



# Baby Bestiary



METAL WEAVE GAMES



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## Creator's Note

Throughout my entire life, I have always had a unique connection to animals. I could probably attribute that to having grown up with animals of various sorts and always having an animal companion, although I still want my red-tailed (dire) hawk.

The inspiration for the Baby Bestiary actually came out of a discussion where someone (our editor, Jeremy) had realized that the rust monster was classified as aberration rather than a magical beast. The conversation then turned to how nonthreatening a magical rust kitten would be compared to a baby aberrant rust monster. This spurred my imagination on the Baby Bestiary, which shows that every beast has an adorable stage to them. And as you can see, they're pretty cute.

This book is intended to be system- and setting-neutral, meaning there will be no ability scores, DCs, stat blocks, or spells listed within this book (we have another one for that). Rather, you will find a rich narrative about what you could expect from a baby beast, focusing on feeding, development, training, re-releasing, and issues that could emerge whilst having a baby beast in the company of your adventuring party (or in your home).

Also, without the help of all our Kickstarter backers, this project would never have come to life as you see it now. Without your help, this would still be a dream concept and would never have seen the light of day as a book as beautiful as this one is.

Aside from my smaller supplements, this is my first major book production, and I am quite proud of it in every aspect. I hope that it lives up to your expectations of both content and quality, as I wish to improve from one book to the next.

Thank you,

Andreas Walters



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## You, The Beastmaster

Looking back on a long career in the trade of nurturing and training animals, I cannot define the exact moment I considered myself a master of beasts. Others I have spoken with tell me they look back with similar experience. Some were born into families with a tradition of monster training, while others found the occupation by accident or necessity. The thing is, if you aren't talented in monster training your career will be short so, by definition, there are no apprentice beastmasters. Everyone finds their way into the trade slowly, often without planning to dedicate their life to it.

Unexpected exposure to monsters of the non-ravaging kind is a common start for those who become beastmasters. Whether it's gnoll whelps stealing apples in your orchards or minotaur calves in your garden maze, dealing with pests has been the start of many careers. Ironically, many began by wanting to destroy them, but after killing the threatening adults, they found it harder to kill their defenseless offspring and adopted them instead.

It matters not how you became drawn to beasts and monsters; what matters is how it changes you. When you master beasts, you also master yourself. You teach yourself control and patience, and through you, the beast learns the same. Their animalistic nature gives way to human nature and the benefits that entails. Don't be fooled—it is not real intelligence,

though it may seem like it, but rather a replacing of animal instincts with human instincts. While the most loyal squire is able to explain their devotion to their lord, the lord's mount is not. But with logic also comes the possibility of subversion, which is why most lords trust their mount more than their squire. To the accomplished beastmaster, the relationships with monsters they keep soon outshine any human relation they could have.

Personally, I believe one becomes a beastmaster when mastering a beast ceases to be a means to an end and instead becomes the end itself. Some train horses so they or others may ride them. Others do the same with griffons, or even dragons. But they are never master of the beast, merely its subjugator. You truly become a master when the presence of the beast is not something you tolerate, but require; when each monster trained is not just another job completed, but a gratifying personal experience. When you reach that level, you will start looking for greater challenges and more unusual beasts worthy of your attention.

Beware, though! There is a danger of falling prey to the lure of the animal mind. History is full of beastmasters abandoning their role and instead letting the beast master them, either by giving in to their animal nature and going savage, or by letting their charge get the best of them in one final, swift episode of bloodshed.



# Finding Your Baby Beast

If you're looking for a new baby beast to rear, the best (and admittedly most dangerous) place to search is in and near its parents' lair. Depending on your choice of creature, you may face a few specific challenges: Some beasts are reclusive, making their lairs difficult to locate, while others are ferocious and willing to defend their homes to the death (quite possibly your death).

It's important to know the breeding habits and cycle of the creature you're looking for. If you're hunting during mating season, as opposed to birthing or hatching season, you're not likely to find a new baby beast. You also need to understand what the creature eats, how it survives hatching (if it comes from an egg), and other incidental facts which will help you be a successful parent.

If you're not the adventurous sort, you can hire some brave soul to fetch a specimen for you, or you can purchase one from a breeder. Each of these methods has its own risks, naturally, but at least they don't put you in harm's way.

Hiring a professional poacher means not knowing what you're going to get. Yes, you may tell them you want a blink dog pup, but unless you're very detailed in your description of blink dogs, you may wind up getting a common canine instead. It would certainly be within your rights to refuse payment to someone who doesn't bring you the right beast, but do you really want to argue with a person who's willing to put their life on the line for a bit of coin?

If you can find a breeder for your chosen creature type, you may be able to select the precise specimen you desire. Not all beasts are legally traded, though, so if you're looking for something exotic, you may need to find a black market distributor. In either case, there's a risk that you'll wind up with a baby beast who has been mistreated or beaten, which makes your job as a trainer that much more difficult

## Baby Intelligence

Although I use the term "beast" to describe the creatures herein, they don't necessarily have animal intelligence. While some of the creatures are purely instinctual (owlbears, anyone?), others have above-average intelligence for monstrous creatures. Some creatures mentioned in this book, such as the kirin, gnolls, dragons, and couatls, have intellects rivaling, and in some cases surpassing, that of the civilized

species. These creatures require special handling if you are to successfully raise and train them.

Some of the intelligent beasts detailed in this book are capable of language, making them especially interesting cases. Whether you choose to teach the creature the language of its parents is up to you, but having the ability to speak to them in a tongue that is instinctively familiar to them would certainly help. Relationships with such creatures tend to be more give-and-take than they are with nonverbal beasts; when you're trying to train a dragon who is capable of negotiating, you must do more than feed it to keep it happy.

Regardless of its intelligence, all beasts learn and acquire new skills throughout their lives. Teaching them the fundamentals—such as hunting, hiding, and hygiene—is important when they are young. Even if you plan to raise the beast as a trapper, guardian, or puzzle solver (in the case of sphinxes and minotaurs), you must not neglect to teach them the basics. Some beasts learn these things faster than others, but in all cases, advanced skills will come with time, so remember to be patient.

## Rearing A Baby Beast

You've acquired your baby beast, and now it's time to raise it to be the helpful little minion you've always wanted. The first steps you take after bringing a baby into your custody are some of the most important you'll ever undertake, so don't take them lightly. I've seen many people try to raise a newborn creature only to fail miserably, sometimes catastrophically.

The first thing I recommend you do before trying to raise your beast is to study and learn as much as you can about its kind. One of the biggest novice mistakes is to assume that all creatures are alike, when nothing could be further from the truth. Each baby has its own unique personality, and more importantly, each creature type responds differently to your actions. You may be able to raise some of the more bestial creatures by simply feeding them regularly and letting them wander around your garden, but most of the monsters outlined in this book are more complex. Before you bring your new pet home from market (or its lair, or wherever you happen to find it), make sure you understand what amenities its new home is going to need.

I recommend you continue to learn everything you can about the beast throughout its childhood and



close attention anyway, because this is important information.

Most of the creatures in this book are not considered domestic house pets, and nearly every city restricts their presence in some way or another. Creatures who grow to large sizes or have harmful supernatural abilities typically require permits, if they're even allowed within city limits at all. Rust monsters in particular tend to be hazardous to a city's health and are rarely allowed on urban streets even with a leash.

If your chosen beast requires a permit, you should carry it with you any time you travel with your pet inside city limits. You alone are responsible for the creature's actions, so if it eats an adventurer's horse or turns a shopkeeper to stone, you need to be prepared to pay for damages (and stone-to-flesh spells). I don't recommend taking your beast onto city streets until it's old enough to understand and obey your commands, otherwise it may wind up costing you a hefty sum in fines.

In certain cases, you may need to demonstrate your ability to contain your beast and prevent it from rampaging on city streets. To earn a permit for such creatures, you need to prove your home has the proper safeguards in place to prevent it from getting loose. This may mean having dimensional anchors to prevent your puppies from blinking through your fence, stone walls to keep your rust monsters in, and so forth. Be prepared for routine visits from law enforcement to make sure all of your protective wards are up to their standards.

Gnolls, kobolds, and other creatures are considered lesser humanoids under some city laws, and they may be subjected to slavery. If you're rearing such a creature in one of these cities and you wish to keep your baby, be prepared to disguise it. As newborns, they may be easy to pass off as puppies or lizardlings, but as they age and begin walking on two feet, you'll need to use better techniques. I suggest investigating magical disguises or steering clear of rearing these humanoids in urban areas entirely.

into adulthood. It's important to know what kind of habitat makes it feel most at home, what kind of food it prefers to eat, and how it responds to discipline. Many beasts have supernatural powers which also require special consideration. You may need to wear protective clothing or magic items to guard yourself against accidental uses of its natural and unnatural attacks.

Once you know how to properly care for your beast, you'll need to put your knowledge into practice. Begin by establishing your role as its master (or parental figure if it's too smart to let you lord over it) so it learns to trust and obey you. Teach it basic living and coping skills, then progress to more advanced techniques as it matures. Keep in mind that not all creatures have the same lifespan; one beast may grow to maturity in a matter of years while others may take decades. The important thing is that you commit to being a beastmaster, lest you wind up with a creature who runs amok and leaves your home in shambles.

## Baby Beasts in the City

Even if you live atop a tower in the woods and don't get out much, chances are you will at some point need to bring your baby beast to the city. If you're a permanent urban resident, you may already be familiar with some of this material, but pay

## Training Your Beast

After showing your baby the basics, you'll want to teach it new skills, unless you're content with having a pet who is dependant on you and unable to do anything in return for your years of rearing, in which case you're probably better off buying a traditional

house cat. Having a well-trained beast who can perform unique tricks is the primary reason anyone becomes a beastmaster to begin with.

Before you begin teaching your beast new skills, consider its strengths and weaknesses. You're probably not going to have much luck training a minotaur to stealthily pick a lock, but training it to chase intruders around your hedge maze would be right up its alley. Likewise, a kobold makes a poor drawbridge guardian, but it does make a fantastic scout. By training your beast to work to its strengths, you'll have a much easier job.

Even though some creatures are fierce and instinctual predators, you should resist the urge to punish them harshly during training. One school of thought tells beastmasters to whip and starve their beasts in an effort to make them more ferocious. Be warned: Such techniques often lead to uncontrollable beasts with an appetite for their master. Instead, try using positive reinforcement to reward good behavior. Your pet will not only be more willing to listen to you, it will be more capable of learning the tricks you're trying to teach it.

