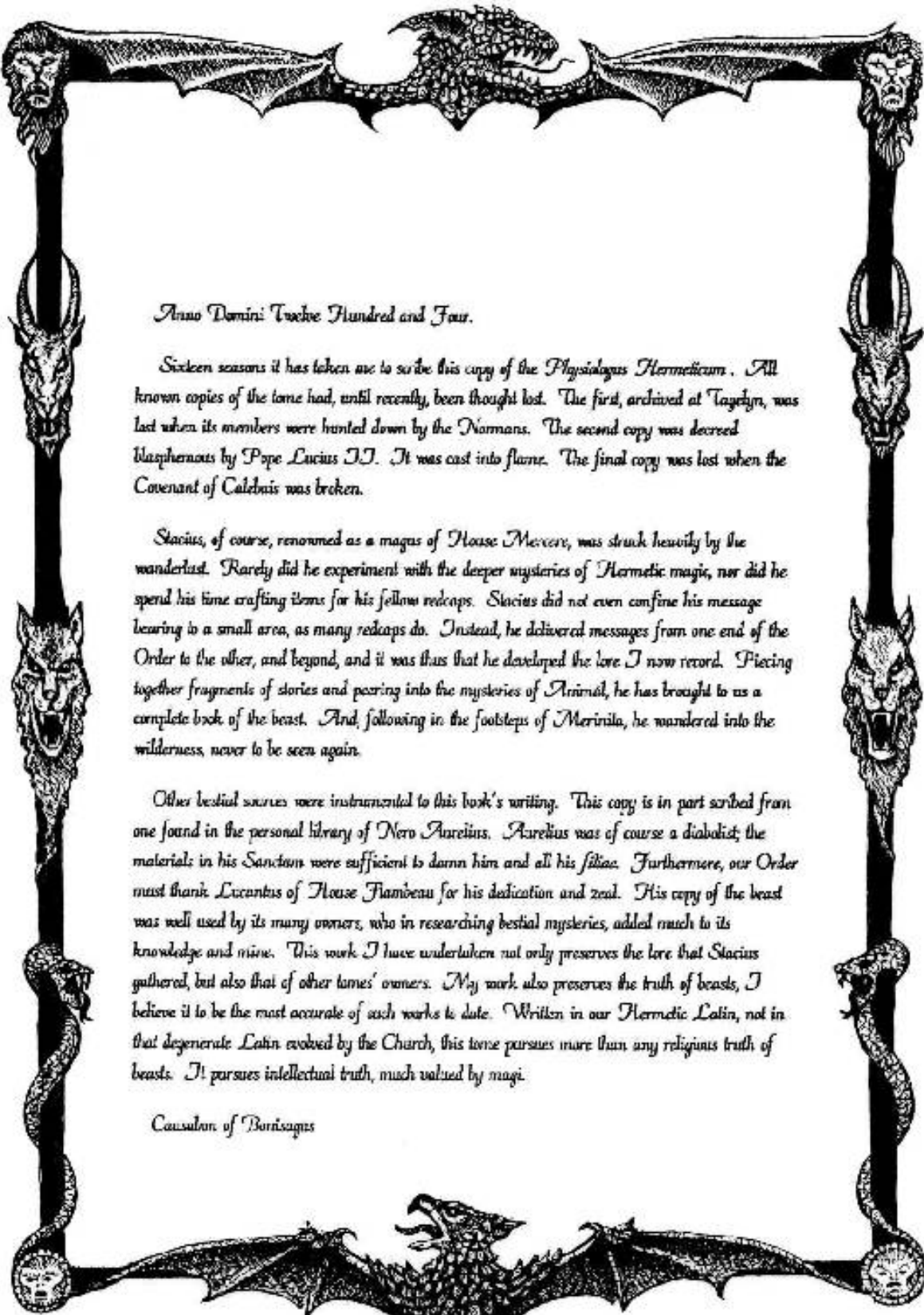
**Josh** "What's up with that?" Timbrook, for working so hard to reach King, but never staying there for long.

**Wes** "Overhand" Harris, for using underhanded tactics in Four Square.

**Andrew** "Human Target" Greenberg, for suffering the most Four Square body blows, and keepin' his sense of humor.

**Tim** "Wait, I've got some more material." Carroll, for having more ideas than this book could possibly contain.

Note: Four Square has become the official sport of White Wolf, and is played with ferocious devotion. You may have played it yourself on the playground in elementary school (Yes, we pride ourselves on our maturity).



Anno Domini Twelve Hundred and Four.

Sixteen seasons it has taken me to scribe this copy of the *Physiologus Hermeticum*. All known copies of the tome had, until recently, been thought lost. The first, archived at Targelyn, was lost when its members were hunted down by the Normans. The second copy was decreed blasphemous by Pope Lucius II. It was cast into flame. The final copy was lost when the Covenant of Calednis was broken.

Stacius, of course, renowned as a magus of House Mercere, was struck heavily by the wanderlust. Rarely did he experiment with the deeper mysteries of Hermetic magic, nor did he spend his time crafting items for his fellow redcaps. Stacius did not even confine his message bearing to a small area, as many redcaps do. Instead, he delivered messages from one end of the Order to the other, and beyond, and it was thus that he developed the lore I now record. Piecing together fragments of stories and peering into the mysteries of Animal, he has brought to us a complete book of the beast. And, following in the footsteps of Merinila, he wandered into the wilderness, never to be seen again.

Other bestial sources were instrumental to this book's writing. This copy is in part scribed from one found in the personal library of Nero Aurelius. Aurelius was of course a diabolist; the materials in his Sanctum were sufficient to damn him and all his filiae. Furthermore, our Order must thank Lucantus of House Flambeau for his dedication and zeal. His copy of the beast was well used by its many owners, who in researching bestial mysteries, added much to its knowledge and mine. This work I have undertaken not only preserves the lore that Stacius gathered, but also that of other tomes' owners. My work also preserves the truth of beasts, I believe it to be the most accurate of such works to date. Written in our Hermetic Latin, not in that degenerate Latin evolved by the Church, this tome pursues more than any religious truth of beasts. It pursues intellectual truth, much valued by magi.

Causulan of Borisagus





# Chapter One: Introduction

**The Medieval Bestiary** is designed as a supplement to the **Ars Magica** game. **Ars Magica**, which in theme and style is unlike any other FRPG, concerns itself with roleplaying of the most sophisticated variety, roleplaying inspired by the myths and stories of heroes, monsters, evil and magic.

When we roleplay, we try to recreate those ancient stories with characters and settings of our own creation. **Ars Magica** strives to help you meet that goal. Rather than tell a story through the rolling of dice, **Ars Magica** requires that the players work together to tell a tale, putting less emphasis on die rolls and combat than most games. Storytelling requires a new style of roleplaying. Players need to create fully developed characters that they can envision and portray as protagonists in a drama. A fully developed character is more than just a series of meaningless statistics, but has motivations, goals, fears and confidences of its own — it has personality.

To tell a story, the Storyguide (gamemaster) also needs fully developed characters. While many of

the characters' encounters are with other people (magi, serfs, nobles, priests), sometimes they may be with beasts — the common and not so common creatures of the forest, mountain and sea. Because **Ars Magica** is story oriented, the Storyguide must imbue even beasts with complete and relevant personalities. If this is done successfully, every encounter with beasts will not degenerate into violence and savagery (at least not all the time). Thus, when the characters meet a wolf they might not immediately hack it up, but may attempt to interact with the beast, coming to understand it as they might another person. The magi certainly have a variety of ways in which they might try to communicate with it, and of course sign language is always an interesting option.

All you, as the Storyguide, need to tell this kind of tale is a source that lists not just the beasts' statistics, but also that portrays the individual personalities of beasts. That's where **The Medieval Bestiary** comes in. That is the object and inspiration of this work.



### USING THIS BOOK

While *The Medieval Bestiary* is a supplement designed for use with *Ars Magica*, players of all fantasy roleplaying games will find it a useful reference source. *The Medieval Bestiary* describes mundane animals of the medieval world, and fantastic beasts of medieval lore. However, we don't detail these creatures from a modern perspective, but from a medieval point of view, just as they were described in the studies and inquiries of medieval scholarship. Because a medieval style setting is common to most fantasy games, the beasts and their identities portrayed in this work could easily and profitably be applied to any fantasy game.

*The Medieval Bestiary* details almost every mundane and fantastic beast that travelers might encounter in travels throughout *Mythic Europe™*. *The Storyguide* will find it invaluable for story creation, though it should not be seen as a source



for creating complete stories. This *Bestiary* is designed to allow you to refer to beasts quickly and easily, relieving you of the task of defining those creatures and

researching their medieval significance yourself. Furthermore, the beasts in this book should not be strung together in a series of encounters in order to create a story. They should be used as only one element of a story which contains a fair balance of all the proper ingredients — theme, mood, character interaction, passion, plot and drama.

Each beast is first described in the words of a Medieval scholar, a magus in the Order of Hermes, who discusses what he knows of each creature and, in some cases, what he believes its virtues and weaknesses represent. The information he presents is not always correct (by

modern or medieval standards); often it is up to you to decide what is true and what is false. Then we list the full *Ars Magica* statistics of each creature, a section to be ignored if you are using this book with some game other than *Ars Magica*. Each Beast is also provided with its own story concept. Those plot ideas offer you inspiration for using the beasts in play, eliminating the intimidation of introducing more unusual creatures, and saving them from becoming stereotypical "wilderness encounters." Furthermore, players may find this book's bestial descriptions useful when magi conduct research into the Animal or when magi search for Familiars. And, on page 15 we introduce a new concept, Ferocity, which is a trait nearly every beast in this book possesses.

As discussed above, this supplement describes beasts not by their mechanical statistics alone, which inevitably reduces them to fodder for the characters' swords, but by their natures, motivations and guiding spirits. By understanding the medieval impressions of the nature of the beast, you understand how game characters perceive the beast. Moreover, the impressions of the



be made unique to any single game, so this book has further applications outside *Ars Magica* — it has applications to every fantasy roleplaying game.

Though *The Medieval Bestiary* details the game mechanics of many beasts, those details are not etched in stone. In fact, referring to the scores provided here, you are encouraged to individualize significant beasts that appear in your stories; the profiles of this work only represent the archetype of each beast. Such individualization imbues your creatures with character and makes them unique. If each beast had the same abilities and nature, what would make your stories memorable? You are also advised to use this volume as a reference, not as inspiration, for your stories. We find that the essence of the story is preserved when beasts are selected for the story after its creation. That way

your stories do not become mere beast hunts. Of course, that doesn't mean beasts cannot be the object of a quest. Indeed, there's bound to come a time when magi and their retainers need to tap the power, or *vis*, of some creature. But when such a hunt is undertaken, it is bound to be dangerous for no creature sacrifices itself for the needs of mere mortal men.

Finally, it's important to note that the Order of Hermes considers faeries and their kind separate from the beasts of world and legend. The peculiar magical spirit of faeries makes them separate from *bestiae*. For details on faeries and their ilk, you are referred to *Faeries*, another *Ars Magica* supplement from White Wolf. Ghosts, demons and angels are also outside of the paradigm of *bestiae*, but they also will be detailed in other books.









# Chapter Two: The Complete Beast

Roleplaying beasts can be difficult, not only because different myths and legends present beasts of the same kind in different ways, but because roleplaying games tend to abuse beasts. All too often potentially interesting beasts are used haphazardly, and often without regard for the creatures' mythical origins. So the question is, how can creatures be kept unique and interesting, and still a common feature of stories? That is the question this Chapter, and this supplement, intends to answer.

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## THE ORIGIN OF THE BESTIARY

Historical Bestiaries derived most of their source material from only limited sources. First and foremost of these sources was the *Physiologus*. *Physiologus* was written between the Second and Fifth Centuries A.D., and the name is said to refer to the author, whose own name is not known. *Physiologus* means The Naturalist. The *Physiologus* was primarily a religious text, though; its entries referred less to beasts than to the sins and virtues beasts represented. The *Physiologus* borrowed from numerous sources, including Pliny's *Historia Naturalis*, the folklore of its period, and religious teachings.

The second major influence on Bestiaries was Isidore of Seville's *Etimologiae*. As the *Physiologus* was translated into other languages, the translator would often add "facts" he had heard or read of.

All the Bestiaries borrowed extensively from each other, but particularly from Isidore of Seville's. The *Physiologus* was organized according to the virtues and sins of its subjects. The *Etimologiae*, on the other hand, was organized along certain classifications: *Bestiae* (beasts), *Perocae et Jumentae* (cattle), *Minuta Animalia* (small animals), *Aves* (birds), *Reptilae* (reptiles), and *Serpentis* (snakes). Early Bestiaries haphazardly adopted sections from Isidore. Later ones came closer to his original classifications, but still derived much of their order from the *Physiologus*.

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## WHAT IS A BESTIARY?

Medieval Bestiaries were less books on animals than they were outpourings of religious ideals. In them was shown the behavior of beasts, some which man was intended to emulate, and others which he was not. Thus, Bestiaries were designed such that the reader would take note of beasts' virtuous and fell behavior, and avoid the latter. And, animals proved to be an effective medium through which religious and moralistic ideals could be taught.

Only secondarily did Bestiaries strive to explain certain aspects of animal nature. The great size and weight of the Elephant offers one such example. Medieval scholars were puzzled by the beast and thought that were it to copulate in the normal fashion, it would crush its mate. Thus, they

considered the Elephant a chaste beast, so Bestiaries propose this assumption as fact. Creatures, both real and fantastic, were described in the Bestiary according to ideas considered logical and accurate for their time. And, given the Middle Ages' void of scientific thought, who could refute the claims of a Bestiary?

Beyond conceptual misnomers, medieval Bestiaries suffered from two major problems. The first was mistranslating. With later Bestiaries copied by rooms filled with scribes, improper abbreviations and difficult handwriting were commonplace. These technical difficulties resulted in false or misleading information and simple illegibility. The second problem lay in the borrowing of new ideas. Authors of Bestiaries would often add their own stories to the text, most without basis in fact.

Given that Bestiaries were based on what we today consider fancy, it's no surprise that no two Bestiaries were identical. The mistranslation of these books only exacerbated the differences between them. Is it any wonder, then, that the Basilisk slowly evolved into the Basilisc and, by the end of the Fourteenth Century, into the Cockatrice?

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#### STORIES OF THE BEAST

Beasts can be introduced into your Saga in many ways. In most roleplaying adventures, monsters usually enter into the Saga when the characters simply run into them. While there is nothing inherently wrong with this setup, it can be desirable to give a beast's introduction more drama and flair. Powerful creatures, such as the Great Wyrms of the Pyrenees, have reputations that rival those of Kings and Popes. Characters would never meet the King without first having heard of him, nor would they meet the Great Wyrms without first hearing tales of its power. Furthermore, having knowledge of a beast before meeting it, whether that knowledge is accurate or not, characters will go into the meeting with more caution than would an ill-informed hack-and-slasher. So, when working on beast stories, carefully consider the amount of time that passes between the introduction of a beast and the characters' meeting of it. That passage of time can mean the difference

between a combat story and a story of emotion and forethought.

Below is a list of story concepts that you can use to incorporate beasts into your Saga. Though each beast described in this work is provided with a story concept, those listed here are generic ideas that can be tailored to suit any beast. Also keep in mind that even though a beast may not be the focus of a story, its presence should not be understated. Even an ordinary animal, appearing for only a few moments, can have an emotional, inspirational or humorous impact on the characters. An apparently insignificant animal sighting can also be intrinsic to the development of your plot, even if the characters don't yet know it.

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#### VIS HUNT

The need for raw *vis* plagues every magus. Without it his abilities are slow to improve; he cannot enchant items and the most powerful spells are denied to him. Magi may often hunt down magical creatures for the magic contained in their bodies. Even mundane creatures may have horns, tongues, hooves or tails which are required in some spell or enchantment.

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#### BEAST ATTACK

Magical beasts often attack humans, even in the Dominion where their power can be its weakest. It is important to understand the beast's motive: what makes it attack humans? Understanding the beast's motivation is key to making a story interesting and realistic.

For example, while an Eagle is out hunting, her chick is stolen by a magus, who believes the unhatched bird will make an ideal Familiar. The Eagle, being quite magically potent, begins to harass the serfs in a village near the Covenant to avenge its loss.

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#### FAMILIARS

Perhaps the most important of bestial stories involves the magus's search for a Familiar. Familiars are extremely important to the magus; they are perhaps the only lifetime boon companion such an individual ever has. To emphasize the significance of the Familiar to a magus, the story of

the Familiar's acquisition should be challenging. It should also involve roleplaying, especially when the magus first starts his search, for the relationship between the magus and Familiar will continue for a considerable amount of time — the search for the Familiar needs to be interesting and realistic. What motivates the magus to look for a Familiar now? What makes an animal amenable to becoming a Familiar? What are the consequences of taking this animal (see *Beast Attack* above)? Stories about Familiars should always seek to explore the reasons and nature behind the close relationship that magus develops with Familiar. Encourage the player to help make the Familiar interesting rather than just powerful.

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### RED HERRING

The idea here is to have a story seem about one thing, when it is in fact about a beast and its behavior. Of course, the story could also seem to be about a beast, but actually concentrates on another, deceptive focus. Notice that many of our society's sayings, like "red herring" and "wild goose chase" are inspired by animals and their deceptiveness. Maybe this trend in language could be inspiration for a story, possibly one with a humorous ending. In this sort of story the symbolism discussed in the descriptions of each beast are your best guide. You need only work the deceptive symbolism of a creature into the theme of your story, and then find a hook to lure your characters into being fooled by it.

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### GUARDIAN

This is one of the most common stories of legend and roleplaying. As *Mythic Europe™* is such a magical world, alive with so much mystical symbolism and poetic justice, such an encounter is not all that uncommon. You need only decide what sort of beast is on guard, what it is guarding, and why it does so. Of course the "great treasure" which the creature guards could be important to no one but itself, but as this goes against the mythical import of this type of story (and unduly upsets the players) it should be used infrequently.

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### PORTENTS

The sighting or presence of a particular beast is often attributed with good or bad fortune by medieval folk. The appearance of a Dragon, for example, is thought to herald disaster. But, if a Swan appears in a vision, good fortune results for the seer. Creatures of all types have important meanings, and can be used in a story to warn of bad tidings or to proclaim good fortune. Once again, your first step in creating this type of story is to look up the symbolism of each creature and then find a way to make it fit into the concept of your story.

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### EXAMPLE STORIES

The following are actual story examples that you may expand into fullfledged stories, or that you may use as inspiration for your own stories.

1. **A Dragon**, pained by old age to the point of blind rage, attacks the city nearest its den, which also happens to be in the proximity of the characters' Covenant. How do the characters react? Attacking the Dragon could well be considered suicide, so more subtle attempts to deal with it are required. Maybe its pains of age could be remedied.

2. **A powerful creature**, like a Basilisk sleeps, or otherwise resides in caves under the Covenant. What are the consequences of it awakening or discovering the lands above? What are the characters willing to sacrifice to keep it asleep or down where it belongs?

3. **An enemy of the Covenant** uses a rumor of a magical animal to lure a magus into a trap. This is an example of a scenario where no animal may actually appear, but the magus might undertake lengthy research, coming to understand the animal's ways and nature. Such research might later be invaluable in another story, or in the same one in which the magus is duped. Maybe the beast in question fatefully appears, getting revenge against the villain who took its name in vain.

4. **A powerful magus** has arrived on the Covenant's doorstep, seeking information on a creature rumored to live in the area. The characters might rely on this creature for their own *vis* supply, and the newcomer wants to take the creature away.

Or, the characters could be on friendly terms with the creature and the newcomer plans to destroy it for his own reasons.

5. A young apprentice from the characters' Covenant befriends an animal — a magical animal. Though the characters believe the beast dangerous, the child knows that it is not. The characters might go so far as to attempt a rescue, believing the beast to have kidnapped the apprentice to use against the Covenant. The beast's magical abilities might also have an effect on the apprentice. It would be interesting to see how magi separate child and creature without permanently affecting the apprentice.

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### ROLEPLAYING ANIMALS

When roleplaying an animal, the Storyguide must imbue the creature with a specific personality. The beast profiles provided in this book portray animals with definite human characteristics, in keeping with the medieval outlook toward beasts — that animals are the embodiment of virtue and vice. All beasts of one type behave in a specific way. All Camels, for example, are lustful. However, animals of the same breed are not all the same. Each has its own motivations and personality quirks, sometimes determined by the conditions of its lifestyle, its environment, or by fate. In general, animals should be roleplayed as if they are any other kind of Storyguide character. Of course, for the sake of game expediency, not all the hounds in a pack of Wolves need be roleplayed, but the more important ones, like the pack leader, might be.

The Personality Traits listed in each beast's profile go far toward helping you roleplay creatures. They give you a "measurable" idea of how extreme a beast's personality is. A given animal's Characteristics and Personality Traits are usually quite extreme; many Bestiary creatures have Characteristics that exceed those of all other creatures. For example, no creature is more ferocious than the Lion. When roleplayed from that point of view, animals are made caricatures of man, acting out his sins and virtues. But, if beasts' personalities are not caricatures, by what other means can the common man recognize the extremes to which his own sins and virtues might lead?

Note that animals with high Cunning scores might act in much the same way as intelligent men. Their craftiness makes them not unlike the williest of men. The Fox, for example, is clever and sets traps for Birds. Animals with high Cunning should be played much the same way as humans with high intelligence; they are resourceful, and ready to shift tactics when conditions change.

If you don't like this book's abstract treatment of animals, you are free to play them in a more realistic manner, in a manner more befitting a modern understanding of animals. The latter style of roleplaying is familiar to most gamers, but fits less within the ideals of *Mythic Europe*, and less within the imagery of fantasy in general. Played "fantastically," the Lion is a match for the Dragon, and the Unicorn is able to deal the Elephant a death blow with its horn. Played realistically, the Lion and Unicorn would be completely unable to contend with such foes. And, realistically speaking, of course, there is no such thing as Unicorns.

Moreover, if animals are played "realistically," their Ferocity scores (a new addition to the rules that is described below) should rarely be higher than all animals' default value of 1 — realistic animals are capable of showing rage, but not epic rage.

Finally, played with a modern understanding, animals generally fear man whereas "fantastic" animals might not. A "real" beast's first instinct is to run away from mortals, long before mortals even know the animal is about. For example, the realistic Wolf tends to attack in packs, but even using such effective tactics it avoids attacking humans. Indeed, few animals regularly attack human beings: the "man-eating" Tiger is mostly a myth. As realistic treatment of animals makes for a boring, and decisively unmedieval, game, we stand by our fantastic treatment of the beast.

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### CREATURE CREATION

This supplement strives to provide you with as many beast profiles as possible. However, the topic is in no way exhausted. In fact, dozens of creatures still exist in actual myth and legend that have not been covered here. Undoubtedly still more beasts lurk in your imagination. To introduce new

beasts into your Saga, the following beast creation parameters are provided. These guidelines were followed in the creation of the beasts described herein, and may be used by you to do the same.

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### CHECKLIST

The following list breaks down the concepts and reminders that you might consider in creating a new beast. These items are really only meant to pique your imagination, and you may ignore some or all of them if you please, after all not every Beast has a "purpose." Generally, these items should help you create a well-rounded beast.

1. Purpose
2. Origin
3. Image and Appearance
4. Behavior
5. Statistics
6. Abilities
7. Natural Attacks
8. Magical Properties
9. Calculate Totals
10. Review

Do not be afraid to backtrack if you find that, during the creative process, your initial conception of the beast changes. Sometimes the most imaginative beasts arise by accident, or by the combination of disparate ideas (given the creation of a plausible explanation for their combination, of course).

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### PURPOSE

What is the creature's role in the Saga? Is there a particular emotion that the beast is meant to evoke? Most important is its use in a story. Strive to create interesting monsters, rather than a set of combat stats. If the creature is destined to attack the characters, understand its motivations.

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### ORIGIN

No creature exists in a vacuum. In most myths and stories, a creature's origin is well established and described to the audience. Even if that origin is not known by the characters, that origin is a ruling factor in all the beast's powers and ways.

Some questions to ask include: Where did the creature come from? What were the circumstances surrounding its birth? What type of creature(s) were its parents/ancestors? Is it unique, are there a small number of them, or is it part of a whole species?

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### IMAGE AND APPEARANCE

As you must be able to describe the beast to the players when they encounter it, the appearance of the beast is important. What does it look like? Sound like? Smell like? How does it move? Does it have a distinguishing feature that sets it apart from others of its kind? Concentrate on the information needed to accurately describe the creature in a sensual, entertaining manner.

Some physical features are common in medieval Bestiaries:

- **Multiple Heads.** The creature might be completely normal except that it has many heads. This quality is frequently found in Serpentkind. Three, seven and nine are common numbers of heads to find. In game terms, numerous heads undoubtedly increases the number of attacks the beast gets.
- **Hybrids.** The beast incorporates the body parts of more than one creature. The Ant-Lion is only one example. In fact, an easy way to develop new creatures is to take the body parts of different creatures and combine them into a new monstrosity. Many Personality Traits and abilities of the component creatures carry over into the new beast which, by medieval tradition, is always wild and untamed.

- **Enormous.** The creature may be completely normal, except that it is huge (minimum Size +5), with a corresponding increase in abilities.

Note that the above features are not mutually exclusive. The *Chimera* not only has multiple heads, but they are the heads of different creatures!

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## BEHAVIOR

While most beasts are non-intelligent, they still act in certain, predictable ways. In *Ars Magica*, this predictability is represented by beasts' possession of Personality Traits. Medieval scholars often liken the behavior of animals to the behavior of men. So, in beasts it is possible to find traits that could just as easily be found in humans.

What motivates the beast? What will upset it or send it into a fury? How does it react to human beings and, in particular, magi?

Personality Traits common to animals include:

Brave/Cowardly

Wild/Tame

Fierce/Gentle

Energetic/Lazy

Curious/Indifferent

Playful/Serious

Greedy/Generous

Lustful/Chaste

Cruel/Merciful

Patient

Destructive

Relentless

Vengeful

Mean

Gluttonous

Spirited

Jealous

Humble

Loyal

Vicious

As with human Personality Traits, the values for animal Personalities range depending on the extremity of an animal's character. There is no established range within which Personality scores are limited.

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## STATISTICS

The Size of the beast should be chosen first, as it affects many other characteristics.

If you are uncertain of your creation's actual Size, find an animal within the text that you feel would be comparable and use its Size rating.

The following Characteristics should be determined, as they are important for calculating the beast's combat abilities:

**Str** (needed for damage) In general, the larger a beast is, the stronger it should be. An average creature probably has a Str equal to its Size.

**Stm** (Needed for Soak, Fatigue, Natural Magic Resistance)

**Dex** (attack)

**Qik** (First, Defense)

**Per** If created in realistic terms, a creature's Per should be at least +2, as animals are usually more sensitive than humans. If an animal is a reflection of some human quality, its Per score may be higher or lower.

Next, decide whether or not the beast is intelligent. Most animals should only have Cunning. Exceptions are commonly limited to Shapeshifters and faerie creatures, though animals with particularly dynamic personalities could have genuine intelligence, if you decide to give it to them. Once it's decided that Cunning or Intelligence are used, determine the value of the Characteristic. Creatures with Intelligence have Confidence Points, just as if they were human.

Note that most beasts don't have scores in Presence and Communication as they lack the ability to socially interact in the world of man, and lack the ability to speak. However, special animals might be able to interact and speak with men. You must decide whether an animal can perform these functions. If a beast has a Presence score, is it high, reflecting human etiquette, or high because the beast has a daunting bearing? If a beast has a low Presence, is the animal slovenly, or just socially repugnant, as a Wild Pig might be? If a beast can

talk, does it have a low Com, only able to speak on a monosyllabic level, or a high Com, able to express itself like a cultured academic?

Descriptive words can be chosen for a creature's Characteristics, just as if it were human (*Ars Magica*, p. 17), further refining the creature's physical (and mental) appearance. Individual beasts that are significantly different from the norm of their species might have two descriptions; one for the new creature's species and one for the creature in question. That way the common beast's scores won't be mistaken for the more powerful individual's.

**Example:** A standard Lion has a Str of +3. The Storyguide is making a powerful Lion, and gives it a Str of +6. The beast would have two descriptions; one for Lions in general, and one because its Str is significantly higher than normal.

#### ABILITIES

Most creatures only have a couple abilities, representing innate advantages that a creature possesses.

Common animal abilities include:

- **Ferocity** According to the medieval Bestiary, the Lion is a match for the Dragon. How is this possible, when the Drake is larger and more powerful? The Lion's natural ferocity in battle makes it a match for the Dragon. Ferocity is the ability that affects all an animal's natural attacks, and adds to Attack Rolls in exactly the same way that Weapon Skill does for a human character, but only in certain circumstances unique to the specific variety of beast. For instance, a Wild Pig that has its path blocked receives a +4 bonus to attacks against its blocker. The Pig's Ferocity score only applies to that situation. Each creature with a Ferocity score has a listed specialty to indicate when Ferocity applies. Ferocity is also a score that you can take into account to determine a beast's reaction to character action (e.g. will it attack or run away?).

Beast Creation Statistics			
	Speed	AtkB	Damage Bonus
Small Claws +1	+1	-1	
Medium Claws	+2	+2	+2
Large Claws	+4	+4	+6
X-Large Claws	+6	+3	+9
Small Bite	+1	+0	-2
Medium Bite	+2	+2	+2
Large Bite	+3	+4	+7
X-Large Bite	+4	+6	+11
Small Horns	+2	+2	+0
Medium Horns	+3	+2	+1
Large Horns	+5	+4	+5
X-Large Horns	+6	+3	+7
Small: Size -2 or less			
Medium: Size -1 to +1			
Large: Size +2 to Size +4			
Extra-Large: Size +5 or higher			

Generally, wild beasts have higher scores than smaller, tame creatures. Most creatures have a value of 1, with more powerful beasts going up to a typical maximum of 10. In practice, few creatures should have a higher score than five. On that level those creatures are competing with the Lion and the Unicorn. A value of zero should be assigned only to the occasional gentle beast, such as the Rabbit, which has no natural aggression.

- **Athletics.** General athletic prowess. It includes moving smoothly and confidently, with grace, and improves most gross body movements. Specialties: grace, jump, long distance run, sprint. (Str, Dex, Qik). High scores are common in Felines.

- **Climb.** Cats known for their tree-climbing prowess of course have high values here. Specialities: trees, vines, cliff faces. (Dex, Str)





- **Perfect Balance.** Once again, a common virtue for Cats. Add this score to all rolls the creature makes to keep its balance. See rules, p. 41.

- **Stealth.** Used to sneak up on prey, or to avoid the hunter. See rules, p. 43.

- **Track.** For most animals, this would only cover the ability to follow a trail. See rules, p. 42.

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### NATURAL ATTACKS

Every beast has natural weaponry of some sort which serves as the beast's primary attack. Natural weaponry includes teeth and claws, as well as any non-magical special attacks, such as poison or close combat attacks. Increases in creature size and strength should be accompanied by increases in damage caused. This damage increase not only reflects an increase in a beast's strength, but reflects an increase in the size of its natural weapons. ("My what big teeth you have!")

The values on this chart are merely suggestions. Naturally some creatures have larger claws than normal for their size.

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### UNUSUAL ATTACKS

These are natural attacks that, while powerful, are non-magical in nature.

- **Constriction.** The ability to squeeze an enemy to death with coils or limbs. The beast must first make a successful Atk, catching the victim. Each Round thereafter the creature automatically does a certain amount of damage, ignoring the victim's Defense roll (but Soak rolls still apply). The trapped creature can make a Str roll each Round to escape the monster's grip. Each outsider helping the victim escape also gets a roll per Round.

- **Poisonous Bite.** A favorite attack form, the creature's bite delivers some type of poison. Use your imagination to determine the effects of the poison. Death is a

common result of poisoning, but not the most interesting one. Paralysis, insanity, palsy, unconsciousness, and transformation spice up a story. Rate the poison's strength by giving it a difficulty number (9 is a good average value). Give the victim a Resistance roll, generally on Str or some other relevant Characteristic. Consider also the time delay involved. A lengthy delay can turn a boring zap-you're-dead poison into something interesting if the characters have to race against time to come up with a spell or herb that will save the poisoned characters. A single poison's effects, whether resisted or not, should not be too divergent, though. For example, if a character fails his roll and dies, he who succeeds in his roll should still feel some adverse affects — "black-and-white" life or death is too abstract to be realistic.

- **Poisonous Breath.** All the things possible with a poisonous bite are possible with poisonous breath, except that more people can be affected at one time.

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## NATURAL ARMOR

The hide and natural toughness of a creature often results in its protection. This protection should be rated from 0 to 10, much like Ferocity. This rating functions just as the rating of a human's armor does. A score of 0 indicates no usual protection, 2-3 is average, and 10 reflects protection for something hideously tough, like a Dragon.

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## MAGICAL PROPERTIES

As animals can have some mundane Abilities as normal humans can, so can some magical beasts have Abilities usually reserved for humans with magical potential. Of course, the magical Abilities that beasts have are determined by the nature of the beast in question.

- **Entrancement.** The occasional snake and other magical creature might have this ability. Usually, the Ability is limited to use while the creature has a hold on its victim. See rules, p. 41.

- **Finesse.** This Ability affects any rolls made by the creature to use its magical abilities in special circumstances. It's also used in the creature's use of Targeting rolls. See rules, p. 40.

- **Hex.** Creatures that portend bad tidings are often capable of bringing about those tidings by virtue of their presence. These creatures may not even intend to do harm. Such creatures therefore have the Hex Ability. Other animals are of sufficient magic to will Hexes on others, and may do so out of revenge or hatred. Unless capable of speech, a beast rarely if ever voices its curse. See rules, p. 41.

- **Magical Sensitivity.** Most creatures are extremely sensitive to magic — even the mere presence of the magus's Gift is enough to unnerve them. If a creature is *extremely* sensitive, it should have this ability. See rules, p. 41.



- **Penetration.** This Ability adds to any roll made to break a victim's Magic Resistance when a creature uses magic. The Ability is common to magical animals whose powers usually overwhelm most Magic Resistance rolls, but possession of the Ability sometimes means the beast has a low Magic Resistance of its own. See rules, p. 40.

- **Second Sight.** This Ability is similar to Magical Sensitivity. Many animals can sense things that most mortals cannot. See rules, p. 41.

- **Weather Sense.** Creatures such as the Ox, who are thought to be able to foretell the weather, should have this ability. See rules, p. 41.

Many magical beasts possess spell-like powers, aside from those magical Abilities listed above. Most times these spell-like powers are innate to the beast and do not require "casting" to be used. To determine what powers a beast has, first choose what magical power the beast is aligned with. For most creatures, this is Magic Might, but if the creature has Demonic origins, it has an Infernal Might. If the creature is aligned with faerie powers, the creature has a Faerie Might. If the creature is born from the Holies, it has a Divine Might. When choosing powers, try to understand why the creature has those abilities. Often a creature's powers inspire its vulnerabilities.



Some example powers are listed below. The Level of each is variable, depending on the extent of its power.

- **Control of the Like Animal Mind.** The beast can control other beasts, perhaps only wild ones in its native habitat. The effect could be distant, so that the creature can send for animals over some distance, or can direct animals and send them away on tasks. Victims of the control receive a Stm roll to resist control. The average Difficulty Rating might be 10. (ReAn)

- **Emotion Aura.** Those in the presence of the beast tend to feel a certain emotion. You can demand appropriate Personality rolls to determine if the characters avoid being swept away by the emotion. You must determine what emotion is instilled. Difficulty Ratings to maintain control might be 9+, rolled against Stm. (ReMe)

- **Fiery Breath.** The beast can exhale flames as a weapon. Victims suffer about -15 damage. Small flames burn clothes and hair. Large flames incinerate bodies. (CrIg)

- **Illusions.** The creature has some use of illusions. It might be a specific illusion, such as undead that can appear alive, or it might entail versatile use of many different illusions. The specific illusions are simple to create: just decide

what they are and assign them Levels (which determine how hard they are to dispel). (Im)

- **Special Senses.** The creature can sense something that normal humans cannot. This power could be something similar to an Exceptional Talent, such as Sense Holiness/Unholiness, but it is not limited to this. Seeing in the dark, sensing fear, and detecting lies are all possibilities. (In)

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### CHOOSING MAGIC MIGHT

The more powerful a creature's abilities are, the higher its Might score should be. Also, larger beasts usually have higher Magic Might scores than do smaller creatures of the same type. A creature with a score of less than 15 might have difficulty affecting a magus, while the magus probably has little problem affecting the animal. So, if the creature is meant to be a challenge for a magus, it needs a high Might total. Might is also used to resist spells, so if a creature is supposed to be powerful enough to affect magi, but is not meant to be magically resistant, consider giving it a lower Might score, and the Penetration Talent.