Rewarding good behavior is a key element to rearing baby beasts. When teaching them a new trick, give them a tasty treat (or shiny trinket for some creatures) to assure them what they did was correct. At the end of a long day of repetitive activities, consider grooming or singing to them; you'll form a tight bond with your pet and it will be more likely to work with you in the future. This is especially important for anyone rearing a beast to be a guardian; the last thing you want is for a disgruntled cockatrice to turn you to stone when you least expect it.

## Beasts as Mounts

I once knew a dwarf named Torvald Gloryhammer who decided he wanted to raise a grey render so he could ride it into battle. Despite the bond he formed with the beast, its giant two-legged form just wasn't designed for the task. Several cure spells and a long recovery period later, Torvald decided his next mount would be a warhorse instead.

Let this be a cautionary tale. Many trainers get into the business of raising baby beasts for the sole purpose of one day using it as a mount, but they don't always know what they're getting into. Not every creature makes a suitable mount, so remember to do your research before making your selection.

You need to consider your potential mount's

suitability for bearing a rider. Blink dogs, for example, make terrible mounts—you only get about three feet (1 m) before they go ethereal and you wind up on the ground. Sphinxes tend to be too smart and proud to let anyone ride them, and gelatinous cubes... well, let's just say if you can train a gargantuan blob of jelly to be your ride, I'll eat my hat.

Some mounts are challenging to train but worth the effort. It can be difficult to get all three of a cerberus' heads to cooperate, but if you can train one to carry you into battle, then you have a strong ally on your side. Many dragons can be convinced to bear you as a rider, but they can be finicky and often require something in return. Finally, nightmares, with their flaming hooves and smoking nostrils, while some of the coolest and most terrifying mounts on the battlefield, are as ornery as a wild stallion and twice as difficult to domesticate.

Once you've chosen a suitable species to be your mount, make sure you commit to training it for this purpose. Not all beasts are naturally inclined to let someone ride atop their back and charge head-first into a horde of orcs. It takes planning, practice, and patience to raise your baby for this task, so if you're not up for it, then perhaps you should choose a simpler trick to teach it, such as rolling over or fetching sticks.

## Stages of Development

There are three main developmental stages for beasts: baby, juvenile, and adult. Some naturalists further separate these into smaller categories; I found 42 Molting Patterns of Phoenixes, written by Janni Aldan Cindersson, to be particularly fascinating, but I feel that any more than three is just splitting hairs.

Babies represent the youngest of a creature's specific species, but that doesn't necessarily mean the beast hasn't lived for several years. Humans may only take 18 years to transform from infants to adults, but for a dragon that's barely enough time to be even considered a juvenile. Kobolds, meanwhile, reach maturity in a matter of a few years, so they're only considered babies for the first several months of their lives.

It's during this stage that you must train your beast to have good habits and be obedient. If you don't, they tend to become juvenile delinquents, and nobody likes a sphinx with an attitude or a cerberus who can't sit and stay. Obedience training is particularly difficult because every creature responds differently

to various stimuli: Minotaurs require a firm, some say aggressive, hand, while treant saplings tend to listen as long as you give them plenty of water and sunshine. If you find one tactic isn't working, reread my entry on the beast to see if you can get an idea for their personality, and modify your tactics accordingly.

At the juvenile stage, your beast is mostly self-sufficient but still requires guidance and supervision. If you've been doing your job as a parent, they may survive on their own in the wild, but this is the stage where you can teach them new tricks that aren't essential to their survival. Juveniles may be intelligent enough to learn several new nonessential skills, which tends to be the goal of most beast trainers.

When your beast reaches adulthood, it should be able to be wholly self-sufficient. If you were to keel over dead one day, it would be able to continue living without you, but ideally you'll live a long and healthy

life alongside your pet. Some long-lived species (such as treants and dragons) may outlive their masters, so it's important that you raise them to be high functioning adults who will take care of your descendants. Other, shorter-lived species only last a few years, so you need to get used to rearing and re-rearing these types of pets.

## Protecting Your Baby Beast

As much as you need to protect the rest of the world from your monster-to-be, you need to protect your baby beast from the outside world. Even a creature as powerful as a dragon is susceptible to poachers and slavers when it is young and helpless. It's important to know the risks associated with raising a baby beast and what you can do to keep it safe.

All baby beasts can fetch a price on the market (or black market, if they're prohibited), but rare and exotic creatures come at a premium. That means



the rarer the creature, the more likely you are to encounter someone who's willing to do anything to take it from you. Thieves might be interested in selling your baby for a small fortune, but if your creature is known for having potent alchemical components, it could be poached for its parts. Phoenix feathers, minotaur horns, dragon scales, and treant sap are just a few alchemical components poachers desire.

When your baby beast is young, it is important to keep a close eye on it. If you have the magical means to create a sleepless guardian to protect it, you should do so no matter the cost. If not, spend as much as you can afford on guards, wards, walls, and locks to try to keep poachers away. Avoid hiring someone to protect your beast if possible; I've found you can't trust people who are willing to put their lives on the line for a bit of money.

Once your beast is a bit older, it may be able to defend itself, but that doesn't mean you should leave it alone. I recommend using a leash (if your beast doesn't violently protest) while in public so others know, without a doubt, the creature is yours. Should poachers attempt to take your pet anyway, it's important to remember that you may use force to protect it. If you're not the sort to do that, then ignore what I said earlier about hiring sellswords, but remember to use them only with constant supervision.

## Returning a Beast to the Wild

If you've decided beast training just isn't for you, or if your pet has destroyed too much of your property to keep it around, you may choose to return it to the wild. Remember that, like any domesticated creature, a beast raised by anyone other than its natural parents is vulnerable to the outside world. It needs to have the knowledge and tools necessary to be able to effectively live on its own, otherwise you're dooming it, and that wouldn't be very responsible of you.

If your beast has relied solely on you for its food, you need to teach it how to hunt and forage in the wild before you can release it. If you don't, it may be unable to feed itself without finding a humanoid population to satisfy its needs. Generally speaking, by the time your beast is a juvenile, it should have learned the skills it needs to fend for itself. If yours hasn't, you may need to spend additional time helping it become self-sufficient.



Depending on your beast, it may be a boon to the local ecology when you reintroduce it to its natural habitat. Some creatures help maintain local populations of secondary consumers or predators, while others are... well, let's just say your pet might be one of those secondary predators. In either case, unless you're releasing an abundance of creatures into the wilds all at once, which may unbalance the local ecology, you're probably doing a good thing for the environment by letting it go.

Of course, you need to know just where to release your pet. Some creatures are solitary mountain dwellers, for example, so releasing them into an overcrowded forest may have undesired effects. If it's a top predator, it may devastate the population of local prey animals. On the other hand, if it is released into an environment where it has no natural prey, it may starve to death. Be mindful of when and where you release your pet if you want it to survive and live a long, healthy, environmentally friendly life.

# BASILISK LIZARDLING

Rearing Difficulty  
**Extremely Difficult**  
Intelligence  
**Clever**

## WARNING: Extremely Dangerous

Some local legends claim that the first basilisk emerged from a lizard's egg that was turned to stone, then incubated by a cockatrice; quite ridiculous if you ask me because it does not work. The basilisk, often confused for the cockatrice, is a lizard-like creature with eight small legs, armed with a powerful grinding jaw and a gaze that can turn its prey to stone.

What is known for certain about them is that they are deeply connected to the minerals that compose their nest. This is demonstrated by their habitat choice, eating tendencies, mineral scent and even the mineral their victim is transformed into. Most varieties will turn their victims to slate, sandstone or granite, but there are rare cases where I have seen basilisks turn their victims into jade, lapis and even obsidian. No matter what, they make stunning statues out of any living thing.

### Egg Care

Basilisks lay their eggs bi-annually in pure mineral deposits. The eggs blend into their surroundings with matching colors and shapes, making them very difficult to locate and identify, and are almost as hard as the rocks themselves. This serves to protect them if stepped upon, although this probably wouldn't help under the feet of a giant.

The nest is mixed with similar sized stones to provide both food and camouflage for the hatchlings. If you have obtained multiple eggs, I recommend that you separate them and pack them inside a barrel of stones that match the mineral of the egg and nest. If this is not done, or a blend of minerals is used, the emergent lizardling will be weaker than its potential. Upon hatching, basilisk lizardlings immediately begin consuming both the stones and eggs around it, ensuring that only the strongest of the clutch survives (hence the need for separating the eggs).

### General Care

Despite their small size when hatched, basilisks are very hungry and very dangerous. Their stone-turning gaze is functional upon hatching and cannot be disabled, so by far the best method to handle basilisks is to be fully prepared with safeguards against petrification. I strongly recommend keeping the creature in an isolated pen where it can hunt and

explore without posing a threat to anyone outside the pen, unless that is intentional...

Although the basilisk can eat various raw minerals and stones, it is far more nutritious for them to feed upon prey they've turned to stone. This is important as it will affect both the basilisk's growth and the strength of their gaze. Some trainers do this to intentionally, weakening the gaze so that less precautions are required to handle and train it. The problem with this practice is that it stunts the growth and power of the basilisk's gaze, which grows more powerful with age. It also leaves you with a hungry, upset basilisk who will take any opportunity to turn on its trainers.

### Training

The best way I can describe a basilisk's gaze is that of a continuous ray, radiating from their eyes which can never be disabled or turned off. This coincidentally makes it easy to track the beast by just following the zig-zag of petrified matter. However, its gaze is still dangerous and very lethal. When working with a basilisk, it is important to wear protective gear and to keep a fail-safe nearby. My recommendation is to use goggles with petrified amber lenses, and a travel cloak that completely covers the skin with the stoneskin spell cast upon it. It does not matter whether it's permanent or not as the spell should last you a number of hours, however spellcasting fees do to add up, so the enchantment may be a more affordable option. As for the fail-safe, I recommend a spellcaster or potions to revert any damage that the basilisk may cause during training.

Both solitary and very temperamental creatures, basilisks have no conception of hierarchy making training a very difficult and drawn-out process that can take upwards of three to five years. Don't feed it prior to any training exercises and utilize its favorite snacks to reward good behavior, though don't expect too much in the early years. When you start, you may need to be a little forceful as basilisks do not initially respond quickly or well to verbal feedback.

Once during my travels I met a young wizard rearing her own basilisk, whose gaze turned objects into rose quartz. For special guests she would gift a rose turned to quartz; I still keep a beautiful example with me on my travels.





# BLINK PUPPY

Rearing Difficulty  
**Tricky**  
Intelligence  
**Intelligent**

This distinct dog breed is easily recognizable by uniquely glossed eyes, lovable demeanor and, obviously, its ability to teleport (otherwise known as blinking) from place to place. Of course, this is only the face their owners see; enemies can expect to be greeted with snarling jaws and plenty of unexpected attacks. Blink dogs are feared for their unanticipated assaults, blinking in to take a bite out of their prey, only to teleport away to safety. Blink puppies fetch quite the ransom on the black market, so poachers are known to go to great lengths to grab them.

When a female blink dog is in heat she creates a scent trail, teleporting from spot to spot, leaving a sort of scavenger hunt for the male to follow. Only the most diligent suitors with the strongest noses and keen sense of teleportation will find the female waiting in a dark cave for her suitor to arrive. Though no one has actually witnessed blink dog mating, those who have seen the cave from afar note the firework-like flashing that occurs.

The gestation period lasts three months, resulting in a litter of two to five puppies. When they are born they fit in the palm of a hand, not opening their eyes for at least four days. Once they do, they instantly imprint on the first being they see, showing them extreme loyalty for the rest of their lives. In most cases, this loyalty imprints on their parents and the other puppies, creating an instant familial bond. However, this is the primary reason why poachers crave newborn puppies, placing them in a dark box so that they can bond with the highest bidder.

For the first few months, both parents reside in the cave until the pup is old enough to run on its own. During this time, the parents are fiercely territorial, even showing a defensive hostility to members of their own pack. There have been several instances of passersby who have been severely mauled for passing too close to a blink dog cave that had newborn pups inside. Only when the pups have grown into their full range of motion and coordination do the parents rejoin their pack and return to their mostly-nomadic lifestyle.

## General Care

Rearing blink puppies is a difficult but rewarding duty. With enough love and care, the pup can grow into a part of any family; one that, even if they teleport away,

they'll always return to. The job is made easier if the pup has imprinted on their owner, intensifying their connection and affection for them.

While blink puppies are capable of eating either meat or plants in their diet, many breeders have actually found a connection between diet and attitude. Raw meats tend to make them aggressive while a purely vegetarian diet will make the blink dog completely docile. I expect that a majority of you are expecting to have the blink dog accompany you on your journeys so it is recommended to ensure a balanced diet.

To give one a bath and wash away the dust and dirt, one only needs to get them into the water. Their fur is quite thin, and just a little dousing is enough to fully clean them off. Getting them wet is the problem, since their teleportation abilities are innately connected to their instinctive reactions. Their blinking makes playing fetch a breeze and makes avoiding their licks much harder, but bath-time can take all day. Blink puppies actually like to be dirty for some reason, too, always rolling around in the nearest patch of mud.

## Training

The biggest question owners get is, "How do you keep a blink puppy from running away?" Getting a regular dog to stay still while attempting to train it is hard enough, but one that can teleport anywhere they can see? You can't cage them and you can't leash them, but there is a thing called a temporal leash, an especially expensive item usually sold at an exorbitant up-charge when purchasing a blink puppy. The leash is placed around the puppy's neck and a control bracelet around the owner's wrist, keeping them from going too far before hitting an invisible wall. It is a small price to pay for the security of one's furry child.

Owners should always keep an eye out for people watching when their dog blinks. The sight can startle the unexpected and entice the unsavoury. Poachers are everywhere, and even though newborns are ideal, unscrupulous patrons will still pay good money for adolescent or adult blink dogs if they can get their hands on them.

Living conditions for captive puppies are often terrible, as they are confined to dark, stifling crates awaiting new owners to bond with.



# BULETTE BILLY

Rearing Difficulty  
**Complicated**  
Intelligence  
**Instinctual**

Bulettes, also known as land sharks, share both size and appetite with the largest of their ocean namesakes. Their ability to 'swim' through the ground gives them a huge advantage in hunting, as they burrow beneath their prey and pounce from below, leaving victims unaware until attacked or swallowed whole. If challenged, their armored hides give them effective protection until they have a chance to dive back into the earth.

This burrowing, along with their love of humanoid flesh, makes bulettes difficult to study in the wild. Several academics speculate about how these beasts reproduce, but none has any hard evidence to support their theories. My own experience with them has led to the following conclusions.

The female lays her eggs in a pocket of earth laced with a musk to attract bulls. Once a bull finds this he will fertilize them and then store the eggs in a special pouch near the base of the tail. Gestation lasts approximately 16 to 18 months, whereupon a single bulette billy will emerge. Though several egg pods are laid, the strongest hatchling consumes the others as soon as it emerges. Once large enough to crawl out of the bull's pocket the pup is left to fend for itself.

The smallest billies recorded measure 1-½ feet (0.5 m) long and are deceptively heavy, at around 100 pounds (45 kg). Even a few hours after emerging their hides have hardened enough to protect them from the jagged rocks they will encounter while burrowing.

## General Care

Rearing a bulette billy is a monumental task. Not only are the beasts large, they are unpredictable and quick to forget training if left unpracticed. Once you acquire your baby bulette, be it by trapping or from the corpse of a carrying bull, you will find that they are quite snappy yet very impressionable and eager to please an owner who feeds them.

Raising a bulette billy is similar to raising a puppy, albeit a huge, terrifying, burrowing, carnivorous and destructive puppy whose grooming gear was designed by dwarven miners.

Bulettes prefer to eat live prey in great quantities. When young it's fine to feed them chickens and other small farm animals, however as they grow larger you

will find that they prefer the taste of humanoid flesh. If you find it distasteful to provide them such fare, you may choose to substitute horses and livestock instead, but be warned that there's a reason many bulette trainers have wooden legs.

Though unpredictable, billies are not uncontrollable. Many attribute their erratic behavior to their lack of parental guidance, and billies raised in captivity have been seen to exhibit great restraint, especially in attempting to feed on nearby halflings. The important thing to remember with a billy is consistency: Regular feeding schedules, bedtimes, and grooming sessions provide a structure to their life that diminishes the urges that come from life in the wild.

Grooming your billy is simple if you have access to a large body of wet sand, or volcanic pumice. Coaxing your billy to swim through these materials will scour away dirt and loose shell plates, and help remove any parasites that may have become lodged in the places you can't reach with a grooming chisel.

## Training

Though dangerous, rearing a bulette billy is an intensely rewarding experience. The most important thing I would reiterate would be to maintain consistency in their daily habits.

The trickiest part about owning a billy is the use of its extraordinary burrowing ability, as it can cause lots of damage, and panic, in any urbanized region. Consider drilling a hole through the rim of the head-shield (don't worry, it won't hurt them) and anchoring them with a long steel chain attached to a well-sunk metal pole. You can then train them to respond to depth commands with taps on the chain and reward them by hiding bits of food at those depths for the bulette to find. Invest in magical digging equipment or X-ray vision devices to help you locate a sulking or sleeping billy, and try dragging a log behind you to distract a playful critter from targeting your ankles.

Due to the bulette's enormous size and feared predatory dominance (and, frankly, their shape), many believe that consuming particular organs will serve as fertility enhancers. These organs fetch high prices in various 'specialty' markets so be wary of poachers.



# CENTAUR FOAL

Rearing Difficulty  
**Easy**  
Intelligence  
**Civilized**

The lives of centaurs revolve primarily around their extended families. Each herd is comprised of several adult females (known as mares) their offspring, and younger males. The adult males (known as stallions) stake out a territory around the edges of the larger tribal lands and function as border guards and buffers to the outside world. When it nears the mating season, once every five years as marked by the constellations they hold sacred, the various tribes come together and hold a Naadam, a sort of highly-cultural tournament. However, it is far more nuanced than any elvish tradition that I have ever encountered. Lasting for an entire month, the event is composed of various tourneys where the stallions compete against each other in poetry, hunting, archery and carving in addition to games of strength, wits and endurance. Some of the races continue for a day and a night, and it is a humbling sight indeed, to see a field of strong young stallions wobbling like a foal from exhaustion. Their dances are awe-inspiring as well, with the massive creatures leaping high into the air so that the earth shudders at their landing. Yet do not think centaurs mindless - their riddles and labyrinths would put our most revered elders to the test. Although there is no single decisive winner of the event, it is the time where the mares pick their partners based on the performances they enjoy most. They present their chosen stallion with gifts of food, hand-made sashes and decorative ornaments. The two centaurs perform a sacred marriage rite and are then bonded for life. The new husband spends an entire lunar cycle with their bride, then returns to the outer tribes, finding opportunities to visit their children and wives whenever possible.

Pregnancy lasts for 16 months, after which the mother's herd prepares a secure place with plenty of straw, water and blankets. The eldest females assist with the birth while the younger family members walk a vigil around the birthplace, singing songs and making gifts for the young foal. Unlike horses or humanoids, centaurs are not born head first; their unique anatomy has the infant emerge horse-chest first, with the human torso laid across its back, so the head and rear hips appear together. A most unusual and privileged sight!

## General Care

Centaur are omnivorous, though they tend to prefer a vegetarian diet, leaving cooked meats for special occasions. Unlike horses, a centaur cannot walk within hours of birth. It takes until it is about a month old to get its legs under it. Once the foals find their walking legs, though, they quickly pick up running as well, though they tend to trip over their own feet until they can master their hooves. Even more so than human babies, centaur foals bounce. Their hair also grows much faster than that of a human, producing full manes and tails by 6 months old.

Now it's important to remember that although a newborn centaur may have the appearance of a 5-year-old human, they have not developed any language skills, which they acquire at the same rate as humans. Instead of making the baby noises commonly recognized by humans, foals make a soft whickering noise most pleasant to the ear.

Once they hit puberty, all fat is shed, and the centaur becomes a lanky, gangling tangle of limbs. Both sexes are subject to violent mood swings and physical impulses. A frequent pastime involves wrestling with arms and forelegs by rearing up. Once, I was caring for a set of twins and was nearly trampled on a daily basis! Although young, they are stronger than you think, so expect buffeting and bruises from even the calmest foal.