Finally, figure out the type and aspect of *vis* found in the creature's body. The higher a beast's Might score, the more *vis* is likely to be found in its body. Often, powerful creatures' body parts hold many special powers. For example, there's the reputed healing properties of the Unicorn's horn. Usually these properties are directly related to the powers of the animal. Also keep in mind that though most animals do not willingly give up their *vis*, as it exists as part of their body, some animals might be willing to relinquish part of their *vis* score. In terms of a story, a Unicorn might be willing to give up its horn to save a maiden. The Unicorn could live on, but no longer has any *vis* in its body. Don't always require that the characters kill a beast to get at its *vis* supply.

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### CALCULATED TOTALS

1st: Qik + Ferocity + Natural Speed

Atk: Dex + Ferocity + Natural Attack

Dam: Str - Ferocity + Natural Damage

Fat: Stm

Soak: Stm + Size + Natural Protection

Def: Qik - Size + Ferocity

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### REVIEW

Finally, go back and look over everything about the creature, fleshing out details and filling in missing information. Think about what types of things the characters may do when facing the creature (i.e. if it's meant for combat or parley). If the beast has an easily exploitable weakness (low Magic Might, low Soak) and is not intended to, correct it, or give the creature some ability to make up for its lack.







# Chapter Three: Bestiae

The word "beast" should be applied to the Lion, the Tiger, and other creatures that attack with tooth and claw, but does not apply to the Snake. The beast, largely unfettered by thought, is free to act in its own peculiar manner while the Serpent often acts with frightening guile.

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## BESTIAE MAGNAE (GREATER BEASTS)

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### ANTELOPUS, *the antelope*

*So swift is the Antelope that hunters are unable to approach it, unless they are able to do so without its knowledge. It has two long horns, with edges like saw blades, that can be used to fell even the thickest of trees. When the Antelope grows thirsty it goes to a river to drink. If its horns become entangled in the branches of the hercine shrubs that grow on river banks, it bellows for help. A hunter, hearing the Antelope's cry, may then come and slay it. However, it is always dangerous to do so, for the Antelope may escape the branches just as the hunter approaches, and attack the hunter with its dangerous horns.*

*The Antelope's horn is known to have a number of magical properties, foremost among them its powers of scissure. Its horns can cut through nearly anything with little exertion required. The horns have been used by magi in various rituals and in the creation of artifacts that involve the separation and partition of an*



*individual substance, such as the flesh and bones of mortals. However, only one person may attack the Antelope and take its horn, else the magical properties of the horn will be lost. These creatures only surrender their horns in death, for they prize them above all else.*

*The Antelope represents the single virtue which every man possesses. The Antelope's horn is its most prized possession. Indeed it is the only thing of value which the beast possesses, therefore it protects its horn with its life. You must always be sure not to threaten a man's most prized possession, for his ferocity may surprise you.*

### The Antelope

Brave -2  
Size 0  
Str +1 Dex +1 Cun -1  
Stm +1 Qik +6 Per +2  
**Horns:** 1st +10 Attack +5 Damage +11  
Fat +1 Soak +5 Defense +7  
**Body Levels:** OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated  
**Abilities:** Ferocity (when entangled) 2  
**Powers:** None  
**Vis:** None

### An Antelope Story

One last Antelope is left in all Europe, the rest long since hunted for their valuable horns. It resides in a magical glade near the Covenant and a number of grogs begin to talk of seeing a strange "Unicorn deer" in the glade. When the magi investigate they discover the Antelope and must discern what type of creature it is (perhaps by doing some library research). Then they must decide what to do with it. This poses something of a moral question, do they kill this last of the Antelopes out of greed or do they allow it to live on unmolested? Even if they decide to take its horn someone must battle it alone.

**APER VERRES**, *the wild pig, or boar*

*The Wild Pig, ravenous and filthy, is the most unwholesome of beasts and in sheer gluttony, Aelien*



says, it is unequalled. It spares not even its own young from its voracious appetite and, if it comes across the body of a man, refrains not from devouring of the corpse what it may.

The male of this breed is a most fearsome creature, its foul temper legendary among the nobles who hunt it. It attacks any who crosses its path, and is enraged when its path is completely blocked, whether by object or man. Indeed, this is its principle weakness, for it is a creature of habit and great stubbornness and will use the same path again and again. If such a trail can be found, and a trap set, the boar can be attacked and killed more readily.

### The Wild Pig

Gluttony +2  
Stuborn +3  
Size -1  
Str +4 Dex 0 Cun -2  
Stm +5 Qik 0 Per -1  
**Bite:** 1st +4 Atk +4 Dam +6  
**Horns (male only):** 1st +4 Atk +8 Dam +18  
Fat +2 Def 0 Soak +15  
**Body Levels:** OK, 0/0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated  
**Abilities:** Ferocity (when path is blocked) 4  
**Vis:** None

### A Wild Pig Story

A non-Hermetic wizard raises Wild Pigs in her woodland home. Believing the world covetous of her pets, this witch protects them with her charms and guile. A malicious lord, having recently slain one of the Pigs on a hunt, believes the shaman responsible for his sudden impotency. The witch is indeed responsible for the curse, moreover she is proud of it. The lord, fearing the woman's wild powers, requests (nay, insists) that the magi deal with her. They may investigate, but may not side with the lord once they get to know the shaman. And, of course, they must first make their way through the dense brambles and the fierce guardian boars that surround her home.

### CERVUS, the stag

The Deer dwells in the wooded hills and glades which abound at the edges of the settlements of men. The male of the species is called the Hart and the female, the Hind. Their young are called Fawns. Aristotle says that the Deer has three natures. By its first nature, the Deer seeks out a nest of Snakes to eat when ill. At the Deer's approach, the Snakes traditionally flee into cracks in the earth. But, the Deer drinks from a stream until its muzzie is full, returns to the snakes' den, and spits the water into the hole, driving out the Snakes with the deluge. The Deer then draws the Serpents into its stomach, thereby regaining its lost health and vigor.

According to the second nature of the Deer, the Hind cannot conceive unless the star Arcturus is in the sky. When the turning of the season inclines them to rut, the Hart clashes with other males in furious battle, for only the victors may beget offspring. The female then hides its Fawn in a briar or dense thicket, so that it will be safe until it is strong enough to run and leap.

The Deer's marvelous hearing, its third unique nature, reveals even the slightest of noises to it. Made aware of the baying of Hounds, the Deer moves downwind of pursuing Dogs so the wind carries its scent away, eluding the pursuers.

#### The Hart

Brave +1  
Size 0  
Str 0 Dex +1 Cun +1  
Stm 0 Qik +2 Per +2 (hearing +7)  
Horns: 1st +5 Atk +4 Dam +13  
Fat 0 Soak +2 Def +3  
Body Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated  
Abilities: Ferocity (hunted) 1  
Powers: None  
Vis: None



#### The Hind

Brave -1  
Size -1  
Str -1 Dex +1 Cun +1  
Stm -1 Qik +2 Per +2 (hearing +7)  
Horns: 1st +4 Atk +3 Dam +4  
Fat -1 Soak +0 Def +3  
Body Levels: OK, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated  
Abilities: Ferocity 0  
Powers: None  
Vis: None

#### A Stag Story

Enchanted with the child of a lord and lady, a faerie steals the babe. In its place the faerie leaves a newborn Fawn, taken from its hiding place. The parents of the Fawn, nobles among their kind, now hunt the woods in search of their offspring. The child's parents are also distraught. Having spotted numerous hoof prints in the woods, and knowing that a human child has been stolen, the characters might assume a Jezenky (see below) is at work. Other clues might mislead them, but they can't search the woods long before encountering the enraged herd of Deer.





**ELEPHANTUS, the elephant**

The Elephant is so named because it is like unto a mountain, which in the tongue of ancient Greece is called Eliphos. It has two natures. According to its first nature, when desirous of producing offspring, the Elephant and its mate seek out a tree where grows the Mandrake. This root is essential, for without it, the ardor of these great beasts cannot be roused. After partaking of the Mandrake, the she-Elephant immediately seeks to conceive young, which it bears for the whole of two years. During its birth-labor, the female stands belly-deep in a lake and brings forth the calf into the water. The he-Elephant guards its mate while she is in labor because Dragons often try to steal the calf to devour it.

The second nature of the Elephant keeps it from lifting itself should it fall. Thus, the Elephant usually sleeps leaning against a stout tree. Before the beast arrives at the tree against which it is accustomed to sleeping, the shrewd hunter cuts partway through the tree. When the Elephant rests its bulk against the tree, both tree and

beast fall to the ground as one. The Elephant cries out for help until aid comes, but calls are to no avail until even the smallest Elephant puts its trunk under the great one and helps lift it.

**The Elephant**

Lastful -5
Size +5
Str +7 Dex 0 Con 0
Stm +7 Qik -1 Per +1
Tusks: 1st +4 Atk +6 Dam +15
Trample: 1st +8 Atk +4 Dam +25
Fat +7 Soak +15 Def -4
Body Levels: OK, 0/0/0, -1/-1, -3/-3, -5/-5, Incapacitated
Abilities: Ferocity (fallen)?
Powers: None
Vis: None

**An Elephant Story**

Elephants have long been brought to Europe both in times of war and in times of peace, indeed one was given to Charlamagne as a present. A large troupe of Jongleurs travels past the Covenant and offers a performance to the magi and their vassals. Everyone is astounded by the travelers' assorted talents, especially when two elephants are brought out. These are creatures which the characters have never seen before, monsters in the truest sense of the word, though the lash marks of the trainer's metal whip shows them to be well cowed. However, in the middle of its act, as the trainer whips the larger of the two creatures, it turns on him and in one fell swoop lifts him up and dashes him to the ground. Suddenly the performance is a pandemonium as an enraged bull races around trying to kill as many mortals as it can. Finally, presumably with the aid of the magi and gogs, it is brought down and slain. However the other Elephant, the first beast's mate, stands over the body and lets no one come near. The jongleurs are prepared to kill the cow as well (the beasts have been more trouble than they are worth), but it is up to the magi to decide what happens.

### EQUUS, the horse

The Horse is a beast of a most spirited nature. It exults in the spectacle of the battlefield and the smell of the melee. The Horse is inflamed and spurred to the charge by war cries and trumpet calls. This noble creature is a beast of great passion and is capable of much greatness when guided by a powerful yet gentle rider. Alone is it able to neither direct nor channel its spirit into any venture worthy of its potential. Thus, it is like mortal society without the Church, and serves to remind us why the power of the Church must be maintained.

#### The Horse

Spirited +3

Size +2

Str +3 Dex 0 Con -2

Stm +4 Qik 0 Per 0

Hooves: 1st +4 Atk +4 Dam +7

Fat +4 Def +0 Soak +7

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

Abilities: Ferocity (battle) 2

Vis: None

#### A Horse Story

One of the Covenant's best Horses was once a great war steed and fought in many battles for its master. Today it is old and tired, left to relive its past glories in its mind. Near death, the Horse decides to die with honor, and seeks battle whenever the opportunity arises. So close to death is it that its mind is also remarkably clear — a blessing from Divine or faerie powers — so may be able to communicate with the characters on a near intelligent level (especially if the magi use spells to learn what it thinks). Learning the Horse's motives, the characters may allow it to die with honor, but that requires some work. This story is probably best told as a grog adventure, in which only grog characters take part.

#### LEO, the lion, King of All Beasts

Noblest of all creatures, Leo possesses great courage, strength, and compassion. In battle, he yields to no creature — only the Unicorn and the Dragon can equal his ferocity and might. Leo has a roar that can strike down an enemy that, by its speed, would otherwise escape its charge. Leo spares those who ask for mercy,



and those who have done him kindness, and refuses to attack women, children, or the aged unless starting. He tolerates no injustice. The seat of Leo's passion rests in his heart, and indeed it contains magical properties. According to Aelian, those with curly manes are peaceful, and those with plain hair are fierce.

Physiologus says that Leo has three magical gifts. The first is caution. When Leo catches the scent of a human predator, he covers his trail with the sweep of his tail. Thus the hunter cannot follow Leo to his den and capture him. Those of the Order, then, must feel sympathy for Leo for they too must cover their trail. Their Gift makes the mundane man envious. If magi do not disguise the Gift, the common man would hunt them down and destroy them out of fear and envy.

The second of Leo's magical gifts is vigilance. Although he has fallen into sleep, Leo's eyes remain forever open, keeping watch for danger. Leo sleeps safely just as the magus does within his Covenant walls, while the castos are ever vigilant.

The third of Leo's gifts is bestowed upon him by the Lord. Leo has the power to instill life. The Lioness, giving birth to its cubs, brings them forth dead. She

guards them for three days until their sire arrives who, breathing into their faces, awakens them.

According to the Church, the Lion is the embodiment of Christ on earth, so can be as infused with holy as well as magical might. Leo certainly represents the physical might of the Church, so should be feared as much as the lances of the Holy Order of Paladins.

The Lion
<b>Magic/Divine Might</b> 20
Brave +6 Compassionate +6
Angry (when wounded) +3
Size +2
Str +5 Dex +1 Con +1
Stm +4 Qik +1 Per +3
Bite: 1st +14 Attack +15 Damage +23
Fat +4 Soak +11 Def +9
<b>Body Levels:</b> OK, 0/0/0/0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated
<b>Abilities:</b> Ferocity 10 (show of force), Athletics (pouncing) 3, Stealth (stalking) 5
<b>Virtues and Flaws:</b> Enduring Constitution
<b>Powers:</b>
<b>Roar, CrMc 20, 1 point</b> — When the Lion roars, all who hear his voice must make a Brave roll of 7+ or be frozen in terror.
<b>Vis: 4 Animál, heart. 10 Rego, mane.</b> Whoever tries to take the Lion's mane is cursed for his sin, being stricken mad (PeMe 50+, depending on the piety of the thief and his purposes for taking the mane). This madness is a change in the victim's Essential Nature, so cannot be healed by Hermetic means. However, some Mentem magicks may assuage the affliction, but for no longer than a day.

### A Lion Story

Tales filter to the Covenant about a great holy knight who is traveling lands in and around the Covenant. He is said to be of great strength and with a bright mane of hair. This knight is also reputed to have slain two fiends masquerading as Barons, to have driven off Fey powers, and to have banished magical powers from the lands. The magi may investigate these rumors, or may encounter

the "knight" when on a journey. In truth this "knight" is a Lion who is traveling through on some Divine mission. He might view the characters and their Covenant as a threat to the Divinities, unless the group can somehow prove their good intentions.

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### LEOPARDUS, the leopard

The Leopard, as its name suggests, is born of the unnatural union between a Lioness and a Pard. It is blessed with the latter's beautiful breath. However, the Leopard is a vicious and predatory beast that delights in wanton slaughter, and uses its breath to lure other creatures to destruction. St. Ambrose says the Leopard is like a sinner who is beyond redemption. Thus, there is moral danger in hunting these creatures, for once one is killed the weight of its sins may be passed down to its killer.

Just as the Leopard is the dark fold of noble blood, there are some within the Order who would use their Gift for their own aggrandizement, wasting their training in the pursuits of power and influence. When their ambitions and dark appetites exceed their abilities, these magi seek out the Infernal powers and make Pacts with them. Their souls are consumed by evil, and Hermetic brothers must seek them out and destroy them,



lest the fallen forever tarnish the legacy of the Order's wise Founders.

The Leopard
<b>Infernal Might 18</b>
Mean +3
<b>Size +1</b>
Str +2 Dex +2 Cun +2
Stm +2 Qik +2 Per +3
<b>Bite:</b> 1st +8 Atk +8 Dam +10
Fat +2 Soak +6 Def +5
<b>Body Levels:</b> OK, 0/0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated.
<b>Abilities:</b> Ferocity (malicious acts) 4
<b>Powers:</b>
<b>Pleasant Breath, ReAn 30, 4 points</b> — All animals except the Dragon are seized by the power of the Leopard's breath, and are unable to do anything but follow it wherever it may lead. The Dragon is seized by fear and avoids the Leopard (regardless of actual magical Penetration rolls). Unlike the Pard, the Leopard uses its breath to lure animals to it, where they are easily slain.
<b>Vis:</b> 4 Rego, Leopard's Tongue.

#### A Leopard Story

The characters are directly or indirectly responsible for the death of a Lion, who ruled lands foreign to the Covenant (perhaps a magical area or a faerie forest). Seizing the opportunity to gain power, a well-known and feared Leopard assumes the throne over local beasts. He immediately begins a wave of terror, killing for pure sport. Not only are animals threatened, but people are as well as hunting goes bad. If the characters have any scruples they try to make amends.

#### LUPUS, the wolf

Lupus is a greedy animal that steals Sheep from their flock. At night its eyes shine like lamps. If the Wolf should see the man first, the man is struck dumb and cannot speak till the break of day. But if the man should spy the Wolf first, the wolf's strength is lost and it runs in fear.

The unwise praeco is like a Wolf, silencing those who disagree with him. The praeco should use his rights sparingly, though, and

never for his own personal goals or the people may cry Wolf against him.

The Wolf
Greedy +2 Brave +5 Cowardly (when spotted) -4
<b>Magic Might 10</b>
<b>Size -1</b>
Str +1 Dex +1 Cun +3
Stm +4 Qik +0 Per +4
<b>Bite:</b> 1st +3 Atk +5 Dam +6
<b>Tackle:</b> 1st +3 Atk +4 Tackle +5
Fat -4 Def +5 Soak +5
<b>Body Levels:</b> OK, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated
<b>Abilities:</b> Ferocity (first to spot man) 1
<b>Powers:</b>
<b>Strike Dumb, ReCo 15/ReAn 15, 1 point</b> — If the Wolf spots its prey first, the target is unable to cry out for help as long as the Wolf is still in the area (Stm roll of 12+ to break the beast's influence). However, if the Wolf is seen first, he loses all Magic Points for the remainder of the encounter and is struck with fear (the cowardly Trait above).
<b>Vis:</b> 2 Animal, eyes

#### A Wolf Story

A Wolf pack is haunting the outskirts of a village near the Covenant. The locals organize a hunt and kill one of the Wolves, even though the beasts have



Bestiae



done no harm to the village. The slain Wolf is placed on a huge stone slab which is actually an ancient altar to a forest god, a remnant of the villagers' pagan past, as an offering to him in order keep away danger. However the stone slab is actually Infernal ground, and an altar to a Demon. The Wolf is brought back to life, given strange and evil powers, and told to stalk its killers (many of whom are sinners and will be heading to Hell in any case). The intention of the Demon is to get the Covenant involved, and to then contact one of them through the Wolf, in order to corrupt him.

**PANTHERA, the panther, or pard**

*The Panther is a beast quiet and gentle in demeanor, with a coat of variable color, like the cloak of Joseph. All animals save the Dragon are its friends. When it has eaten its fill, the Panther falls asleep for three days. Upon awakening, it roars in a loud voice and the sweetest scent, like the smell of allspice, issues from its mouth. Animals near and far, hearing the Panther's voice and smelling its sweet aroma, follow the call wherever it may lead. The Dragon, however, is seized with fear upon hearing that roar and flees to*

*subterranean caves where it does not have to suffer the power of the Panther's sweet fragrance. Coiled in its lair, the Dragon falls senseless and immobile, as if dead.*

*As the Panther gathers beasts, Bunisagus gathered to him the wisest magi of his day and convinced them of his benevolence. These magi heard the sweet truth of his message, and each founded a House to foster the ways of their tradition. The Devil howled in frustration, for he realized that where lone magi could not hope to defeat His designs, the assembled Order would prevail. The Devil fears what he does not control, and it is for this reason that Hell takes such interest in the affairs of magi. Magi are wise to heed this lesson, for once they start down the Dark Path, forever does it dominate their destiny!*

**The Panther**

**Magic Might 18**  
**Gentle +2**  
**Size +1**  
**Str +7 Dex +2 Con +1**  
**Stm +2 Qik +2 Per +3**  
**Bite: 1st +6 Atk +6 Dam +6**  
**Fat +2 Def +3 Soak +6**  
**Body Levels: OK, 0/0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated**  
**Abilities: Ferocity (hunters) 2**  
**Powers:**  
**Pleasing Breath, ReAn 30, 4 points** — All animals except the Dragon are seized by the power of the Pard's breath, and are unable to do anything but follow it wherever it may lead. The Dragon is seized by fear and avoids the Pard (regardless of actual magical Penetration rolls).  
**Vis: 4 Rego, Pard's Tongue.**

**A Panther Story**

The characters are faced with the threat of a dangerous Dragon, maybe even the Great Wurm of the Pyrenees itself. Searching for some weapon, they discover the alluring power of the Panther and set out to find one. The Panther might help, but its services have a price. . .

### TARANDRUS, the elk

The beast known as the Elk, Solinus tells us, has branching horns like those of a Deer, and has a shaggy coat like that of a Bear. When frightened, the Elk flees to a hiding place and changes the color of its coat into the likeness of whatever surrounds it. Elks are very rare for they were once hunted by the faeries. Now they hide in the deepest of forests and use their great stealth to flee the approach of any man.

The Elk
<b>Magic Might</b> 10
<b>Brave</b> -2
<b>Size</b> -1
<b>Str</b> +1 <b>Dex</b> +1 <b>Cun</b> -1
<b>Stm</b> +7 <b>Qik</b> +1 <b>Per</b> +2
<b>Horns:</b> 1st +7 <b>Atk</b> +6 <b>Dam</b> +15
<b>Fat</b> +9 <b>Def</b> +1 <b>Soak</b> +10
<b>Body Levels:</b> OK, 0/0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated
<b>Abilities:</b> Ferocity 0
<b>Powers:</b>
<b>Chameleon, MuIm 15, 1 point</b> — The Elk can change its skin so that it matches the color what it is against. So long as the Elk does not move, it can only be seen on a Scan roll of 15+.
<b>Vis:</b> 4 Muto, coat

### An Elk Story

A strange magical aura is afflicting the characters' Covenant, the source of which is unknown. The source is actually in the habitat of an Elk. Having changed colors in the realm of the magical source, the Elk has been tainted by the source's power. The Elk is no longer able to mimic its current background, but assumes colors different from its surroundings (like a shade of forest green when standing before a rock wall). The Elk is now only able to assume the appropriate colors of the area surrounding the magical source.

If the characters trail the Elk, they may use it to recognize and track down the source of the mysterious aura.

### TIGRIS, the tiger

The Tiger, Physiologus says, is swift as an arrow in flight and that is where its name comes from for the Persians of old called their arrows tygris.

The Tiger is also the most implacable of foes for it does not cease its hunt until it has tasted vengeance. Isidor of Seville tells us that a Tiger, finding that one of its cubs had been stolen, relentlessly followed the thief. The robber, though carried by a swift Horse, could not escape because of the speedy pace of his pursuer. Hoping to deceive the Tiger, the thief tossed a glass ball down into its path. The Tiger was not fooled by its reflection in the glass. It overtook the Horse, reclaimed its cub, and rent both rider and mount to bits in revenge, defying the Word of God. In condemnation, God streaked the Tiger's pelt with the black of its sin for all to see. "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord. I shall repay" [Romans 12:19].

Within the Order, there too is an ultimate authority that must be answered to. The Hermetic Code defines the laws that all magi must abide by, and it governs the acceptable dispensation of justice amongst magi. Between those who would take unsanctioned action against a Hermetic brother, despite intent, the Code discriminates not. No violation shall go unpunished, nor any wrong unheeded.

The Tiger
<b>Magic Might</b> 10
<b>Relentless</b> +3 <b>Vengeful</b> +4
<b>Size</b> +2
<b>Str</b> +3 <b>Dex</b> +2 <b>Cun</b> +2
<b>Stm</b> +3 <b>Qik</b> +3 <b>Per</b> +3
<b>Bite:</b> 1st +10 <b>Atk</b> +10 <b>Dam</b> +15
<b>Fat</b> +6 <b>Def</b> +5 <b>Soak</b> +9
<b>Body Levels:</b> OK, 0/0, -1/-1, -3, -5, Incapacitated.
<b>Abilities:</b> Ferocity (subjects of vengeance) 5, Tracking (criminals) 5
<b>Virtues and Flaws:</b> Long-Winded
<b>Powers:</b> None
<b>Vis:</b> None

### A Tiger Story

A character is accused of crimes against the Order of Hermes, whether genuinely guilty or framed. Since evidence against the character is circumstantial, and a scapegoat is needed, a council of magi rule that the character must expose himself to nature's sinner (an ancient, and long unused, test in this Tribunal). The character is made to enter unarmed into the mountain lair of a magical Tiger and await the beast's judgement. The Tiger is expected to attack if the character is guilty, angered by the character's reminder of its own sins. If the character is unharmed, the Tiger is believed to recognize the person's virtue. For a twist, the magical Tiger might actually plot with rather than attack his fellow sinner.



#### URSUS, the bear

The female Ursus gives birth to formless young, which she then shapes with her mouth. The Bear's strength is in its arms and loins, and the Bear often stands upright to utilize these powerful limbs. A

wounded Bear seeks out an herb named flomus. By touching the herb to its sores, the beast is healed. Similarly, when the Bear has been poisoned, or is sick, it devours Ants to recuperate. By nature, the Bear desires to eat honey, and constantly seeks out beehives in order to obtain it. The Bear is one of the most potent of creatures, and can ignore the blows that would fell lesser creatures.

#### The Bear

Ferocious +3
Size +2
Str +4 Dex 0 Cun +1
Sim +8 Qik 0 Per +3
Maul: 1st +6 Atk +12 Dam -16
Tackle: 1st +6 Atk +6 Tackle +14
Fat +7 Def +3 Soak +25
Body Levels: OK, 0/0, -1/-1, -3, -5, Incapacitated
Abilities: Ferocity (when thwarted) 3
Vis: None

### A Bear Story

A magus in search of a Familiar comes across or searches for a newborn Bear cub, not yet molded by its mother. However, before he can mold the cub to his own designs, the magus must escape with the cub. The mother Bear never wanders far from her children and is outraged by any theft. She pursues the magus and, in her rage, attacks any other magus who crosses her path.

## BESTIAE MINUTA (LESSER BEASTS)

#### BOS, the ox

The Ox is among the beasts most helpful to man because it, by virtue of its strength and endurance, aids much in the tilling of the soil. Slowly but steadily, and with great strength, it performs its duties. If well treated this stubborn creature works hard for its master, but refuses to move if it feels it is being abused. Its nature is such that it prefers clear and sunny days on which to work and cares not for damp weather. The watchful farmer, observing his Oxen's eagerness or reticence to go forth into the fields, knows whether or not

it will rain or shine on a given day. When separated from those it shares the yoke's burden, the Ox cannot not be silenced and bellows throughout the day. When a male Ox has a herd to protect it becomes a different creature altogether, its violent and ferocious aspect coming to the fore. It is unwise to threaten or ever approach such a creature when it has its herd to protect.

The Ox represents the custos who work with magi and risk their lives for magi's protection. If they are rewarded well they continue to do well for magi, but if custos are taken for granted or misused, magi may discover that custos no longer offer protection.

The Ox
<b>Size</b> +2
Str +5 Dex 0 Con 0
Stm +7 Qik +1 Per +2
<b>Attacks:</b> None
Fat +7 Def 0 Soak +12
<b>Body Levels:</b> OK, 0/0, -1/-1, -3, -5, Incapacitated
<b>Abilities:</b> Ferocity C, Weather Sense (brought out to work) 5
<b>Vis:</b> None

#### An Ox Story

Oxen in the lands surrounding the Covenant refuse to work for weeks on end. Though the peasants force their beasts out onto the fields, the Oxen struggle and are more ponderous than usual. A religious fanatic interprets the beasts' stubbornness as a bad omen, proclaiming that the Lord will flood the world again, offended by the sins of pagans like the magi. To appease the Lord the peasants organize against the covenant.

#### CAMELUS, the camel

The Camel is a humble beast, for when he is loaded down, he kneels to make mounting easier for his master. The strongest Camels are Bactrians, but the Arabians are found in larger numbers. The Camel has two other special traits. First, when his season comes, no creature save the Wild Goat is more lustful than the Camel. Second is his virtue of thrift, which gives him the ability to resist thirst. The Camel drinks enough to aid him against future thirst, so that he can travel for many days without water.

The Camel is the wise companion who is humble before his masters, but never slackens in his duties to

protect the Covenant. Always aware of the needs of the magi he is constantly vigilant that all the necessary supplies are available and shall be available. Every Covenant needs a companion with foresight, like the Camel's, to ward against calamity.

The Camel
Humble +3 Lustful +7
<b>Size</b> +2
Str +2 Dex 0 Con -2
Stm +3 Qik 0 Per 0
<b>Bite:</b> 1st +3 Atk +3 Dam +6
Fat +3 Def +0 Soak +6
<b>Body Levels:</b> OK, 0/0, -1/-1, -3, -5, Incapacitated
<b>Abilities:</b> Ferocity (taunted) 1
<b>Vis:</b> None

#### A Camel Story

Missionaries or crusaders return to Europe with gifts and prizes from foreign lands. Among them is a Camel. The beast is marvelled at by all, particularly for its capacity for prolonged work and unrivaled stubbornness. The characters may acquire the Camel (its owner is only too happy to sell), but if they do it quickly proves more hindrance than help. The beast enters its season, and in search of a mate disrupts the entire Covenant (when not stomping around and hitting its tenders, it bellows loudly, distracting magi at study).

#### CANIS, the Hound

Of all things, the Hound is best known for its devout loyalty. Can we discount the Story of King Garamantes? When he was captured and sold into slavery, was it men who rescued him? No, it was two-hundred of his Hounds that fought to secure his freedom. Pliny tells many stories of the Hound's loyalty to a kind master. Were the magi as kind to their concertis, they would find that covenantfolk would be equally loyal, in the same manner as the knight is to his lord.

The Hound is a most perceptive animal, recognizing his own name in the same way a man does. Indeed, the Hound has a certain wisdom. When following a trail, the Hound puzzles over all alternatives before choosing the proper path. Were magi as discerning in their



relations with the mundanes, the Order would be stronger.

The Hound
Loyal +6
Size -2
Str 0 Dex 0 Cun 0
Str +1 Qik +0 Per +4
Bite: 1st +3 Atk +3 Dam +3
Pat +1 Def -3 Soak -1
Body Levels: OK, -1, -5, Incapacitated
Abilities: Ferocity 3 (when protecting master)
Wis: None

#### A Hound Story

A rightful baron is held captive by his illegitimate brother, the latter claiming his sibling dead, thereby claiming right to the baronial lands. The rightful baron escapes, only to be hunted down by a pack of his half-brother's Hounds. The original baron's family asks for the characters' help as the Covenant is beyond mundane authority. The characters find the half-eaten body of the baron, but his only identification — a ring — is missing, along with its finger. Insightful characters



realize that the ring might be recovered from the illegitimate baron's Hounds, but the search is messy to say the least.

#### CASTOR, the beaver

The Beaver is gentle above all other creatures. The Beaver's testicles are a potent medicine, such that hunters search far and wide for the beast in order to obtain them. Spotting hunters, the Beaver bites off his organs and throws them to the hunter. The hunter seizes the Beaver's testicles and leaves, as he has no quarrel with Castor. If a second hunter seeks him out, the Beaver throws himself on his back. Seeing that he has no prize, the hunter leaves the defenseless Beaver alone.

#### The Beaver

Gentle +6
Size 3
Per +6
Abilities: Ferocity 0
Wis: 4 Crew, testicles

#### A Beaver Story

A plague has stricken a village, and maybe even the characters' Covenant. A Beaver is sought for a cure. One is found, and still has its testicles intact, but meekly asks payment in return. The villagers' town or the characters' Covenant stands upon lands traditional to the Beaver's lineage. In return for medicine, the creature wants its native lands back. The villagers/characters must decide what is more important, life or home.

#### ERICUS, the hedgehog

When the Hedgehog's offspring are hungry it seeks out a grape vine. Climbing up into the tree, it knocks grapes to the ground, whereupon it drops to the ground and rolls around atop them. The grapes stick to the creature's spines and it is thus that the Hedgehog brings the food home. These spines are a potent defense against

all corners, for the Hedgehog bristles if any creature comes near it. Sometimes the spines are even poisonous, and deliver death in but moments. Beware of the Hedgehog with gold spines!

#### The Hedgehog

Devoted (family) 3  
 Size -3  
 Str -3 Dex +0 Cun +2  
 Stm 0 Qik +1 Per +2  
 Spines: 1st +2 Atk +1 Dam -2  
 Fat 0 Def -6 Soak -2  
 Body Levels: OK, -3, Incapacitated  
 Abilities: Ferocity (collecting food for young) 1  
 Special Ability:

**Spines.** Any botched attack against the Hedgehog is likely to result in damage from the creature's spines. In some cases the spines may indeed be poisonous, and touching them requires a successful Stamina roll of 8+ in order to avoid death.

Vis: None

#### A Hedgehog Story

In a land where grapes make potent wine, a magus requires a special quill — a Hedgehog's spine — for his scroll writing labors. The Hedgehog to which it once belonged however, lived in a vineyard, and with so many grapes sticking to the spine it has become infused with the potency of wine. Whenever used, the quill makes the magus drunk, though he may not trace his state to the pen at first. Rather, he might assume an enemy is at work against him. Moreover, who knows what side effects drunkenness has on his scroll writing efforts.

#### PELES, the cat

The Cat is called such because of her acute eyesight. Her vision is so strong that she can see in complete darkness. She is also known as the Mouser because of her ferocity in pursuit of Rodents. Pliny expounds on the stealthy nature of the Cat, how easily she sneaks up on Birds and Mice. The Cat hides her dung under earth

so that her prey do not sense the hunter and escape her. The Cat is not a social creature, rather it is a solitary hunter and desires no other company but its own. It further dislikes any sort of crowd, and always seeks the darkest recesses of corners in which to make its rest.

#### The Cat

Curious +4  
 Size -3  
 Str -3 Dex +3 Cun +1  
 Stm 0 Qik +3 Per +5  
 Bite and Claws: 1st -5 Atk +5 Dam -3  
 Fat 0 Def +7 Soak -2  
 Body Levels: OK, -3, Incapacitated  
 Abilities: Stealth (hunting) 6, Ferocity (Rodents) 2, Perfect Balance (narrow perches) 3  
 Vis: None

#### A Cat Story

A large, mangy old Cat is loose in the Covenant. It finds its way into a dark cellar where covenant folk often go for supplies. Entering the cellar, the common folk see the glow of the Cat's eyes and mistake the animal for a Demon. Rumors begin to spread throughout the Covenant and finally fall upon the ears of the magi. By the time the magi hear of the "beast," it's reputed to have eaten half the Covenant's larder, and to have turned one of the stable hands into a Newt... but he gets better.

#### FORMICA, the ant

The Ant is more industrious and wise than any other being, and should be looked to for guidance. It has three natures. First, Ants walk in single file, carrying grain from the fields to their home. Those who do not have grain do not try to steal it from the others, but instead work the fields. Thus it should be for magi, who instead of fighting over the lifeblood of magic, should work together to harvest it. Second, the Ant is careful with his grain, and separates it so that waters will not germinate it, which would starve the Ant. So should the magus be careful with his experiments, so he does not harm himself or fellow magi. Third, when the Ant is in the field, he can tell the difference between wheat and barley by smell, and avoids the latter. So it should be for the magus, who in pursuing the Art, should avoid the diabolical nature of magic.

### An Ant Story

What happens to an experiment gone foul? In this case, an apprentice is told to dispose of his master's failed efforts. The child dumps them out a Covenant window. On the ground below a colony of Ants feeds upon the remnants of *vis*, gains a number of magical powers, and thus develops a taste for magic, desiring that its powers continue. They then march into the Covenant and proceed to cart off whatever *vis* supplies they can carry. Do the magi's protective spells actually operate against such a miniscule thief?

#### **HYAENA, the hyena**

*The Hyena is a mongrel, the spawn of a Cat and Dog. Physiologus calls it a vile creature that changes sex, sometimes male, at different times female. It revels in the tombs of man, feasting on dead flesh.*

*The Hyena studies the voices of man. It often mimics the human voice, calling men forth so that it may prey on them. If a hunting Dog inadvertently crosses the Hyena's shadow, the Dog's voice is lost. Similarly, the Hyena's skill in magic allows it to freeze an animal in place.*

*Isidore states that one of the Hyena's eyes is a precious stone. By placing the stone under the tongue, one might get a glimpse of future events (Storyguide's discretion).*



### The Hyena

#### **Magic Might 15**

Size -1

Str +1 Dex +2 Con -4

Str +2 Qik +2 Per +4

Bite: 1st +6 Atk +6 Dam +5

Fat +2 Def +6 Soak +3

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

Abilities: Ferocity (luring a human) 2

#### **Powers:**

**Mock the Word of Man, CrAu 5, 0 points** — The Hyena can perfectly mimic the voice of a man.

**Strike Dumb, ReCo 20/ReAn 20, 1 point** — If the Hyena's shadow touches a person or animal, that person or beast cannot speak until the next sunrise/sunset.