Until they reach 9 years of age, the children are cared for by all the mothers of the tribe. When they have their first coming of age ceremony, the adolescents begin to learn the more mature aspects of their culture. Mares will remain with their mother's herd, raising their children next to their siblings and cousins. Stallions will begin spending time with adult males, learning how to patrol and mark territory up until they reach sexual maturity, at which point they will claim their own land and prepare to compete for female attention at the next Naadam.

Pregnant centaur urine is highly prized on the black market due to its use in gender-changing spells and potions for postmenopausal women. It is usually consumed in powdered form. Care should be taken, as some individuals react to its ingestion by growing a long, silky mane down the length of their spine.



# CERBERUS PUPPY

Rearing Difficulty  
**Tricky**  
Intelligence  
**Clever**

Known for its multiple heads, monstrous size and loyal, possessive nature, a cerberus resembles a very large mastiff with three heads conjoined at the base of its neck. Typically standing between 6-½ and 7 feet tall (2 meters), these canines are fiercely territorial and are vicious hunters. Capable of using each head independently for keeping watch, a trained cerberus makes a marvelous guard or loyal hunting companion.

During the mating season, males will wander their vast territories in search of a female, sometimes travelling up to 80 miles (129 km) in a single day. When the male comes across a female in heat, he will alert her to his presence by giving a warbling sound from his throats. Should the female be receptive to his advances, she will return the call and approach him. Often, a mating pair will stay together for several days, hunting and mating until the female grows bored and forces the male to leave.

When she is ready to give birth, a pregnant cerberus will seek out a suitable den and make a nest out of nearby plant material, typically out of branches and tall grasses. She will also ensure that the entrance of the den is hidden and/or masked to protect her pups from any would-be predators. A female cerberus will generally give birth to between two and four pups, though normally only one or two will survive the first few weeks due to the fierce competition for their mother's milk.

## General Care

As carnivores, cerberi eat meat as fresh as they can get it but, if raised from a pup, they will tolerate some forms of cooked meat and fish. Fully grown cerberi, even those that are domesticated, prefer to hunt for their own food. This should be encouraged as much as possible to ensure that none of the heads become bored, as this often leads to destructive behavior. Think

Cerberi can survive the loss of either outer head, should they not succumb to infection or blood loss, but not the removal of the central head. An old demon hunter I once knew cauterised the stump of his loyal, wounded companion with the only thing he had available, his metal holy symbol. Forever after, the missing head would reappear as a burst of eldritch green flame whenever demons were near.

one gnawing head is bad? try three!

When raised from a pup, a cerberus is an intensely loyal companion, sharing many of the characteristics of a domesticated dog including tail wagging, barking, and playfulness. In this sense, a domesticated cerberus is very much like a large, intelligent, three-headed Collie. General care and grooming is very much the same as with other domesticated dogs, albeit on a much larger scale. Care must be taken to ensure that the space between each head, where fleas and other parasites can nest, is kept clean; the cerberus cannot reach these areas easily by itself. Regular baths, both in water and in dust, are an important part of bonding with a cerberus, as this is normally when the creature is most relaxed.

## Training

Training a cerberus can be a challenging task, particularly when the creature is still quite young. Although slightly more intelligent than most domesticated dogs, you must have the attention of all three heads for any training exercise to be successful, otherwise the effort will be wasted as the unengaged heads will distract those that are paying attention. This is particularly important when playing games like fetch, as all three heads will compete for the same object even if there are enough objects for each head.

Basic training for simple commands should begin when the puppy is approximately 16 weeks old. By this time, the puppy should be fully weaned and moderately house-trained. As with domesticated dogs, one-word commands will work best, as the puppy is less likely to become confused. As the puppy grows older, more complex commands may be taught, though these should be limited to simple statements or sentences to ensure that they are fully understood. Some cerberi can be trained to accept a command to each head separately, though this training technique is extremely difficult.

Although no one knows the true origin of cerberi, it appears they first emerged from the nine layers of Hell. Early stories of the cerberus told of it being able to sniff out spirits and bring them back to the layers of Hell, or consume them, depending on the story. If true, one should be able to train a cerberus to track or detect undead spirits.





# CHIMERA CUB

Rearing Difficulty  
**Complicated**  
Intelligence  
**Clever**

A winged beast with the heads of a dragon, a goat, and a lion, the chimera is considered by many to be a naturally evil creature. While dangerous, the chimera is no more temperamental than your average bear; territorial, occasionally aggressive, with no qualms about hunting humans and livestock as needed. Competing biannually for mates, both male and females vie for prime territory and partners. Consistent victors of either sex will often pair up for the mating seasons. During the gestation period, mated pairs will live within the same territory, as the male will hunt, bring food, and defend the pregnant female who is unable to fly during the later stages of pregnancy.

Typically chimerae only bear one pup, but in the event of twins the weaker sibling rarely survives to adolescence. Chimera pups are weaned from their mother after three months, during which time the father will continue to care for the female and the pup. Once the pup has been weaned, the mother leaves the territory for a hunting spree, regaining her strength, while the male chimera remains with and cares for the pup until its adulthood. Chimera pups also fledge at this time. Male chimera will not leave their pup alone during this period, taking their offspring on hunting expeditions. This serves a dual purpose: Young chimera learn first by example by watching their father hunt, and the father can protect the young from other adult chimera that would otherwise target and kill them.

The chimera's three heads are observed to behave more like three siblings when they are newborn and adolescent, often snapping at each other and competing for food. During the young chimera's time in its father's care, it learns to hunt and fight using its three heads in concert. The adult male begins by showing his pup how to fly and hunt, supplementing these expeditions with play that emulates combat. Finally, he will supervise his pup as it brings back prey of its own. Adolescence lasts from two to three years, after which the young chimera finds new grounds in which to hunt.

Chimera exhibit minimal sexual dimorphism; females are slightly larger, whereas the male have slightly more lustrous wings, which appear gold in contrast to the female's brown feathers.

## General Care

Chimera are born very small, only about the size of a goat, but grow quickly, reaching 12 feet (3.6 meters) after the first year. The first signs of a mane will begin appear on the lion head after 8 months, a good indicator of its health and age. At 16 months, the wings become fully-grown and functional. Typically the parents will aid in the cleaning and preening until the individual heads have sorted themselves out; with them out of the picture you will have to assist the pup.

With the rapid growth comes a voracious appetite. To make matters worse, each head feels that they're hungry independently, causing them to snap and fight with each other over food, fresh meat. I honestly recommend you not break the heads up and let them fight, as this helps define each of the personalities of the heads and also helps the chimera realize it is a single creature with three heads working together.

## Training

Chimera, like many animals, are capable of imprinting if they are found very young. However, only chimera pups who are orphaned or stolen before they wean—within the first three months—will be capable of being truly trained. At this juncture, a human caretaker must emulate the mother's behavior. Infant chimera can survive on goat milk supplemented with herbal magical components, and they should be bathed with wet cloths and held in warmed blankets during this period. Chimera pups that are taken in before maturation but after the weaning period can be trained to a point, but they will always be mostly feral.

Chimera are not truly sentient, but they are cunning and intelligent hunters. If left unsupervised and without ample exercise, they are likely to become destructive. Chimera pups need play, much in the same way as other young predators, to emulate combat and hunting. It is inadvisable for a human to roughhouse with a young chimera without proper precautions, as the chimera's dragon head is capable of breathing fire within the first year (which nearly blew my head off last spring).

Unlike mundane lions, both female and male chimera grow full manes on their lion heads.



# COCKATRICE CHICK

Rearing Difficulty  
**Extremely Difficult**  
Intelligence  
**Clever**

## WARNING: Extremely Dangerous

*“A unique creature that is both cockerel and serpent, the cockatrice has a deceptive appearance. Its apparent lack of natural weapons would lead one to look upon its beautiful plumage and fantastic scales, but such activity would be folly. Gazing upon the cockatrice is harmless, but be careful not to stare, for if it turns its eyes back to you, it will surely turn you to stone.”*

It is popularly believed that the cockatrice is the result of some wizard melding magic with nature. Oddly flexible creatures, the cockatrice can lay its own eggs or steal the eggs of serpents or fowl to hatch cockatrice chicks. What makes the creature most fascinating is its ability to acquire traits, and sometimes abilities, if the incubating creature is a magical reptile of some sort. I once acquired a cockatrice egg incubated by a couatl; the cockatrice I reared had beautiful rainbow scales and plumage and even was capable of magical abilities, albeit uncontrolled and sporadic.

### Egg Care

If you have obtained a cockatrice egg, the easiest thing for you to do is to let a chicken incubate it for you; it does not have to be a chicken but they are the easiest surrogate to come by. If you are adventurous, find some magical reptile or bird and have it incubate your egg. If you happen to have a willing dragon or phoenix lying around, it would be particularly helpful for you to document and share your results.

### General Care

As cold-blooded creatures, cockatrices need external warmth to regulate their body temperature, which makes them poor candidates for living in the depths of a dark dungeon. They do, however, make great outdoor watch-pets.

A chick's stony gaze isn't as immediately deadly as an adult cockatrice's, but I still advise you keep your other animal companions and familiars out of their line of sight. Oddly, the creatures do not actually feed on stone, but they do seem to admire their petrified creations. More intelligent cockatrices have been observed to bait their victims into forming silly poses before permanently turning them into commemorative

figurines for their nests.

Contrary to what many believe, the cockatrice's diet consists of very few minerals. The beasts prefer to eat eggs, especially other cockatrice eggs, and it is important to keep a healthy supply on hand. Thankfully, chicks only eat about one meal per day, but expect their appetites to increase as they reach maturity.

### Training

Rearing and training a cockatrice chick is difficult and dangerous work, but unlike the basilisk the cockatrice is capable of controlling its gaze ability. The beasts are lazy and self-serving, and all they have to do is look at you funny to make you stop what you're doing. If you can manage to raise a chick to adulthood and get it to do what you want, you'll have a fantastically powerful pet (and a lot of spare statuary to sell).

There are three essential items to possess to successfully train a cockatrice: a mongoose (for keeping it in line, as they are immune to the gaze), a pair of petrified spectacles (to limit exposure to their gaze), and a stockpile of stone-to-flesh potions. If you can train the mongoose to administer the potions, all the better.

When training a cockatrice, be cognizant of their feelings. As the chick becomes bored, tired, or frustrated, it may demand more sun or leisure time. Not giving in to the chick's demands could spell bad news for you and those around you. Though it may seem like placating the creature is counter to your ability to control it, a relationship with a cockatrice is more like an agreement to cohabitate than a master-pet arrangement.

Alchemists prize the cockatrice for its ability to transmute living material into minerals. Many believe it is possible to raise a cockatrice capable of turning flesh to gold, but the precise chicken-reptile pairing has yet to be discovered. Although many alchemists continue to raise cockatrices for their own experiments, many have given up this pursuit in favor of rearing basilisks, with a similar goal in mind.



# COUATL NEONATE

Rearing Difficulty  
**Tricky**  
Intelligence  
**Superior**

Naturally gifted with telepathy and planar teleportation, couatl are capable of powerful magics and associated with natural phenomena such as hurricanes and rainbows. Wise and powerful, they are often worshiped as gods and have even been known to serve the gods themselves.

With an adult wingspan of 35 feet (10.6 m), they travel long distances to form huge networks with other intelligent and powerful creatures, such as other couatl families, phoenixes and even good dragons. The couatl see themselves as stewards and guides, often forming benevolent relationships with the tribes and cities of their homeland, typically warm or tropical forests and high misty mountains.

Once they reach maturity, unpaired couatl gather from across entire continents to choose a new mate. Choosing places with hot thermal updrafts, they each perform an intricate and unique aerial dance; if another couatl's dance appeals the two will combine their manoeuvres, after which the two will move off to roost together. Pairs remain together for twenty years, and then choose a new mate, but maintain contact with old mates and offspring to maintain their networks. The female lays three eggs in a nest, constructed by her mate, of feathers, furs and tributes offered by people the pair have helped in their travels. Occasionally the couatl have been known to bring trusted servants, provided by the civilizations they interact with, to their roost to serve as assistants in caring for their neonates.

## Egg Care

Couatl eggs are about 16 inches (40 cm) at their longest point, with the shell a deep jade hue. As the egg matures, a rainbow sheen develops across the shell, until the original green is but one color among the rest, at which point the egg hatches. They must be kept warm at all times, or the egg will cease to develop. Once laid, egg clutches are carefully buried somewhere

Couatl feathers are sought after by collectors and certain cultures for their size, resilience, and brilliant colors. Fortunately, couatl molt feathers on a regular basis and a steady business between couatl communities and collectors inevitably develops for their spectacular plumage.

with consistent high temperatures; in deep sand near natural hot springs, volcanic ash, or stable elemental fire vents. If no such place is available, then burying in an earthen pile surrounded by a fire ring kept constantly alight will suffice. Incubation lasts approximately 14 months, and by the twelfth month you can start to hear clicking and scratching within the shell as the neonate begins to become active. Couatl believe that a neonate should break free from its shell on its own, though they offer telepathic encouragement to their young.

## General Care

Since couatl can communicate telepathically with any intelligent creatures in their presence even before hatching, they begin to speak with their nest-mates, parents and carers during the last several months within their shells. If you start to hear a voice in your head while tending a clutch you're not going crazy, it's just the hatchling getting to know you and beginning to develop its natural curiosity.

Care and training of couatl is relatively easy for a dedicated caretaker who has an understanding of magic and access to plentiful food sources for a growing omnivorous neonate. A balanced diet of meats, flowers, fruits and roots is needed; couatl require the same range of food as humanoid adults from birth, although their appetites grow until they can consume a small cow and equivalent amounts of other food types in a single day.

As intelligent creatures who are born with an intellect equivalent to a 3-year-old human, teaching is essential from the first moments of birth. Since they are fundamentally good creatures, couatl neonates are very trusting and will listen to their caretakers and follow instructions almost to a fault.

As they mature over two decades, neonates benefit from contact with adult couatl; if possible, such contact should be encouraged. Adult couatl can teach adolescent couatl essential skills in plane shifting, teleportation, and flying that non-couatl caretakers are not always capable of. Adult couatl understand the bond between a caretaker and a child, and unless there are signs of abuse, they will not try to remove the adolescent couatl from the care of their non-couatl parent.



# DRAGON WYRMLING

Rearing Difficulty  
**Difficult**  
Intelligence  
**Superior**

Rank dragons of any kind amongst the most dangerous and difficult to rear, next to the dodomeki and the rakshasa but, like all rearing efforts, it definitely pays off if you get it right. They have an immense intellectual capacity and an alluring obsession with treasure. This combination makes them difficult to raise and keep under control, but once a dragon bonds with its owner, they develop a kinship that cannot easily be broken.

When a dragon is gravid, she will carve out a new section of her lair to lay her eggs. Once laid, the female dragon will perch outside her lair and roar to attract a mate. Each dragon has slightly different cries, but to the layman, it's all dragon. Once the male dragon has fertilized the eggs, it will leave, and regardless is chased off as the mother's protective instincts switch on.

During the incubation process, the mother uses her terrifying breath upon her eggs daily. Unlike the blast most adventurers witness in their final moments, this lasts for almost a minute, tiring her quickly as she bathes the eggs in draconic essence. Since dragons have few natural predators other than other dragons, and the mother will not leave the nest unattended, their eggs typically go undisturbed until they hatch. Once hatched, the young are guarded and nurtured until they learn to fly and defend themselves, which takes about three months. After that, the wyrmlings leave to find their own way. I have occasionally seen clutches band together when ejected from their mother's lair, forming what resembles a gang, though it's rare that these groups last into adulthood.

## Egg Care

If you find an egg and attempt to bring it to term, realize you are embarking on a difficult and time-consuming endeavor. The first step is identifying the type of egg you have. This can be easy to do, if the egg

Dragon scales are a natural armor and provide a great amount of resistance to whatever element the dragon happens to be aligned with. When a dragon matures to the next life stage (when it transcends being a wyrmling and becomes an adolescent dragon in its own right) it sheds its infant scales like a human child loses teeth. These scales can be harvested and used to craft incredibly rare and resilient armors.

was stolen from the nest of a known dragon. If not, you can usually determine the type from the location you discovered the egg. An egg found in a noxious swamp, for example, would probably belong to a toxic green dragon.

Once you have identified the egg and decided you are going to hatch it, you will quickly realize you lack the elemental breath of a mother dragon. You must find a way to replicate this breath on your own and bathe the egg in its element a few times a day. This can be easy for some, like a frost or water dragon, and more difficult for others. An egg can still hatch without exposure to its element, but its breath weapon will never be as powerful as a dragon that was exposed.

## General Care

It is imperative that you understand that you are not in control of this dragon. It will never be your pet, and it will never submit to you. A dragon can be a companion, but only if it deems you worthy of its friendship. The bond between a dragon and its owner is strong, bested only by the bond between wizards and their familiars. The best way to ensure a bond is to care for the dragon like it is your own child. Dragons are not only sentient, they are intelligent, and they can tell when they are being treated like a pet.

A dragon can care for itself; It can wash itself, feed itself, and learn to fly on its own. Your job is to protect it, watch over it, and ensure it has everything it needs. If you put your life on the line for your dragon, it will do the same for you.

An easy way to please your dragon is to help it develop its first treasure hoard. You will undoubtedly come home one day to find your dragon constructing such a hoard from items it has found during its hunts. Help the dragon guard the treasure, and you will become inseparable. Just don't borrow anything from it without negotiating first, or the inseparable will become consumable.

As it turns out, any dragon can fertilize any type of dragon's eggs, but they will only ever reach full maturity and power if parented by dragons of matching elements, and more often than not a dragon of unmatched type that gets close to eggs will eat or destroy them.





The mating rituals of elementals are hard to decipher, as no one has actually witnessed two elementals mating (or recognised if they have). The two most commonly accepted theories are that either a single elemental splits off a piece of itself into a smaller elementals, or that two adult elementals combine together to become a single entity then separate again, but into three entities instead of the two that came together. It is easy to overlook this process, as it can be difficult to distinguish two elementals from a non-sentient variety of element.

The presence of an elementlet outside of the elemental worlds is a rare thing; due to their size, they are difficult to locate. Most are typically overlooked as temporary arcane manifestations or the miscasting of some spell, which happens more than you'd think. Yet it remains possible for the trained eye to pick out a newborn elementlet. Maybe that drop of water never evaporates, or that ember never burns out. Elementlets take up residence where they can live immersed in their element and can grow relatively undisturbed, such as the local well or embers of a forge.

Finding a way to bring them home is another story. Their lives are very delicate when they are small, so any attempt at capture and storage must be undertaken with great care. The most successful method of capture I have seen is to lure the elementlets into a custom-made terrarium. Sometimes these are pocket-dimensions. Sometimes they are enchanted environments which replicate the conditions of their home plane.

## General Care

Taking care of an elementlet is akin to producing more of the element itself. A fire elementlet must be provided with plenty of tinder for itself to feed upon. An air elementlet must be given a large area in which to blow, picking up more air as it does so. Elementlets eat continuously. They absorb whatever is around them to power themselves and their growth.

The best elementlet I ever trained was a little pebble I called Chip. It would ride on my shoulder making a deep, gentle humming sound, like it was trying to remember the words to a song. I released it years ago now, at a gate to the Plane of Elemental Earth, but I still find myself humming that tuneless song when I'm walking.

Elementlets tend to take on the personality and mannerisms associated with their element. Fire elementlets are aggressive and unpredictable, while water elementlets are fluid and flexible. By understanding the element itself, trainers can understand the way the elementlet thinks, and this will help them bond.

Some elementlets are friendlier than others and will develop closer relationships to their caretaker. In general, they tend to be drawn toward wielders of the magical arts, as they can sense the power that made them. Also, magicians have an easier time raising elementlets, as they can sustain their growth through spells.

## Training

Training an elementlet can be dangerous, depending on the beast's element. Lightning and fire elementlets have been known to seriously hurt or kill their caretakers, usually by accident—but sometimes not. Elementlets are difficult to predict. Others will use training exercises as a means to escape, as elementlets crave freedom.

The act of training depends heavily on the type of elementlet. Some are best suited to combat roles, others to agility or intelligence tests. They can be taught to run through mazes, battle foes, and solve complicated problems. Elementlets may lack the ability to communicate with us normally, but they are nearly as intelligent as we are.

A well-trained elementlet can grow to become a huge boon. Elementals are in short supply and, especially when coupled with a magician of that elemental school, offer a rare amount of power that makes the rewards worth the risks.