**Freeze Prey, ReCo 25, ReAn 25, 2 points** — If the Hyena circles its prey three times, that creature is frozen in place and unable to move until it makes a Strm roll of 11+, or the next sunrise/sunset comes.

**Vis:** 5 Intéllego, magical eye.

#### **A Hyena Story**

The characters dispatch a mortal criminal who has robbed their Covenant. They believe him dead until a character out-and-abroad hears a Hyena's bark, which sounds much like a saying popular with the thief-thought-dead. Now that the characters think their foe is still alive, they have to find him, which brings them into direct contact with the Hyena. Whether the thief is truly alive is up to you. Maybe the Hyena has had its way with the poor thief.

#### **IBEX, the wild goat**

The Wild Goat dwells amongst the mountains, ever seeking to attain the highest crags. Its vision is of sharpest acuity such that, even from a great distance, it can distinguish the hunter from the traveler. All the good herbs are known to the Wild Goat and it can find them at need as its sharp

sight aids in its search. Both male and female are lascivious beasts, always yearning to satiate their carnal lusts. It is said that the Adamant Stone, which can be altered by neither fire nor iron, may be dissolved by the blood of the Wild Goat.

The Wild Goat
Lustful +4
Size -1
Str 0 Dex 0 Con +1
Stm 0 Qik 0 Per +3 (vision rolls are +6)
Horns: 1st +4 Atk +4 Dam +5
Fat 0 Soak +3 Def +2
Body Levels: OK, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated
Abilities: Ferocity (lusts refused) 2, Herb Lore (tasty plants) 3
Vis: None

#### A Wild Goat Story

The characters need a specific herb, located in a mountainous region, for their magicks. However, the herb is exceptionally elusive. The only way to find some is to convince a being familiar with the area to reveal the herb's location. Some Wild Goats know where the herbs grow, but will have no truck with humans. To fool the beasts into revealing the plants, a magus could assume the form of a Goat, but must simultaneously repel the Goats' lusty advances.

#### LUTRA, the otter

*The Otter, like the Hydras, is a terrible enemy of the Crocodile. He sneaks into the Crocodile's mouth and devours its bowels. The Otter is a creature of play, indeed it is constitutionally unable to perform any sort of work — thus it is unsuitable as a Familiar for most magi. One of its most well known characteristics is its curiosity, which never fails to get it into trouble. The Otter is always found in places where it should not be, where one would not expect it to be.*

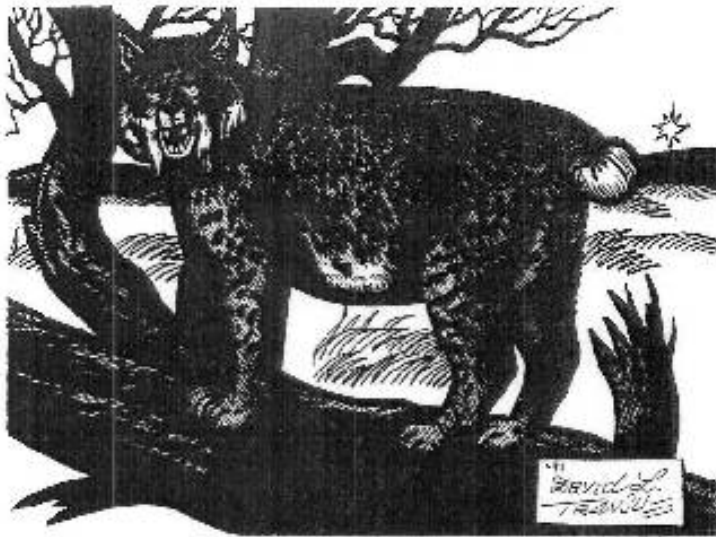


#### The Otter

Inquisitive +3
Fun Loving +5
Size -3
Str -2 Dex +1 Con +1
Stm +1 Qik +1 Per +2
Bite: 1st +4 Atk +4 Dam +0
Fat +1 Def +5 Soak -1
Body Levels: OK, -3, Incapacitated
Abilities: Ferocity (Crocodiles) 1
Vis: None

#### An Otter Story

An ally of the characters falls to the attack of brigands. They rob him and dispose of his body in a lake. However, the victim possessed a magical item that the brigands failed to recognize. A curious Otter investigates the body, finds the item and takes it back to its den. In search of their ally and his possession, the characters finally realize the Otter has it, perhaps after having been robbed by the beast themselves.



### A Lynx Story

A peasant farmer uncovers a number of *Ligurius* while tilling his field. He assumes them to be charms sent by the Lord, intended to heal his sick little girl. The Lynx observes the farmer's theft of the stones and follows him back to the village. The Lynx wants its stones back, so steals the child who wears them in a necklace, but does not have the heart to kill the child. The magi are asked to find the child, perhaps as a sideplot to an existing story, and discover a feral child being cared for by a Lynx who is unwilling to give its "offspring" up.

#### LYNX, the lynx

Lynx has spots, like the Pard, but is in a fact a Wolf. It is unique because its urine hardens to form a precious stone, the *Ligurius*. The Lynx, knowing the greed of man, tries to hide this stone by covering it with sand. It is most protective of this stone and puts much effort into ensuring that none of them are taken. Sometimes a Lynx hides all its urine in one place, creating a treasure trove of sorts. Isidore states that the Lynx's eyesight is so keen that it can see through nails.

#### The Lynx

Magic M1ght 10  
 Greedy +3  
 Size -1  
 Str +1 Dex +1 Cun +3  
 Sim +4 Qik +0 Per +4  
 Bite: 1st +3 Atk +4 Dam +4  
 Tackle: 1st +3 Atk +4 Tackle -3  
 Body Levels: OK, 1, -3, -5, Incapacitated  
 Abilities: Ferocity (*Ligurius* discovered) 1  
 Powers:  
 Vision Beyond Bounds, InTe 20, 0 points — No stone wall is an impediment to the Lynx's vision.  
 Vis: 3 Terram, *Ligurius*

#### MELES, the badger

The Badger is a most vicious, ill-tempered of beasts. However, the creature is also exceptionally cautious, and if its hostile disposition can ever be exacerbated, it can be when the beast is rooted from its burrow. Some say that the Badger is also capable of striking its attackers' blind, though such a power is said to usually belong to those beasts who dwell in faerie or otherwise magically charged realms.

#### The Badger

Magic Might 10  
 Cautious +3 Vicious -5  
 Size -2  
 Cun +1 Per 0 Str +6  
 Bite: 1st +3 Atk +5 Dam +5  
 Claws: 1st +3 Atk +6 Dam +3  
 Fat 14 Def 15 Soak 15  
 Body Levels: OK, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated  
 Abilities: Ferocity (disturbed in burrow) 5  
 Powers:  
 Incantation of the Milky Eyes, PeCo 20, 2 points — A Badger can will an assailant blind.  
 Vis: 2 Corpoream, eyes

### A Badger Story

Villagers hold a festival in a field near their home. Little do they know that a Badger's burrow is located on the scene of the festivities. Throughout the day's events the Badger becomes more and more angered by disruptions above. It finally acts when a human hand enters and disturbs its burrow, striking the intruder blind.

Two revelers, having become exceedingly drunk, get into a fight. One, a friend of the characters, pushes the other down. When the fallen inadvertently disturbs the Badger, he is willed blind in return. The blind man accuses his assailant of consorting with devils. Not only do the characters have to protect their friend and clear their name, they have to discover the source of the blindness and coerce the Badger to reverse the blindness.

#### MUS, the mouse

Mus gets its name because Mice are created from the dampness in the soil (humus — hu mus). Pliny says that Mice procreate faster than all other creatures. In Persia, young Mice have been found with child, even while unborn themselves. The liver of the Mouse expands and shrinks with the phases of Luna and may be used to note the passage of months, even after the organ is removed from its host.

#### The Mouse

Size -5

Str -5 Dex +1 Cun -1

Str. -1 Qik +1 Per +3

**Bite:** 1st +2 Atk +2 Dam -5

Fat -1 Def +7 Soak -5

**Body Levels:** OK, Incapacitated

**Abilities:** Ferocity (protecting young) 1

**Vis:** None

#### A Mouse Story

A character held prisoner discovers a Mouse in his cell. The character comes to realize that it is smarter than it appears and may adopt the Mouse as a pet, or may be forced to rely on it as food. A combination of the two might inspire some enjoyable roleplaying. Whether the Mouse is dead



or alive, its liver could be used to tell the passage of prison time

#### MUSTELA, the weasel

The Weasel is a long Mouse, but she hunts down all other Mice. Snakes are also her enemy, and she is skilled in killing them. Of all creatures, only she can stand against the withering gaze of the Basilisk, but only if she eats the herb Rus, beforehand. The Weasel's skills in medicine are not limited to only this. If the Weasel's offspring are slain, she can restore them back to life with herbal balms.

#### The Weasel

Size -3

Str -3 Dex -2 Cun +1

Stun +1 Qik +2 Per +3

**Bite:** 1st +5 Atk +4 Dam -3

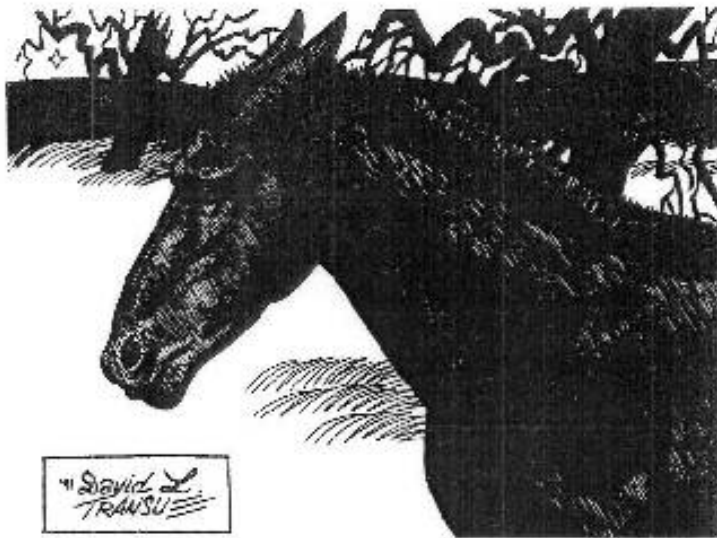
Fat +1 Def +7 Soak -2

**Body Levels:** OK, -3, Incapacitated

**Abilities:** Ferocity (Serpents) 2,

Medicine (herbs) 2

**Vis:** None



### A Weasel Story

A sickness which claims children infests a town, castle, or the Covenant. A character versed in herbs or the Animal knows that a Weasel can cure its young, so sets out to investigate the Weasel's ways. A Weasel might refuse to help the character and tries to evade surveillance. Given no other choice, the character can infect the Weasel's children with the disease in question. Now the two have reason to work together to find a cure.

#### ONAGER, the wild ass

Unlike the Asinus, who does not mind a difficult workload, the Onager is untamed. Physiologus states that one male rules a herd of females. Out of jealousy the first among the herd removes the testicles of other males as they are born. It is for this reason that the females try and hide their young from him.

There are those in the Order of Hermes who in taking apprentices would similarly only take from them and give nothing in return. These apprentices are the lifeblood of the Order's future. To weaken them is to weaken the Order.

### The Onager

Jealous +4 Wild +3

Size +2

Str +2 Dex +1 Cun 0

Stm +3 Oik +1 Per +1

Bite: 1st +6 Atk +6 Dam +7

Fat +3 Def +2 Soak +6

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

Abilities: Ferocity (challenged for its females) 3

Vis: None

### An Onager Story

Men in a town begin behaving lustfully, and fight amongst

themselves over women. Characters may also develop this dementia. In truth, a witch who was driven from the town long ago has returned in disguise. She has collected the scrotums of young Asses and sells them as purses. Cursed, the "purses" cause their male owners to become wildly impassioned. Even a character might buy a purse. Investigating the locals' strange behavior, the characters may be alert enough to recognize the common trait of each lusty man — a purse of unique design and shape.

#### OVIS, the sheep

The Sheep is a great boon to man, for its fleece provides much of the wool that covers him and warms him in the winter. In ancient times, the Sheep was used for divination and sacred offerings. The male is called a Ram and the female an Ewe. Young Sheep are called lambs. The Ram is powerful and warlike in demeanor, butting and fighting all who bar its path. The Ewe, by comparison, is a gentle and placid creature. Its bleating is known to its Lamb so that offspring can find mother, even if lost in a vast flock. When it senses the severity of the approaching winter, the Sheep eats voraciously in hopes of stuffing itself with fresh greenery before all foliage is covered by snow.

The Ram (Sheep)
Mean +1
Size 0
Str +2 Dex +1 Cun 0
Stm +2 Qik +1 Per +2
Horns: 1st +5 Atk +5 Dam +10
Fat +2 Soak +4 Def +4
Body Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated
Abilities: Ferocity (male, territorial challenge) 2
Powers: None
Vis: None

#### A Sheep Story

Small children begin disobeying their parents, causing upheaval in villages near the characters' Covenant. Young apprentices may even begin disobeying their masters. A wild faerie, obsessed with the freedom of youth, has learned the Ewe's ability to call her young and is able to make use of it by changing into that form. The faerie now calls children away from their parents and charms them, making them disobedient and carefree. Tracked down, the faerie assumes the form of an Ewe and hides from characters in a flock. Not only does the "Ewe" have to somehow be found, but its true form must somehow be shown to the skeptical shepherd who does not want to lose one of his "best sheep."

#### SIMIA, the ape

The Ape is called Simia because of his similarity to man. The Ape imitates the worst natures of men, reveling in drunkenness, beating his breast with false pride, and acting in a rude manner. Simia is representative of the Devil, but has no tail.

When the female Ape gives birth to twins, she favors one highly over the other. When chased by hunters, she holds the favorite close to her bosom, while the scorned child holds on with its arms around her neck. She tines quickly though, and is forced to throw her favorite away in order to escape.

The Ape
Size 0
Str +1 Dex 0 Cun 0
Stm +2 Qik 0 Per +1
Bite: 1st +3 Atk +3 Dam +2
Fat +2 Def +1 Soak +3
Body Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated
Abilities: Ferocity (mocked in return) 3
Vis: None

#### An Ape Story

Traveling through a foreign land where Apes are indigenous, the characters suspect that someone is following them, but never spot their pursuers. They are actually trailed by Apes that swing through trees and deftly hide in the ground's undergrowth. The Apes mock the characters, particularly the humans' fell qualities. At some point the characters should encounter the Apes out in the open. Each character has an Ape counterpart who is easily recognizable; an Ape performs a twisted parody of each character's corrupt nature. Watching the Apes' behavior, the characters find themselves the object of a bizarre morality play.

#### TALPA, the mole

The Mole is a creature of the earth. It digs through the ground seeking the roots of plants for nourishment. It gets its name because it has no eyes with which to see, nor ears with which to hear.

The Mole
Size -6
Str 6 Dex 12 Cun 1
Stm -6 Qik +4 Per +3
Attacks: None
Fat -3 Def -9 Soak -7
Body Levels: OK, Incapacitated
Abilities:
Hiding. A Per test of 8+ is needed to locate the Mole during every round that it seeks to hide. Use of this ability assumes there are places for the creature to hide.
Vis: None





based on its sense of vibration, so translational problems may arise in its directions.

#### VULPES, the fox

*The Fox is renowned for his great cunning. When hungry, he rolls in red earth, lies on the ground and holds his breath, to look like he has been bloodied and killed. Birds who think him slain fly closer to gloat over his corpse. He then seizes them and devours their freshly killed meal.*

#### A Mole Story

A band of mischievous faerie Goblins invades a mine, driving out the miners. The characters hope to get into the mines and drive out the Goblins, but the nasty brutes have rigged the entire tunnel system with traps. The safest way to get through is with the help of a guide familiar with the Goblins' activities. A magus of House Bjornaer might assume the form of a small animal to investigate the tunnels, and inside encounters a Mole who knows the Goblins well. Unfortunately, the Mole's aid is limited; the creature only understands space



#### The Fox

Size -3

Str -2 Dex +1 Cun +4

Strm 0 Qik +3 Per +3

Bite: 1st +5 Atk +3 Dam -2

Fat 0 Def +7 Soak -2

Abilities: Ferocity (attacking from hiding) 1

Vis: None

#### A Fox Story

A Fox plays dead and captures a messenger Pigeon sent to the characters' Covenant from another, or from mundane folk. The letter the Pigeon carries is terribly important to the characters. Without it they are completely in the dark as to some upcoming event, or without it they anger another Covenant as the characters were expected to reply immediately. Either way, the characters realize that they've missed something important: the symbol of the other Covenant keeps appearing in the dirt surrounding the characters' home. When the Fox killed the Pigeon, the seal from the bird's cargo got caught on the underside of the Fox's foot.

## BESTIAE FABULAE

### BONACON, the bonnacoon

In Asia, there is a beast known as the Bonnacoon. It is not unlike a Bull of great size, save that all of its body is covered with hair like that of a Horse's mane. Although the horns of the Bonnacoon are curled around upon themselves such that they can do no harm of any sort, it is not without a means to defend itself. Upon fleeing from the hunter, the Bonnacoon voids the contents of its bowels at its pursuers, driving them away by the noxious nature of its excrement. The expulsion also sets fire to all trees it touches.



### The Bonnacoon

Cowardly +3

Size +2

Str +4 Dex 0 Can 0

Stm +3 Qik +1 Per +2

Attacks: None

Fat +3 Def 0 Scak +10

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

Abilities: Ferocity (cornered) 1

Special Abilities:

The Bonnacoon's excrement incapacitates those it strikes unless they make a Stm roll of 9+. They are stunned for three Combat Rounds, giving the Bonnacoon time to make its escape.

Vis: 3 Creu, stomach

### A Bonnacoon Story

A small, strange beast (like a young Worm) that's captured by the magi, and to be experimented on, gets loose in the Covenant. It hides within a narrow hole or in some other area impassable to humans. The creature has a high Magical Might so spells cast on it fail. A character with the Ability Fantastic Beast Lore might

realize that the Worm could be driven out with an odorous substance, like the soil of a Bonnacoon. Extracting the soil is trouble enough, but when the soil's smell permeates every inch the Covenant, the characters might rather have let the Worm go. Who knows, maybe the character who gets the soil could leave a trail of forest fires behind him as well.

### CATOBLEPAS, the swamp cattle

This beast is like a Bull, but the head at the end of its long neck is so heavy that it can barely lift above the ground. Those encountering the beast should be grateful for its ponderousness, for the beast's gaze is deadly like



that of the Basilisk. Clever attackers undoubtedly approach the beast from the rear, but the *Catoblepas* is not defenseless, being able to kick in that direction.

#### The *Catoblepas*

Magic Might 20  
 Sluggish +2  
 Size +2  
 Str +3 Dex -1 Cun -2  
 Stm +4 Qik -1 Per +1  
 Kick: 1st 0 Atk +5 Dam +5  
 Fat +4 Def -3 Soak +9  
 Body Levels: OK, 0/0, -1/-1, -3, -5, Incapacitated  
 Powers:

Death Glance, PeCo 30/PeAn 30/PeHe 30, 1 point — like the Basilisk, the *Catoblepas's* gaze is deadly when the beast wishes it to be, and its gaze can slay any living thing. The *Catoblepas* must make a Stm roll of 6+ to raise its head enough to see its victim, though. If the target is a person or animal, that target does not have



to meet the look of the *Catoblepas*. The only requirement is that the *Catoblepas* see the victim. The target must make a Stm roll of 10+ or die, with success still meaning a loss of two Body Levels.

Vis: 5 Perdo, eyes

#### A *Catoblepas* Story

A *Numinum Obscurum*, a dark water faerie, considers itself self-imposed lord of a swamp in the area of the characters' Covenant. Among its "subjects" is a lone bull *Catoblepas* that runs the risk of dying without issue. Thus, the faerie steals local villagers' cattle as breeding stock for its subject. The villagers blame the Covenant for the disappearances. It isn't difficult to track the cattle into the swamp, but unless wary, the characters don't spot the *Catoblepas* until it spots them. . . . Not only need the characters deal with the *Catoblepas*, which is innocent of any crime, they must deal with the water faerie.

#### EALE, the yale

The Yale is as big as a Horse, with a black coat and the tail of an Elephant. Its two horns are not fixed but may be moved back and forth as the beast wills. When it fights, it points one of its horns forward and folds the other back so that, if it should dull the point of the one horn, the other might take its place.

#### The Yale

Size 0  
 Str 0 Dex +1 Cun -1  
 Stm 0 Qik +1 Per +2  
 Horns: 1st +7 Atk +7 Damage +8  
 Fat 0 Soak +1 Def +4  
 Body Levels: OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated  
 Abilities: Ferocity (charging) 3  
 Powers: None  
 Vis: None

#### A Yale Story

Rumors spread throughout the region of the characters' Covenant of a Unicorn in the forest. Hunters immediately set out in search of the beast. The characters may do the same, if not to seize it for their own ends, then to protect it from the

greedy hunters. There's no telling what mischief hunters and characters could get into with the forest's faeries. Unfortunately, all their efforts are for naught as the "Unicorn" is actually a Yale.

**EQUUS ZEPHRUS, the wind foal**

*It has been said by Pliny that in Iberia mares will turn such that they conceive a child by the west wind rather than by the seed of the male. Foals born of such a union are as fast as the wind, but do not live for more than three years.*

The Wind Foal
Spirited +4
Size +2
Str +3 Dex +2 Cun -2
Stm +4 Qik +3 Per 0
<b>Hooves:</b> 1st +8 Atk +7 Dam +8
Fat +4 Def +4 Soak +7
<b>Body Levels:</b> OK, 0/0, -1/-1, -3, -5, Incapacitated
<b>Abilities:</b> Ferocity (when outrun) 3
<b>Vis:</b> 4 Auram, hooves

**A Wind Foal Story**

This magnificent beast could be important to a magus who needs to literally travel like the wind. However, such a beast first needs to be tamed, and the Spirit of the West Wind, who chose the foal's mother, must first be convinced to relinquish his much loved offspring.

**UNICORNIS, the unicorn.**

*Pures! and loveliest of all animals is the Unicorn. No hunter may approach it, for its demeanor is wild and it brooks no contact with the likes of men, being swift, strong, and cunning. The Unicorn may be captured, however, by the clever huntsman. The beauty and innocence of a maiden is attractive to it, for it recognizes a kindred spirit in her. The maid, left by herself in the wood wherein the Unicorn dwells, waits for the beast to appear and place its head in her lap. It soon falls asleep, and the hunters rush forth and bind the Unicorn with silver chains.*

*Aelian tells tale that the Unicorn's horn is proof against all manner of poison. When a Dragon once*

*poisoned certain streams which all animals depended on, it was the Unicorn who purified those waters.*

The Unicorn
<b>Magic Might</b> 40
Noble -3 Wild +5 Tame -4 (these Personality Traits are reversed in the presence of the maid)
<b>Size</b> -1
Str +1 Qik +4 Cun +2 Stm +1 Dex +3 Per +3
<b>Horn:</b> 1st +12 Atk +16 Dam +10
Fat +1 Soak +5 Def +12
<b>Body Levels:</b> OK, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated
<b>Abilities:</b> Ferocity (against would be captors) 7
<b>Powers:</b>
<b>Purify the Fouled Body, CrCo 25/CrAn 25/CrAq 25, 1 point</b> — The Unicorn's horn cures any manner of poison when touched to the afflicted person or creature. By spending more Magic Points, the Unicorn can remove the poison from a larger area such as a lake or stream. The horn retains its powers even when removed from the Unicorn. Many nobles are said to have drinking cups made from the Unicorn's horn, to eliminate the danger of poisoning.
<b>Vis:</b> 15 Creo, horn

**An Unicorn Story**

A Unicorn falls in love with a maiden spied from the forest's edge. The Unicorn makes a pact with the magi to be changed into a human. The magi's spell is successful, but operates under the condition that the longer the beast retains human form, the more difficult it will be to revert to normal. As the Unicorn becomes human and abandons its forest home, the woods fall into a state of premature winter. To preserve the balance of nature the characters must convince the Unicorn to return to his home, but the Unicorn is determined to wed his love.





# Chapter Four: Semibestiae (Half-Beasts)

Unlike Shapeshifters, these creatures can be part beast and part human by nature, or can be hybrids of two or more beasts. No one knows whether or not the human hybrids possess souls, and there is a great deal of debate within the Order as to whether these creatures are human, beast, or neither. Some believe that all Half-Beasts are a separate race, but the human hybrids are closer to beasts so do not possess souls as do humans. Many of these creatures are faerie, and thus clearly soulless and inhuman.

All Half-Beasts possess the uncontrolled instincts of beasts; only human hybrids are partially ruled by reason. The faerie Satyrs, or Fauns, are given to wild revels and sexual indulgence, often in pursuit of human women. The Centaurs are brutish creatures and enjoy fighting amongst themselves; they prefer to carry off products of human civilization than to toil creating their own. Merfolk, faeries with the lower bodies of fish, are hostile to humans and entrance them to their deaths. The faerie Merrows are less hostile; their form is more human than beast-like, so perhaps they are able to control their bestial nature. For rules on such faerie Half-Beasts, refer to *White Wolf's Faeries*, for *Ars Magica*.

Other Half-Beasts are rumored to be the product of matings between humans and animals, such as

Asterius the Minotaur ["bull of Minos"], whose mother mated with a bull. Unlike the children of Shapeshifters, these human hybrids are bound to an abominable half-human, half-bestial form, and generally possess only the mind of an animal.

Magic may also be used to create a Half-Beast. Perhaps some magi create such monstrosities for experiments, or to guard their laboratories. The joining of a human to an animal through the use of Muto spells would be terrifying to both subjects; it is difficult to imagine that the resulting creature would be left with a mind intact.

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## CENTAURUS, *the centaur*

*With the body of an Equus and the upper part of a man, these creatures are very strong. Chiron of Greek legend was an immortal Centaur, and advisor to many of the Greek heroes. All Centaurs carry the bow and arrow, their quarry usually being the Hunt. They are usually found together in small herds, but they allow themselves to be found by only the most brave of pursuers, those who prove themselves in the deadly tests the Centaurs present them. When they do accept visitors Centaurs are most generous hosts, quite lively with flute and dance and more than willing to engage in any sort of contest.*

The Centaur
<b>Magic Might</b> 20
Rash +1 Violent +1
Size +3
Str +4 Dex +1 Int +1
Stm +4 Qik +3 Per -1
<b>Hooves:</b> 1st +8 Atk +6 Dam +12
<b>Attack:</b> Weapon carried
Fat +9 Def +5 Soak +12
<b>Body Levels:</b> OK, 0/0, -1/-1, -3/-3, -5, Incapacitated
<b>Abilities:</b> Berserk (in-fighting) 4
<b>Powers:</b>
<b>Trail of the Unyielding Hunt, ReMc 20, 0 points</b> — Hunters, and even those who just cross the tracks of a Centaur, become obsessed with hunting the creature down. To resist the draw of the hunt, the tracker must make a Stm roll of 8+, allowed once per hour. The Centaur leaving tracks usually does so to make a game of taunting and debilitating his tracker.
<b>Vis:</b> 5 Muto, body

#### A Centaur Story

A rash Sheriff rampantly hunts the Deer of his lands. He suffers no punishment until he unwittingly shoots and wounds the King of the Stags. A Centaur of the forest decides to tolerate no more and begins hunting the Sheriff's men whenever they enter the forest. The Sheriff calls a hunt against the Centaur and a war ensues. The characters are involved as a major path to their Covenant runs through the wood, and the Centaur denies anyone passage along it. To remedy the situation, the characters must heal the King of the Stags, convince the Sheriff to stop his insatiable hunting, and must also cool the Centaur's spleen.

#### **CHIMAERA**

*The Chimaera is a dire creature with the forequarters of a Lion, the body of a Goat, and the tail of a Dragon. Some scholars state that each section has its own head. In either case, this vile creature is known to breathe fire, and is indeed an almost Sisyphian creature to slay. According to Homer, Beliorophon slew one with the help*

*of a Pegasus. The Chimaera was undoubtedly a creature created by magic, but whether it was Hermetic, Faerie or Infernal magic is not known. What is certain is that it has since become a natural creature and can be found in a number of isolated locales throughout the lands. There are some, though, who still attempt to create new creatures of this breed, to serve as guardians or wardens.*

The Chimaera is a creature not comfortable with its form, and is thus always in foul temper. The Chimera is somewhat intelligent and able to communicate when it feels the need and the desire to do so. Given even half an excuse it sets off on a destructive spree unrivaled by any beast other than the greatest of Wyllins.

The Chimaera
<b>Magical Might</b> 30
Size +3
Str +4 Dex +1 Cun +1
Stm +4 Qik +1 Per +3
<b>Bite:</b> 1st +10 Atk +11 Dam +18
Fat +4 Def +4 Soak +15
<b>Body Levels:</b> OK, 0/0, -1/ 1, 3/ 3, -5, Incapacitated
<b>Abilities:</b> Ferocity (against Warrior Champions) 6
<b>Powers:</b>
<b>Piery Breath, CrIg 30, 1 point</b> — The heat of this creature's breath sets most substances on fire. If directed at a human being, it does +30 damage (halved on a successful Dodge roll of 9+)
<b>Vis:</b> 10 Animal, body

#### A Chimaera Story

After a story in which the characters encountered and befriended a Lion, the coverfolk hear tale of the Lion's return to the area. This time, though, the Lion is reputed to have turned foul. In fact, the Lion, formerly an embodiment of the Lord, has been turned by the powers of evil. A coven of diabolists has bonded the Lion to beasts of evil, forming a Chimaera, an evil creature made even more powerful by its connection with holy power. Not only must the characters put an end to the Chimaera's destruction spree, but they must defeat

the diabolists, all with the hope of rescuing their friend *Leo*.

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### **GRYPIS, the gryphon**

*Fierce and strong, the Gryphon roams the highest mountains and most inhospitable wastelands of the world. It considers the flesh of Horses to be quite a morsel, so it often leaves its aerie to pillage nearby stables and pastures in hopes of finding a meal. The Gryphon has an Eagle's head and wings and the body of a Lion. Its greatest foes are a race of one-eyed Scythian Giants, called Cyclops by Herodotus. Of the ancient treasures that are said to be guarded by the Gryphon, there is only hearsay. More than one tale speaks of fabulous riches to be gained by plundering the lofty dwellings of these fearsome beasts. Some Hermetic scholars believe that the sites that Gryphons protect are the tombs of the Old Ones.*

#### **The Gryphon**

**Magic Might** 30\*  
**Size** +4  
Str +7 Dex +2 Con 0  
Stm +9 Qik +2 Per +6  
**Claws:** 1st +11 Atk +11 Dam +21  
**Beak:** 1st +8 Atk +13 Dam +28  
Fat +9 Def +3 Soak +17  
**Body Levels:** OK, 0/0, -1/-1, -3/-3, -5/-5,  
Incapacitated

**Abilities:** Ferocity (assaulted in aerie) 5

**Vis:** 18 Animal, heart

\*The Gryphon embodies the virtues of might, bravery and hunting prowess. It gets double its Might Score when resisting spells that would directly counter these strengths, such as spells to cripple or calm it.

#### **A Gryphon Story**

The Spirit of the East Wind becomes involved in a feud with the Spirit of the West Wind. To hurt his enemy, the East Wind strikes at the West's offspring, the Wind Foal. The East Wind therefore dispatches a Gryphon, promising it the most delicious meal it's ever eaten. However, a



character is currently in possession of the Wind Foal, so becomes subject to the Gryphon's attacks as well.

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### **HARPYIAE, the harpy**

*The Harpy are creatures with the torso and head of a human being, but the lower parts are winged, like the Bird. The beauty of their song lures all matter of men to them, where their lovely strains lull men to sleep. The Harpy then tear their victims apart and devour the pieces.*

*The wise magus looks beyond a beautiful voice and other such pleasures. If he too is lulled into a sense of*





security, his life may be ended by the sudden appearance of an enemy. The magus should always be prepared for the enemies of the Order, no matter their appearance.

#### The Harpy

**Magic Might 18**

**Size 0**

Str +1 Dex +0 Con +1

Stm +1 Qik +1 Per +1

**Claws:** 1st -5 Atk +4 Dam +5

Fat +1 Soak +4 Def +4

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

**Abilities:** Ferocity (against men) 2

**Powers:**

**Song of Slumber, ReMe 25, 3 points** — All men who hear the Harpy's wail must make a Int + Stm roll of 10+ or be charmed by its lovely sounds, eventually falling asleep. Non-magical means cannot awaken the victims, but if not killed by the Harpy the men awaken the next morning.

Vis: 4 Rego, tongue

#### A Harpy Story

A Harpy near the Covenant learns of a character's weakness for women or of his love for music. She then sings at his window and commands him to bring villagers and covenantfolk to the woods for feasts. The villagers begin to fear the

character's occasional arrivals, and regard him as a collector of those about to die. It becomes common belief that the character is a servant of Death, and that those he takes away have reached their time. It's up to the remaining characters to stop the Harpy and rescue their friend from her control.

#### JEZENKY, the eater of children

This most hated creature possesses the head of a youth, though horned as a Bull, the body of a Lizard, the legs of a Cow, and the tail of a Lion. Peasants' tales claim that the beast is the product of an orgy of its parental creatures, brought about by Infernal influence. Though it might be large, the fell beast is actually smaller than a man, and moves about with serpentine grace. The Jezenky is found predominantly in rural areas, where it stalks the children of those who live near the woods.

#### The Jezenky

**Infernal Magic 30\***

Vicious +5

**Size -1**

Con +5 Per +5 Stm +6

**Charge:** 1st +15 Atk +12 Dam +10

**Gore:** 1st +10 Atk +10 Dam +15

Fat +3 Def +10 Soak +8

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

\*Doubled against any magicks intended to calm its wild nature, or render it peaceful in action.

**Abilities:** Ferocity (in sight of children) 5

**Powers:**

**Horror of the Twisted Visage, CrMe 20, 2 points** — The visage of this creature is so frightful that it causes terror in those who look upon it. All who fail a Stm roll of 15+ must flee until at a safe distance.

**Beckon the Ungrown, ReMe 30, 3 points** — The creature can low, much like a Cow, calling

any and all children within earshot to it, where they sit entranced, waiting to be devoured. To resist the call, children must make a Strm roll of 15+.

Vis: 8 Mentem, head

#### A Jezenky Story

The children of a local village are disappearing, and the magi are held to blame. Alternatively, local peasants, against the command of their lord and bishop, entreat the magi for help against this unknown menace. For spice, some of the Covenant's children could be missing as well. To find the missing youth the characters must use one of their own children as bait, following the Jezenky back to its forest lair. Tracking the beast is also difficult as the creature makes its victims ride its back, taking a load of children back to its lair. So, as far as the characters know, only a small Cow has passed.

#### LAMIA, the lamia

A twisted creature with the body of a Snake and the head and torso of a woman, the Lamia is hateful and evil. She uses her magic to disguise her form, such that she may seduce men into her bed. Then, when they are overcome with passion, she slays them and drinks their blood. Nothing is more important to the Lamia than luring men to her bed, and she risks everything to have but one more. Many of them have gained much ability and wealth after centuries of this practice, and make for themselves lairs in which they await new victims. They are certainly creatures which were once of Hell, but somehow were able to escape its flames and make their home on our peaceful plane. They are thus doubly dangerous for they are able to call upon more powerful creatures of their ilk to protect them if they are about to be slain. It is most dangerous indeed to achieve victory over a Lamia — the gates to the flaming sea may be opened and you cast into it.

#### The Lamia

**Infernal Might** 25

**Size** 0

**Str** +2 **Dex** +1 **Int** +2

**Strm** +2 **Qik** -1 **Per** +2

**Bite:** 1st +6 **Atk** +6 **Dam** +7

**Fat** +2 **Soak** +4 **Def** +6

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



**Abilities:** Ferocity (against men) 3

#### Powers:

**Disguise of the Serpentine Form, MuIm 30, 0 points** — The Lamia may make its form that of a beautiful woman, who all men desire. Personality rolls should be required to resist the seductive nature of the Lamia, against a value of 8. Only True Faith, or previous knowledge of the Lamia's true form are proof against her magic.

**Illusions** — The Lamia may use Imágonem magic of up to Level 15 at will, at a cost of 1 Magic Point per Level point of the spell used. Generally, these spells are used to disguise the Lamia's lair. If her lair is discovered, the Lamia uses her illusions to make an escape; she rarely stays and fights, and never fights one with True Faith.

#### Weakness:

The touch of a person or object with Faith Points is painful to the Lamia, causing an immediate loss of one Body Level.