Deep in the underground black markets there exist illegal rings of elementlet battlers. These organizations bring in trainers who battle their elementlets against each other; sometimes to the death. They take bets on the battles, and some of the best trainers rake in hundreds of gold pieces from a single match. In most civilizations, these activities are considered highly illegal and dangerous. Trainers found participating in these arenas are typically fined, imprisoned and have their monster possession licenses revoked.



# EYELINGS, DODOMEKI

Rearing Difficulty  
**Extremely Difficult**  
Intelligence  
**Superior**

## WARNING: Extremely Dangerous

"Dodomeki," loosely translated as "thousand eyed demons," are powerful, brilliant, and legendarily cruel aberrations that have long terrified and disgusted the layman while fascinating adventurous wizards and taxonomists, sometimes to the point of obsession. As an adult, the Dodomeki appear as a fleshy sphere approximately 8 feet (2.4 m) in diameter, with one side dominated by a large central eye and mouth, lined with long sharp teeth. Besides their central eye, they grow numerous eyes from their heads on thick stalks that constantly writhe and give them 360 degree vision. The number of eyes and length of the eyestalks seem to vary between dodomeki.

Hermaphroditic, they are capable of autogamy and tend to reproduce once in their lifetimes, typically between the ages of 40 and 120. After self-fertilization occurs, there is a gestation period of 24 to 26 months, during which time one of the dodomeki eyestalks gradually grows and grows until it reaches twice the size of a human head at the end of the pregnancy. During the final stages of development, the eye in question closes and detaches from the parent, resulting in a newborn eyeling.

### General Care

Most individuals who think about the dodomeki usually think about how best to avoid them, rather than potential companions. The rearing of a dodomeki is a challenge, recommended only for the greatest masters of the arcane arts. Even then, such rearing should be undertaken only with the utmost caution and care. If you are unfortunate or crazy enough to try and rear an eyeling, heed the following experiences.

Dodomeki are omnivorous and can draw sustenance from almost any organic matter, including the corpses of unfortunate adventurers. They prefer bright and colorful foods with interesting visual textures, which is likely linked to their strong visual pallet. Eyelings should be reared on a diet of live birds, small mammals, and various edible plants and flowers. From adolescence into adulthood, dodomeki take a liking to the consumption of alcoholic spirits, particularly wine,

The average lifespan observed for a dodomeki is around 200-250 years, yet some individuals and legends claim to have surpassed 800 years.

which they require in voluminous amounts to become intoxicated. Its important to note that dodomeki do not process food like most creatures; rather, they vomit out a mass of gray, colorless, ashy matter when they are done absorbing the essential nutrients.

### Rearing

The idiosyncrasies of an eyeling's temperament and personality are a great challenge—some might say "threat"—to a potential caretaker. Any time spent with their parent is singularly focused on magical research, theory, and practice, and nothing else. One theory is that after years of focusing on teaching the basics of arcane lore to the eyeling the parent selfishly desires to return to its own, more advanced research.

Early socialization is key to befriending a wild eyeling. Put bluntly, the younger you can get one, the better. Just remember when you first approach an eyeling, it is probably just as disgusted and scared of your "bizarre and frightful" appearance as you are of its, so be sure to adopt a submissive posture and avoid making too much eye contact.

The dodomeki have a natural genius for spellcasting and have often learned numerous minor spells by the time they reach adulthood. Without hands to perform the intricate gestures required for most casting, they gravitate to spells that are composed of the words of magic, only later developing techniques to overcome gestural casting components.

Born with an innate fascination for spells, magical devices, and magical power of all kinds that only grows with age, gifts of interesting and unique magic items can help accomplish some level of friendship, or at least help you be recognized as a source of interesting gifts. In addition, personally providing it with lessons in arcane theory and spellcraft, with access to spellbooks of increasing complexity, is a good incentive for growing dodomeki to remain intellectually stimulated.

As they reach adulthood, they tend to become more self-centered, reclusive, and secretive, leading some to outright paranoia and insanity as they rove further afield in search of magical items and spells worthy of their interest. For these reasons, we strongly recommend that you allow it to go its own way, rather than restricting its movement. If you see it again, it may remember you fondly from its childhood years.



# GELATINOUS CUBELET

Rearing Difficulty  
**Tricky**  
Intelligence  
**Instinctual**

The gelatinous cube is the kind of creature that spurs debate among wizards and philosophers over the nature of life. They eat, grow, and move toward food, but are they truly alive? These large, translucent oozes seem to possess only the most basic of drives.

One thing's for certain, a gelatinous cube is ravenous. The average gelatinous cube will eat around 50 lbs of food per day. A malnourished cube will slowly shrink, eventually drying out and dying. Most stabilize in size at around 10 ft in size, but well fed gelatinous cubes have been found up to twice that width.

## General Care

Harvesting a cubelet is a simple matter for the experienced beastmaster. One merely needs to find a large cube, and carve off a chunk at least 1 cubic foot (0.03 m<sup>3</sup>) using a non-reactive material. I have found my platinum-plated blade works well, though one dedicated cubist of my acquaintance has a special set of glass harvesting blades she commissioned specifically for the task. Once harvested, assuming you can fend off the donor, drop the cubelet into a square chest lined with organic material, I use minced beef, and leave it to set for a few days. It will naturally heal the wound that separated it from the larger cube in this time, and emerge ready to grow.

In their natural environment, cubelets wander dungeons and tunnels, and encounter enough traps laid for unfortunate adventurers that the population of cubelets is maintained. I have seen a cube slide unperturbed down a corridor filled with scything blades, and come out the other end as twenty seven new cubelets.

While growing to maturity, it's a good idea to keep the cubelet in a well-mortared run with plenty of damp places for it to maintain a healthy slime. Like snails they use their inner liquid reserves to create

a trail for them to slide across the ground, but being highly acidic it evaporates after only a few hours. Distillations of this corrosive slime can be used to pen a cubelet into a specific area if you can't put in a sealed stone run, as immature cubelets won't cross the trail of an adult, unless it's of their donor cube in which case they will naturally follow it. If you have multiple cubelets, make sure you give them each a damp, nutritious place to rest as they will eventually absorb one another if forced to compete.

A common practice for gelatinous cube growers is to sprinkle colored mineral dust into their cubes. The normally translucent cubes become much easier to spot, preventing the owner from being accidentally paralyzed and eaten by their pet. Giving each cube a unique color makes it much easier to tell them apart as well.

## Training

Gelatinous cubelets aren't so much trained as directed. They are attracted to motion, but can sense vibrations best when they are in a tunnel or a tube. Gelatinous cubelets can smell a surprising distance, so they will quickly find food left in their habitat.

A gelatinous cube tends to expand to the size of its container if given sufficient food. Most become cubes the size of the hallways they roam, but creative caretakers have been known to keep "cubes" in strange shaped containers, forming gelatinous spheres, hexagons, or even stars.

Some cubists have taken to keeping their charges in partially submerged areas, where they absorb a lot of water and become more fluid. They can then be trained to sit in water features such as wells or fountains and appear like normal water, until a creature drinks from it and the corrosive paralytic sends them pitching headfirst into it to be consumed.

One village thought it was a great idea to keep a gelatinous cube in a pit to dispose of refuse. Each night the village trash would be thrown into the pit for clean, odorless disposal. This worked well until the cube grew large enough to escape during the night. The next morning the cube and half the villagers were nowhere to be found.

Another ostentatious display I have seen was a cubelet used as a Duchess' pet; she had surrounded it with a cage of platinum wire attached to a chain, and dropped glittering gems into it to form a dazzling cube of conspicuous wealth that would eat the fingers of any trying to steal the jewels.



# GNOLL CUB

Rearing Difficulty  
**Tricky**  
Intelligence  
**Civilized**

Gnolls are predatory, nomadic humanoids who make their home in vast plains and forests across the world. A pack creature, the gnoll has earned a frightening reputation as a vicious monster who devours fallen foes and raids small towns and outposts. Though considered by some to be a primitive species, they have a highly complex pack structure, and every member of the tribe has an assigned role they must fulfil for the good of others.

Gnolls usually die of injuries received in conflict, but a gnoll can live up to three to four decades. A gnoll will take, on average, one to two mates in its lifetime, and with each pregnancy lasting only five months, a mother can birth to two to six cubs in a single litter.

A gnoll mother is expected to keep hunting and providing for the tribe within the first four months of her pregnancy. Upon reaching the last month she is allowed to rest in a communal den with other mothers while the rest of the tribe picks up the slack. Mothers receive the freshest and best cuts of meat and the most water during their pregnancy.

## Lost Whelps

Gnoll families are protective of their whelps, going to great lengths to ensure they are well-fed and protected. Lost whelps have a high mortality rate, and those who would otherwise survive often perish when adults are killed by predators or adventurers. A gnoll whelp will latch on to strong parental figures and seek their approval by catching small animals, such as rodents and snakes, and presenting them to its surrogate parent to show off its hunting skills.

As they grow, whelps will become more aggressive, often settling their arguments by brawling. Raising them among children of other species is difficult, as their aggressive nature will eventually pit them against children of civilized races, whose skins are much thinner and nails blunter.

Rumor has it that several individuals have bred gnolls in slavery as an attempt to civilize them and uplift the species. These attempts have ultimately failed as the traditions of civilization conflicts with both the nature and culture of the gnoll.

## General Care

Gnolls are omnivores, but their preferred dietary staple is fresh meat. Poorer tribes unable to find fresh meat will resort to eating carrion and preserved meats, but this will cause them to lose fur and muscle density, resulting in thin, sickly looking creatures. Those who are able to maintain a steady diet of fresh meat will have thick, luxurious coats and will grow to larger size than their malnourished brethren.

Studying the behavior of gnolls reveals that their ears, tail, and lip movements can reveal their emotions, even when they are trying to hide them. Their tails will dip downward when they feel fear or anxiety, and their ears will stretch back on their head and lips curl into a snarl when they are feeling anger, hatred, or rage. They do not wag their tails but will flick them back and forth when surprised or when approaching a dominant creature.

Although looked upon as greedy and ravenous for their preoccupation with food and gold, it is actually a survival tactic. Growing up as hunters teaches them to constantly seek out new food, and not knowing where their next meal will come from causes them anxiety.

Gnolls adhere to a pack structure, with the alpha male overseeing the hunting activities, while the matron, a spiritual guide, oversees all other decisions of the pack. Next to hunting, gnolls respect displays of dominance or ferocity. Those attempting to hire gnolls as mercenaries or soldiers need to show their dominance constantly, or the gnolls will leave or, worse, turn on them.