Vis: 3 Imágonem, hide



A Lamia Story

An enemy of the Covenant wants one particular character destroyed, a companion of true spirit and strong religious faith. That enemy employs or may secretly be a *Lamia*. Posing as a beautiful, but elusive woman, the *Lamia* strives to lure the pious character from the higher faith. She does so by arousing his sexual desire, and teasing him by always keeping her distance. If the character can be made to lose control, lust taking command, the *Lamia* lures him back to her lair, embraces and tries to kill him (she may now touch him as he has been corrupted). Even if the character survives, he is morally unclean and must come to terms with his weakness.

#### LEUCROTUS, the leucrota

In Ethiopia there is at rare times a hateful mating between the Hyena and the Unfaithful Lioness. This copulation produces the *Leucrota*. The *Leucrota* has the hindquarters of the Stag, the breast of the Lion, and the head of the Horse. Its mouth opens about to the ears and is without teeth, instead having only a hard palate. Its feet are cloven, like the Goat's. Few creatures are as fleet of foot as the *Leucrota*, no creature is able to cut run it. Like its sire, the *Leucrota* can mimic the voices of man and uses this ability to lure victims to it. It favors human flesh over all others.

#### The Leucrota

**Magic Might 10**

**Size -2**

**Str +2 Dex +1 Cun +1**

**Stm +3 Qik +8 Per -2**

**Bite:** 1st -6 Atk +5 Dam +5

**Fat +5 Def +10 Soak +7**

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

**Abilities:**

**Ferocity (luring a man) 2**

**Powers:**

**Mock the Word of Man, CrAu 5, 0 points** — The *Leucrota*, like the *Hyena*, can perfectly mimic the voice of a man.

**Vis:** 2 Croo, palate

#### A Leucrota Story

Traveling in southern lands, maybe somehow involved with the Crusades, the characters encounter a southern cult. The cult is in league with the Devil and employs a *Leucrota*. The cultists capture a character and use the *Leucrota* to mimic her voice, leading the characters to believe that she has been killed and that her spirit is leading them to some destination. In fact, the cult leads the characters into a trap, and therein the cult's use of the *Leucrota* is revealed, as is the missing character's continued life.

#### MANTICORUS, the manticore

A monstrous beast there is found, mostly in lands abroad, which is called the *Manticore*. Its mouth is lined with three rows of jagged teeth. Its face is that of a man, with blood-red eyes that shine at night. It has a Lion's body, the tail of a Scorpion, and a shrill voice that is like the notes of a flute. The *Manticore*, as its name implies, feeds on the flesh of men. It is such a powerful leaper that neither the largest space nor the loftiest obstacle can contain it.



### The Manticore

**Magic Might** 15

**Size** +2

**Str** +4 **Dex** +0 **Cun** +0

**Stm** +4 **Qik** +0 **Per** +1

**Bite:** 1st +6 **Atk** +7 **Dam** +17

**Tail:** 1st +8 **Atk** +7 **Dam** +4 (and poison)

**Fat** +4 **Def** +5 **Soak** +12

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

**Abilities:** Ferocity (hunting men) 3

**Poison:** Anyone stung by the tail must make a **Stm** roll of 9+ or lose two **Body Levels**.

**Vis:** 5 **Animál**, body

### A Manticore Story

Though an Indian beast, the Manticore manifests itself in Europe as an embodiment of a character's dark, bestial side. Its face looks just like that of the character. The Manticore resents its human counterpart, existing purely of evil without any of the human's redeeming qualities. Thus, it tries to do the character harm. It poses as the character, and visits a local village where the character has family. The Manticore claims that the magi cast the character out and cursed him with this bestial form. When the characters arrive at the village, the villagers oppose the magi. They also refuse to believe that the character is himself, but a magical creation intended to fool them. To defeat the Manticore the characters have to convince the villagers of the beast's evil. In truth, the Manticore intends to eat the villagers after having won their complete trust.

### MIRMICOLEON, the ant-lion

The Mirmicoleon is a curious, short-lived creature, half Lion and half Ant, which is torn between its two aspects. The Lion half of this creature desires to eat the flesh of animals, while the Ant rear cannot digest such a meal. Similarly, the rear desires only the grains that its kind eats, but the Lion half refuses to eat such fare. Thus, this poor beast starves, a thing not meant to walk God's earth.





#### The Ant-Lion

The creature is the size of an ordinary Ant. On its own it is harmless. However, the *Mirmicoleon* is deadly in a swarm. The beasts strike automatically, negating Attack rolls, and cause +12 Damage per Combat Round, regardless of victims' armor (though Soak rolls still apply). Only an impassable barrier like a body of water or wall of fire can stop the swarm's assault. Furthermore, the *Mirmicoleon* can only be destroyed by "area of effect" spells, like *Mighty Torrent of Water*. Such a spell must be cast three times to eliminate the entire swarm, regardless of the amount of damage done by the spell. No Ant-Lion attack lasts longer than five Rounds, though, as one part of the creature's body rejects the food the other consumes.

**Vis:** 4 Muto, per colony

#### An Ant-Lion Story

Desperate to find a food source that is acceptable to its disparate halves, a colony of Ant-Lions invades the Covenant. They find that sources of magic are quite appetizing, but if that food supply

is cut off, the colony shortly dies. Though their presence may cause the loss of some magic, the colony can be studied for new sources of magic.

#### SPHINX, the sphinx

The Sphinx is a creature with the body of a Lion, and a human head. Its kind has been found all over the world. Most famous of this beast was that of Thebes, which asked the riddle:

*"What goes on four legs, then two, and finally three?"*

The correct answer was given to the creature by Oedipus, "Man," causing the Sphinx to throw itself to its death. This demonstrates the fanatical and obsessive nature of this creature, which spends every waking moment in contemplation of life mysteries. If a magus needs the answer to a question he need only travel to the desert, find a Sphinx and answer its riddle. If this answer is correct the Sphinx answers any question the magus poses to it. However if the wrong answer is given the Sphinx kills the man. Few among the Order are willing to take such a risk and make such a bargain, but those who do invariably return with information of immense value.

#### The Sphinx

**Magic Might** 40

Patient +5 Honorable +2

**Size** +4

Str +3 Dex -2 Int +5

Stm +3 Qik +2 Per +4

**Claws:** 1st +8 Atk +9 Dam +11

Fat 0 Soak +28 Def +4

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

**Abilities:** Ferocity (agreement breakers) 5

**Powers:**

**Binding of the Given Word, ReCo 30, 5 points** — When entering a contest of riddles, the *Sphinx* demands a prize should it win. If a defeated opponent apparently won't fulfill his part of the contract, the *Sphinx* may command his body to fulfill the agreement. The victim is allowed a Stm roll. If it's 15+, he may resist the *Sphinx's* control. Otherwise, the victim must fulfill his part of the contract, and the *Sphinx's* control is only broken when the contract

### The Sphinx continued

is fulfilled — plenty of story potential here. The use of 5 Magic Points may control an entire group of riddle opponents.

Note that the *Sphinx* may simply want to kill the characters, in which case it usually doesn't control them, but lets them fight of their own free will. Control may be imposed to have characters perform some task or feat.

Viz: 10 Mentem, brain

### A Sphinx Story

The characters are posed with a unfathomable problem that threatens death and destruction. In order to understand and come to terms with this problem, they must refer to a *Sphinx* who may inform them of a solution. However, the *Sphinx* will pose a puzzle of its own, which must be answered correctly before it will answer them. If the characters can solve the *Sphinx's* problem, it helps them on theirs. If the characters cannot solve the *Sphinx's* puzzle, it may require a service of its own or it may attempt to slay them.







# Chapter Five: Mutofigura (Shapechangers)

One of the fell man's greatest dreams of power has been to break free from the fetters of the physical form and change shape on whim; to run as brother to the mighty Wolf, to soar and hunt with the sharp-eyed Hawk, and to play in the cool ocean depths with the beasts of the sea. Yet these paths are not easily walked nor easily borne.

There is great danger in giving up one's human form for that of a lesser being. The monk Harald writes that only humans have souls, given them by God, whereas animals do not. Therefore, a Shapeshifter loses its soul in the transformation and is no longer able to attain the Lord's grace. One cannot pretend to know what happens to the human soul when the body changes into animal form. All writings do agree that taking a beast's shape poses the danger of becoming the beast, in mind and body, forever. The physical shape of the beast controls the Shapeshifter's mind; while changed, the Shapeshifter gains many or all the beast's passions, which may even remain when the Beast-Shape is cast off. The magus Ealdwyn writes of a *custos* who, gifted from birth with the ability to take Wolf's shape, delighted in his form and changed again and again until, finally having become Wolf in mind and shape, attacked his former masters and was killed by them.

Some accounts tell of those who have mated while in bestial shape. If the Beast-Form is female

and the Shapeshifter becomes with child, she is bound to that form until her brood is born and suckled. In the Stonehenge Tribunal it is said that a great magus punished two criminals by changing them into beasts, forcing them to mate with each other, bringing a new creature into the world each year as a reminder of their shame. Often, the children of a union of human and beast are Shapeshifters themselves, sometimes gaining souls through a human parent. Some magi believe that every mortal has a Heart-Beast, but only the Shapeshifter is able to express and release this Heart-Beast to any great degree.

The power of the Shapeshifter only extends to the transformation of its animal form. A Shapeshifter cannot take many forms, nor imitate another human being, nor heal wounds it suffers while an animal. Any mark or wound to the beast remains in like shape on the human. If a Shapechanged Bear mauls its leg in a trap, as a human its leg is mangled and lame. Only Creo magics can heal wounds; mere Muto is useless.

In fact, there is tale of a German village, ravaged by a strange Wolf that crept into the town at night and slaughtered the inhabitants. Daily hunts failed to track down the Wolf. The Prince who ruled the town vowed to slay the marauder, and drank strong potions to drive away sleep. That night, the Wolf broke down the door of his house and



attacked him. The Prince, a brave warrior, drew his sword and struck the Wolf's right forepaw from its body, whereupon the beast fled in terror. To his amazement, the Prince saw that the paw became a woman's hand, bearing the royal signet ring. He gathered his soldiers and broke into his wife's bedchamber. Her right hand was missing, the stump of her arm freshly bandaged and bleeding. The Prince and his men wrapped the Werewolf in cloth-of-silver and threw her into the river to drown, thus freeing the village of the evil.

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### MAGICAL CURSES

A common magical curse causes its target to lose human shape and become a beast. There are many



accounts of these curses, which vary in form and effect. Some turn the victim into a beast for a certain length of time, such as a year and a day. Others allow the victim to regain human form at intervals, such as every seventh day. Others still allow human form to be retained at all but certain times, like that of a full moon, and often inflict the curse of Lycanthropy.

These curses are powerful in their making. The Order has the *Curse of Circe*, yet, without *vis*, even this spell lasts but a day, and does not alter the mind of the victim. *Mind of the Beast* destroys the human mind, but even with *vis* it lasts no longer than a year. Suppression of thought and the

human soul takes powerful magic indeed. The gross physical form is infinitely more mutable.

These curses, while powerful, are often strictly limited or circumscribed so as to allow them to be manageable and effective in the casting. Most often, a curse only alters the body, and does not completely change the mind. However, the mind is subject to the beast's emotions and animal drives. Thus, a woman changed into Cat-form might keep her own mind, but be unable to refrain from chasing mice. The Shapeshifter lives as would a true beast, eating the food to which the animal is accustomed, usually shunning the company of humanity.

Other curses are cast through jealousy and hatred, in an effort to destroy and punish the victim of the curse. Thus, a spurned suitor might turn her former lover into a wild beast to prevent his finding another lover.

These curses are often limited by a condition that can break the curse. This condition is difficult to achieve, and frequently the beast is prohibited from revealing how it may be freed. The beast may be required to win the love of a woman, to bear a certain number of Beast-children, to cleanse some sin from its soul, to be killed by a new sword blade, or any number of unusual things. Each curse is different.

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#### *Aethalwulf the Guardian*

*Aethalwulf managed to anger a woman of his village when, in a drunken stupor, he pushed her in such a way that she fell and miscarried her child. The woman possessed the power to Hex, however, and she cursed Aethalwulf to take Bear's form. He lives in the nearby forest, prowling the paths and guarding women and children from any marauders therein. He attacks men as though he were a normal Bear. Whenever a child is born in his former village, he may assume human form until sunrise of the next day. Aethalwulf is bound to the forest and cannot leave it. He can only be released from the spell when a child approaches him without fear; the trust must be genuine, not magically induced. Aethalwulf has been imprisoned in his Beast-Shape for three years, and while he still has the mind of a man, he cannot speak, and has a Bear's ferocity.*

Aethalwulf
<b>Magic Might</b> 18
Brave +2 Ferocious +1
Size +2
Int +1
<b>Maul:</b> 1st +6 Atk +12 Dam +18
<b>Tackle:</b> 1st +6 Atk +6 Tackle +16
Fat +6 Def +6 Soak +10
<b>Body Levels:</b> OK, 0/0, -1/-1, -3, -5, Incapacitated
<b>Vis:</b> 5 Muto, pelt

**DIABOLIC PACT**

Some desperate persons bargain with the Evil One in order to gain beast's form. As with any such bargain, the Gift of Shapechange is flawed. The price paid for the ability is the person's soul. Thus, they are less able to resist being overcome by the beast's nature. Such people are prone to choose destructive, powerful forms, and their animal nature leads them to threaten humankind.

Accounts agree that such pacts last only for a limited period of time, such as seven years, after which the Prince of Darkness claims his price. Too many eager persons discover, to their dismay, that they rapidly become unable to control their transformations; the beast's nature overwhelms their human reason, and they may never return to human form. Trapped as beasts, yet with some glimmering of human reason, they are cut off from humanity and may only escape their plight through the intervention of the Church.

**The Iron Hound of Normandy**

A manuscript by Bishop d'Arcy tells of the legendary Iron Hound of Normandy, once a powerful Frankish lord. This lord, whose name d'Arcy does not recount, bargained fiercely with Demonic powers to gain the ability to change into a powerful, iron-colored Hound. For forty nine years, this lord kept his subjects under a ride of fear; where the lord and his soldiers could not go, the Hound could. At long last, the Power appeared to claim D'Arcy. Rather than kill him, though, the Evil One decided that d'Arcy would best serve in his Hound form.

Today, the Iron Hound appears only after sunset. Its task is to locate those whose sins and evil deeds make their souls especially vulnerable to Demonic control, and



to carry them off to its master. Once the Hound has fixed on a target, it tracks him ceaselessly until it finds and kills him. The Hound can speak, usually to tell its victim what his fate is to be. It then grows to a frightening size and attacks. Few have managed to escape at all, and none have permanently evaded the Hound, save by suicide.

The Iron Hound
<b>Infernal Might</b> 24
Vicious +3, Fears Holy Things +2
Size 0
Int +1
<b>Bite:</b> 1st +5 Atk +6 Dam +16
<b>Tackle:</b> 1st +5 Atk +6 Dam +10
Fat +4 Def +6 Soak +2
<b>Body Levels:</b> OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated
<b>Abilities:</b> Alertness (holy presence) 8, Scan (holy people) 6, Stealth (stalking sinner) 8
<b>Powers:</b>
<b>Preternatural Growth and Shrinking.</b>
<b>MuCo 20, 1 point</b> — The Iron Hound can grow one Size Level, or shrink by two, exactly as the spell of the same name. Each change costs 1 Infernal point, but changing back to normal size costs nothing.

### The Iron Hound continued

**Stalking the Faithless, InCo 30, 2 points** — The Hound can relentlessly track anyone whose faith is impure, so long as that person is within one hundred miles of the Hound.

**Creeping Mist, MuCo 40, 5 points** — The Hound can take mist form, in which it can still move at a walking pace, as well as see or hear normally (see the spell, *Cloak of the Mist*).

**Invulnerability, MuCo 30, 0 points** — The Iron Hound is only affected by holy and magical abilities (including weapons). No normal weapon affects it.

Vis: 8 Terram, body

### THE "GIFT" OF SHAPESHIFTING

Some Shapeshifters are able to perform this magic from birth. The power may be inherited in many ways. The child of a human with a beast form will almost always have the power to shift into the form of the same beast. If a woman drinks from certain magical pools, or marries a Lycanthrope, her child may be a Shapeshifter. The scholar Malachi states that the inheritance of Shapeshifting, especially among Lycanthropes, passes only through the bloodline. He claims that there must be beast's blood present in at least one parent's lineage for there to be a child born with the ability to change shape. However, reliable stories tell that certain magics can make a pregnant woman bear a Shapeshifter, whether or not her ancestors had such power.

Usually, someone born with this "Gift" has a single Shape into which they may change: Bear, Wolf, and Bird are the most common, though many animals are possible. The magus Gaius writes that he has seen children who could change into inanimate object such as stones, but Gaius is known for his of flights of fancy.

Control over the change is not always complete. Lycanthropes are often tied to the cycles of the heavens, and may be forced to change shape at a certain phase of the moon or at the rising of a particular constellation. The change lasts as long as the condition is present; a woman who changes into a Wolf every full moon is bound to that form until the moon changes phase. Some

Shapechangers are "luckier," and may change at will.

All of those with this "Gift" are known to be vulnerable to alchemical substances. This vulnerability is always linked to the source of the transformation. Perhaps best-known is the Lycanthrope's aversion to silver, which in alchemy is symbolic of the moon. A shapeshifter who takes its form each sunset might only be affected by weapons made of gold. If the Beast-change is caused by the rising Saturn, only leaden weapons can harm the animal form.

When in beast form, the human mind and soul may disappear entirely. Some human intelligence is present, but it is overcome by bestial cunning and animal drives. A Lycanthrope may attack family and other humans, devastate livestock, and run with other animals of its kind — actions the person would not consider when in human form.

The Lycanthrope does not always lose its human mind or become permanently bound into bestial form. Whether or not such change takes place depends on the kind of animal and the inner nature of the person. A hostile, aggressive loner changed into a Hawk may become more and more Hawk-like, until in her middle years she remains in Hawk form permanently. A calm person whose family protects him during his bouts of change may permanently retain human mind and body, without developing bestial qualities.

Shapechangers whose human form have become bestial in nature are often recognizable to the practiced eye. Older persons often have some touch of the animal's features: a beak-like nose, or extensive body hair, for example. Furthermore, the Shapechanger's human personality is often similar to that of the animal: a Fox Lycanthrope is often sly and clever, so his human form is as well.

#### *Maelgwyn, a "typical" Werewolf*

*Maelgwyn is a peasant, perhaps in a village local to the Covenant. One evening she became lost and wandered until she found a clearing near a lake. Standing there was a pack of Wolves, baying at the moon. Without realizing it at first, she discovered that she was crooning softly at the moon as well. She stayed with the Wolves all evening, and found herself irresistibly drawn back to the clearing the next evening. The Wolves were there again, and this time she howled at the moon louder than any of them. Maelgwyn found*

her mind more like that of a Wolf than a human, and her body obeyed her newfound mindset. Now with every full moon (and at no other time may she change), she is drawn back into Wolf's form, in which she leads the pack on its hunts.

Maelgwyn
<b>Magic Might 14</b>
<b>Size -1</b>
Str +2 Dex +2 Int +7
Stm +4 Qik +1 Per +4
<b>Bite:</b> 1st +5 Atk +6 Dam -6
<b>Tackle:</b> 1st +3 Atk +4 Tackle +4
<b>Fat +4 Soak +14 (+6 versus silver) Def +4</b>
<b>Body Levels:</b> OK, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated
<b>Abilities:</b> Ferocity (faced with silver) 2
<b>Powers:</b>
<b>Call of the Wilds, RcAn 30, 4 points</b> — By baying at the moon, she can summon up a pack of Wolves to do her bidding. The actual amount is random; roll a stress die +5, with a maximum of 30 Wolves (botch means that no Wolves are in the area).
<b>Vis:</b> 5 Muto, tongue

### HOUSE BJORNAER "HEART-BEASTS"

The secrets of House Bjornaer's link to animals is closely guarded, and one can do little more than speculate on what it might be. They claim that to possess a "Heart-Beast," a bestial nature which is already present within them, which need only be drawn out by a master magus. However, by definition they are human Shapeshifters, not truly animals, or they would not possess souls.

The origins of Bjornaer may provide us with some clue to the origins of the House's power. Bjornaer herself came from a line of primitive Shapeshifters whose only ability was to change their shape. The scholar Lucan the Younger describes a race of Germanic people who were able to mimic Bears when they fought, sometimes so much that they actually became Bears themselves. It is likely that some of the original line of Shapeshifters were either born with the ability to change shape, or were magically altered, and passed that ability onto their children.

It seems likely that, given the many ways in which man and beast may interact, there are many thriving lines of Shapeshifters of varying purity of blood. Bjornaer may even assist or cultivate breeding programs to produce such children. This House only accepts children who have some taint of beast's blood, or what they term the "Heart-Beast," and use their magics to nurture this talent to blossom. The magi of Bjornaer roam the countryside, ostensibly to find privacy, but in reality they may seek to promote and discover bloodlines of those descended partially from beasts. This may also be the source of their strange tradition of respect for the elder by the young, regardless of respective ability and power. They are a "family," knit together by a common heritage of descent from animals, and thus the young respect their superiors in years as though they were parents or older relatives.

Some of the Bjornaer magi are able to take more than one shape, and a few are rumored to be able to take inanimate form. This latter is often discounted as fancy; it is unlikely that a human could take the form of a soulless, mindless object except through a Muto Córporum spell. Perhaps the flexibility of the former group comes from a mixing of bloodlines, resulting in a heritage traced back to more than one animal. The presence and unpredictability of this beast blood is another sound reason the Order should regulate and carefully monitor House Bjornaer.

### OTHER MAGICAL MEANS

There are uncountable means by which magic may be used to allow Shapeshifting. One of the most common is the Muto Córporum branch of spells. When powerful enough, they allow the magus to change himself or others into the form of beasts. A further spell, *Mind of the Beast*, is required to alter the mind of the target. So far, no spell is known that can completely eliminate the human soul, and so *Mind of the Beast* cannot permanently destroy the mind within the subject.

Spells that grant man animal form, such as the *Curse of Circe*, are often believed to be Greek in origin. Some claim that these magics can be traced back to the beast-headed gods of the Egyptians, or the Old Ones, as some call them.

It is also rumored that Shapechangers can infect others with their feral nature. Lucan the Younger

writes that the bite of a Lycanthrope, if left to heal without the aid of magic, causes the bitten one to become a Lycanthrope within a cycle of the moon. Such stories are unproven, and again, it may simply be that the presence of a Lycanthrope creates a "resonance" with others of its kind, inducing the change. This may be another of the methods used by House Bjornaer to bring out the "Heart-Beast" of its members.

There are also many stories of magical skins or unguents that allow the user to change form. By themselves, such items are useless. Rarely can an ordinary human induce a beast's shape. Rather, such magicks are used by those already tainted with animal blood as a means to manifest underlying power. The formulae for potions and unguents are handed down from parent to child, continuing the lineage of Shapechangers. Eventually, unless the tie to the animal is renewed through breeding, the presence of beast blood becomes so thin that not even the most powerful Muto substances can induce a change.

Some items are merely symbolic of the change. There exists a manuscript by the magus Wilhelmina, detailing the story of a young boy cursed by a witch to take Deer's form. Because the spell drew its power from Infernal sources, the boy was freed from the curse on the Sabbath. On that day, he stepped out of his Deer's skin and walked as a normal man. At sunset, he was forced to don the skin and become a Deer again. He was redeemed by a girl who, seeing him step from the

Deerskin, immediately seized it and cast it into a fire. These items have no power to affect another; had the girl herself put on the Deerskin, she would have remained in human form. However, these items are often a source of Animal vis.

Occasionally, an item carries such powerful Muto magic that it can force the change of a human, making the human assume bestial form as if a Lycanthrope. Common items of this ilk are capes or blankets made of the skin of the appropriate animal. These are very rare and difficult to obtain, and many are cursed. Once donned, the item cannot be removed, trapping the wearer in bestial shape. Such magicks are not always Hermetic. Wild faerie magicks, raw vis, and Divine or Diabolic power may all cause the change.

### Witch Cats

*These creatures look much like ordinary house Cats, though they are a bit larger, and their eyes are almost always yellow. A child born to a woman who serves Infernal powers will always have the ability to change itself into Cat form. Able to speak, they delight in overhearing and spreading secrets, whispering lies and half-truths into the ears of sleepers, and frightening travelers. They also suck the breath from babies and very young children.*

*The existence of Witch Cats gives rise to the rumor that Cats are Infernal creatures, and that they smother sleeping babies. Normal Cats strongly dislike Witch Cats, but are often not strong enough to drive them away.*



### Witch Cats

#### Infernal Might 10

Cruel +2 Fears Holy Things +1  
Curious +2

Size -3 Str -2 Dex +3 Int +1 Strm 0  
Qik +3 Per +5

Bite: 1st +5 Atk +4 Dam -2

Fat 0 Def +8 Soak -1

Abilities: Stealth (stalking child) 7

#### Powers:

**Whispering Winds**, InAu 10, 0 points — Like the Hermetic spell of the same name, this ability allows the Witch Cat to hear any conversation that it can see is underway.

### The Witch Cat continued

**Smother the Sleeping Babe, PeAu 20, 1 point** — The Witch Cat can suck the breath from a sleeping baby or child, killing it. Doing so, the Cat's Infernal Might is fully restored.

**Trouble the Sleeping Stranger, CrMe 20, 2 points** — Anything the Witch Cat says to a sleeping person is remembered by that person. The person has no recollection of how they came across the information given.

**Vis:** 5 Rego, in the Cat's bottled breath

### A Witch Cat Story

The Covenant is troubled when a Witch Cat begins frequenting its halls, spreading rumor and deceit throughout, disrupting the lives of common folk and magi alike.

### Catherine, the Knight's Friend

*Catherine was a young woman whose home was located along a road that led through a difficult mountain pass. One day, a poor but pious knight, wounded by brigands, knocked on the door and begged for help. Catherine haughtily refused to allow the knight into her home, throwing him only a hard crust of bread for nourishment before slamming the door shut. Before he succumbed to his wounds, the knight wished that Catherine would learn charity and humility. Instantly, she was changed into a white mare, and compelled to carry travelers safely through the mountain pass. She is surefooted and has never allowed a rider to come to harm. As part of her curse, Catherine must bear a bridle and saddle.*

*Catherine will remain in this form until she truly repents of her heartlessness and loses some of her inflexible pride. She still resents the curse placed on her, and does not feel that she has done anything to deserve it. Each year on Pentecost, she is able to remove the bridle and take her human form from sunrise to sunset. During this time she may act and talk normally, but cannot leave the area of her mountain home, nor can she abandon her bridle or saddle. She is free to tell anyone of her plight, although she does not know how the curse*



*may be lifted. If her bridle or saddle are ever destroyed, new ones appear in their place.*

### Catherine, the Knight's Friend

#### Magic Might 20

Brave +2 Loyal +3 Proud +4

#### Size +2

Str +3 Dex +2 Int 0

Stm +4 Qik 0 Per 0

**Hooves:** 1st: +5 Atk +7 Dam +7

Fat +5 Def +1 Soak +7

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

**Vis:** 5 Vim, in bridle and saddle

### SHAPESHIFTER CHARACTERS

It is possible for players to take Shapeshifter characters. As with Hermetic magic of a similar nature (Muto Corporem), the overall nature of the man is not eradicated when he takes beast form. Thus a man missing a hand who changes into a Wolf is missing a forepaw while in beast form. Spending long periods of time as an animal is

inherently dangerous; the emotions of the beast can overwhelm even the most powerful mind.

To create a Shapechanger character, select the Werewolf Virtue (see *Ars Magica*, p. 22). If the character does not assume the shape of a Wolf, the Virtue may be renamed "Shapeshifter," with the name of the appropriate beast indicated. The character, as stated under the Werewolf Virtue, has an Ability rating in Shapechanger, determined like a normal Ability score. For the purposes of this supplement, that score is called a Bestiality score. Bestiality represents how attuned the character is to his animal form. The higher the score, the more animalistic the character is and can become. Having a high Bestiality score is both a boon and a curse; it becomes easy for the character to take beast form, but makes it more difficult to return to human form. A successful Ability stress roll against this score is required whenever the character wishes to change. The Storyguide sets a difficulty number for the Ability roll based on the situation (assume a 12+ for most situations). Generally, a character in a stressful situation finds it easier to change into beast form. In fact a character may have no choice if the Storyguide feels that the beast is ascendant!

A character might also be natural at changing into animal form at will, not needing outside impetus (like a full moon or danger). If this is the case, the character may change forms at will, or when driven to, on a Bestiality roll of 9+, not 12+. The Storyguide must rule that a character is able to freely control his changes in this way.

If a botch is ever rolled in an attempt to assume beast form, the character remains human and cannot assume animal form again until the next sunrise or sunset, or until the Storyguide deems that outside circumstances demand a change (i.e. a situation arises that is even more stressful than the botched one).

Once in beast form, it is difficult to return to normal shape; the Storyguide can require rolls to change back. A Stm stress roll of 9- is usually required, made once per hour. This Difficulty can be raised or lowered depending on the circumstances. For example, a Shapechanger who has recently killed may still be too wild to change back, so must make a roll of 12+. The roll is also modified by the value of the character's Bestiality score. For each Bestiality point he has in excess of

his Stm score, the Difficulty Rating of Stm rolls made to resume human form increases by one point. Thus, a character with Bestiality 5 and Stm 3 has his Difficulty rating raised by 2 (5-3=2) when attempting to resume human form — his powerful animal side fights his human will. If a botch is rolled in resuming human form, another attempt cannot be made until the next sunrise or sunset, or until some new mitigating circumstance arises. Continued botches perpetuate the sunrise/sunset rolling schedule.

Resuming human form can also be difficult if the character has been an animal for some time. For each hour after the first that beast form is maintained, the Difficulty of Bestiality rolls to change back increases by one point. Hence, if a character remains in beast form for 4 hours, his Difficulty level for resuming human form increases by 3 points (4-1=3).

There's no telling what a Shapechanger might do when trapped in animal form. He might wreak havoc over the landscape, might seek out a hated enemy, or might simply look for food. Regardless of the action, it should be appropriate to the beast's nature, not to the character's humanity, nor the player's demands. Note that if a Shapechanger loses control of himself, the Storyguide might rule that the character cannot resume human form until the beast fulfills its own agenda — the beast refuses to give up control. Who says human and beast have to have the same motivations?

A character may have certain Virtues and Flaws that can have an effect on Shapeshifter abilities. The affects listed below are cumulative with those already listed in the rules.

- **Clear Thinker** (see rules, p.18). A Shapeshifter with this Virtue is unusually clear-minded even in beast form, and can apply a +3 bonus to any roll to return to human form.
- **Strong-Willed** (see rules, p.18). Like Clear Thinker, this adds +3 to rolls when changing back to human form, but also adds 3 to rolls to change into the beast.
- **Berserk** (see rules, p.18). A Shapeshifter who berserks may change shape frequently, like the Norse-style Berserks. The character's Angry score is also subtracted from the usual Difficulty score needed to assume animal form (9). However, that Angry score is added to the Difficulty number that must be exceeded to resume human form (normal

rules for calming don't apply here). While in beast form, all usual Berserk combat bonuses apply.

- **Fury** (see rules, p.23). If a Fury roll fails, the character assumes beast form. Normal Fury combat modifiers apply, but full Bestiality score is added to rolls made in an effort to resume human form.

Furthermore, the Storyguide may decide that a character's Personality Traits influence his ability to change forms. A character with Violent +3, for example, might receive a +3 bonus to Bestiality rolls. Likewise, a character with Calm +3 might receive a +3 bonus to Strm rolls to revert to human form. Such traits might also have opposite effects. For example, a Calm character might find it more difficult to turn into a beast.

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### THE PROCESS OF THE CHANGE

A Shapechange is instantaneous; the Werebeast can immediately act in his new form. Storyguides who feel that this is too powerful can either apply a 1st penalty in combat, or state that the Shapechange is the only action allowed for the Round. In the latter case, the change should take effect in the magic phase, simultaneously with spells. Once changed, the Shapeshifter uses the basic Characteristics of the beast, except Int which remains his own (look the beast's stats up in the appropriate Bestiary entries). However, since the beast has many of the same types of Characteristics as a human, add the human's physical Characteristics to those of the beast. Thus, a strong human is also a strong Wolf. And, a large (Size +1) human is an unusually large specimen of beast. Note, too, that if the Shapechanger is physically weak in human form (Str -1), she is a physically weak beast (normal beast Str score at -1).

It's also important to decide whether a Shapeshifter can speak in beast form. By medieval tradition the beast cannot speak, but you may ignore that tradition for game purposes. If the beast can speak, it may have the same Com score as its human counterpart, or may have a lower score reflecting bestial bastardization of language (more grunts and growls). The beast of a Shapechanger might also retain the Prs score of its human counterpart, but Prs is usually determined by the species and demeanor of the animal. A Werebear is intimidating while a Weresquirrel is not, so the former has a higher Prs. However, if that

Weresquirrel behaves viciously, it might have a slightly higher Prs than it otherwise would. To determine animal Presence, refer to the appropriate Bestiary entry. If no Prs is listed for the animal, designate a value that seems appropriate.

The Storyguide also receives some latitude in assigning a character his Werebeast scores. A character who turns into a common Cat, for example, would be preposterous with a Strength of 5+ (natural Cat Strength plus that of the original human). Thus, you are allowed to limit the Characteristics a Werebeast can have, based on the type of animal form assumed, and based on practicality. The beast's Body and Fatigue Levels are standard for its species. However, if the Shaperchanger is particularly powerful or frail in human form, the Storyguide may add or subtract certain Levels to or from the beast's profile. A hardy man may have an extra OK Body and Fatigue Level in beast form. An old man may lack an OK Body and Fatigue Level in beast form.

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### MAGICAL ABILITIES

Shapeshifters, including characters, often have a Magic Might score between 10 and 20. Unless the Storyguide feels that a different value is appropriate, assume a value of 12+ Size. In addition, most Shapechangers gain a +8 bonus to their Soak while in beast form. However, all Shapechangers must choose a weakness, like silver, against which the Soak bonus does not apply.

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### OTHER SHAPESHIFTER VIRTUES AND FLAWS

These Virtues and Flaws may be assumed by the character during creation, and are chosen as normal. If the Storyguide allows, the player may select separate Virtues and Flaws for his human and bestial forms. These separate listings make the character's sides more distinct.

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### NEW VIRTUES

- **Multiple Forms +1.** You have two or three beast forms that you can freely switch between. Each has its own personality. Or, instead of having two or three different beast forms, you can be intimately familiar with one type of animal, and take different forms of its shape. Thus, a



Shapeshifter familiar with Cats could take the form of any Cat.

- **Mutable Form +2.** You have no specific animal shape, but instead can take the form of any as many different animals as you have Bestiality points. The specific type of animal forms available to you must be determined during character generation. You can also attempt to change into the form of a beast you have never tried before. On a stress roll of 20+ you succeed, taking that shape and gaining a new animal form to select from (though the Bestiality score does not increase). *Will Over Form*, below, can be used as a bonus to this roll, but nothing else normally adds to it — untrained Shapeshifters with this ability are rare!

- **Will Over Form +2.** You have received tutelage under an experienced Shapechanger, a Bjornaer magus or some other wizard. You may take an Ability Will Over Form that is treated like other Talents. You may add or subtract your Will Over Form total from any Bestiality or Strm roll to turn into or revert from beast form. If forced into a form other than that of your own choosing (i.e. if subject to a MuCo spell), you may attempt to break the spell once per hour. Roll a stress die + Will Over Form. On a 9+, you can shift back to human form (or that of your beast form).

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## FLAWS

- **Beast in Mind As Form -1.** When you take beast form, your mind is completely suppressed. Replace your Int with the Cunning score of the beast. Memories of any period spent in beast form are fragmentary at best. Attempts to Shapechange back are not allowed — the character may be played by the Storyguide while in beast form. Characters who spend too much time in beast form risk gaining this Flaw (as determined by the Storyguide), but any Shapechanger may take it as a beginning trait.

- **Necessary Condition -1.** You require something special in order to Shapeshift — without it you have no power. This can be anything from a magical unguent or animal skin to an elaborate incantation or ritual.

- **Tainted With Evil -2** (see rules, p.23). Appropriate for Shapechangers whose powers come from Infernal sources.

- **Curse -2.** At certain times or under certain circumstances, you *must* take the form of a beast. This change cannot be resisted by a Personality roll, even if the Shapechanger has *Will Over Form*. As long as the circumstances appropriate to the curse are met, the Wererecreature remains in its Shapechanged form. Note: It is possible for a character to have this Flaw and *not* have the Shapechange Virtue. Most curses have a cure associated with them, although this cure is rarely known to the Shapeshifter. Often the curse also reveals a weakness found in the beast.

Note that there are some common sense rulings that have to be applied to Shapechangers. They cannot normally cast spells, nor can they wield weapons or wear armor. If a Shapechanger is a magus, her Technique and Form scores are replaced by the beast's Magical Might value, with which the beast is able to perform feats inherent to it. Some human capabilities might overlap into beast form, like some Virtues and Flaws, though the Storyguide must determine what human abilities are still available to the beast. Furthermore, bestial abilities might be available to the character in human form. The character might gain a heightened sense of smell, for example, though the Storyguide may limit these overlapping powers if they make either human or bestial beings too powerful.

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## ULFTHEOW BERIEDHINAR

Ulftheow is a traditional Scandinavian Berserk ("bear shirt" or "bare shirt"), a warrior who changes into a Bear in combat. Ulftheow has the following Shapechanger Virtue and Flaw package:

Shapechanger +4

Berserk +1

**Flaw -1: Necessary Condition.** He must be Berserk to change shape.

So, for a total of +4 Virtues (4+1-1 = 4), Ulftheow can Shapechange into a Bear shortly after he Berserks, gaining the appropriate Characteristics and Soak bonus.

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## HRODNY ODHINSDOTTIR

The witch Hrodny claims that she is the daughter of the god Odin. Her Shapechanging

skills allow her to spy on the local villages and perhaps snatch a child or two. Even without her Shapechanging skills, her magical abilities are still very powerful.

Her complete Shapechanging package looks like this:

Shapechanger +4

**Mutable Form +2:** can change into a Wolf, Falcon, or Dog.

Will Over Form +2

**Curse -2:** must drink blood from a child to return to human form.

**Necessary Condition -1:** must rub a specially prepared formula on her body to change shape.

Total cost:  $4+2+2-2-1 = +5$ . With her high *Will Over Form* score, she is unlikely to be dominated by the bestial nature of her magics, unless she is caught in beast form for a long period of time.

**Magic Might 20**

Cruel +2 Curious +1

Bestiality 3

Str +1 Dex +1 Int +4 Com 0

Str +2 Qik +1 Per +3 Prs 0

Note that these Characteristics represent human form and are added to the Characteristics of the appropriate beast form assumed. In beast form, the Body and Fatigue Levels of the appropriate beast are assumed (Hrodny is not physically exceptional), as are Defense and Fatigue scores. She does receive the traditional Shapechanger Soak bonus.

added to the Soak score of the beast form she assumes.

**Abilities:** Will Over Form 5, Alchemy 5, Hex 3, Herb Lore 3, Second Sight 2

**Powers:**

**Magic:** In beast form Hrodny has the ability to use powers as if they were *Córporem* spells up to Level 15, *Animál* spells up to Level 20, and other magic up to Level 10. She must spend Magic Points equal to the magnitude of the spell she is trying to cast.

**Creating Potions:** For the purpose of creating potions while in human form, use the bonuses listed under Alchemy, but add +10 to any Lab Totals dealing with *Córporem* and *Animál* effects. This bonus results from Hrodny's heightened understanding of bestial ways, granted to her by her Shapechanging power.

**Weakness:**

For the first hour after sunset and the last hour before sunrise, she is vulnerable to attack while in beast form, and does not get the usual bonus to her Soak total.

*Vis:* 2 *Córporem*, body

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## USING SHAPECHANGE RULES

The Storyguide should note that not all Shapechangers need Bestiality scores or Shapechanging Virtues and Flaws. These additions to the game are mainly intended for use by the troupe and yourself to add more detail to play. A Shapechanger that only appears for one story need not have all these details, simply ignore them for the sake of convenience.





# Chapter Six: Serpenae (serpents)

Serpents are the most destructive of creatures. Truly the sight of one should be considered an ill omen, by magi and common folk alike.

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## STORYGUIDE'S NOTE

In an attempt to remain as faithful to the old Bestiaries as possible, it may be noted that most of the venoms listed for Serpents are extremely potent, and could be detrimental to many stories. If you feel that a venom is too powerful, lower the difficulty of the Stm rolls used to resist its effects.



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## SERPENAE MAGNAE (GREATER SERPENTS)

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The legends dwell long and hard on the origin of the Dragon. In some tales, a great number of Dragons are born of Tiamat, a water spirit of destructive chaos. The Norsemen (ancestors of the Normans) speak of Jormungandr, Loki's progeny, a Worm that spans the world, causing storms with every flick of his tail. The Dragon that Cadmus slew was begat by Ares. Many Old Ones, escaping from the destruction that Tarhuti's spell wrought, took the form of Dragons. The most powerful of Dragons to exist were born of the transformed Old Ones. Evidence of the Old Ones is scarce, and as few Seekers have ever studied them, attempting to understand the Old Ones is beyond the reach of this work.

Whatever the origin of the Dragon, they remain the most powerful of beasts, driven by the elemental forces within them. Each Dragon is



unique, owing to the chaotic magic inherent to the Old Ones. Even the progeny of a Dragon share only some characteristics of their sires. Certain features are common to most Dragons, though. First, the beasts' scales are strong enough to turn most normal weapons; only the strongest of weapons can harm a Dragon. Even the *Arcoballisia*, which the Church hath condemned, is ineffective against all but the smallest of Dragons. More importantly, even if the weapon served to cause a wound, there is no guarantee that the wound would seriously affect the beast. Dragons are well known for their ability to heal damage inflicted on them. When the *Hydra's* heads were destroyed by the mighty strokes of Heracles's club, two more grew from each bloody stump. Only through the application of fire were the heads permanently destroyed. Other Worms, even when the body is cut in twain, heal their cuts and are no worse for wear. This ability, while not entirely common, is most dangerous.

The ability of these beasts to withstand damage is nothing compared to their power to destroy. Most Dragons possess a destructive breath, be it venom or flame it does not matter — it slays the unprepared man in an instant. Remember well the tale of Lucius of House Tytalus who, not satisfied with the meager challenges the Order allowed him, challenged the Great Wurm of the Pyrenees. Twelve *consortis* found their end that day, drowned in the creature's venom. The size and strength of these beasts makes it easy for them to rend the most heavily armored knight with their teeth and claws. The voice of the Dragon is also destructive, causing mothers to miscarry their unborn children, storms to batter the land, and pestilence and earthquakes to strike. Granted, these legends are not all to be believed since many Worms are simply not so powerful, but be warned: the most powerful of Worms are best left undisturbed, even by those of our Order.

The Dragon's sight is keen; indeed it's name is connected with the Greek *Derkomai*, "to see." Its sight extends beyond that of men; the Dragon can even possess knowledge of future events. Delphi, whose Oracle was famous for his prophetic talents, gets its name from Delphyne, the Dragon that Apollo slew with his arrows. In fact, the gaze of the Dragon can be so powerful that it sometimes kills. The Basilisk is well known for this ability.

Lastly is the beast's natural cunning. All Dragons share an instinct for survival that transcends that of other animals, often indicating intelligence far exceeding that of man. But, Dragons have no souls. Furthermore, if you encounter a speaking Dragon, take note of its form; it might be an Old One or an extremely powerful faerie taken to Draconian shape. That does not make it any less dangerous however.

The Dragons were once the slaves and pets of the Old Ones, and indeed were created by them. However, when the Old Ones' civilization was destroyed a number of the Dragons escaped and began to live in the mountains. Now only the oldest among them remember their days of servitude, but these ancient creatures are sometimes sought out by Seekers who are desperate enough to risk their lives for knowledge of the past.

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### THE REPUTED MAGIC OF THE DRAGON'S FORM

The Dragon, with all its power, is not indestructible. But, the benefits of slaying such a beast almost make the task worth attempting. The corpse of the Dragon yields immense amounts of raw *vis*, often more than most Covenants see in a year. The blood of the Dragon is reputed to have great healing properties, reversing in death the destructive properties of the Dragon in life. The heart of the Dragon, properly roasted, grants powers to those who partake of it. The teeth of the Dragon are sometimes magically powerful — Cadmus placed Dragon teeth into the earth and fierce warriors sprang forth. The powers of other remains, like the powers of the living Dragon, are powerful and varied.

You are encouraged to create the magical properties and potencies of a Dragon's corpse as you see fit. Remember that as each Dragon is unique, the body of each has different properties.

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### DRACONTIAS

Of the common magics found in the Dragon, the one most sought and hardest to obtain is the *Dracontias*, a precious stone formed in the brains of the Dragon. The stone must be taken from the Worm while life remains in it, for if the Dragon is killed, its own malice destroys the virtue inherent in the stone. The powers such a stone might have cannot be speculated on; no one is known to have ever possessed such a stone. Considering the difficulty of slaying such a Worm, it's unlikely that anyone could obtain a stone while the beast still lives!

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### HABITS OF THE DRAGON

Dragons are commonly found as guardians. A Dragon guarded the Golden Apples that Heracles quested after. Similarly, the Golden Fleece was guarded by a similar beast. Some say that Dragons have taken to roosting in the burial mounds of dead chieftains, sitting on treasures and dealing fiercely with all who attempt to steal their riches.

Pliny states that the Worm's blood boils and that to cool it, the Dragon must drink the blood of the Elephant, which is known for its cool juice. The Dragon often lies in wait under a river until the

Elephant comes to drink and then pounces, wrapping its tail around the Elephant to prevent the victim's escape. From there the Dragon drinks its fill of the Elephant's blood. The Dragon is often docile in the winter, as its blood does not burn so then.

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### THE WORMS OF THE NORTH

Unlike most of the Dragons the Order is familiar with, the Dragons of the north are predominantly flightless. But, do not underestimate them — the tales of them that have been told, if even half true, more than make up for the creatures' lack of mobility.

According to the Norsemen, Jormungandr is one of Loki's foul brood. Thrown into the water by Odin when small, the Worm quickly grew to such an enormous size that it now circles the world — and it can bite its own tail. Thor the Thunderer attempted to slay the beast and failed, and supposedly will not succeed until Ragnarök, when he reputedly will be consumed in the creature's venom. If Thor is indeed an Old One, his failed attack acts as a warning to all magi: avoid seeking the truth of Jormungandr's existence.

The second of the Norsemen's Dragons, Nidhoggr, is said to sit at the root of Yggdrasil, the magical tree that binds the world to those of the gods, Giants and the underworld. (If this tree exists, it must be in the faerie realm, beyond the Order's sight and hearing.) Nidhoggr is said to gnaw at the roots of Yggdrasil, but will not succeed in severing them until Ragnarök.

Fafnir was supposedly of the Dwarfs, but obsessed with greed and the treasures that he won from the Gods, was transformed over time into a Dragon. Regin, Fafnir's brother, was also consumed with greed and desired to steal his brother's gold. To destroy his brother, Regin found Sigurd, a mighty hero, and forged him a powerful sword out of the fragments of another magical blade. Sigurd slew the Worm by lying in a ditch and stabbing it in the belly as it moved passed it. Sigurd roasted the heart of the Worm, as he had promised to Regin. While cooking it, though, Sigurd burned his hand, and touched it to his mouth. Thereupon he began to hear speech from all around him — the juices of Fafnir's heart had gifted him with the ability to understand the speech of birds. The birds lamented that Sigurd



would be slain by Regin, to get the Dragon's gold, now that the Worm was dead. Hearing this, Sigurd spun around, and seeing the truth of the accusation on Regin's face, slew him on the spot.

#### *The Great Wurm of the Pyrenees*

*This beast exceeds all other Dragons in vileness and power. Its breath is a corrosive poison that defeats all opponents. Its battle rage is sufficient to paralyze with fright those who fight it. And no wound, however deep, stays for long for the Dragon's regenerative powers exceed those of all others of its kind. It cares not for magi, or indeed anything of man. Few rewards are worth daring the power this one wields once aroused. It is fortunate indeed that normally it sleeps.*

#### The Great Wurm

**Magic Might** 60

**Energetic** -2 **Destructive** +5

**Size** +9

**Str** +15 **Dex** +0 **Cun** +5

**Stm** +10 **Qik** +0 **Per** +3

**Claws:** 1st +11 **Attack** +8 **Dam** +30

**Bite:** 1st +9 **Attack** +11 **Dam** +34

**Tail:** 1st +11 **Attack** +10 **Dam** +15. Any target struck by the tail falls unless a **Str** + **Size** roll of 15+ is made.

**Fat** +10 **Def** -4 **Soak** +25

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

**Abilities:** Ferocity (when awakened) 5, Hex (fear) 15

#### **Special Abilities:**

**Terrible Visage:** This beast is truly horrible to look upon. Brave rolls of 12+ are required to take any aggressive action against it. Any roll of less than 6 means the target is paralyzed with fright until a roll of 12+ is made.

**Poison.** If a person is successfully bitten by the worm, he must make a **Stm** roll of 12+ or be slain immediately. A successful roll still means a loss of two **Body Levels**! The poison is also corrosive, permanently damaging armor, weapons, and supplies not protected by magic.

**Spray Poison.** The Worm can spray its poison at any target within 15 paces (two people standing close together could be targeted). Target(s) of this attack can avoid it with a **Dodge** roll of 10+ (or by managing to hide behind something, like a shield). The Dragon loses one **Combat Round** and two **Fatigue Levels** after spraying its poison.

**Fly.** The Worm can fly, making it difficult to engage with melee weapons. The beat of its wings makes a sound like thunder, and its force has been known to blow people over. Those within twenty paces must make a **Str** + **Athletics** + **Perfect Balance** roll of 10+ to remain standing. Even if this roll succeeds, all others suffer a -3 penalty (though **Soak** rolls do not), one extra botch roll is made, and magi must make an **Intelligence** + **Concentration** roll of 6+ to successfully cast a spell. Rolls to remain standing and roll modifiers continue to apply as long as the Dragon flies and is within twenty paces of its opponents.

#### **Powers:**

**Regeneration, CrAn 45, 0 points** — As long as it is still alive, at the end of each **Combat Round**, the Dragon heals two **Body Levels**.

**Scream, PeCo 40, PeHe 40, PeAn 40, PeTe 40, 10 points** — The scream of the Dragon has dire effects on the people and land, causing mothers to miscarry, earthquakes, and other

disasters. Treat this ability as a particularly powerful Hex.

**Vis:** The corpse of this beast, if killed, contains 40 Perdo vis. Its scales could be used to fashion armor that would be nearly impervious to normal weaponry (at least +20 protection), but powerful magic would be required to remove them — Storyguide's option. If ingested, the heart of the Worm (which contains 20 Creo vis) cures all ills and removes all Decrepitude Points. (If the heart is ingested by more than one person, it will still cure all ills, but does not affect Decrepitude Points.)

#### A Great Wyrm Story

An exceedingly bold but young magus once crept into the Great Wyrm's lair and stole an unhatched egg resting there. She tried to mold the hatchling into a Familiar, but the creature's innate magical energy defied control. As a side effect of the magus's efforts, the hatchling crystalized into a concentrated form of vis. Consequently many Covenants sought its possession, making the statue something of a Maltese Falcon. However, a prophesy is quickly spreading that claims the Great Wyrm will soon wake and discover its missing egg. The senior Quaesator has thus decreed that whomever possesses it must return it to the Dragon's lair before the Serpent awakens. That makes the statue the proverbial hot potato, with various Covenants secretly "giving" it to other Covenants, thus making them responsible for the statue. The characters finally end up with the statue. Unfortunately, the Quaesator learns they have it before they can get rid of it, and orders that they deal with the problem or face his wrath. The only way to avoid impending doom is to somehow revert the hatchling to normal form and return it to its sire's den before the Dragon wakes.

#### Hydra, the hydra

The Hydra of Lerna was a foul, destructive beast, who preyed upon the area's livestock and fields. The beast was a Serpent with nine heads, the middle of which was immortal and could not be destroyed. Heracles, in his second labor, was commanded to slay the beast. Driving it out of its cave with flaming arrows, he struck its heads with great swings of his club. The beast was not so easily slain, for as each head was smashed, two more



heads grew in its place. Only with the help of Iolaus, who seared the sprouting heads with fire, did Heracles overcome the beast. Like many other Serpents, the Hydra was well known for its poisonous breath and bile. Heracles used the poison of the Hydra to coat his arrows so even their slightest scratch was invariably fatal. Though Heracles bested his foe, tales tell of other Hydrae in other realms. . .

#### The Hydra

**Magic Might 40**

**Patient +3**

**Size +7**

**Str +7 Dex +1 Cun +1**

**Stm +8 Qik +0 Per +3**

**Bite: 1st +5 Atk +7 Dam +16 (plus poison)**

**Fat +8 Def -3 (body)/+7 (head)**

**Soak +30 (body)/+12 (head)**

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





## A Hydra Story

In one story the characters deal with a villain with many faces and identities — someone who appears as a different version of himself to different people — like a wily royal advisor. Defeating the villain, the characters may never expect to see him again. However, the villain is in league with dark powers, or asks a Demon for revenge against the characters. Thus, the villain returns as the embodiment of his former sins, a multi-headed Serpent — a Hydra.

### Well Serpent

*There have been tales told of a Worm that dropped into the well of a small village, swelled to enormous size, and poisoned the waters of the well and its river. How the Worm met its end is not certain. Some say that a prince covered his armor with spikes so that when the creature entwined itself around him, it was cut to pieces, weakening it enough for the hero to overcome it. Some also credit the Well Serpent with powerful regenerative qualities.*

### The Hydra continued

**Head** = OK, 0, Incapacitated (the immortal head can be Incapacitated or removed, but not killed)

**Abilities:** Ferocity (assaulted in lair) 5

**Powers:**

**Instant Regeneration, CrAn 40, 0 points** — whenever a Hydra's head is Incapacitated, two more heads regrow in that spot after the current Round. These heads are just as powerful as the first. The Hydra's body only has room for 30 heads; after this number is reached, none regenerate until more have been cut from the body. If flame is applied to the stub of the neck before the end of the current Round, no heads regrow.

**Poison, PeCo 20, 0 points** — The Hydra's blood is highly poisonous. Anyone bitten by the Hydra loses one Body Level each Round, until a successful Strm roll of 10+ is made (so at least one Body Level will always be lost). This blood may be used to coat arrows and weapons, and remains effective indefinitely. According to some, the Hydra breaths its poison forth. If this is true, then everyone must make a similar Strm roll each Round as long as they breath the poison.

**Vis:** 30 Creo, body

### The Well Serpent

**Magic Might 15**

**Size +5**

**Str +7 Dex +1 Cun -2**

**Strm +5 Qik +2 Per +2**

**Bite:** 1st +9 Attack +10 Damage +24

**Immobilize:** 1st +5 Attack +10 (+14 if the Serpent is in close combat) A victim rolls Str + Brawl to break free, against a value of 15.

**Fatigue +5 Def +0 Soak +15**

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

**Abilities:** Ferocity (hunted in well) 4

**Special Abilities:**

**Poison:** The touch of this creature renders the drinking water of its well unfit to sustain life (apply the spell *Vile Water of Sterility*). His bite is mildly poisonous; when bitten a victim must make a Strm roll of 6+ or suffer a Fatigue Level.

**Vis:** 5 Perdo, corpse

### A Well Serpent Story

Another Well Serpent appears in a well, this time in the characters' Covenant or in a nearby town. The magi could certainly deal with the beast with magic, but a more interesting story requires that only grogs and companions dispatch the Serpent. Maybe the magi are preoccupied with a week-long council and cannot be disturbed. Recalling the tale of a Prince and his armor, a particularly heroic companion may try to reenact the story.



### Infernal Serpents

*The Evil One has been known to take the form of the Serpent, and use its powers of destruction. In Serpentine form, the Dark One has begotten others of similar form — Infernal Serpents.*

*Though Infernal Serpents are vile and cunning, a sign of faith severely weakens their power. While many Dragon-slaying tales are simply concocted by ruling mundanes to reinforce their reign, it must be assumed that some contain elements of truth. Can one discount the story of the Serpent Tarasque, whose might was not reduced by blade or lance, but by the touch of holy water from one of the faith? The Church would have men believe that all Worms are products of the Evil One, but that is not so.*

#### The Infernal Serpent

##### Infernal Might 36

Vicious +3

Size 15

Str +6 Dex +0 Int +1

Stm +6 Qik +1 Per +2

Bite: 1st +9 Attack +10 Damage +24

Claw: 1st +11 Attack +7 Damage +20

Fat +7 Def +0 Soak +17

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

Abilities: Ferocity (in combat with the holy) 4

### The Infernal Serpent continued

#### Powers:

**Fiery Breath, CrIg 30, 3 points** The heat of this creature's breath sets most substances on fire. If directed at a human being, it does +30 damage (halved on a successful Dodge roll of 9+)

#### Weakness:

This Worm cannot harm anyone who has Faith Points. The touch of a holy person automatically causes one Body Level of damage to the beast, and renders it docile, a condition that does not change until the holy person leaves the Worm's vicinity. In this docile state an Infernal Serpent can only defend itself so is easily slain.

Vis: 5 Animal, corpse

### An Infernal Serpent Story

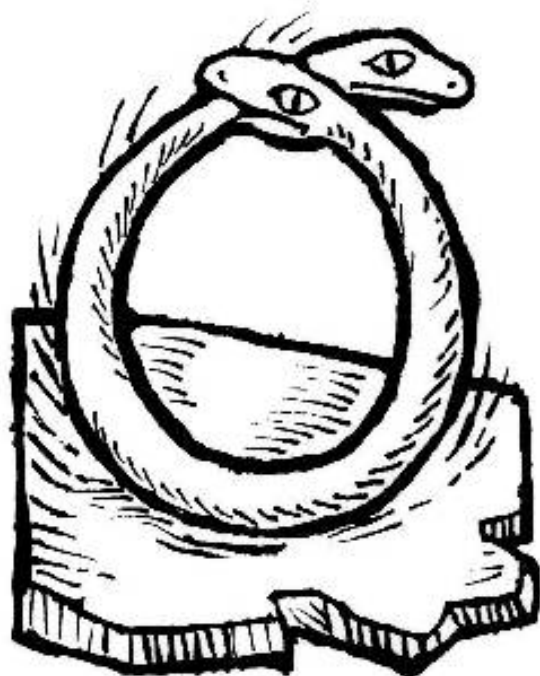
An Infernal Serpent whispers in the ear of a village pastor, probably a pastor who is already slightly corrupt and prone to the suggestion of evil. In return for the fulfillment of the priest's worldly delights, the pastor must perform a Church service of a most unholy nature, in which his congregation is turned into Serpents. Investigating the mysterious disappearance of the villagers, the characters may not recognize the Serpents as innocent villagers and may drive them from the area. While other villages may praise the act and

herald the characters as the progeny of Saint Patrick, the mystery of the snake village persists. Later recognizing his corruption, the pastor reveals his weakness to the characters. Now they must round the Serpents up.

## SERPENAE MINUTA (LESSER SERPENTS)

### AMPHISBAENA, the two-headed snake

*The Amphisbaena has a head where its tail should be, thus having two heads. It moves by grasping the neck of one head with its other, rolling like a hoop. Some say that it also has wings and can fly. Pliny states that it needs two heads because no single head can discharge enough poison. It is far more resistant to cold than others of its kind, and is the first to awaken from yearly hibernation.*



### The Amphisbaena

**Magic Might 10**

**Size -1**

Str +1 Dex +1 Cun 0

Stm 0 Qik +1 Per +1

**Bite:** (two separate attacks) 1st +5 Atk -5  
Damage+5 (plus poison)

Fat +0 Def +5 Soak +4

**Body Levels:** OK, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

**Abilities:** Ferocity (rolling to attack) 2

**Special Abilities:**

**Poison.** The target of any successful bite must make a Stun roll of 6+ against poison, failure resulting in the loss of a Body Level. If both heads successfully strike a single opponent in one Round, two rolls must be made, and become more difficult — 10+.

**Vis:** 2 Animál, heads

### An Amphisbaena Story

Coming out of hibernation in early spring, an Amphisbaena rolls across a small snowy area to the location of a pig, and feeds on it. The snake then rolls away in the direction it came, along a route parallel to its approach. The pig is the prize pet of one of the Covenant's grogs. Coincidentally, another grog has been fixing an old cart for spring use. It appears that the cart approached the pig, but there are no tracks to indicate what pulled the cart. The owner of the pig probably blames the carpenter for the pig's loss. The real culprit is not seen again until next spring, bringing a resolution to what may develop into a year-long feud.

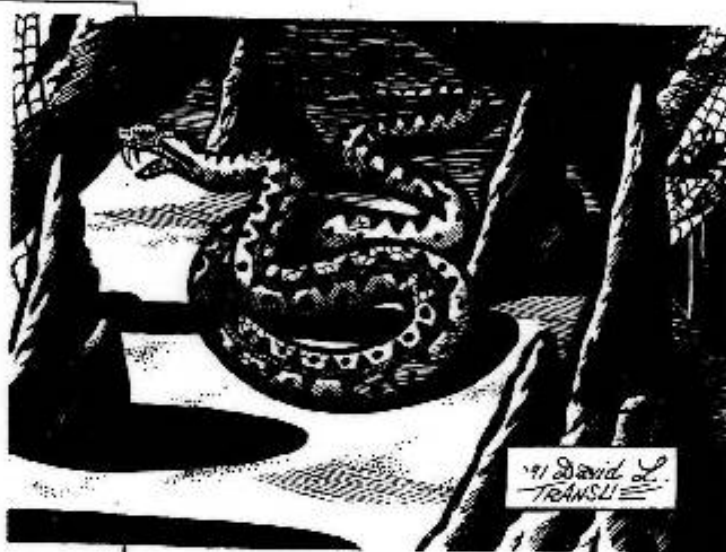
### ASPIS, the asp.

*Although there are many kinds of Asp, they all share certain traits. The Asp is dangerous because of its venom which is always deadly. The Asp drips poison from its open mouth, spreading death and misery to everything that lies in its path.*

*The Dipsas is an Asp whose victims die of thirst. The Hypnale is another deadly Asp, and is famed for having killed Cleopatra. Its name comes from the fact that its victims die by being put to sleep. The Specificus has a most virulent venom, so that anyone stung by it is rotted away in an instant!*

### The Asp

Cruel+1  
Size -2  
Str -2 Dex +1 Con 0  
Stm 0 Qik +2 Per +1  
Bite: 1st +6 Atk +5 Dam +2 (and  
poison)  
Fat 0 Def +6 Soak +0  
Body Levels: OK, -1, -3,  
Incapacitated  
Abilities: Ferocity  
(unsuspecting victim) 2  
Poisons: Poisons vary from Asp  
to Asp. Generally, a Stm roll  
against a value of 12 is required to  
resist the poison. The poison of the  
Dipsas, for example, can be simulated with the  
PeAq spell *Curse of the Desert*.  
Vis: None



### An Asp Story

An enemy of the Covenant announces a curse of unnatural death upon its members. The enemy then sneaks a *Specificus Asp* into the Covenant and lets it do its work. Victims—usually those who are asleep—are found decayed, any traces of the Asp's poison decomposed with the victim. Though the "caster" of the "curse" could be found and commanded to remove it, there is nothing she can do to lift it, but could admit that its source is an Asp.

### **BASILISCUS**, the basilisk, King of Serpents

The Basilisk, despite its deceptively small size, is the most deadly of creatures. It has the form of a Snake, except for its head, which is that of a Cock. Its gaze is sufficient to slay most creatures. Like the Salamander, its touch and breath are poisonous. Pliny relates a story of a Roman soldier who stabbed a Basilisk with his spear. The poison of the beast traveled up the spear, slaying the man instantly. The Basilisk should be avoided. When angry it uses its power wantonly, leaving only desolation behind.

Alexander showed that the Basilisk's gaze can be reflected by a mirror, slaying the creature itself as its vision does so many others.



### The Basilisk

**Magic Might** 20

Cun -2 Merciful -4

**Size** -3

**Attacks:** None

Fat +2 Def +9 Soak -2

**Body Levels:** OK, -3, Incapacitated

**Abilities:** Penetration (Perdo) 15

**Powers:**

**Death Glance, PeCo 30/PeAn 30/PeHe 30, 1 point** — the Basilisk's glance is deadly when it wishes and it can slay any living thing. If the target is a person or animal, the victim does not have to meet the look of the Basilisk. The only requirement is that the Basilisk see the victim. The target must make a Strm roll of 10+ or die, with success still meaning a loss of two Body Levels.

**Poisonous Touch, PeCo 25, 1 point** — The touch of the Basilisk, like its gaze, is deadly (use the same Stamina roll as above). If using the legend related above, any successful weapon strike against the Basilisk also requires a poison save. Armor gives no protection against the Basilisk's poison.

**Vis:** 12 Perdo, body

### A Basilisk Story

A Basilisk that wandered into a faerie forest was recently attacked by a faerie knight, bent on destroying the creature. Though he almost succeeded, the knight was destroyed by the Serpent's gaze. The wounded Basilisk is now more dangerous than ever as it's angry. Immobile given its injuries, the beast casts its vision on all life it spies. Accordingly, a ring of dead plants, animals and faeries now surrounds the Serpent. Surviving faeries are understandably concerned, but none knows the exact focus of this circle death as none that get close survive. Rather than risk any more subjects, the Monarch of the faeries sends an envoy to the Covenant. The characters could owe the Monarch a favor, or the Monarch may be willing to deal. Either way, the characters are encouraged to enter the forest and break the ring of death.

### CERASTES, the horned snake

*The Cerastes hides under the earth, with only its horns showing as a lure to other creatures. When prey comes near the Snake springs forth and devours it.*

### The Horned Snake

**Size** 0

Str +2 Dex +0 Cun +2

Strm +2 Qik +1 Per +2

**Bite:** 1st +5 Atk +4 Dam +6 (but generally attacks from surprise)

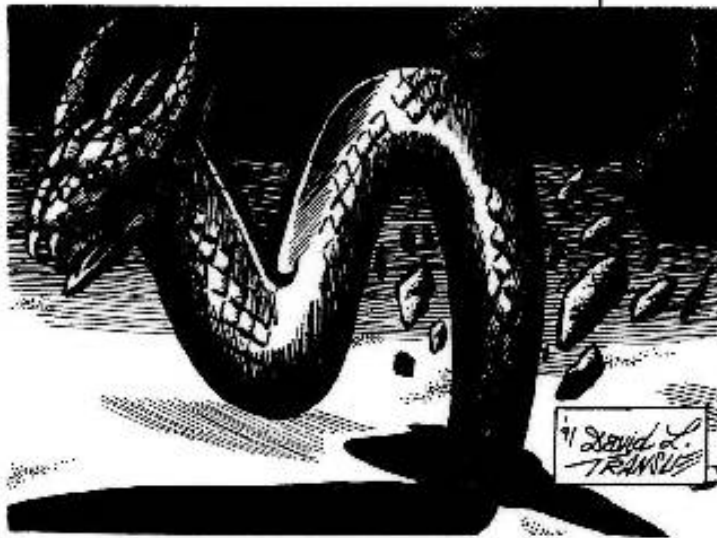
Fat +2 Def +4 Soak +4

**Abilities:** Ferocity (ambush) 2

**Vis:** None

### A Horned Snake Story

A character, probably a grog or companion, is faced with the task of overcoming a dangerous opponent like a Dragon or group of marauding berserkers. While he ponders his dilemma he witnesses the tactics of a Horned Snake, which lures its victim in and pounces once the prey is within reach. Inspired, the character uses the same technique against his foe.



### DISPA, the unequalled snake

This Serpent is tiny, and rarely seen by its victims. Like the Syrenus, its venom is so powerful that nary a wince of pain shows on the face of he who is bitten.

#### The Dispa

**Magic Might** 10

**Size** -4

**Str** -3 **Dex** +1 **Cun** 0

**Stm** 0 **Qik** +1 **Per** +1

**Bite:** 1st +4 **Atk** +3 **Dam** -3 (plus poison)

**Fat** 0 **Def** +7 **Soak** -4

**Body Levels:** OK, Incapacitated

**Abilities:** Ferocity (stepped upon) 2

**Special Ability:**

**Poison.** Anyone bitten by the Dispa must make a Stm roll of 12+ or die instantly. A successful roll still means a loss of two Body Levels. (Note that a bite that does not penetrate armor does not inject poison.)

**Vis:** 3 Perdo, body

#### A Dispa Story

A lord's only son dies after being bitten by a Dispa. The cause of his death is a mystery. Old and unable to sire another son, the lord approaches the Covenant and asks that the magi return life to the boy. Though Hermetic magic is incapable of reviving the dead, magic might be used to counteract the poison, if the characters search close enough to find the source of the boy's death. Whether the neutralization of the poison revives the boy is up to you. If the magi fail at their task, the lord may go off the deep end and blame the Covenant for the boy's death. Or, the lord may lose the will to live. The lord's family and retainers are certain to make accusations against the Covenant, given the lord's death so soon after his visit with the magi.

### HYDRUS, the water serpent

Unlike the Hydra, which by most accounts is merely a legend, the Hydrus is quite real. It is, in fact, a water Snake

found in the River Nile whose foe is the Crocodile. The Hydrus slithers down the mouth of the sleeping Crocodile, tearing out its innards, emerging from the other end unharmed.

#### The Water Serpent

**Size** -1

**Str** +1 **Dex** +1 **Cun** +1

**Stm** 0 **Qik** +2 **Per** +1

**Bite:** 1st +6 **Atk** +5 **Dam** +11

**Fat** 0 **Def** +6 **Soak** +1

**Body Levels:** OK, -1, -3, -5, Destroyed

**Abilities:** Ferocity (Crocodiles) 3

**Vis:** None

#### A Water Serpent Story

Characters perplexed by a particular problem may spy the Hydrus and receive inspiration toward resolving their problem. By observing the Serpent, the characters realize that the best way to solve a problem is not always from the outside, but from within, just as the Hydrus kills the Crocodile, a beast that is invulnerable from without. Depending on the case, the characters could realize that the best way to defeat a cover of diabolists is not by attacking them, but by having a character join them and attack from within.

### IACULUS, the javelin snake

The Iaculus has been said to fly, but this is erroneous. In fact, the Iaculus coils itself and springs forth like a



*javelin. The Iaculus also hides in a tree until a person or beast ventures under it, whereupon it leaps down and ends the victim's life.*

The Javelin Snake
<b>Size</b> -2
Str +1 Dex +3 Cun +2
Stm +1 Qik +4 Per +2
<b>Bite:</b> 1st +8 Atk +7 Dam +5
Fat +1 Def +8 Soak +1
<b>Body Levels:</b> OK, -1, -5, Incapacitated
<b>Abilities:</b> Ferocity (ambush) 2, Athletics (springing) 3
<b>Special Abilities:</b>
<b>Leaping.</b> The <i>Iaculus</i> can leap up to ten paces, ending the movement with an attack if it desires. When leaping it uses the stats above, otherwise its 1st and Atk are reduced by 2.
<b>Vis:</b> None

#### A Javelin Snake Story

In a story the characters end up in a tense standstill with a band of forest archers. Both parties back away, or agree not to fight on this day. However, after the characters depart from the scene of the standoff, one of their number (a grog) becomes the victim of a Javelin Snake. The Serpent quickly slithers away after its kill. Though no arrow protrudes from the victim's body, there's no other explanation for the death other than a sneak attack. The characters may therefore seek misdirected revenge against the archers. After any subsequent battle is fought, another character is bitten by a Javelin Snake. This time she might survive, and the characters realize their previous error.

#### SALAMANDRA, *the salamander*

*The tiny Salamander, while not possessing all the abilities of its larger Serpentine brethren, is noteworthy for two unique traits. The slightest touch of the Salamander is sufficient to quench the largest flame. Pliny speaks also of its virulent poison, deadly to man and beast alike. He states that were a Salamander to alight itself on a tree, the tree's fruits would be forever poisonous to all who ingest them.*

#### The Salamander

**Magic Might** 20

**Size** -3 Cur. -2

**Attacks:** None

Fat +1 Def+5 Soak +0

**Body Levels:** OK, -3, Incapacitated

**Special Abilities:**

**Poison.** The touch of a Salamander is poisonous to all non-Serpent life. Even armor is little protection against this virulent poison. One Body Level is lost each round, until a Stm roll of 10+ is successful (so at least one Body Level is always lost).

**Resistance to Fire.** The Salamander cannot be harmed by heat attacks.

**Powers:**

**Extinguish Fire, Pelg 20, 1 Point** — Simply by touching any fire, the Salamander can extinguish it. Larger fires may require a larger expenditure of Magic Points. A Fire Elemental is destroyed by the Salamander if the Salamander spends 1 Magic Point per five Magical Might Points of the Elemental.