## Rearing

Raising a whelp has numerous benefits, as the teacher can impart tactics and understanding of the civilized world to the gnoll who can use that to its advantage when dealing with society later in life. Socializing gnolls can also make them better mercenaries, as they are more capable of understanding their employers. Devoted gnolls who see their teacher as their pack leader will obey and protect them from harm as best they can, and value scraps from their meals as a sign of favour..





# GRIFFIN HATCHLING

Rearing Difficulty  
**Complicated**  
Intelligence  
**Clever**

Griffins are majestic creatures that sport the head, talons, and wings of giant eagles and the hindquarters and ears of lions. Griffins (also spelled “gryphons” or “griffons”) fly and lay eggs but when rearing chicks are more like their leonine half.

Griffins use their front talons to rip apart prey and manipulate their habitats. Their tufted ears are set asymmetrically, to better enable a hunting griffin to pinpoint prey that is heard but not seen. Their vision is binocular and excellent in both dark and light. Their thick fur allows them to live in very cold climates.

Griffin females have drab plumage and fur coloring, while males are slightly smaller and have bright, lustrous feathers. To attract a potential mate, griffins engage in a complex and beautiful mating flight. The male griffin will initiate the flight, performing acrobatic aerial maneuvers, showing off his plumage. An interested female will then join the flight, adding to the dance. A successful dance will result in both parties matching each other flight for flight, coming together in a thrilling synchronous performance. At the completion of the dance, the mated pair will search for a suitable home in which they will build their family, and remain mated for life.

Griffins roost in eyries carved into high mountaintops or sheer cliff faces. These eyries are usually natural caverns, but they will use ruins or abandoned dens if they are well placed. Griffins are non-migratory, and will keep the same nest unless circumstances force them to move.

A clutch produces an average of two offspring in mid-winter, and a pair will mate only three or four times in their life.

## Egg Care

Griffin eggs are very sturdy, with thick shells that can withstand extreme weather, and thus need little attention. These eggs incubate for 40 days, and the hatchlings emerge hungry and can walk within a few minutes. Their hindquarters are bald but their shoulders, heads, and wings are covered in a very soft down.

Griffins are rumored to be able to tell truth from lies and see through magical illusions. Many believe that wearing or ingesting a griffin feather or tooth will bestow upon them the same ability.

## General Care

Have blended raw meat ready for new hatchlings, to emulate the pre-masticated nourishment delivered to the babies by their mother. Newly-hatched griffins will almost always imprint on the first face they see upon emerging from their shells, so be ready when you hear the scratching start.

Hatchlings eat a staggering amount of raw meat, and must be fed at least five times a day, eating twice their body weight daily in the first year of life. It is also important to mix bones, fur and stomach contents in with the meat to supplement their diet.

Hatchlings prefer to sleep in enclosed spaces – setting out a blanket-lined crate will entice a young griffin to make a small nest in that area. One should clean a hatchling’s nest weekly, while the young griffin is otherwise engaged in hunting or play.

## Training

While an imprinted hatchling may be more inclined to friendly behavior toward their surrogate family, they are still predators. Young griffins, or gryphlets, require a lot of stimulation in the form of play once they fledge. After this, they will be more inclined to explore their hunting instincts, and may grow restless. Experienced falconers may find it enjoyable to use a lure to play with a gryphlet, but one should not ever jess or hood them, as they will respond with extreme panic and aggression. Toys designed to look like small prey can also be attached to lines and rods, to facilitate the stalking and pouncing part of a griffin’s hunting regimen.

Developing a lasting bond requires plenty of handling. I highly recommend that a caretaker cuddle and stroke their hatchling as often as possible, to emulate the griffin parents’ protective affection with their young. Once the claws and beak grow sharp, I then recommend falconer’s gloves and other robust gear, to protect against playful kneading and nipping.

Young griffins reach adolescence at one year. They may become rebellious and wish to range farther afield for their hunting; it is advisable to let them explore to give them a sense of the large territory their wild cousins maintain.

A gryphlet reaches maturation around its second year. If you wish to keep your companion, it is best to see them mated and provide them with an eyrie or they will grow despondent.



# HIPPOCAMPUS FRY

Rearing Difficulty  
**Tricky**  
Intelligence  
**Clever**

The hippocampus is a rare breed of sea creature with the upper body of a horse and lower body of a fish. They have two legs and two back fins, and females have a set of wings similar to that of a pegasus, but more akin to fins in structure. They are born via live birth underwater and measure 3 feet (1 m) long and weigh around 30 pounds (13.6 kg). The breeding cycle of the hippocampus is based on seasonal weather changes. During the colder seasons, hippocampi enter an underwater hibernation period, during which they survive without oxygen for long periods, only rising to breathe when there is no ice over the water or when the temperature becomes that of a cold glacial lake.

When they do rise from the water after hibernation, they begin their mating rituals. The female hippocampus, or mare, is the flamboyant one and will perform a dance, flapping her wings and swimming in an intricate pattern under the water. The males, or stallions, observe and then follow the desirable mare in her dance. However, the hippocampus couples mate seasonally and do not remain with individual partners beyond a single season. The foals are born in the summer season after nearly four months gestation.

The stallions are the carrier and bearer of the fry, keeping the eggs in a small pouch on their stomachs, where the fish part of their body begins, much like the mundane seahorse. As the hippocampi only have single births, and rarely twins, this is not so much of a chore, and both fry and stallion mortality is rare.

## General Care

As it is an aquatic creature, you must ensure that the hippocampus has a sizable body of water to swim about, explore, and develop in. Fortunately, hippocampi osmoregulate, so they can thrive in both freshwater and saltwater environments, making

The hippocampus fry is attracted to fire coral, typically biting off small pieces and grinding it in its mouth. They will naturally deviate if they spot a patch of this toxic growth, though hippocampi seem to have adapted to the toxin and are happily unaffected, unlike their handlers. A small amount adds healthy lustre to their scales.

site selection far easier than it is for other aquatic creatures. Fry need a regular diet of kelp or algae and minnows or sardines, depending on their location and breed. If near rivers, they will find a hard time resisting swimming to catch fish, so a watchful eye must be kept on them during this time.

It is important to note that the temperament of the hippocampus will vary depending on what breed it came from. Those from the southern tropical islands are typically hot-tempered and are quick to anger or excite and easily fall into bad habits like biting or stomping. Breeds from the northern fjords are docile but can fall into deep depressions if they are not well cared for and do not have regular salt baths.

## Training

Training a hippocampus is very similar to training a mundane horse, with the exception that all training is conducted in water. Regular lunging (sprinting in a long line) is required. It is also necessary to teach diving, which can be done with dense, bright objects that the fry can retrieve from various depths. Without this training, they will be averse to leaving their comfort zones. When training the fry to bear a rider, begin by strapping a potato sack or something of a similar weight onto its back and tie it in place, then place it on a lunge line. Repeat this every other week until there is no resistance, then increase the load over time until they can handle the weight of a person. This normally takes about three months and should not begin before the age of two.

The most successful hippocampus trainers are the nomadic merfolk circus troupe, the "Carnival of Deep Stars". Through dedication, breeding and constant training they have a dozen or more hippocampi who can perform tricks that would put any land cavalry to shame. They also take advantage of their watery domain to conduct complex formations and manoeuvres in all dimensions, breathtaking to behold. The acts are most entertaining, and well worth throwing a few coins to the waters. Other beastmasters have dismissed their skill as crass Monster Charming or possession magics, but one look in the eye of those beasts and I could tell it was well-drilled and hard-earned effort.



Few people have ever seen the kirin or qilin and lived, not because the creatures are violent but because they serve the gods as psychopomps, delivering favoured mortals to the divine realms upon their death. Those lucky few who have seen and not passed speak of a creature of immense power and strange abilities, having the head of a dragon, a flowing lion mane, the antlers of an elk, armored scales, a long tail, and the body of a horse, all encased in a magical flame that only burns the unworthy.

Kirin do not reside naturally on the mortal plane. Rather, they are denizens of the Astral and magical planes. If one were to come to care for a kirin foal, one must possess incredible magical abilities not limited to dimensional and planar travel, as well as a saintly demeanour and probably the blessing of at least one good god, just to be safe.

Born in a manner similar to mortal horses, kirin mature in only 12 months, growing to their full size, strength, and abilities. They are clearly intelligent creatures, and speak telepathically when they need to, which is rarely. Otherwise they are strangely silent creatures, moving with quiet dignity and purpose.

It is important to understand the role kirin fill. They act as the heralds, messengers and couriers of the gods of goodness, magic and life. Most importantly, when a mortal of particular grace and value to these gods is about to pass from this world, the kirin is sent to safely ferry them through the underworld and bring their reincarnated souls to their new body. A kirin foal's entire existence is based on learning these important jobs.

A note of caution: As the kirin are messengers of the gods, they do not take the harming of innocents lightly. They do not even tread upon the ground so as to avoid harming even a single blade of grass. Their wrath for those who are evil is quick, hot, and final.

Several tomes of magical wisdom contain a story of an unnamed land where a master wizard raised a single kirin foal planning to harvest its parts when it reached maturity. The retribution visited upon the wizard and the region by the gods was so complete that everything but the story of its destruction was removed from existence. Not even a memory or name remain.

## General Care

As said before, only the most skilled masters of magic should attempt to care for a kirin foal. Mystic theurges have had the most success in the care of kirin, probably because of their understanding of both the mystical and holy nature of the kirin. Kirin foals are never found in the wild, and only appear as gifts from the gods, so to be chosen to raise one is a great honor.

While adult Kirin do not require sustenance, foals will occasionally consume pure magical energy, naturally magical materials or those crafted into a magical item.

The housing of a kirin foal is incredibly important. Every part of a kirin is highly prized by the unscrupulous for its intensely magical properties. A secure compound with plenty of mundane and magical protection is necessary, and usually only established churches or monastic orders have the moral fortitude and facilities to provide suitable agistment. Wars have been fought over a single kirin's scale. Secrecy may be the best protection for a kirin foal, so a stable that is guarded against scrying and dimensional travel is important. Kirin need to run and fly, so enchanting an entire region or perhaps a secret pocket dimension against scrying is considered obligatory when preparing to take on such a sacred duty.

## Rearing

Basic training of a kirin foal is important so that they may carry the worthy on their backs. Thus, training them to carry a person on their back while flying and eventually traveling to various dimensions should be a top priority.