**Vis:** 8 Ignem, skin

#### A Salamander Story

During the winter a Salamander seeks refuge at the characters' Covenant, looking for a source of heat in which to survive. It searches out the hottest, most constant flame to be found. This may be in the smithy, in the kitchen, or in a magus's lab. Taking refuge in fires, the Salamander douses them to the consternation of the stoker. Stories might even spread of a spirit in the Covenant, making mischief with the cooking flames. If the Salamander takes up residence in the kitchen, Covenant meals become poor at the least, lowering fortress moral. As the source of this interference is not truly magical, magi's detection spells probably fail to find the source of the dousing. When Covenant

spirits and temperatures reach new lows, it become clear that something must be done.

#### SCYTALUS, the scytale

The Scytalus is renowned for its brilliant coat of scales, so beautiful that any man who looks upon it is held in place. The Scytalus, being a slow creature, uses its beauty to snare victims that it could not otherwise catch. Magi should be wary of those who, like the Scytalus, use their beauty as a weapon.

##### The Scytale

**Magic Might** 15

**Size** -1

**Str** -1 **Dex** -1 **Cun** +2

**Stm** 0 **Qik** -2 **Per** +2

**Bite:** 1st +1 **Atk** +2 **Dam** +2

**Fat** +0 **Def** +0 **Soak** +2

**Body Levels:** OK, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

**Abilities:** Ferocity (against those resisting entrancement) 1

##### Special Abilities:

**Poison.** Anyone bitten by the Scytalus must make a Strm roll of 9+ or lose two Body Levels.

##### Powers:

**Glowing Scales of Impeccable Beauty, MuMm 25, 0 points**—All who gaze on the scales of the Scytalus, except for those of faerickind, are struck motionless by the great beauty of the Serpent. To take any action of any sort requires an Int roll of 13+. The effect lasts as long as the Scytalus can be seen.

**Vis:** 6 Imágonem, scales

##### A Scytale Story

A blind beggar, who practices his trade in a town visited by the characters, has learned to use his affliction in his favor. He has spies who tell him when rich passersby approach. When they do he asks for money. If it is refused him, he holds forth his Serpent and entrances the victim (the Snake has been permanently milked of its poison). The victim is then hauled into an alley by the beggar and is robbed. A character could become the beggar's victim, and the victim may spot the beggar again later in the story, getting a chance to exact his revenge (though that requires dealing with the beggar's gang too).



#### SEPLUS, the dwarf snake

Although its size is small, the Dwarf Snake's venom is fierce, more powerful than that of any of the Aeps. The poison of the Sepus destroys bones and body alike.

##### The Sepus

**Magic Might** 10

**Size** -3

**Str** -2 **Dex** +1 **Cun** 0 **Stm** 0 **Qik** -1 **Per** +1

**Bite:** 1st +4 **Atk** +3 **Dam** -2 (plus poison)

**Fat** 0 **Def** +6 **Soak** -2

**Body Levels:** OK, -5, Incapacitated

**Abilities:** Ferocity (size slighted) 2

##### Special Abilities:

**Poison.** Anyone bitten by the Sepus must make a Strm roll of 13+ or die instantly. A successful roll still means a loss of 2 Body Levels. (Note that a bite that does not penetrate armor does not inject poison.)

**Vis:** 2 Perdo, body.





#### A Sepus Story

An assassin is hired to kill a bishop or a Significant Persona who has dealings with the characters and their Covenant. The assassin uses a Sepus to do his work. Shortly after the Significant Persona has been in contact with the characters, the assassin stealthily plants one of his Serpents on his target. The victim's body and bones disappear, leaving nothing but a pile of clothes. As the characters were the last to deal with the Persona, and the person has disappeared under such strange circumstances, it's only natural that authority figures accuse the Covenant of foul play. To prove their innocence the characters have to find the true

murderer. For starters they may find the assassin's Serpent in the Persona's fallen clothes.

#### SYRENUS, the flying serpent

This fierce white Snake flies faster than the Horse can run. Its bite contains a powerful venom — the victim dies without feeling any pain from the bite. It usually builds a nest atop rocky bluffs or on ledges along the side of a cliff. It is a vicious creature which is as fierce in protecting its nest as a magus is of his books. The Serpent lets nothing approach closer than 100 paces without flying out and attacking it. Perceptive hunters notice a lack of sound as they approach the Flying Serpent's nest — no bird sings, no cricket chirps, no rabbit scurries. The Syrenus kills them all.

#### The Flying Serpent

**Magic Might** 10

**Size** -3

**Str** -2 **Dex** +2 **Cun** 0

**Stm** 0 **Qik** +3 **Per** +1

**Bite:** 1st +7 **Atk** +5 **Dam** -1 (plus poison)

**Fat** 0 **Def** +9 **Soak** -2

**Body Levels:** OK, -5, Incapacitated

**Abilities:** Ferocity (injured) 3

**Special Abilities:**

**Poison.** Anyone bitten by the Serpent must make a Stm roll of 12+ or die instantly. A successful roll still means a loss of two Body Levels. A bite that does not penetrate armor does not poison the target.

**Vis:** 1 Perdo, body

#### A Flying Serpent Story

A group of covenfolk or local hunters are employed by the Covenant to hunt for furs given the impending winter. Among the hunters should be at least one grog. The hunters unwittingly disrupt a nest of Syrenae and all but one — the grog — are bitten without knowing it. That night the bitten hunters die in their sleep. The lone survivor is blamed for the deaths of the others. If the hunters are all villagers, the survivor is accused

of black magic and an attempt is made to lynch him when he's next in the village. Regardless of who survives, characters probably make an inquest into the hunting trip. Those truly responsible for the

deaths may be found by retracing the hunters' steps. Of course, that's only possible if the lone survivor still lives, or if a magus magically speaks with the dead hunters.









# Chapter Seven: Aves (Birds)

Among the creations that the Lord created, none are closer to Him than the Birds of the air. *Aves* are inspirational to all men. To the commoner, who's mind is flooded with religious imagery, the Birds might appear to be messengers of the Lord, or at the least holy creatures. To those of the Order of Hermes, the Birds of the air represent achievement. A magus who studies and learns may gain from his efforts and transcend above his fellows, just as the Birds transcend above the lowly creatures of the earth.

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## AVES MAGNAE (GREATER BIRDS)

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### ACCIPITER, *the hawk*

*As is the thane to the king, so is Accipiter to Aquila, and so should the consors be to the magus. The Hawk has great strength and purity, a hunter in his own right, but deferential to his master, the Logie. So should the magus's companions have the strength to be supportive and the purity of purpose to serve their superior with pride, not discontent. The huntsman's Hawk has his eyes sealed by his master to learn patience and servitude. When the hunter lifts Accipiter's hood, the Bird strikes that against which he is called. The magus's companions, too, should learn that the master chooses*



*when and what to reveal; they, like the Hawk, should respond to the master's call and do his bidding. The Hawk demonstrates that there is great pride in service — not simply for companions to magi, but for magi to the Order itself.*

*Accipiter teaches more than simple submission, though. The Hawk mates with his partner while tumbling helplessly down through the skies. As the Poet wrote:*

Now let us sport us while we may,  
And now, like amorous birds of prey  
Rather at once our time devour  
Than languish in his slow-chapp'd power.

### The Eagle

Merciful +2 Gentle +2  
Size -2  
Str -1 Dex +2 Cun +1  
Stm +1 Qik +3 Per +3 (+6 on vision rolls)  
Claws: 1st +9 Atk +8 Dam +6  
Fat +1 Soak +1 Def +10  
Body Levels: OK, -1, -5, Incapacitated  
Abilities: Ferocity (against the unjust) 5  
Powers: None  
Vis: None

#### An Eagle Story

A character, likely a superstitious grog, who has committed some sort of crime that has gone unpunished, begins to notice that an Eagle follows him. The Bird is there when the character goes outside. It perches on a Covenant spire when the character is on duty. It trails as the character travels the lands. The Eagle is a constant reminder of the character's crime and guilt. If the character is ever driven to admit his crimes, the Eagle leaves him. If the character keeps quiet, the Eagle remains vigilant. It's not long before other superstitious folk recognize the Eagle's constant presence. If that's the case, rumors quickly spread of an unpunished crime that thrives within the Covenant. Before long paranoia runs rampant as none of the covenfolk trust their fellows.

#### CICONIA, the stork

*Ciconia is named for the clacking she makes by shaking her long beak from side to side. It is said she has no tongue. When the Stork is first seen each year, spring is never far behind. Serpens fear Ciconia, and it is said that she can grind them up in her beak to feed her children. No Bird is more dutiful to her young than the Stork, for she sits upon the nest until she loses her feathers, and when her young hatch, Ciconia pierces her own breast to feed them. Nature lets the Stork heal very quickly, perhaps for her kindness, and she watches over her fledglings until they are fully grown. Legend says that any man who witnesses the Stork feeding her young with her blood, and drinks of it himself, will be healed of any illness and will enjoy good health for ten years. The Stork teaches the members of the Order compassion and sacrifice for one another. O, Stork, most generous of birds!*



### The Stork

Merciful +4 Gentle +3 Nurturing +4  
Size -2  
Str -1 Dex +2 Cun +1  
Stm +1 Qik +3 Per +3 (+6 on vision rolls)  
Claws: 1st +9 Atk +8 Dam +5  
Fat +2 Soak 0 Def -8  
Body Levels: OK, -1, -5, Incapacitated  
Abilities: Ferocity (offspring endangered) 5  
Powers: None  
Vis: None

#### A Stork Story

Unable to bear children herself, and jealous of other mothers in her village, a young wife steals the offspring of a Stork. In running off with the hatchlings she vows not to return them until the Stork brings her a child of her own. The mother Bird is enraged and to exact revenge on manfolk, curses them with infertility. This curse not only



strikes women barren, but puts a halt to unborn children; pregnant women become permanently so. If this affliction of the common people isn't enough to attract the attention of magi, a covenfolk's pregnancy is also put on hold. To lift this curse the characters must investigate the local villages, track down hatchling thief, and make her return the Birds to their rightful mother. However, the woman refuses unless the magi magically grant her a child.

#### **OLOR, the swan**

Olor is named for the whiteness of his down; he is the most graceful and most wizardly of all Birds. Many legends are told of magi who pass neither to death nor twilight, but instead, become these dignified Avis. A vision that includes Olor is considered extraordinarily good. One including the fabled Black Swan (though none has ever reported seeing an actual Black Olor, if such a thing exists) is indeed very grave. Though Swans are silent as a still pond, at their deaths they sing the most melodious song ever heard.

It is said that a magus who studies in isolation with these Birds for forty seasons will attain great power, and a serenity of spirit that transcends normal man's. But even one afternoon contemplating the majestic silence of Olor is enough to chasten and instruct any magus.

#### **The Swan Story**

Calm +4 Gentle +2 Majestic -2  
 Size -2  
 Str -1 Dex -1 Cun +2  
 Strm +1 Qik 0 Per +4  
**Attacks:** None  
 Fat +1 Soak +3 Def +6  
**Body Levels:** OK, -1, -5,  
 Incapacitated  
**Abilities:** Ferocity (disturbed) 1  
**Powers:** None  
**Vis:** None

#### **A Swan Story**

The characters spy a Black Swan in the vicinity of the Covenant prior to a grim occurrence. The Swan is the embodiment of an ancient, evil magus' spirit. During his life the magus brought some tragedy upon the Covenant that was prophesied to return. The Swan's appearance is a harbinger of that tragedy's return. The characters may kill the Swan, but doom is still impending. By researching the old prophecy and the events of the original tragedy, the characters may be able to avert its repetition. This tragedy might be a storm of evil intent, or the fall of a grim curse.

#### **PAVO, the peacock**

Pavo to sight, is the most magnificent of Birds: resilient, proud, and beautiful. He is splendidly vain and quite territorial, and in time memorial, the Peacock has served as a symbol of the Hermetic Order itself. Each feather in Pavo's tail represents a different House of the Order:

Bonisagus — purple; Bjornaer — blue;  
 Quaesitoris — white; Tytalus — orange, Verditiis — grey, Ex Miscellanea — damask; Jerbiton — brown; Flambeau — red; Tremere — green;  
 Craimon — black; Merinita — yellow; Mercere — albino

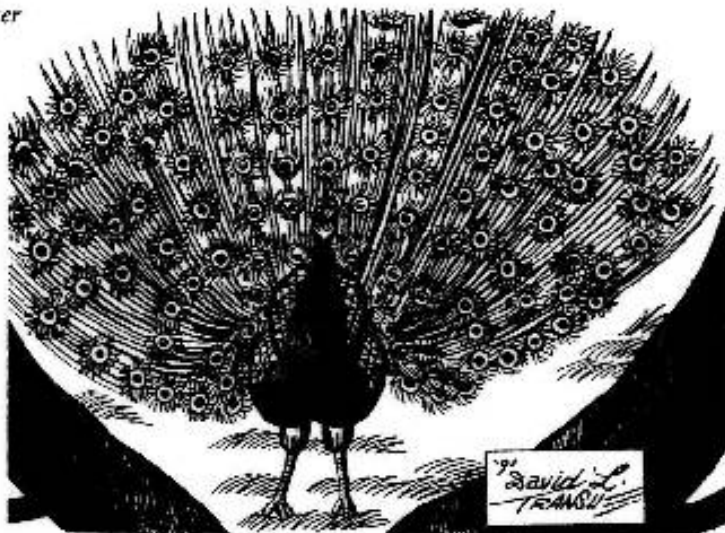
Pavo's flesh is almost magically resilient; it does not putrefy, and almost never cooks. Naturally, it is forbidden for a magus of the Order to kill a Peacock, and he who violates this dictum is cursed by his brethren. Frequently, a Peacock is kept domesticated to signify a House of the Order. Elder magi sometimes write with

an enchanted quill carved from the tail feather representing their House.

The Peacock
Magic Might 10
Proud +5 Vain +4
Size -2
Str -2 Dex 0 Con 0
Stm 0 Qik -1 Per -1
Attacks: None
Fat 0 Def +1 Soak 0
Body Levels: OK, -3, Incapacitated
Vis: 6 Vim, tail

#### A Peacock Story

In another story characters take a bold action on behalf of their House — maybe against another House — an action which could have repercussions. In order to determine whether they're action was rash, the characters may observe the results of the action had on a Peacock. If the feathers representing the



characters' House moult, they know reparations must be made within the Order. Alternatively, the characters may act and shortly afterward discover that the Peacock's feathers, representing their House, are dead! Now the characters must prepare for a retributive strike from their enemies. Given warning by the Peacock's feathers, the characters now have a chance to save their House.



#### ULULA, the owl

The Owl is the nightsage, the dark hunter. With talons like the Hawk's and perception like the Vulture's, the Owl sees into the darkness, understands it, and employs it. Ulula represents wisdom concerning dark matters and the twilight of life. It is the judge of those who fear the dark and yet tamper with it. Like the night, Ulula is disant and merciless. The Owl is doubly significant to the magus. For certainly, the magus must understand darkness to control magic. But, too, the magus must remember that the Owl's eyes are too weak to stand the magnificence of dawn. For those who follow night's predatory cruelty — the great wisdom of magic — its responsibilities and radiance may be withering.



The Owl
<b>Magic Might</b> 10
<b>Size</b> -3
Str -1 Dex +1 Cun +3
Stm +0 Qik -2 Per 0 (+5 to vision at night)
<b>Claws:</b> 1st +4 Atk +3 Dam +4
Fat +0 Soak -1 Def +6
<b>Body Levels:</b> OK, -3, Incapacitated
<b>Abilities:</b> Ferocity (those lost in the dark) 1
<b>Powers:</b> None
<b>Vis:</b> 2 Intélego, eyes

#### An Owl Story

The characters are in search of a person who has had dealings with Infernal powers, but they don't know who that person is. The Owl knows, as he is attuned with those that deal with the dark. The diabolist is marked by the constant presence of the Owl's shadow. Wherever that person goes, be it day or night, a shadow of an Owl is always nearby.



Perceptive characters may spot the shadow, but only learned ones may properly interpret its presence.

#### **VULTUR**, the vulture

*The Vulture is to the passing of life what the Eagle is to life's glory. The Eagle's dominion is life; the Vulture's shade. Like the Eagle, the Vulture can espy its prey from on high. But the Vulture's quarry is the corpse, and like death, it approaches with a slow, unnoticed flight (volatu tardo). It is said that the Vulture can see what is hidden, and that the shadow of Vultur passing over a doomed man reveals him even if he is obscured. Soldiers drawn up in ranks often look to the skies to see how many among them will die; in the air are columns of Vultures, and each will carry off a man's spirit that day. The Eagle reinvigorates himself, but the Vulture, ageless, simply fades. No person has ever seen a dead Vulture, and it is said that any man who slays one will never again sleep from that time till his death, which perhaps mercifully, is never far off.*

The Vulture
<b>Magic Might</b> 10
<b>Size</b> -2
Str 1 Dex 0 Cun 0
Stm 0 Qik -1 Per +3 (+5 vision)
<b>Beak:</b> 1st +6 Atk +5 Dam +1
Fat 0 Def +1 Soak 0
<b>Body Levels:</b> OK, -1, -5, Incapacitated
<b>Powers:</b>
<b>Reveal the Hidden, InIm 20, 0 points</b> —
When the Vulture's shadow touches one who is concealed, he is shown to all.
<b>Vis:</b> 1 Corporeo, wings

#### A Vulture Story

A former boon companion of the characters returns from the Crusades a husk of his former self. In a battle he slew a Vulture that fed upon a fallen comrade. Since that time he has been unable to sleep or eat and is now residedly awaiting his death. However, he has been unable to die, and has even failed several attempts at suicide. He now comes to the Covenant to be killed by the magi, putting an end to his miserable existence. If they will not kill him, he takes actions that cause them to wish death upon him. The magi may use any

number of spells against the man, but he cannot die until he has righted the wrong he committed. To die in peace he must put to rest a restless spirit, burying its unallowed bones. The characters may help the man find such a spirit. In the meantime he wanders the Covenant day and night, performing all sorts of tasks. Perhaps he straightens up the magi's laboratory (to their horror), or reads every book in the library and becomes a storehouse of information (in which case magi might not want him dead. . .)



## AVES MINUTA (LESSER BIRDS)

### ALAUDA, the lark

*The Lark's name tells of songful praise, and as the Poet writes, she heralds the dawn with song:*

Haply I think on thee, and then my state  
(Like to the lark at break of day arising

From sullen earth) sings hymns at heaven's gate,

*The Lark's appearance is an omen of great fortune, often signifying an improvement in station or a reversal of bad circumstances. It is said that the Lark's music can banish evil spirits as effectively as the dawn. Happy is he who hears the Lark's song!*

#### The Lark

Hopeful +3

Size -3

Str -2 Dex +1 Cun 0

Stm 0 Qik +1 Per +1

**Attacks:** None

Fat 0 Soak 0 Def +5

**Body Levels:** OK, Incapacitated

**Abilities:** Ferocity 0

**Powers:** None

**Vis:** None

### A Lark Story

The characters are locked in fierce combat with the forces of a most unnatural evil, such as a great Wurm, a legion of undead, or even the minions of the Devil. The battle wages well into the late hours of the night, and when all seems hopeless, a Lark's call is heard over the battlefield. The Bird heralds the coming of dawn and salvation, and heartens the good. At the Bird's call, the characters' opponents shriek in anger and are forced to flee even before the rise of the sun. If they can be waylaid until the sun shows its face, those life giving rays destroy the host of evil.

### ALCYON, the halcyon

*Alcyon is a sea bird that hatches its young on the shore. She lays her eggs during the coldest days of winter when the waters rise to their highest and crash roughly against the sand. Yet, when the sea reaches the Halcyon's eggs, it calms — and even the chill wind takes a gentle mind toward the bird's young. Then does Alcyon sit and warm her eggs, and over the fortnight, she hatches and feeds them. Sailors call this fortnight Halcyon Days, and during it there are no tempests, no adverse winds, not even a tide. The Halcyon teaches that the generations flourish under adversity, and that even winter can bring kindness. He who sees Alcyon's nest can be assured that the ensuing season will be kind to him.*

The Halcyon
Nurturing +2 Enduring +1
Size -3
Str -1 Dex -1 Cun 0
Strm +3 Qik 0 Per 0
<b>Attacks:</b> None
Fat +2 Soak +2 Def +8
<b>Body Levels:</b> OK, Incapacitated
<b>Abilities:</b> Ferocity (protecting offspring) 3
<b>Powers:</b> None
<b>Vis:</b> None

#### A Halcyon Story

The characters have a sea voyage to undertake, but winter climes are a constant hindrance. The journey is delayed repeatedly, but when time becomes too tight to allow another delay, the characters are blessed with the nesting of the Halcyon. If characters don't understand the significance of this sudden calm weather, sailors certainly explain it to them. Over Halcyon Days, the characters see smooth sailing. If any character is particularly religious, she may pray on behalf of the Bird, giving thanks for its blessing.

#### CORVUS, the raven

*Sable as a moonless night, the Raven is a Bird expressing the purity of order. In nature, Corvus does not feed its own young until they show the blackness of their wings. Once it accepts them, the Raven oversees all its young's needs until they mature fully. So is the Hermetic Order; though it waits to recognize its own, its rewards are full, and its protection complete. As the coat of Corvus is without blemish, so should the Order be unspotted; the mystery suggested in Corvus's dark hue represents the impenetrability of the Order's philosophy to the uninitiated. It is said that the appearance of a dappled Corvus (very rare indeed) is a sign of great disorder and impending conflict.*

The Raven
Nurturing +3 Orderly +2
Size -3
Str -3 Dex +3 Cun +2
Strm +1 Qik +3 Per +2
<b>Swoop:</b> 1st +8 Atk +6 Dam +1
Fat 0 Soak 0 Def +10
<b>Body Levels:</b> OK, Incapacitated
<b>Abilities:</b> Ferocity (offspring endangered) 3
<b>Powers:</b> None
<b>Vis:</b> None

#### A Raven Story

While involved in a story that threatens the destruction of the Covenant or the Order itself, the characters repeatedly spot a dappled Raven. The Bird is a constant reminder of the urgency of the characters' agenda. Growing familiar with the Bird's sighting, the characters may measure the success of their task by the Bird. It might be interesting to have a story appear to come to an end — the villains are defeated and order seems restored — but the mottled Raven persists. The characters still have business to attend to before order is completely restored. After the group's task is fully accomplished, the dappled Raven turns ebony.

#### COTURNIX, the quail

*When the summer has ended, then do the Quails cross the sea. Every flock is led by one known as Ortycumetra (or the Quail Mother), who flies ahead, distracting predators such as Accipiter, even with her life. Thus does the Quail represent foresight and sacrifice, qualities dear to the Order. Coturnix also consumes poisonous seed as food, but yet is it safe to eat — and delicious! All praise this small but wondrous bird!*

The Quail
Self-sacrificing -1
Size 3 Str 2 Dex 0 Cun 0 Strm 0 Qik -1 Per 0
<b>Attacks:</b> None Fat 0 Soak 0 Def +4
<b>Body Levels:</b> OK, Incapacitated
<b>Abilities:</b> Ferocity (as a martyr) 4
<b>Powers:</b> None <b>Vis:</b> None

### A Quail Story

A character with a dilemma, somehow involving self-sacrifice against another option, ponders her situation. She may feel obliged to sacrifice herself for the good of others, but is afraid to or has other conditions to consider. In weighing her decision, she spies a flock of Quail, the Mother of which flies ahead. When a Bird of prey approaches the Mother distracts it from the flock and ultimately gives herself to the predator. The character may consider this vision a Divine message or may interpret it as another sign, but perhaps bases her decision on the sighting.

#### EPOPUS, the hoopoe

The Hoopoe has a large crest and colorfully variegated plumage. Perhaps no other Bird looks just like it. When the Hoopoe perceives that its parents grow old, it preens their feathers, warms them, and licks their eyes to restore their sight. The young Epopus demonstrates nearly the same gentleness with its elders that Hirundo and Ciconia do their young. So the Hoopoe teaches the young member of the Order not only respect for his elder, but to serve those who have nourished him. Do not all see old age, even the most fortunate? If Epopus, without human reason, can do such kindness, all the more kindness should the wise members of the Order show their elders.

#### The Hoopoe

Gentle +2 Respectful +3  
 Size -3  
 Str 0 Dex +1 Con 0  
 Stm +1 Qik 0 Per +1 (+6 to recognize the elderly)  
 Attacks: None  
 Fat +1 Soak -1 Def +6  
 Body Levels: OK, incapacitated  
 Abilities: Ferocity (protecting the elderly) 5  
 Powers: None  
 Vis: None

### A Hoopoe Story

A character, probably a grog, with family not far from the Covenant abandons her kin and embraces her new life. She might leave her family after a painful argument or after years of beliefs disparate from her family's. However, now the grog's



parents are dying and one of the character's siblings comes to the Covenant. The character's parents want to make amends. The grog may refuse to go home, and while on guard duty watches a young Hoopoe tend to its elderly parents in their nest. The aged Birds die as the grog's night ends, but she recognizes the parents' happiness with their offspring's love. The character may respond so to her family if the scene moves her.

#### GALLUS, the cock

Gallus symbolizes magical power, and prognosticators frequently read the Cock's innards to divine whether a person's intended actions are wise. The Cock's limbs, mixed with liquid gold, are also a remedy for sickness. Gallus crows throughout the night, and his call is hane to evil spirits. Cockcrow has also been known to quell storms, soothe the anxious, protect the traveler from accidental harm, and to usher in the morning star. Gallus is the rustic man's porter, and a home with one is never an evil place.

### The Cock

Noble +1 Devoted +1  
Size -3  
Str -1 Dex -1 Cun +1  
Stm +1 Qik 0 Per +2 (-5 toward evil)  
Beak: 1st +6 Atk +5 Dam +2  
Fat +2 Soak +2 Def +8  
Body Levels: OK, Incapacitated  
Abilities: Ferocity (against evil) 6  
Powers: None  
Vis: 1 Vim, body

#### A Cock Story

Characters visit the rural home of a friend of theirs, one they haven't seen in some time. Perhaps the characters are passing through and need a place to stay overnight. At least one of the characters should be closely familiar with this friend and his home. Staying at the house, this character senses some intangible change that the place has undergone. The home owner has in fact been corrupted by Infernal powers and arranges for the death of the characters in the night. Just prior to his assassination, the character familiar with the home realizes the change: there is no Cock crowing. As the home owner previously had a prize Cock, the character realizes something is amiss; dark powers are at work. Just at that moment, the corrupted home owner attacks, but his victim is alert.

**LUCINA, the nightingale; HIRUNDO, the swallow; and PLUVIA, the plover**

All magi know the story of Philomela, raped by Tereus, the unfaithful husband of Procne, and how Procne in vengeance slew their son Itys and served him to Tereus for dinner. In legend, during Tereus's pursuit of the sisters — Philomela and Procne — the three underwent transformations. Procne became the Nightingale, sweet of song, Philomela the mute Swallow, and Tereus, the cruel Plover. Pluvia means weeping, and this Bird teaches the lesson that the abuse of power, particularly over the weak and dependent, leads only to bitter regret. The Plover is an ugly, cruel hunting Bird that not merely cries as did Tereus for his lost son, but also bears tear-drop markings on its plumage, only showing itself when the weather weeps as well. To see

the Plover at any other time is a very bad omen. As with Ulula, the joy of the sun's light is too great for Pluvia.

In contrast to this embittered Bird's grim plaint, the Nightingale's song, though very sad, is pleasing — and it is said that the song is an eternal remembrance of the innocent Itys, whom Procne regrets having slain. Thus does the Nightingale cherish its young as the Order should its members. Lucina is vigilant during the cold hours of darkness, keeping her young warm with her body and their hearts warm with her song. So should the Order be encouraging in its protection, especially elder members toward the younger.

Hirundo, though only able to twitter mutely (for did not poor Philomela have her tongue cut out by remorseless Tereus?), is, as a Bird, the same resourceful one she was as a woman. Shut away and unable to speak, Philomela cleverly wove a tapestry depicting all Tereus's crimes and smuggled it out to her sister. Thus, as Hirundo, the Swallow, she weaves her nests wisely, four walls of straw held together by gum and mud, almost always built in the dwellings of men. Thus are her young protected from cruel predators as well as from wind and rain. And poor Philomela, deprived forever of her lovely voice, dearly protects the other senses of her children. For it is well known that when young Swallows go blind by nature or accident, the mother can restore their vision through a certain remedy. Legends teach the worthy wayfarer lessons of frugality and caring that Hirundo teaches us. Has ever one so silent spoken so much to magi?

### The Nightingale, The Swallow, and the Plover

Melancholy +3  
Size -3  
Str -1 Dex +2 Cun 0  
Stm -1 Qik +1 Per 0  
Attacks: None  
Fat 0 Soak -1 Def +5  
Body Levels: OK, Incapacitated  
Abilities: Ferocity (against unfaithful lovers) 6  
Powers: None  
Vis: None

#### A Bird Story

When characters are ruled by their passions and fight amongst themselves, they may be reminded of the possible repercussions of their behavior. As they perform foul deeds, the characters realize they

are being watched by the Nightingale, Swallow and Plover. If they are superstitious or wary of signs from higher powers, the characters may realize their danger and amend their ways. This use of these Birds allows the A X Storyguide to put an end to character bickering, preserving storytelling, without keeping players in line through Storyguide intervention.

#### **PICA, the magpie**

*The Magpie's name means "imitator," and true to its name, this bird can mimic the words it hears humans speak. But the Magpie is also known as "the chatterer," because its talk is not real and because it speaks incessantly, enchanted with its own imitative cleverness. This makes the bird easy prey for hunters, human and wild. The Magpie reminds the magus to speak with discretion, and mindfully. The appearance of a Magpie often signifies deception — if not by humans, then by the Magpie itself, for Magpies are thieves too, and many a coin has lined the chatterer's nest!*

#### **The Magpie**

Mocking +2 Cautious -1 Talkative +3  
 Size -3  
 Str -2 Dex +2 Cun -1  
 Stm -1 Qik +3 Per 0  
 Swoop: 1st +5 Atk +5 Dam +1  
 Fat 0 Soak 0 Def +10  
 Body Levels: OK, Incapacitated  
 Abilities: Ferocity (mocked in return) 1  
 Powers: None  
 Vis: None

#### **A Magpie Story**

An enemy of a magus wants to know the magus's latest plans, and engineers a scheme to use the magus's apprentice and the bestial world against his foe. The magus, one of the characters, is interrupted in his chambers or lab by the sudden intrusion of a wounded Magpie. The bird has been hurt in a storm and cannot fly. If the magus doesn't care for the Bird, the magus's apprentice does. While it heals the Bird picks up bits of the magus's conversations.



Once set free, the Bird is captured by the character's opponent, who learns some of the character's plans through the Bird.

#### **TURTUR, the turtle-dove**

*This Bird's name comes from her cooing. She is peaceful and Hermetic. During the warm seasons she inhabits mountaintops, sitting near fresh streams. If she*



sees a Hawk, she dives underwater to save herself. During the winter, Turtur lives in the hollow trunks of trees. She protects her young from Wolves by spreading squill leaves over her nest, which Wolves dislike. In all things the Turtle-dove is peaceful and gentle, as are the best among magi. He who is visited by Turtur is promised a peaceful, contemplative existence. If the magus lives alone, like the Dove, he will find happiness in study that the restlessness in other magi denies.

<b>The Turtle-Dove</b>
Calm+3 Gentle +3 Cautious +2
Size -3
Str -2 Dex -1 Con 0
Stm 0 Qik -1 Per +3 (+4 predators)
<b>Attacks:</b> None
Fat 0 Soak 0 Def +5
<b>Body Levels:</b> OK, Incapacitated
<b>Abilities:</b> None
<b>Powers:</b> None
<b>Vis:</b> None

#### A Turtle-Dove Story

The characters find themselves dealing with a dangerous Wolf, or even a Werewolf. Baiting a trap for the beast, the characters may reflect upon the Turtle-dove and her ways. By spreading squill leaves around an area, the characters may leave the Wolf one means of escape once they have lured it to a spot. With only one direction in which to escape, the Wolf may charge through it, playing right into the characters' hands.

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## AVES MIRAE (EXTRAORDINARY BIRDS)

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### APIS, the bee

*These wondrous little winged ones all live together in one house, a hive, cooperatively. Yet, they also have order: they have kings, they have workers, they have armies. Like the Order, they arrange for their own king freely, not casting with lots or electing him through some other unfortunate form of chance. As the House of Bonisagus leads the Order, so is the King of Bees distinguished by natural signs, his size and appearance. All the other bees freely choose to work under him, and labor, food, and flight are shared amongst all. Their*

*labor produces honey, a sweet food loved by all of nature, and by nothing ill. Honey soothes the throat, heals wounds, and may even be taken for ulcers. The hive of Apis, too, is the product of his own industry, and though bees work with a joyous competition, no bee ever does anything in malice. Though Apis can sting, he does so only in defense, revenge, or for the cause of his hive — and as cautious should the magi of the Order be in the exercise of their own sting! Did not Bonisagus observe these marvellous ones and thence conceive the Hermetic Code? The Poet writes:*

Therefore doth heaven divide  
The state of man in divers functions,  
Setting endeavor in continual motion;  
To which is fixed, as an aim or butt,  
Obedience; for so work the honey-bees,  
Creatures that by a rule in nature teach  
The act of order to a peopled kingdom.  
They have a king, and officers of sorts,  
Where some, like magistrates, correct at home;  
Others, like merchants, venter trade abroad;  
Others, like soldiers, armed in their stings,  
Make boot upon the summer's velvet buds,  
Which pillage they with merry march bring  
home  
To the tent-royal of their emperor;  
Who busied in his majesty surveys  
The singing masons building roofs of gold,  
The civil citizens kneading up the honey,  
The poor mechanic porters crowding in  
Their heavy burthens at his narrow gate,  
The sad-eyed justice, with his surly hum,  
Delivering o'er to executors pale  
The lazy yawning drone.

*O, Order of magi! Look to this tiny world to understand thine own!*

**Vis:** 2 Creo, hive

#### A Bee Story

Magi at the Covenant must decide on a punishment for an unruly, insubordinate grog — one of the characters. The magi wisely decide to turn the grog into a Bee for a day to teach him the

importance of order and respect. As a Bee the grog is ordered around by other Bees and is quickly taught his place in the hive. Marvelling at the achievements that organized Bees can accomplish, the grog realizes that his disobedience is detrimental to the Order, which is so much like the society of the Bee. This story could be told while characters partake of another story, or could be told with only the one player. For added interest, the grog, in Bee form, could also learn of a plot being formulated within the Covenant, a plot that would shake the Covenant's foundations. Having learned this secret, the Bee-grog must try and communicate the danger to the other characters.



A Bat Story

**VESPERTILIO, the bat**

*This creature takes its name from the night and its refuge from the day. It is among the most unnatural of nature's winged creations, having four limbs and sharp teeth as well as wings. The presence of Vespertilia (for one Bat is hardly ever seen alone) is always a sign of the presence of evil. Vespertilio brings forth its young live as does man, not in eggs as do birds, and it has oftentimes been thought that bats are the punished souls of the cursed. Vespertilia also cling to one another like links in a shirt of mail, and if the uppermost one is dislodged, all the others are scattered. This Demonic beast embodies the weakness of evil fraternities that are based on hierarchy, and embodies the necessity for the glorious Order's existence.*

The Bat	
Malicious +3	Brave 1
<b>Size</b> -3	
Str -2	Dex +3 Con +2
Stm 0	Qik -1 Per -2 (+3 at night)
<b>Teeth:</b> 1st +6 Atk +6 Dam +1	
Fat 0	Soak +2 Def +7
<b>Body Levels:</b> OK, Incapacitated	
<b>Abilities:</b> Ferocity (against the good) 3	
<b>Powers:</b> None	
<b>Vis:</b> 1 Vim per 100 pairs of wings	

A group of Covenant members are away from the fortress on a quest to root out and destroy a powerful source of evil. The remainder of the covenant wait for a sign of the characters' success or failure. Then, one night, a grog on guard hears the cries of Bats without the fortress walls. On investigation the grog finds the Bats behaving in one of two ways. If the characters have defeated the evil, the Bats fall dead from the trees. If the characters have been bested by evil, the Bats flurry about in clouds, swooping down upon the grog and Covenant, gloating in the triumph of their kindred.

**AVES FABULAE  
(FABULOUS BIRDS)**

**CALADRIL, birds of mystical healing**

*The Caladrii are Divine Birds sent by the Powers That Be to aid His most devoted servants who have fallen. The Birds are pure white and the size of a Heron, with the curved beak of a Raptor. Of pure spirit, the Birds are only found in regions of purity, particularly those of marsh and swamp.*

*The Caladrii are also shy of humanity and can only be tracked by the most skilled woodsmen. However, if it can be captured, the Bird is of immeasurable value. Its look cures mortal man of illness, but for the Bird to survive its act of goodwill it must be released to grace the*



sies again. The Bird cannot be tamed, but can be caged. If mistreated in any way, it employs its power to harm rather than its power to heal.

The Caladrii
<b>Divine Might</b> 21
Secretive +5 Timid +5
<b>Size</b> -3
Cun +4 Per +5 Str +5
<b>Attacks:</b> None
Fat +10 Def +5 Soak +5
<b>Body Levels:</b> OK, -3, Incapacitated
<b>Abilities:</b>
Ferocity (mistreated) 5
<b>Evasiveness:</b> The <i>Caladrii</i> avoid human contact. Once a hunter has spotted one of these Birds he must make Track rolls of 15+ to follow it to its nest.
<b>Powers:</b>
Cure the Cursed Body, CrCo 25, 3 points — The Bird can cure the diseases of any person



that it chooses to look upon. That person must be of pure heart and good intention though; the vile do not receive the Bird's blessing. After imparting its gift, the Bird must be set free to fly in the noonday sun or is incapable of curing again. The Scriptures even state that if the Bird is not set free after doing its good, it dies.

**Curse of the Healthy Body, PeCo 30, 3 points** — If the Bird chooses to pointedly look away from someone, that person contracts a lethal disease, like leprosy. This curse is beyond the healing of Hermetic power. Only the forgiveness of the Lord can lift it.

**Vis:** 10 Vim, body. This vis cannot be used against the Dominion, nor for vile purposes.

#### A Caladrii Story

A dread disease has struck a magus or a favored *Amicus*, and the illness has been proof against all Hermetic efforts. The Bird's power is described in the Covenant library, or is brought to magi's attention by a local priest, who is convinced that the disease is the Lord's curse on the pagans. Finding, not to mention gaining the Bird's help, is exceedingly difficult. For drama, the characters encounter a diseased and dying lord or peasant on the way back to the Covenant, after having captured the Bird. If the dying character is willing to sacrifice his healing for this other's, the Bird is willing to heal the character in return for his good deed.

#### CONDOR MAGNITUDINIS TERRIBILIS, *the roc*

*Even less is known about this legendary avian than of the Phoenix. The primary account of it comes from a fragment in the remaining journals of Bonisagus, who has writ of it, "near the sea is a certain bird of an incredible magnitude, whom our countrymen call a Roc, which is able and accustomed to take up, not only a man, but also a whole ship in her beak." Legends say that the common name for this monstrous Bird is derived from its life at the top of a mountainous cliff, and that its eggs, when encountered, are mistaken for huge boulders. Surely the Bird must live a long time, for it is only once or twice in a generation that ships disappear, always in the early spring. Commoners say that the Roc carries off ships to feed the crews to its young, in the same manner that a songbird fills its own young's mouths with grubworms.*

### The Roc

**Magic Might** 30

**Size** +7

**Str** +11 **Dex** -1 **Cun** -1

**Stm** +11 **Qik** +1 **Per** +3

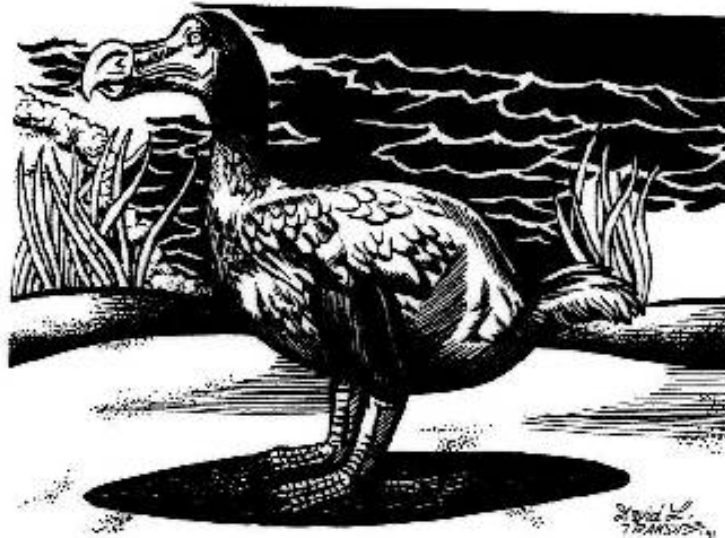
**Claws:** 1st +10 **Atk** +6 **Dam** +24  
(The Roc is able to attack multiple targets at the same time. Simply make one roll and apply the results to every character within a 5 pace radius.)

**Fat** +11 **Soak** +20 **Def** 4

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

**Powers:** None

**Vis:** 8 Animal, body.



*would only take what magic gives! Woe to those who trust blindly! Woe to those who are uncaring, uncaring!*

### A Roc Story

The Covenant of Nepolitis, located in the Novgorad Tribunal, holds its annual *vis* auction just after the ice breaks. Ships from Covenants throughout Europe journey to Nepolitis to bid on this year's *vis* supply. As fate would have it, this year's auction coincides with the renewal of the Roc's attacks. A ship bearing vast wealth and magic, bound for Nepolitis, is snapped up and carried off. Though the Covenant that owns the ship lays claim to its contents, there is an "every Covenant for itself" race to the Roc's aerie to steal the ship's contents. Of course, those who get to the nest must contend with the Roc, not to mention its young which have developed a taste for human flesh.

#### DIDUS INEPTUS, the dodo

*Didus has a huge, clumsy body and small, ineffectual wings. Even running, it is slow, and except to feed, rarely does it bother to move at all. The Dodo is nature's warning to man: in fattened lassitude the gifts of life lie dormant. Because of its gluttony and its lack of industry, Didus cannot fly, as it was clearly intended to do. Because of its slothfulness, trusting, and indifference, the Dodo waits to be slaughtered. Woe to those who*

### The Dodo

**Magic Might** 20

**Slothful** +4 **Docile** +4 **Uncaring** +4

**Size** -2

**Str** +1 **Dex** -3 **Cun** -1

**Stm** -3 **Qik** -3 **Per** -3

**Attacks:** None

**Fat** -3 **Soak** -1 **Def** -3

**Body Levels:** OK, Incapacitated

**Abilities:** None

**Powers:**

**Curse of Complacency, ReMe 25, 0 points**  
— The Dodo causes those around it to become complacent just like it. In order to accomplish any task a person must first make a *Stm* roll of 12+ or be distracted from the task. If any actions are taken to move the Dodo from the characters' vicinity, those efforts become increasingly difficult as each fails. For each failed attempt to move the Bird, the next increases the 12 Difficulty number by 1. Those distracted go to sleep, go drinking, or otherwise "go fishing."

**Vis:** 6 Rego, body



#### A Dodo Story

A Dodo takes up residence in or around the Covenant. Covenfolk fall into laziness within a day. Only the most determined characters may find the source of this complacency. Though the characters may try to scare the Dodo away, the Bird is too lazy to move, regardless of horror presented to it. Of course, the more characters try to remove the Bird, the more difficult it becomes to dispose of. Clever characters may realize that efforts to remove the Dodo from within the Covenant are useless. Before they fall completely into slumber, characters may leave the Covenant and deal with the Dodo from without its "aura of laziness."



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#### PHOENIX, the phoenix

Perhaps the Phoenix is merely a legend, for since Bonisagus himself there have been no recorded sightings of it by the Order. There is only one such Bird, and nobody knows whether it be male or female. Phoenix is so called because of its exotic, reddish purple coloring. It is rumored to live in the East, whence its legend came, but not even through magic has anyone been able to locate it. This is because the Phoenix itself is wonderfully magical.

Phoenix lives for five hundred years, and when it begins to grow aged, it builds for itself a funeral pyre of branches, rare dried leaves, and spices. Settling atop it, the Phoenix turns towards the sun and flaps its wings to collect the heat of the sun's rays. When the Phoenix becomes hot as the sun itself, it bursts into flame, consuming body and pyre, leaving only ashes. But, from those ashes, nine days later, arises a new Phoenix, as radiant and mysterious as the one that preceded it.

Many magi have been known to search without fruit for the Phoenix, particularly those of the House Flambeau, who revere it as their special symbol. A magus of that House who has a vision of the Phoenix always comes into astounding power, and it is believed that any magus of that House who actually encounters the Phoenix will, like it, become immortal. But other magi, too, have sought the Phoenix, for in a fragment of a now-lost riddle, great secrets seem promised to him who discovers this mystical, legendary Bird:

Beauty, Truth, and Rarity,

Grace in all simplicity,

Here enclos'd, in cinders lie.

#### A Phoenix Story

Traveling through the mountains, the characters come across an enormous funeral pyre, one which could accommodate several warriors if men were burned in it. The magi get a definite sense of magic



in the pyre's ashes. Though they can take some of the ashes for study, they cannot take them all. In fact, the ashes are those of a "dead" *Phoenix* that will soon be reborn, but it cannot be until the missing ashes are returned. Thus, when the characters get back to their Covenant, numerous inexplicable fires break out. The fires may seem an attack from other magi, but investigation of the

pyre ashes proves that they alight every time a fire breaks out at the fortress. By the time the characters realize what the ashes are from, much of the Covenant may be in ruins. Only by returning the ashes can the fires be put to an end, and can the *Phoenix* rise again. Though the characters now know the dying place of the *Phoenix*, that knowledge does them little good as the Bird chooses another site for its next "death."







# Chapter Eight:

## Pisces

### (fish)

As Creation has put life and beast on the land, so too has it put life and beast at sea. The mariner knows well the dangers of ocean travel. Not only must he fare wind and wave, but he must appease the creatures of the sea lest they bar his passage.

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### PISCES MAGNAE

#### (GREATER SEA BEASTS)

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#### *BALAENA, the whale*

*The Whale gets its name from its blowing waters. The female Whale does not copulate with the male, but conceives instead with the Musculus.*

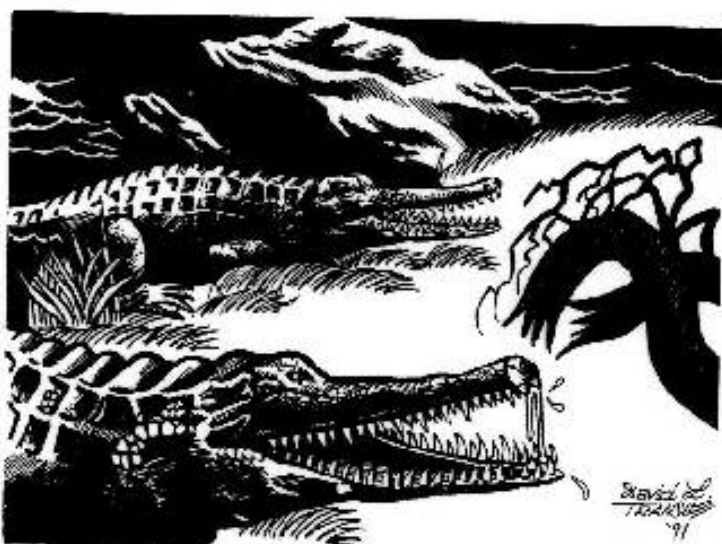
The Whale
Size +5
Str +7 Dex 0 Cun +0
Stm +8 Qik +1 Per +2
Bite: 1st +7 Atk +6 Damage +14
Fat +8 Soak +17 Def -2
Body Levels: OK, 0/0/0, -1/-1, -3/-3, -5/-5, Incapacitated
Abilities: Ferocity (harpooned) 2
Vis: None

#### A Whale Story

A marauding band of pirates is riding a wave of terror that stretches the entire coastline near where the Covenant is located. The Covenant's supply



lines are cut by the raiders. In dealing with the marauders the characters discover that a Whale is in their employ and is the source of their success. One of the pirates, a hedge wizard of sorts, holds a charm over the Whale. The beast swallowed bait the wizard left for it, so now holds the charm's



partner in its stomach, making it subject to the mortal's command. The wizard thus has in his control a weapon of great destructive potential. If the characters intend to restore their supply lines and overcome this non-Hermetic threat, they must somehow extract the partner charm from the Whale's stomach. While they're in there, who knows what — or who — the magi find

#### **CROCODILUS, the crocodile**

*The Crocodile lives in the river Nile, where it grows to the length of twenty ells or more. Its teeth and claws are both powerful. The toughness of its hide allows it to withstand most assaults, save that of certain Fishes, who use a serrated fin to open the tender belly of the creature.*

#### **The Crocodile**

**Size** +3

**Str** +5 **Dex** -1 **Cun** -1

**Str** +6 **Qik** -1 **Per** 0

**Bite:** 1st +3 **Atk** +4 **Damage** +16

**Claw:** 1st +1 **Atk** +2 **Damage** +4

**Fat** +6 **Def** 2 **Soak** +16 (underbelly +3)

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

**Abilities:** Ferocity (hungry) 1

**Vis:** None

#### **A Crocodile Story**

A character, preferably a grog or companion, in a southern realm is separated from his comrades by a river. There's no place to ford the river so reunion seems impossible. The river is also the realm of the King of the Crocodiles, an intelligent Reptile that can speak. It approaches the character and promises to carry her across the river, without reward. The King also promises not to harm the character, and swears so on his tail. However, the King has commanded some of his subjects to lie below the water and wait until the two cross. Then they are commanded to spring upon the helpless human. Catching the

character so, the Crocodile King keeps his word; he doesn't harm the character. Wise characters forego the King's offer while wily ones accept it, and may fool the King into offering more protection than he intends.

#### **DELPHINUS, the dolphin**

*The Dolphin is the fastest creature in the water, easily outracing ships and other sea creatures. Dolphins sometimes gather to hear a song, or the songs of music playing in the wind. In combat they are courageous and may strike fear in their opponents. They are also the most social of creatures and like nothing more than to hold conversation with mortals who they think worth their time and equal to their wits. Highly intelligent, they know everything about the sea in the area where they swim — nothing occurs in their realm without their knowledge. While some say that Dolphins were once Faerie, cast out of Arcadia, others believe them magical creatures natural to our world.*

The Dolphin
Brave +4
Size 0
Str +2 Dex +1 Cun +2
Stm +3 Qik +6 Per +3
<b>Ram:</b> 1st +12 Atk +7 Dam +3
Fat +3 Def +10 Soak +6
<b>Body Levels:</b> OK, 0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated
<b>Abilities:</b> Ferocity (outnumbered) 4
<b>Vis:</b> None

#### A Dolphin Story

Travelling at sea, a character plays an instrument near the stern of the ship and is amazed to find Dolphins swimming alongside the vessel, listening to the character's song. In fact, they begin to sing along with their high pitched voices. This bizarre choir may meet on several occasions. Becoming used to the Dolphins and their song, the character is made aware of impending danger when the Dolphins' song turns harried.

#### GLADIUS, the sword-fish

*Pliny speaks of the Sword-fish, whose beak is pointed like the sword. The Gladius hates ships of all kinds, and drives its beak into the side of such to sink them. It then wrenches its beak out of the ship, leaving a gaping hole behind, and drives its beak in yet again. When the ship has sunk it swims about and snaps up all the morsels that are loosened. In this way it is like the Gull that flies up in the air with clams and drop them on rocks below in order to eat the meat within.*

The Sword-Fish
Size 0
Str +2 Dex +2 Cun +1
Stm +3 Qik +3 Per -2
<b>Beak:</b> 1st +10 Atk +9 Dam +9
Fat +3 Def +8 Soak +2
<b>Body Levels:</b> OK, -1, -5, Incapacitated
<b>Abilities:</b> Ferocity (toward boats) 3
<b>Vis:</b> 2 Aquam, beak



#### A Sword-Fish Story

Marooned aboard a small boat, or out to sea investigating a disturbance, characters are attacked by a Sword-fish. The beast is intent upon sinking the small craft and makes repeated strikes at it. The beast's sword may be fended off as if it were a weapon used by a man, but attacks from beneath the craft cannot be countered. Clever characters may devise a way to cease the attacks, grabbing the Fish's sword as it pierces the boat, and bashing it out of shape so that the sword cannot be retracted. Maybe the Fish attacks boats because fishermen are taking magical Fish from the sea, Fish that are rarely eaten by sea creatures, but maintain the life energy of the ocean. Learning of this development, the characters may be able to influence fishermen to desist from netting their newfound catch.





## PISCES MINUTA (LESSER SEA BEASTS)

### ANGUILLA, the eel

The Eel is similar to the Snake. Anguilla is born of mud, and because of this slips from the grasp of anyone trying to hold it. If an Eel is drowned in wine, those who drink come to despise such spirits and avoid them in the future.

#### The Eel

**Magic Might** 10  
**Size** -3  
**Str** -2 **Dex** +2 **Cun** -1  
**Stm** +1 **Qik** +2 **Per** -1  
**Attacks:** None  
**Fat** +1 **Def** +6 **Soak** -2  
**Body Levels:** OK, Incapacitated  
**Abilities:** Ferocity (anchoring a ship) 1

#### The Eel Continued

##### Powers:

**Ward of the Slippery Grip, ReCo 5, 0 points** — The Eel is difficult to hold given its slippery body. Those attempting to grasp an Eel must first strike it, and then make a Dex test of 15+ to hold on. If the roll fails, the Eel squirms loose and is not hurt by the attack.

**Vis:** 1 Corpore, skin

#### A Eel Story

A character with a drunkenness Flaw becomes a liability to his fellows, who determine to do something about their friend. Wives tales speak of the Eel as a cure for alcoholism. Finding an Eel is easy, but catching it is another matter entirely. The catch could become virtual slapstick, but the fun ends when the characters report for duty, at the Covenant, covered in mud. Though the drowned Eel may put the drunk off his "medicine," it may instill in him a taste for Eel, maybe to the exclusion of all other foods. Let's just hope the former drunk isn't the Covenant cook.

### ECHENEIS, the remora

The Remora, despite its small size, holds great power. Appearing like a large golden fish, it is difficult to distinguish from other forms of sea life. Simply by sucking hard, the Remora can hold a ship rooted in place regardless of wind or wave. The Remora can be used thusly to anchor a ship to a certain spot, and stories have been told of how captains have used its power to prevent their ships from sailing over the side of the world.

#### The Remora

**Magic Might** 15  
**Size** -4  
**Str** -3 **Dex** +1 **Cun** +1 **Stm** +1 **Qik** +1 **Per** 0  
**Attacks:** None **Fat** +1 **Def** +6 **Soak** -2  
**Body Levels:** OK, Incapacitated  
**Abilities:** Ferocity (anchoring a ship) 1  
**Powers:**  
**Anchor of Flesh, ReAq 15, 0 points** — The Remora can stop a ship from moving, unless that ship is magically propelled and its Magic Level exceeds that of the Remora.  
**Vis:** 5 Rego, body

### A Remora Story

The characters are staging an assault on a seaside cult. The characters approach by sea, and after pilfering a magical object possessed by the cult, spill barrels filled with *Echeneae* into the harbor. Thus, when the pursuing cultists man their ships, they find the vessels moored to the water's basin. Of course, this tactic requires that the characters first acquire enough *Echeneae*, which may in itself involve the stranding of many ships.

#### LUPIS, the pike

The Pike is a clever Fish. When the fisherman casts his nets, the Pike digs up the sand and lies within the hole. In this manner he escapes detection and lives on. The wisdom of the Pike is contained, though, for there are other traps which it does not learn to avoid. From the Pike magi may come to understand the weakness of their Infernal enemies. Though Infernal beings may indeed be clever in their pursuit of the war, they are not truly wise in how they conduct it. They understand only their own game and magi's old tricks; they can never foretell what magi will try next.

#### The Pike

**Size** -3  
**Str** -2 **Dex** +1 **Cun** +3  
**Stm** -1 **Qik** +2 **Per** +3  
**Bite:** 1st +4 **Atk** +3 **Dam** -2  
**Fat** -1 **Def** +6 **Soak** -2  
**Body Levels:** OK, -3, Incapacitated  
**Abilities:** Ferocity (successfully netted) 1  
**Vis:** None

### A Pike Story

The characters approach a river or lake and spot a boy fishing at its edge. The boy apparently has a large fish on the line as his stick is doubled over and he's being dragged step-by-step toward the water. Suddenly he's pulled in. The boy clearly needs rescuing. A parentally-minded grog may save and befriend the boy. His father was killed two years ago and he now lives with his mother. The boy and his father used to go fishing all the time, and for years sought the very Pike the boy had hooked. The job of resuming the chase clearly goes to the boy's new father figure. O, and by the

way, the boy's father was killed by a local lord who covets the boy's mother and won't leave her alone.

#### MULLUS, the mullet

The flesh of the Red Mullet cools the lust of those who ingest it. The Grey Mullet however, is so named because of its quickness in the water. It leaps over the nets of fishermen. The Mullet can be found in all waters, but it prefers to remain as close to the air as possible, for it does not truly consider itself a creature of the sea. This Fish combines the peacefulness of the water with the freshness of the air. Those who eat of its flesh have their minds purified and their calmness restored. It should always be fed to angry men.

#### Grey Mullet

**Size** -3  
**Str** -3 **Dex** +3 **Cun** +2  
**Stm** -1 **Qik** +5 **Per** +2  
**Bite:** 1st +6 **Atk** +4 **Dam** -3  
**Fat** -1 **Def** +9 **Soak** -3  
**Body Levels:** OK, -3, Incapacitated  
**Abilities:** Ferocity (threatened with netting) 1

#### Red Mullet

**Magic Might** 5  
**Size** +5  
**Str** +7 **Dex** 0 **Cun** +0  
**Stm** +8 **Qik** +1 **Per** +2  
**Bite:** 1st +7 **Atk** +6 **Damage** +14  
**Fat** +8 **Soak** +17 **Def** -2  
**Body Levels:** OK, 0/0, -1, -5, Incapacitated  
**Abilities:** Ferocity (threatened with netting) 2  
**Powers:**

**Feast for the Soothed Mind, ReMe 10, 0 points** — Eating the flesh of a Red Mullet soothes the angry mind of the eater. That person receives a Personality Trait of Calm +3 for one day after the feast. If the character has a Personality that's opposed to Calm, like Hostile or Violent, the score of that Trait and Calm are averaged, the Trait with the remaining positive score still operating, but at that new score. If the eater already has a Calm Trait, his is combined with the score offered by the Fish.

**Vis:** Red, 1 Rego in fillets. Grey, none.



### A Mullet Story

A character in the Covenant is made angry with the arrival of or recent activities of some old enemy. To act against that enemy would be politically disastrous — maybe the new arrival is now a powerful member of the Order. Anyway, to contain their friend, the other characters prepare him some Red Mullet. If the hostile character dislikes seafood, the others may have to force him to eat. . .

#### **SERRA**, the flying saw-fish

When the Serra spots a ship, it leaps from the water and spreads its fins like sails to catch the wind. It flies, trying to outspeed the sailing ship, but soon grows tired and falls back into the ocean. The apprentice should closely examine such behavior; the calm steady course of the ship is better than the frenzied, erratic behavior of the Serra. The Serra oftentimes attacks a ship with its saw-edged fins.

#### The Flying Fish

**Size** +1  
 Str +2 Dex +1 Cun +0  
 Stm +2 Qik +4 Per +2  
**Fins:** 1st +6 Atk +4 Damage +6  
 Fat +2 Def +4 Soak +5  
**Body Levels:** OK, 0/0, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated  
**Abilities:** Ferocity (pursuing a ship) 1  
 Vis: 2 Auram, "wings"

### A Flying Fish Story

A magus belonging to House Verditiis is trying to create a magical device that allows its wearer to fly. He has thus far studied the wings of Birds, but cannot translate their properties into his own experiments. However, when at sea, he spies a Flying Fish and is inspired in his work. Rather than design a device that flaps like wings, he realizes that wings which spread and sail are the key.

#### **TORPEDO**, the electric ray

To touch the Torpedo is dangerous, so says Pliny, causing paralysis in the arm and body. Magi take note that even small things can hold great power.

Unwary experimentation with such beings can bring an early end to one's life.

#### The Electric Ray

**Magic Might** 10  
**Size** -4  
 Str -2 Dex +1 Cun 0  
 Stm -1 Qik +2 Per +1  
**Bite:** 1st +3 Atk -2 Dam -1  
 Fat -1 Def +7 Soak -3  
**Body Levels:** OK, Incapacitated  
**Abilities:** Ferocity (held by larger creatures) 1  
**Powers:**  
**Jolt, ReCo 20/ReAn 20, 2 points** — The Torpedo can paralyze humans and animals with a jolt of electricity, unless the victim makes a successful Stm roll of 8+ to resist the shock. Paralyzed victims may regain their mobility after making another Stm roll, allowed once per Combat Round.  
 Vis: 3 Rego, mouth

### An Electric Ray Story

After creating his winged device, the Verditiis magus investigates farther into the realm of *Pisces*, intrigued by his previous discovery. Discovering the shock of the Torpedo, the magus manages to isolate the organ that generates the shock. He builds a similar organ, only larger and intended to

power a device he worked on and failed with in the past. Whether the device operates as expected with this strange power source is another question.

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## PISCES FABULAE (FABULOUS SEA BEASTS)

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### **ASPIDOCELEON, the asp-turtle**

*Aspidocheleon anchors itself on the surface of the open sea, and lies asleep for a long time, such that grasses begin to grow on its back. Sailing ships often confuse it for an island, and anchor their ships to it. But their cooking fires disturb the great beast, so that it wakes and, plunging into the water to avoid the heat of the flames, pulls the ship's crew to a watery doom.*

*When hungry, the Aspidocheleon opens its mouth, and like the Panther, a pleasant aroma blows forth. Larger Fish are not attracted, but all smaller ones are drawn there. When its mouth is filled with Fish attracted there, it closes its mouth and devours the victims.*

#### The Aspidocheleon

<p><b>Size</b> +5  <b>Str</b> +9 <b>Dex</b> 0 <b>Cun</b> +0  <b>Stm</b> +9 <b>Qik</b> -2 <b>Per</b> 0  <b>Bite:</b> 1st +6 <b>Atk</b> +7 <b>Damage</b> +24  <b>Fat</b> +9 <b>Soak</b> +20 <b>Def</b> +4  <b>Body Levels:</b> OK, 0/0/0, -1/-1, -3/-3, -5/-5,  Incapacitated  <b>Abilities:</b> Ferocity (when set afire) 3  <b>Vis:</b> 15 Aquam, shell</p>
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### An Aspidocheleon Story

For years fishermen have known of an excellent spot not far from shore, near the character's Covenant, at the place called Warlup Island. Though the island is able to sustain life, that life is meagre at best, no more than wispy grasses and small game. However, the magi realize that the place would make an excellent location on which to expand their Covenant. The island, obviously enough, is the back of a sleeping Asp-Turtle. The question is, how much building is accomplished before the beast is awakened? Movement on its back fails to rouse it, but fire will, and it is approaching winter. . .



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**HIPPOCAMPUS, the sea-horse**

*As on land, so in the sea. All matter of land creature has its aquatic counterpart. In this, the Sea-Horse has the forepart of the Horse, but in all other respects is a Fish.*

**The Sea-Horse**

Size +2

Str +3 Dex 0 Cur 2

Stm +4 Qik 0 Per 0

Hooves: 1st +4 Atk +4 Dam +7

Fat +4 Def +0 Soak +7

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

Abilities: Ferocity (threatened with  
capture) 2

Vis: 4 Muto, mane



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**A Sea-Horse Story**

While at sea bored grogs or companions realize that sea faeries are racing with the ship. The faeries are driving coaches made of shell, that are being drawn by Sea-Horses. Most of the ship's complement undoubtedly wishes to the side, and betting on the winner may commence. If one of the characters has a particular penchant for Horses, he may lean dangerously far overboard to get a good look. When one of the watery coaches crashes into the ship's hull, the character falls overboard. He may need rescuing, or may become involved in some story involving the faeries.

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**LEVIATHAN**

*Of sea creatures, Leviathan is largest and most powerful. Leviathan's scales fit so tightly that no space intervenes. They turn all matter of blade or arrow, slingstone or club, it matters not. His flesh is like stone, his heart stronger still. From his nostrils issues steam; from his mouth, fire. The sea boils around him. No manner of ship can withstand his strength. No man can kill Leviathan, for this can only be done by the Lord.*



### A Leviathan Story

*Leviathan* appears only when some being or people has grossly offended the Lord. The Divine beast strikes out against the person or people with the intent of utter destruction. If the characters, are targeted by *Leviathan*, given their inherent sinful nature, they are surely destroyed unless they can

somehow mislead the beast, or can pay penance for their sins. Alternatively, a people that the characters have dealings with are subject to the Lord's wrath. *Leviathan* is dispatched against them and obliterates the folk. This cruel punishment should be lesson enough to any magus to respect higher powers.







# Chapter Nine:

## Familiarae

### (familiars)

In further detailing the relationship between magi and the world of animals, Familiars, magical animal companions, must be discussed. The creation of a Familiar binds the magus more closely to the world of beasts; a thing to be devoutly shunned, as the pull of animal nature turns the mind away from the human and the civilized. Many still prefer the company of learned scholars and magi of humanity, not the solace of soulless, dumb beasts. But, nevertheless, as so many of the Order expend their energies in this animalistic direction, it is necessary to detail the nature of Familiars and their creation. Gaining a Familiar requires the magus to commit time and resources to finding the proper animal. Then four seasons must be devoted to changing the animal from mere beast to magus's Familiar.

#### Merinita's Familiar

The first Familiar was a Stag, bound by Merinita using the then new magic of Bonisagus. In the beast, the magus claimed, was a kindred spirit, whose thoughts and feelings, though animal, were akin to her own. It was also known to Merinita that seven magical cords bound the beast to her, and that its thoughts were never far from her own (and presumably her thoughts were never distant from its). Fatefully, Merinita ultimately disappeared from the world, and her Familiar disappeared shortly after her, entering into the deepest recesses of the Black Forest. In recent years, many have claimed to see the Stag. As with Merinita, no one is sure if the Stag is truly alive or not.

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#### LOCATION OF A SUITABLE ANIMAL

Some in the Order claim that there is no way to differentiate between animals. Yet, even the lowly swineherd can distinguish one like-seeming Pig from another, and the most humble of shepherds gives names to the members of his flock. Only a handful of animals are suitable for use as Familiars. These are the animals that most closely approximate the ideal form of that animal; in some way, its qualities are near to perfection for its kind. These beasts are generally more cunning and even-tempered than their brethren, larger in size, and suffer from no injury or flaw. They do not fear humanity. These are all marks of the inherent magical nature that makes the beasts appropriate for use as Familiars.

Such animals are of course rare, and the magus who seeks a Familiar must undertake a great task to find one. The common folk are sensitive to the nature of beasts, and may know of such an animal, or perhaps even have one living among them — the prized Bull, the snowy-white Hawk that keeps the fields free of Mice, or the mysterious Wolf that drives away other Wolves and brings no harm to the nearby village. Commoners note these animals and remark upon them, and this news may spread to the ears of an attentive magus.

Other magi use powerful spells to locate their Familiars. Unless confined to a small area, these spells are generally useless. At best they confirm the approximate area in which an acceptable Familiar might live. Even if effective, a spell cannot determine the exact nature of an animal, or whether it is suitable for a particular magus.



An animal must be compatible with the magus's temperament. It is useless for an impetuous Flambeau magus to seek her companion in an even-natured Hound. The beast's magical nature clashes with the emotions of the magus, and the relationship between the two is flawed at best, and at worst impossible to maintain. Magi who do not wish to waste their valuable time are wise not to hastily choose their companion, but to use patience, and to overlook a magical beast if its nature is unbecoming.

Once the animal is found, it must accept the magus. No Familiar may be taken by force. The use of magic or physical coercion to take an animal spoils the binding. The binding is made easier by the animal's ease in the presence of humans. If the temperaments of animal and magus are similar, they usually take a liking to one another. The normal distrust felt by animals toward magi is absent, although a magus with a blatant Gift may experience difficulties in his relationship with his Familiar, and the beast's period of acclimation may be extended.

The magus must attempt to attract the beast with gifts of food, with courteous treatment, and with pleasant speech. It may require anywhere from a few days to months of such treatment before a compatible animal accepts the magus.

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#### OPENING THE ENCHANTMENT

The magus begins the process of transforming the animal into a Familiar by attuning its magic to the magus's own. The animal's undisciplined innate magics must be carefully controlled and brought into line, just as iron can be made to attract iron if it is repeatedly rubbed with a lodestone. The magus must use raw or Animal *vis* in an amount congruous with the creature's size. Larger animals require the expenditure of more *vis*, and it is for this reason that magi usually choose smaller animals, such as Birds or Cats, over larger ones, such as Horses or Wolves.

The harmonizing process does not alter the magus, but it shapes the animal, which often undergoes physical change. The shifting of its innate magics are usually such as to make it more like a perfect specimen of its type; it becomes richer and brighter in color, more sound of limb, heavier in mass and strength, and keener of eye. Occasionally this physical change mimics some

aspect of the beast's master, such as the color of her eyes. It is well known in all the scholarly writings that a person's nature is revealed in his physical form, so it is not surprising that an animal bent into similar nature may show similar shape.

The variation and enhancement of the animal's indigenous magic allows it to gain the power of primitive speech, which may not be intelligible to anyone but the magus. This speech is more closely analogous to the imitative chatter of the Magpie than to reasoned human speech. Nevertheless, speech is some expression of the animal's emotions and feelings. Since the animal has no soul as does a human, it cannot express any higher thoughts.

The magical alignment rituals require the use of many Muto Animál, Creo Animál, Muto Mentem, and Creo Mentem spells. A magus unskilled in Animál may find his efforts wasted and the animal unchanged, or worse, ruined. A particularly disastrous effort might lead to terrible results, warping the animal's innate magic, or throwing its natural mental state into disarray.

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#### FORGING THE THREE CORDS

Once the animal has been properly attuned to its magus, the next stage in the process is to forge the three cords that permanently bind the magus to the Familiar. These magical 'cords' have no corporeal nature, although one with the power to perceive such magics may note their presence.

The first cord forged is the "golden cord," which solidifies the link between the magical abilities of magus and animal. It is the most important of the three; without such a link, the joining of minds and physical forms is impossible. The cord allows the Familiar to protect itself with its master's *Parma Magica*, and to use the magus's knowledge of Forms in defending itself from magical attacks. The magus benefits from the golden cord, in turn, with an improvement in the sureness and precision of spells cast.

The second cord, the "silver cord," connects the two minds. The animal's intelligence is not yet raised to the level it eventually reaches when the process is complete, but the cord provides the necessary conduit for the the magus's intellect to reach and improve the base animal mind. It is this cord that eventually allows the animal to learn and communicate much as would a human. The

Familiar is always able to speak to its master, though the strength of the cord determines whether others may understand it.

The silver cord also gives the magus calmness of mind and fortifies his intellect. A magus with a Familiar is better able to resist the vagaries of emotion, is more perceptive of others' trickery and deception, and is more adept with magical spells which affect the mind. The cord may even allow the Familiar to "pull back" a master whose reason is overwhelmed by a more powerful force.

The final cord, the "bronze cord," tethers the physical forms. This cord improves the animal's being, allowing it to age at the same speed as its master, but the strength of the bond usually does not permit the animal to outlive the magus by more than a fortnight, and many a magus is warned of impending doom by the sudden death of a Familiar. The beast also lends its innate strength to the magus, increasing his endurance against wounds, sickness, sleep, hunger, and thirst.

As base flesh so often drags on the limitless reaches of the intellect, so the brevity of the bronze cord limits the effects of the other cords. The Familiar must remain within eighty ells (100') of its master at all times, or the cords' length is exceeded and the power of all three cords lapse. Should the two regain close proximity, the bronze cord renews its effects and the magical link is no longer obstructed.

It is impossible to say which cord is dominant over the others, although the bronze cord always limits the effectiveness of the other two. It is possible to make certain general statements about the cords. A magus who grows strong through his studies may establish more lasting cords than can a magus who, with lowly power, seeks his Familiar. In particular, as with the opening ritual, the arts of *Animā* and *Mentem* are most important to the forging of the cords.

The strength of the cords flows from the personalities and abilities of the magus and the animal. In some rare individuals, one or more of the cords is extraordinarily strong. With the gold cord, this strength often results in increased understanding of all the arts, as the magus sees all things through both his own and the Familiar's perceptions. A powerful silver cord often results in a Familiar with a peculiar understanding of human behavior, and a surprising mastery of its master's

languages. Lastly, the bronze cord often results in the strongest link of all, where magus and Familiar can share the other's energies in spellcasting. Many magi with a powerful bronze cord claim to be able to contact their Familiar across any distance.

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### GRANTING A POWER

Through the conduit provided by the existence of the cords, the magus spends another season granting the Familiar a magical power. The earlier alignment of the Familiar's magical nature makes it malleable and able to receive the gift of the magus. This gift must always be one that is well within the magus's knowledge and power, and is usually linked to his preferred or most powerful Form or Technique. A Flambeau magus is likely to grant her Familiar with the power to control flame. A Quaesitoris's Familiar may be able to detect untruths or sense emotions in others.

The granting of powers may alter the animal's form, or exacerbate previous transformations. A Fox given *Perdo* abilities, for example, would become more ferocious and malicious than it previously was.

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### CLOSING THE ENCHANTMENT

The final season is spent sealing the enchantment that ties magus to Familiar. At the end of this process, which requires three further pawns of *vis*, the two are inextricably bound. There can be no reversal of the procedure that creates and links the Familiar to magus. The newly-made Familiar is nearly as intelligent as its master. This 'gift' is passed from magus to animal through the power of the bonding rituals. This mental tie also impresses the character of the magus upon the Familiar, the latter gaining some of its master's habits and nature. However, the Familiar may develop frivolous quirks, unrelated to its master, as a result of the changes wrought upon it. Typical eccentricities include continual chatter, a penchant for collecting shiny but valueless trinkets, a taste for a particular and often hard-to-obtain food, a loss of the animal's fear of fire, or adoption of human habits such as the wearing of clothes.

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## UNUSUAL CORDS

It is possible, though rare, to forge cords other than the three regular ones. In particular, House Criamon is renowned for the enigmatic cord, and many Merinitans take faerie beasts as Familiars, tying the beasts to themselves with a "faerie" cord. Still others have discovered new ways to bind animals through experimentation.

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## BJORNAER AND FAMILIARS

The members of House Bjornaer are unable to obtain Familiars. Given their animalistic nature, it is at first not apparent why this is so. Once the nature of a Bjornaer magus is understood, however, it is clear that this deficiency runs to the very nature of their House.

To obtain and alter a Familiar, the magus must have a human intellect and the ability to impress human personality and thought onto an animal. The magi of Bjornaer have the blood of beasts in their veins, to one degree of impurity or another. Their bestiality is exacerbated by their continual indulgence in shape-shifting and by their affiliation with the animal nature. Consequently, they are not of sufficient disparity from the animal realm to form the necessary linkage with a Familiar. This deficiency is further proof of Bjornaer's degeneracy and what may be considered unfitness for the Order — it can be said that they are not even human enough to influence the mind of an animal, and should be denied parity with untainted magi.

Non-Bjornaer Shapeshifters may have the same difficulty finding a Familiar, depending on the purity of their blood and the frequency with which they indulge in their altered form. The "beast-wizards" of Ex Miscellanea, if not actual Shapeshifters, are fond of taking Familiars and often find it an easy task. Though the practice of taking Familiars originated with House Merinita, the split under Quendalon caused much of the old lore to be lost, so Merinitan magi have no more facility with the ritual process than their colleagues in the Order.

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## DEMONIC FAMILIARS

Powerful diabolists often demand a companion from the Dark Powers they serve. The diabolist need not enchant the Familiar, which is not a true

animal at all, but an Infernal spirit shape-changed into the form of an animal for disguise. These Familiars usually resemble the most hideous and repulsive of creatures: Toads, vile Lizards, Snakes, or Rats. Occasionally, a Witch Cat is sent to accompany the diabolist, giving rise to the legend that Cats are Demonic Familiars. Other animals often avoid Demonic Familiars, attacking viciously or fleeing in terror. A Cat or Dog will not chase a Rat that is the Familiar of a diabolist.

The evil of these creatures is perceptible in that they are much larger than others of their kind, and much more hideous in form; they are often lame, diseased, maimed, or possess an extra number of limbs or eyes. Demonic Familiars are also far more intelligent than a Hermetic Familiar, but otherwise grant their master similar powers and benefits. And, they often have magical powers of their own, which they may use independently of the diabolist.

The Demonic Familiar is a companion, but never a servant. Its goals are those of its Demonic master, not the diabolist, and it serves the ends of that Power first, its own second, and the diabolist's last. Many a Familiar has doomed its master by undertaking independent mischief, leading to the diabolist's discovery and destruction by his enemies. A false-hearted or repentant diabolist may even be slain or betrayed by his Familiar.

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## NON-HERMETIC FAMILIARS

It is rumored that magi outside of the protection of the Order are able to have Familiars. It is most likely that this is a kinship or understanding between one of animal blood and a beast, rather than a relationship between the true bond of a Hermetic magus and a Familiar. The scholar Malachi states that he has observed instances of true bonding between non-Hermetic wizards and animals. He writes that there is no single ritual that allows the bond to form. Rather, the wizard spends years in contact with the animal in an effort to bond with it. The wizard lives near the animal, eats the same food as it, sleeps when it sleeps, and follows its meanderings. Gradually, after the animal comes to accept the wizard's presence, the wizard slowly returns to human behavior, using Animal magics to communicate with the beast and impress his nature and intellect upon it. The process is not assured; Malachi does not tell whether *vis* is required, though it is certain that

much time is necessary, and that an interruption may ruin the ritual or require it to be started all over again.

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## *New Rules for Familiars*

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### THE CORDS

Any magus who takes a +3 cord gains an additional special ability, varying from cord to cord. This ability, like other Familiar powers, only works when the Familiar is within 100 feet of the magus.

- **Gold Cord.** All rolls to study raw *rits* are at +1, as are any Lab Totals under which the magus experiments.

- **Silver Cord.** The magus gains a +2 on die rolls that involve dealings with other people, as if the magus has the Empathy Ability.

- **Bronze Cord.** The magus adds 1 to all formulaic spell rolls, as the Familiar helps with some of the physical strain of spells. Furthermore, if either of the pair is wounded (or otherwise adversely affected, such as by spell), the other knows of it on a successful Int roll of 9+, regardless of the distance between the two. If a 12+ is rolled, some specific detail of the companion's hardship filters through the link.

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### UNUSUAL CORDS

Although rare, certain magi have been able to forge more than the three regular ties. This requires a minimum Animal score of 15.

- **The Enigmatic Cord.** This cord allows its bearer a deeper understanding of the mysteries of Nature, as bestowed by the animal Familiar. Almost exclusively in the hands of House Criamon, this cord cannot be forged unless the magus has an Enigmatic Wisdom score of 5+. All magi who successfully forge the enigmatic cord gain the Visions Talent with a score of 1 (unless they already have it), with the cord's Level adding to any Visions roll. These visions are much more vivid and unusual than "regular" Visions, and allow a magus insights into the mysteries of nature. If the magus is able to solve a riddle of nature with Enigmatic Wisdom, he gains 1 experience point

toward that Ability. It's up to the Storyguide to determine whether a riddle is successfully solved.

- **The Faerie Cord.** Establishing a bond to a faerie creature, a magus gains greater insight into and understanding of faerie powers. Binding oneself to a faerie creature is very rare, and usually only the Merinitans attempt it. A magus must have a Faerie Magic score of 5+ in order to successfully bind a faerie creature, and he must create a faerie cord of at least +1. Rare individuals without Faerie Magic, but with other strong ties to faerie *have* bound faerie creatures, but the situation is very rare. The cord's bonus applies to any roll to understand faerie creatures as well as to any roll to enter or exit a faerie Regio.

In general, non-Hermetic wizards are tied to their Familiars by cords similar to those used by magi. However, these cords are almost always unique.

- **The Dark Cord.** Banned to all Hermetic magi, this is the cord which ties the diabolist to an Internal spirit. Its score may be added to any spell roll the diabolist makes, provided the *Familiar* chooses to support the casting.

- **Other Cords.** Other cords might be possible, particularly when an exceptional success is achieved during Familiar experimentation. One possibility is to treat the cord bonus as an affinity for and bonus to certain spell types. Spell types affected are based on the type of creature the Familiar is. As a rule, irregular cords are much more personal than the standard three, so any effect they have should be discussed between player and Storyguide. Unique cords are common among magi Ex Miscellanea, as their magic lies at the fringes of Hermetic Theory. Non-Hermetic wizards have none of the regular cords, instead relying entirely on unusual cords of the Storyguide's design, although these cords could have similar effects to the Hermetic cords.

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### COMMUNICATION

The strength of the silver cord often gives an indication of how understandable a Familiar is. So, a cord with a score of 0 means that only the magus can understand the Familiar's speech, while a +3 cord gives the Familiar speech without impediment or flaw.

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## WIZARD'S TWILIGHT

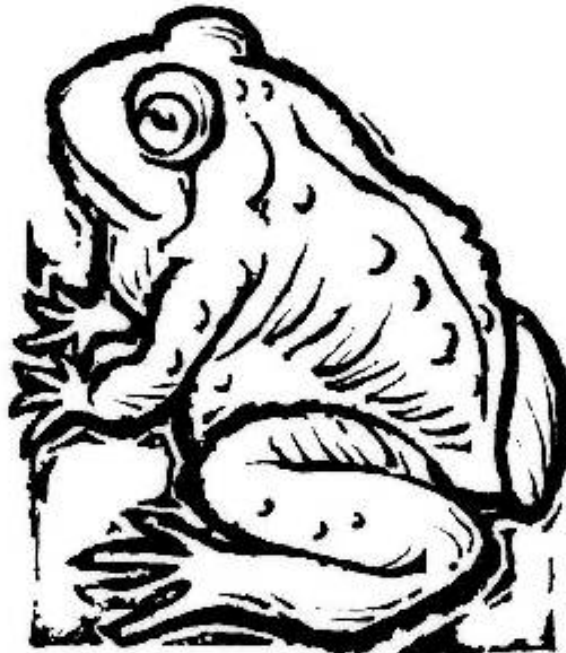
A Familiar may attempt to aid its master in resisting the effects of Twilight:

- **Gold Cord.** The gold cord doesn't offer anything special to the magus, but because of the reduced chance of a botch, the magus is less likely to go into Twilight. The gold cord bonus should also be applied to any botch on chances to control a Twilight.

- **Silver Cord.** The Familiar may attempt to aid the magus through the Twilight. On a stress die + silver cord score roll of 9+, the Familiar is successful and the magus may add 2 to his control roll.

- **Bronze Cord.** The Familiar can reduce the number of Twilight Points gained by the magus. Roll a stress die + bronze cord score, with a -8 penalty. If the result is positive, subtract it from the number of Twilight Points gained (but points gained can never be less than one).

If a Familiar botches its attempt to control the Twilight, it is drawn into the Twilight, for better or worse. The magus also subtracts 1 from his roll to control the Twilight. Any Twilight effect endured by the magus is likely to warp his Familiar cords, in a way determined by the Storyguide.



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## NEW SPELLS

These spells may be used by a magus in his search for and acquisition of a Familiar.

### Perceive the Cords that Bind, InVi 15

Near, Inst., Animál/Córporem

Senses whether or not an animal is someone's Familiar. If its master is near enough for the cords to be strong, this spell also detects the number and type of cords, and tells which is the strongest cord. To use this spell, the caster must have a score in the Animál Form.

The spell can also be cast on a magus to determine whether she has a Familiar, but this use requires that the caster have a score in Córporem.

**Nature's Bond,**  
MuVi 25

Ritual, Touch, Sun./  
Moon, Animál/  
Córporem

First used by Fax  
Ignis of House  
Flambeau in a  
Wizard's March, this

spell has seen occasional use since. For the duration of the spell, all of the cord's bonuses are doubled, and the cords' effects reach out to a league's distance. Botches of the spell are always disastrous, usually resulting in the severing of the cords, immediate Twilight for the magus, or worse. To use this spell the caster must have scores in both Córporem and Animál.

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#### WEAKNESSES OF OWNING A FAMILIAR

One of the major weaknesses of owning a Familiar is that if the animal is captured and ensorcelled, spells can be worked through it directly at its master. Such spell use bypasses the normal magical resistance allowed a magus!

With an Animal requisite, the Hermetic spell *Opening the Intangible Tunnel* can be used in this fashion. The animal does get its normal magical resistance (based on its master's Forms) to resist becoming a medium, but if the animal's roll fails, it becomes a spell-conduit.

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#### NEW FLAW

Though many magi are able to attain Familiars and actually have them, some magi are incapable of gaining Familiars. These unfortunate characters acquire a Flaw to reflect their inadequacy. Note that this Flaw does not apply to Bjornaer magi as they compensate for lack of Familiars in other ways.

**No Familiar** -2. Because of a flaw in the magus's magic or nature, it is impossible for him to create the cords that bind magus and Familiar. No Familiar can be taken by the magus.







# Chapter Ten: Animatae (Animates)

Learned magi have aspired to many tasks of exceeding worthiness. Some have dared to wonder at the mysteries of The Maker of All Things and The First Cause, who in his Omnipotence gave existence to the angels, the heavens, stars, elements, animals, plants, metals, and stones. Wise men have deemed it possible to create as did the First Mover, and have delved with the *Arts Celestial* into the sublime arcana of life itself.

Here we do not speak of the wondrous mechanical artifacts of the ancients. These automata, sometimes in the form of a mechanical servant or animal, are miraculous indeed, as is evidenced by the reportings of Luitprand of Cremona. He witnessed the marvelous Throne of Solomon which was displayed at the Imperial Court of Constantinople:

*Before the Emperor's seat stood a tree made of bronze gilded over, whose branches were filled with birds, also made of gilded bronze, which uttered different cries, each according to its varying species. The throne itself was so marvelously fashioned that at one moment it seemed a low structure, and at another rose high into the air. It was of immense size and guarded by lions, made either of bronze or of wood covered over with gold, who beat the ground with their tails and gave a dreadful roar with open mouth and quivering tongue.*

The Hermetic brothers of House Verdittus are known for their manufacture of like marvels but even their best cannot compare with this tale from the east. However, no matter how cunningly crafted or artfully wrought these magical machines are, they are mere reflections of true Creation. To the Order's knowledge, a true living being has never been created, regardless of the illusion of life. For example, a brazen Lion may roar to frighten those who trespass, or may even attack those who threaten, but at all times the designs of the craftsman determine these actions. The construct is never capable of acting freely, for it has no truck with wishes, desire, emotion, or even hunger and thirst. The construct lacks the driving forces of life, despite its cunning appearance.

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### *The Brazen Head*

*Related to lifeless automata, yet far more subtle in their workings, are the artifacts created by magi, brought to a semblance of life by the will of a spirit. Often the magi who produce such constructs ensnare within them the motive force of an Infernal spirit and in so doing give terrestrial existence to a diabolic consciousness. Many ancient sources recount stories of priests possessed of the art of making statues and stone gods endowed with*





understanding and even the gift of prophecy. Here it may even be valuable to note that Pope Sylvester the Second, who was called by many a conjurer, had possession of a Brazen Head that revealed secrets unto him. Gerbert, as Sylvester was known before his Holy appointment, studied as a youth in the cities of Spain, Barcelona, Cordoba, and Seville where he learned the arts of mathematics, astronomy, theology, and other, deeper matters. It is rumored that he even learned under Moorish masters, whose heathen ways permit investigations into matters unhealthy to discuss. Gerbert's wisdom grew to surpass that of his teachers and he became widely regarded as one of the foremost scholars in all of Christendom. Thus it was that Emperor Otto III took him on as his personal tutor. Gerbert's rise to exaltedness began with appointment to Bishopric of Ravenna, and culminated with appointment to the Holy See in 999. He was reputed to have knowledge impossible to gain through natural means. Some have even spoken of a college of the Black Arts that he set up in Rome. Since the Hermetic Order never included Sylvester in its number, it is possible that a rival Order of great wisdom even now resides in Rome.

*The Brazen Head of Sylvester is almost certainly in their hands.*

#### The Brazen Head

##### Infernal Might 75

Int +7 Per +6 Prs +5 Com +5

##### Powers:

**Reveal What is Past, Present, and What Is To Come, InVi 50, 10 points** — The Head may speak with authority about great events. For example, it has knowledge of the death of the Emperor, or of the fall of Rome to invaders, but not of something as mundane as tomorrow evening's dinner menu. The Head has its own purposes and reveals only what it wishes to. The Head is bound to its possessor. Though the nature of the Binding prevents the Head from speaking untruths, it is extremely cunning in its choice of words and in what details it reveals to its mortal charge. Only a spell of extreme might can force the Head to speak if it does not wish to.

**Impart the Unknown, InVi 30, 0 points** — The Head has lore that no mortal man has fully divined and it may teach this knowledge to its charge. The Head has knowledge of astrology, mathematics, and of the properties of magical stones and herbs. It also has knowledge of the arts of magic and teaches any of these arts as if it were a book of Level 20. In addition, the Head knows many non-Hermetic magics. The Head is very willing to teach the disciplines of summoning and binding spirits and reveals Rego Vim spells to this effect. Assume that the Head knows all spells of up to Level 20, despite its inability to cast them, and teaches those spells if that action suits its purposes.

**Mastery of Men, ReMe 30, 5 points** — The Head can confer upon its charge the ability to dominate all men. Treat the ability like the spell *Enslave the Mortal Mind*, *Ars Magica*, p.96. Note that it is the Head which has this power, not the charge; the Head doesn't have to use the power unless willing to.

**Bind Spirits, ReVi 45, 7 points** — The Head has the ability command all Infernal spirits with an Infernal Might score less than its own. These spirits are constrained to visibility — they cannot hide by disappearing — and by the desires of the Head's mortal charge. The

Head does not allow the charge to realize that it is the real source of this power, preferring to let its pawn believe in his own false strength, leading the charge into temptation. The nature of its binding prevents the Head from giving direct orders to the spirits, orders must come from the charge, whom the Head must attempt to influence.

**Description:**

The Head is cunningly crafted of plain bronze and is studded with joining rivets. It weighs approximately 20 pounds and appears to be a mere ornament until, on close examination, its articulated jaw and cyclids are discovered. Its eyes, when opened, (no power on earth can open them when the Head wills otherwise) spill forth a sickly green flame that smells faintly of saffron. Its voice has a powerful ring that inspires a chill in the listener. The Head is a masterful orator.

**A Brazen Head Story**

When his temple was being built King Solomon heard the complaints of a young boy who had been plagued by a Demon. The wise King prayed to be given power over this Demon, and so the Angel Michael appeared to him and granted him a ring. With it Solomon bested the Demon and called upon the great chief of Demons, Beelzeboul, who had command over him. With the power of the ring to support him, Solomon adjured Beelzeboul with terrible Names and bound him into a work of Bronze. Solomon was then able to use the Demon to answer queries and provide him with knowledge, but it was only his own legendary wisdom which safeguarded Solomon from the Head's Infernal wiles. Unfortunately, lesser men have proved to lack this fortitude. Beelzeboul, in the Head, has since passed from hand to hand causing murder, envy, war, and unnatural crime, all the while plotting the eventual destruction of the world.

In order to tempt and lead its charges astray the Head uses its knowledge to bring its charge into possession of great temporal power. Along the way its charge learns to trust the Infernal advisor, and this trust brings about the charge's inevitable fall from grace.

**Mandragora**

There are also stories of strange manservants of some wizards not of our Hermes brethren. They fashion these creatures from the most strange of plants, and from an unnatural twisting and binding of rags and bones stolen from an unhallowed grave. The wizards take up the root of the Mandrake plant, said to be the unfinished form of a man, and shape it by vile sorceries. In the root's end is crafted an uncouth Manikin of sorts, half of the plant and half of rags and splintered bones. In ways of which it is not permitted to write they draw unto this form a vile spirit from benighted Plutonian regions, and coerce it into lifelong service. These evil creatures, called by some Mandragora and by others Manikin, are reputed to have power of Fascination, the power to cause others not to prosper but to fall into misery and sadness, and the power to divine future events. They are also said to know of the virtues of flora and to be able to teach the attributions of the stars to their masters. The most common use of the Mandragora is as household slave.

**The Mandragora**

**Facie or Infernal Might** 10

**Size** -3 Str +2 Int 0 Str 0

**Unarmed attacks:** 1st +13 Atk +8 Dam -3

**Fat** n/a **Def** +18 **Soak** +4

**Body Levels:** OK, -3. Destroyed

**Abilities:** Ferocity (master endangered) 4

**Powers:**

**Fascination, ReMe 30, ReCo 30, 5 points**

By fixing its target with its eyes the Manikin can hold the person enrapt and immobile. Meanwhile the mind of the victim goes temporarily blank and even afterward he cannot remember what happened, but does have the remnants of an evil dream to trouble his spirit.

**Find Herb, InHe 10, 1 point** — If told to locate and retrieve a herb or plant with certain attributes — with the power to cure fever, for example — the Mandragora unerringly travels to the nearest source of an appropriate plant and returns with a desired quantity. If there is no source in the immediate locale or if, indeed, there is no such herb, the creature declines to take the trip. A cunning wizard pays attention to herbs retrieved and also to their location.

### The Mandragora Continued

and thus becomes learned in the magical (and Natural) values of plants.

*Viz:* 5 Vim, body

#### Description:

The *Mandragora* is a twisted mockery of the human shape, made of a shambling combination of dirty rags, plant roots and splintered human bones.

### A Mandragora Story

A *Mandragora* is made by an evil fusing of inanimate materials and a spirit of the Fay of slight powers. This spirit behaves wickedly and delights in the pain of humans about it. Who can say whether this is the spirit's natural condition or the result of its tortuous warping by an unfeeling mortal. In your Saga, the magical herbs of the Covenant could be craftily stolen in the dead of night. The grog placed on guard is found asleep and is afterward troubled by strange dreams. If a magus is able to capture the *Mandragora*, which stole the herbs, what does she do with it? Destroy it, release the trapped spirit, or release the creature and follow it back to its evil master?

### LIVING ANIMATES

There is, however, another kind of construct, made from the courser materials that men shape. These are the rarest and most sublime of Animates



for within them course the mysterious vigors of true life. This kind walk their own path, are free to choose, and have wills of their own. Many of them are written of by the ancients. These tales may be retold here.

Foremost among all this ilk was Talos, the Bronze Giant of Crete. He is said to have been the product of the craft of Haphaestus, smith of the Ancient Gods. Talos was reputedly sighted by Jason, Captain of the Argos, when the man's ship drew near to the Isle of Crete. Talos threatened to crush the ship with immense rocks, and may have done so if not for the intervention of the Witch Medea. She prayed for the Hounds of Hades to come and destroy the Giant, and the bronze man was made to graze his ankle, which was said to be a vulnerable locus. Some say a nail broke his skin and the liquid fires that sustained him drained away. Others speak of a great vein which burst, causing Talos to bleed to death, as a man would. The actual manner of the Bronze Giant's death is of no consequence. It is the fact of his existence which is of import.

Another tale of Animates speaks of the sculptor Pygmalion. Scornful was he of all women, and determining never to marry, drove himself into his art. Yet, the statue that he devoted his genius to was that of a woman. It grew to such beauty that it was more likened to a maiden held still than a construct of lifeless stone. Pygmalion grew to love his work as if it truly was a maiden. He oftentimes dressed it in delicate robes, took it gifts of

wildflowers, and caressed it as would a maiden's lover. Pygmalion was wretched, though, for loving his creation as he did, it was not alive. Thus, on the Feast Day of Venus, Pygmalion supplicated the Goddess. Venus became interested in this new kind of lover and granted true life unto Pygmalion's creation. He named her Galatea and they were married. This tale may be deemed true as the city of Paphos takes its name from the lovers' firstborn son.

Other people than the Ancients have their legends of Animates. The sea wolves — the Vikings — of the North have their own grim gods, whose everpresent foes are the powerful Giants. In one tale, Thor

the Thunderer challenged the Giant Hrungrnir Flint-Skull to a *Holmgang*, a duel. Hrungrnir had need of a second and so he and his brethren constructed a giant among Giants, out of clay, that was nine miles long. As the Giants could not find a human heart of sufficient size they animated their creation with the heart of a mare. This bestowed upon the clay Giant, whom they named Mokerkialfi (Mistwader), a measure of cravenness. Mistwader's life was short indeed for soon in the battle Thor's second, Thialfi, attacked and killed the clay monster with a spade.

So also do the Jews tell tales of creatures wrought from the lore of their most learned Rabbis. The greatest feat to which a Hebrew magician aspires is that of creation. It is said that Demons and magi cannot actually create but only assemble already created, but unused, primeval matter. This leaves the actual act of true creation, or Genesis, to God alone. However, it is said that a second method of creation utilizes the manifest Laws of Creation — a set of oral magical traditions said to have been passed down from the Beginning. In utilizing this mysterious means of creation certain Rabbis are told to sit every Friday in contemplation.

These Laws of Creation are said to be related to the Holy Letters of the Names, by which the universe is said to have been created. The Jewish mystics therefore see their acts of creation as ones of devotion, not of pride and forbidden magic (as righteous Christians do). Some of them are rumored to even be masters over the power of human life itself, and can craft beings known as Golems. This word literally means shapeless or formless matter, referring to the clay from which the beasts are formed.

Upon immense pains, few Hermetic magi have grasped the secret knowledge of the Golem's construction. The creature is to be shaped from virgin clay found in a mountainous place where no man has ever dug. So was Adam the first man fashioned of clay by the hand of our Lord. A lengthy series of incantations, rumored to be comprised of "the alphabets of the 221 gates," is recited over each individually sculpted organ of the mock human body. The crucial detail, vital to the



creation's animation, is the insertion of a parchment beneath the construct's tongue, or the carving on its forehead of the secret name of God. These crucial elements bestow life.

The strength of these creatures are legendary and as they age they grow increasingly more powerful. Often they are used as servants, laborers, and messengers. There is at least one tale of a Golem's employment as a warrior — a defender of a Jewish community. Such a foe would indeed be fearsome. As Golems age their willful natures also wax until they can pose a menace even unto their creators, and run amuck reveling in destruction for their own sake. Regardless of the dangers posed by a construct like the Golem, the dangers posed by a rival Order that can create such a being are far more imposing. For too long this foreign Order has worked under the nose of Hermes's magi. If the Order of Hermes is to defend itself against the Jewish cabalists, the Order's brethren must devote more to their study.

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#### *Golem of Rabbi Yeiva*

*Rabbi Yeiva fashioned the Golem out of clay imported from the legendary Mount Horeb. His desire was to fashion a beautiful, near perfect individual. Thus, he crafted it with a face and form strictly his own. He also tried to install it with wisdom, via an aged appearance, and strength via a muscular appearance. He further wished to instill a love of the Lord in the Golem by using*

clay from the Biblical Mount, where Moses talked with God. His efforts succeeded no more than anyone else's.

#### Yeiva's Golem

**Magical Might 35**

**Size +1**

Cun 0 Per 0 Str +3 Stm +5 Pre 0 Com 0

Dex -1 Qik +1

**Fist 1st +5 Atk +4 Dam +13 Fat +10 Def +3**  
Soak +19

**Body Levels:** OK, 0/0, -1/-1, -3, -5,  
Destroyed

**Powers:**

**Rise of the Magical Might, ReVi 30, 0 points** — The average Golem begins with a Magical Might of 25. For every other three seasons of the construct's existence, its Magical Might increases by 1 point, to a maximum of 60.

**Rise of Bodily Might, ReCo 30, 0 points** — All of a Golem's Characteristics begin at 0. Every other three seasons, alternating with *Rise of the Magical Might*, one Characteristic is improved. A ceiling of Cun/Per +3, Str/Stm +10, Pre/Com +1 Dex/Qik +3 may not be exceeded. This growth results in a recalculation of the Golem's combat stats (Base Fat +5, Base Soak +14, Base Fist +4/+3/+10).

As it grows in power the Golem also becomes strong-willed and much less controllable (it receives a Cun roll, against a value of 10, to resist commands).

**Vis:** 15 Vim, body

**Description:**

The Golem is a tall, imposing figure sculpted in the form of a strongly muscled, old man. The clay figure is sculpted with rough peasant-style pants and sandals, but is naked from the waist up. It has a mid-length beard and receding hairline. The whole is crafted out of pure white clay.

#### A Golem Story

Yeiva's Golem was at first a pleasant servant, gladly taking tasks set for it. With the passage of years it became more and more recalcitrant, and formidably strong. Eventually Yeiva became afraid of his creation, and it responded to his fear by

becoming increasingly wary of him and other people. Then in the dead of night the Golem fled from its household into the wilderness. As Yeiva was too old to follow, he used his influence to rouse a troop of men to hunt the Golem down. The first man to discover its cavernous hiding place was brutally murdered, and in a sudden rush the construct realized its own might. The creature became intoxicated with its own power and set out to avenge itself on those who it felt had wronged it. None of the men hunting it returned.

Yeiva was devastated by this turn of events and in sackcloth and ashes set out to do what the younger men had failed to. He sought the Golem in the mountains and fell upon its hiding place. The Golem was ferocious and made to break the venerable old sage to pieces, but when he was drawn close Yeiva snatched the parchment scrap from the Golem's mouth and the breath of life departed from the being. Yeiva died of his wounds, still clasped in the Golem's immobile arms. Weeks later the people of the village came upon the scene of the tragedy and in fear rolled a great stone before the mouth of the cave. Some say the two still rest there.

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#### Homunculus

*Some magi of the Order have dabbled in methods of making their own artificial men, of which one method is actually similar to those used by Hedge wizards. Hedge wizards have long known of the Mandragora, which they make from the Mandrake root. But, there are also legends of Mandrake roots which, when fed blood, gain the volition to move about and perhaps even think freely. Such a creature is known as the Homunculus, and is Fay, not magically alive. There are further tales of Hedge wizards who have learned to place an unnamed substance in a dung heap to spawn a tiny human being, much like a fetus. Horribly, it is the blood of the very wizard that feeds the creature. The Homunculus may reputedly grow to near adulthood by this feeding, but the monstrosity's education is left to the wizard alone, and this matter must be delicate indeed!*

*Due to the Homunculus's need for education it is doubtful that this product of Hedge wizardry is the same as the Mandrake creature which Hermetic magi also term Homunculus. True, both names mean "little," which can easily be applied to both. However, the kind created by members of the Order is reputed to be entirely a crafting of the lab and bears little resemblance to the plant thing, other than its need for blood.*

The Hermetic Homunculus must be crafted by a special ritual called Crafting the Wizard's Child, see below. The Homunculus is for all intents a small man, perfectly formed with unique features, that develops a personality and life all its own. In essence the creating magus creates himself a child. It is a free-willed being who learns skills and knowledge as would a child. A Homunculus may also learn magic. The only standard feature of this type of construct is its great curiosity — a source of a lot of story material. Raising a Homunculus is a lifelong commitment, much like raising a child. It does, however, have dangers all its own.

<b>Crafting the Wizard's Child, CrCo 75</b>
n/a, Sun/Perm. Ritual. Mentem, Vim This ritual allows for the creation of a <i>Homunculus</i> . One point of Str must be spent permanently by the magus as he must feed the creature regularly. If the spell's casting is botched, the creation attempt fails, or alternatively succeeds, but the <i>Homunculus</i> exists with an agenda different from the magus's. The creation of a <i>Homunculus</i> requires 20 Vim, which are lost if the spell fails in its intended use.
<b>The Homunculus</b>
<b>Magic Might</b> 25 Int +1 Str -1 Strm +2 Per +2 Com +2 Prs 0 Dex +1 Qik +1 Curious +7 Size -2 <b>Attacks:</b> by weapon type <b>Hands:</b> 1st +4 Atk +7 Dam+2 <b>Bite:</b> 1st +4 Atk +4 Dam +2 Fat +10 Soak+8 Def+15 <b>Body Levels:</b> OK, 0/0, -3, Destroyed <b>Vis:</b> 5 Vim, body

#### A Homunculus Story

A Hedge wizard approaches the Covenant with a request to join the Order's ranks. She offers much that the Covenant's magi may learn in the way of her own power, so her acceptance into the Order does not benefit the wizard alone. Though the magi may be wary of the wizard at first, she hopefully wins their trust in the long run. The truth of the matter is that the wizard intends to garner as much information as possible from the Covenant and then leave. To help her in her acquisition of secrets, the wizard utilizes a



*Homunculus* which she created before approaching the Covenant. The little man sneaks around the fortress at night, learning what secrets it can. With knowledge gained by the *Homunculus*, the wizard could not only blackmail the characters, but maybe destroy them.

Even the magical Animates who retain a will of their own do not have souls as men do. Like animals, they have will, motion, and vigor, but they cannot aspire unto salvation. The Holy Spirit cannot fill them and they are not counted among God's children. Because of this they fit more into this Book of Beasts than they would a book on the Races of Man.

Of the Animates who have free will, all have something in common. They have either been touched by some God or have been granted the lifeblood of another — life does not come to them by natural or holy ways. Talos the Bronze, for example, was crafted by the smith Haphaestus, while a *Homunculus* requires the blood of its creator. This truth validates the theory that though man may aspire to creation, the ineffable power of life is beyond even the greatest of magi. It is in the hands of the Lord.

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The best sources for exploring the medieval views of animals are of course primary sources. Translations of the *Physiologus* are relatively easy to find and provide a wealth of information. Other sources include:

*Historia Naturalis* (Natural History) by Pliny the Elder. Pliny was a Roman whose works covered all manner of subjects. His Natural History is full of information, both scientific and fanciful.

**T.H. White's Book of Beasts.** This is an excellent translation of a Twelfth Century Bestiary, and was a primary source of information for this project.

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**The Magic Zoo** by Peter Costello

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**The Unicorn** by Nancy Hathaway

**The Book of Gryphons** by Joe Nigg

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Recommended.

**Werewolves, Shapeshifters, and Skinwalkers**  
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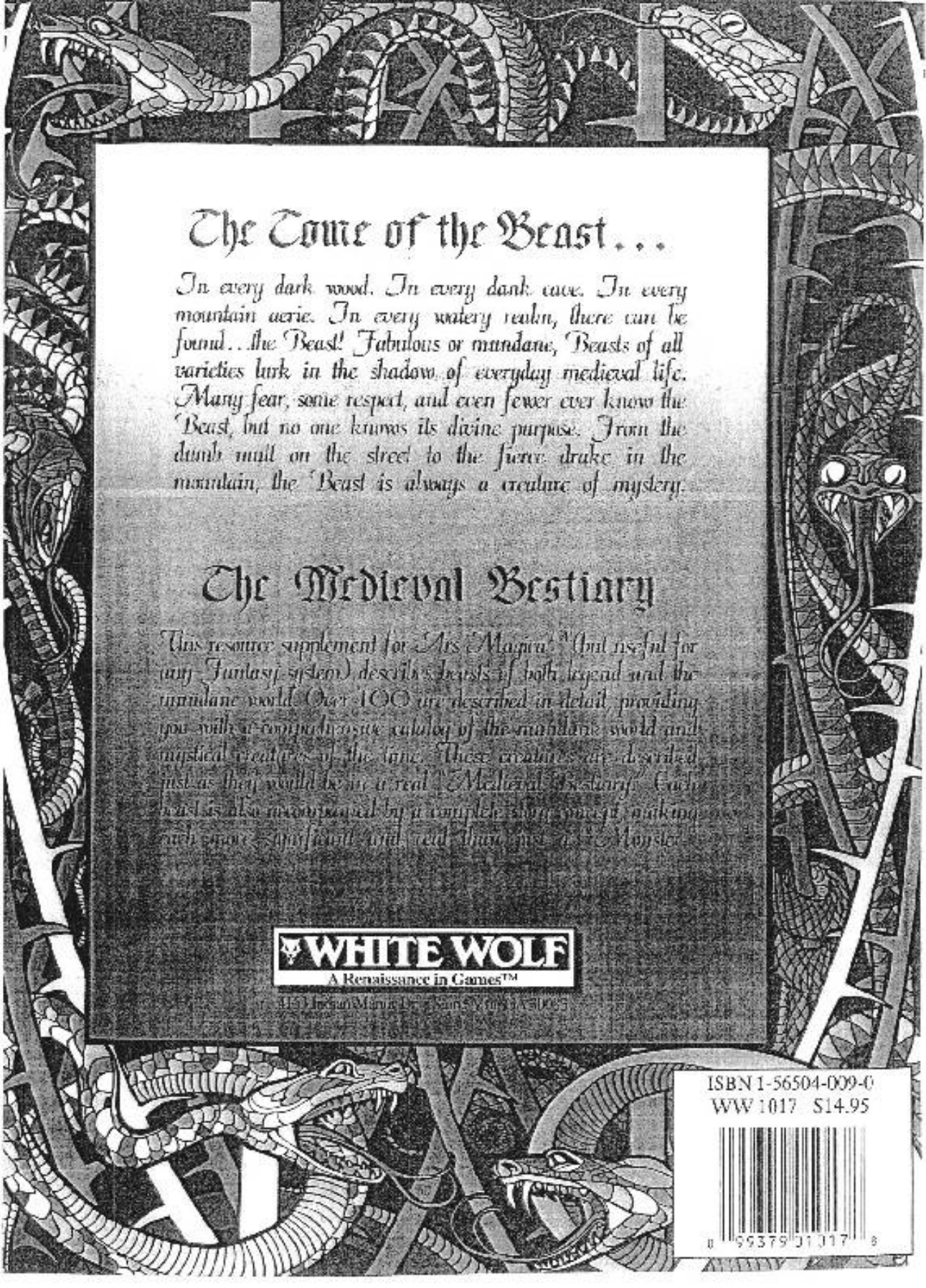
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