Travel across all dimensions and visiting the various gods of magic, life, and goodness is important to familiarize the kirin with its role. It is especially important that the kirin visit the realms of the dead at least once before it is fully mature, usually after 10 months. It is important to make sure the kirin foal is not injured or harmed at any time during these trips, as their blood is magical and can cause serious, powerful, and chaotic events when it touches anything.



# KITSUNE PUP

Rearing Difficulty  
**Tricky**  
Intelligence  
**Civilized**

Are they beautiful women or men who wander through the forest looking to help those in need? Or are they magical white foxes with nine tails who protect the lost and sacred places within a wood?

It's difficult to categorize the mysterious kitsune (otherwise known as the nine-tailed fox). Some believe them to be powerful witches or warlocks with access to rare spells. Some believe them to be a breed of fox that was altered with powerful magics. Others consider them spirits related to fertility, magic, prosperity, and feminine myth. Whatever they truly are, they live in a symbiotic relationship with humanoids and wield incredible power.

I have discovered a common thread in tales of the kitsune. An unfortunate, lone man or woman in need, whether recovering from a failed harvest, caring for children, or defeating enemies, meets a beautiful and mysterious person of the opposite sex. The ways they meet are myriad, from a night's stay in a lonely shrine to a fancy costume party. Usually, the unfortunate individual or those who know them will see a fox before meeting the mysterious stranger, but not always.

The couple fall in love, and as if through a blessing of fate, their own or even their entire village or clan's fortunes improve. The kitsune bears or fathers at least one child. The kitsune's goal is to always raise one child, usually a daughter, who is also a nine-tailed fox. If the kitsune's spouse is kind, they will stay with their spouse even after the child is grown, but if their spouse is cruel or indifferent, when their child is old enough, they will leave, and their spouse's fortunes will turn for the worse. Loving couples sometimes grow old and die together, their grown children having left home to bring great fortune to others.

A kitsune's pelt and nine fox tails are prized by unscrupulous hunters, collectors, and practitioners of dark magic. The pelt and tails are luxurious, soft, and desired as cloaks. Practitioners of dark magic believe that the coat and tails can be used in a secret ritual to turn the one wearing the coat into a kitsune themselves. No such ritual is confirmed to exist, but this does not stop the hunting of kitsune.

## General Care

Kitsune pups are born from their humanoid mother in humanoid form, and in most cases the pup is female appearing as the same humanoid race as their parents. When they are roughly three years of age, they gain the ability to transform into their fox form. Legend says that some kitsune females will only spend one evening with a mate and then transform into their fox form and leave for the deep forest to whelp pups born as foxes who transform into humans.

Raising a kitsune child is much like raising a child and an excitable puppy at the same time—a child and puppy that can shapeshift and use magic! It is important to nurture and care for them as any loving parent would, but keep a close eye on them, as they are prone to mischief and their curiosity will often get the better of them. Living near a forest or in a rural area is preferred so that the pup can learn to transform and use their abilities away from prying eyes.

## Rearing

Rearing a kitsune pup has many benefits and difficulties, and an adult kitsune is always preferred, as the extent of their abilities is not fully known. If no adult kitsune is available, then a person of magical ability is the next best thing in helping a kitsune pup. As any humanoid child, they can be instructed but their ability to transform into a fox, alter their appearance and teleport makes it difficult to keep track of an unruly or upset pup unless magical measures are taken to track the child.

When the pup enters puberty, many changes take place both physically and magically. They gain a deep desire to travel, and their magical abilities flourish. Among kitsune, it is traditional that the adolescent travels to another village or city in the same region to help the locals there and master their skills. When enough time has passed, the kitsune will return home and undergo a secretive ritual to become a true adult. The new adult emerges and leaves home on a year-long journey. Many meet a person in need during these journeys and the cycle begins anew.





Witting and wily creatures, kobolds are natural thieves and scouts. They're intelligent, which means they must be raised differently than other beasts, but it also means they are highly capable. Although they are small of stature and weak of frame compared to many humanoids, I would caution against underestimating them; if you do they may surprise you, but you may not like what you get.

Full-grown kobolds aren't much larger than halflings and their babies are significantly smaller. They grow up quick, though; kobolds reach maturity in just a few short years. This means adult kobolds may only have as much life experience as a five-year-old human, but their cunning intellect make them far more clever and devious. Kobolds have a deserved reputation as tricksters, scoundrels and cutthroats, but a baby reared away from kobold society has the capacity to be raised into an upstanding (if immature) citizen.

When two kobolds mate it's usually a union of passing interest rather than life-long commitment. Females lay a clutch of three to five fertilized eggs, then wander off to let them fend for themselves. Most kobold mothers are only a few years old themselves and are hardly mature enough to care for their young, so they let nature have its way and if the children find their way back into kobold society then so much the better. Many kobold kids don't make it past hatching, but because female kobolds are capable of laying eggs every three months they usually wind up with enough survivors to keep the species going.

## Egg Care

Although kobold mothers make basic attempts to hide a clutch of eggs, it's relatively simple to find an unattended nest if you're near kobold territory. There are usually dozens of nests at any time of year, so it's a trivial matter to wander in and grab any egg you see lying around.

The egg itself requires very maintenance and will hatch about a month after being laid. As long as you keep the egg safe from predators and resist the urge to make kobold omelettes (trust me, they're not very delicious) you'll have a new baby kobold in no time. Do note that a kobold's coloration will vary dependent on the egg's temperature, ranging from reds and oranges in warm seasons to blues and purples in the cold.

## General Care

For the first four years of their lives, kobolds have insatiable appetites. They grow rapidly and their metabolisms are among the fastest in the humanoid world, so it's important to keep a large stock of food on hand. Thankfully kobold kids will eat just about anything--they're omnivorous scavengers, but prefer to eat meat when available.

If left untempered, kobold kids develop mischievous and conniving personalities. This makes it difficult to train them unless you teach them early on who is boss. I don't recommend punishing them for misbehaving since that typically leads to them rebelling even more. Instead, try to use positive reinforcement for the first several years until you've formed a relationship and can rest assured they won't booby trap your commode.

Once you have formed a bond with your kobold, it's important to continue to take care of them and groom them--both physically and emotionally. Kobolds as a species don't often form lasting bonds with anyone, so take care to ensure they want to be around you. By offering them food and occasional affection, you can earn and maintain the kobold's trust and desire to stick around. After that, it's a lot easier to raise them as your helper.

## Training

Most caretakers are unsuccessful at teaching the kid any tricks until it is at least two years old. During the first few years the kobold is growing, learning how to walk and talk, and learning how to avoid getting into things (or how to avoid getting caught getting into things).

Kobolds, despite most accounts, are intelligent creatures capable of speech and conversation. They're also capable of swimming, climbing, skulking, and trapmaking, the latter being a natural kobold talent and a skill you can't teach most other beasts. Because they are so adept at being sneaky and cunning, most beast masters who raise kobolds employ their pets as scouts and dungeon guardians.

If you are adept at magic and have the patience, you may be able to teach your kobold a few spells. Be careful which spells you show it, though--I once knew a wizard who taught his kobold how to cast fireball and, well, let's just say he never lived to like the results. I have, however, met many others who have had success teaching their kobold invisibility and lockpicking spells.



# LEVIATHAN, LITTLE

Rearing Difficulty  
**Extremely Difficult**  
Intelligence  
**Clever**

Distinguished by its serpentine body and draconic-shaped head set with frills, the leviathan is the largest known creature of the seas. The nightmare and terror of all mariners, the leviathan can grow to lengths upward of 350 feet (107 m). The leviathan is its own sole predator - if there is anything larger I would prefer not to meet it. As with other large predators, the leviathan does not tolerate others of its species sharing the same territory except during the breeding season. This aggressive behaviour also extends to large boats sailing overhead, as these can be mistaken for large threats or potential prey, earning the creature its fearsome reputation.

During the mating season, leviathans congregate in warmer waters, though they will not venture too far toward the shore due to their immense size and the risk of beaching. At this time, the frills on the male turn into a dazzling display of bright colours, which they use to attract the attention of a potential mate. When a male has a female's attention, he will swim slowly around her, displaying the frills. If the female is impressed, the pair will mate, and the female will leave while the male repeats the display with another female.

Gestation last several months, ending in the live birth of between five and seven young. The mother eats any that are small or weak. The young then spend several months with their mother as they learn to hunt for themselves. Once the little leviathans reach their first year, they are left to fend for themselves, typically the most dangerous parts of their lives as they must avoid other leviathans and creatures they have not yet outgrown.

## General Care

It is possible to rear and train a leviathan, though I have never done so myself. The merfolk claim that in the last age a hero named "Mychelleus" captured a baby leviathan and trained it as his aquatic mount. I have copied down here all I gleaned from their tales, but if anyone manages to raise one successfully please let me know!

Space is the most difficult thing for rearing a leviathan; if you get it early enough, you can isolate it in a cavern pool or submerged structure where you can spend quality time with the creature. In the wild they prefer fatty foods such as seals and whales, though I'm

sure they'd eat cattle if that is more easily available.

While a leviathan will not need any regular grooming, I am told the creature's scales must be regularly checked for aquatic parasites, as well as wear and tear. A leviathan will deal with grooming through the shoal of cleaner fish they usually attract early in their lives, but a captive leviathan must be provided with these by the beastmaster. Any barnacles found on the creature's body do not need to be removed unless large areas are covered with them, impeding the creature's ability to swim.

## Training

Feeding before training is important so they don't see you as food, but not so much that they no longer pay attention to treats. Start with a few seals, and offer giant turtles as rewards; the extra crunch is also good for keeping teeth sharp.

As they grow you will need some sort of coaxing mechanism for it to return to you. Familiarize the beast with a customized scent released into the water at meal times, or an underwater horn call you only use for feeding.

Establishing dominance over such enormous creatures may appear challenging, but they are impressionable at an early age and judicious use of Giant Growth potions and spells will enable you to convince your leviathan that you are large and in charge. The ability to breathe underwater and swim quickly is essential to training a leviathan as it will spend most of its time beneath the surface. With enough patience and rewards, a leviathan can be trained to recognise a large variety of signals, from light flashes to clicking sounds, to prodding sensitive areas around the eyes, corners of the mouth or behind the frill.

Although the leviathan is primarily found in seas and oceans, a rare subspecies has adapted to living in freshwater lakes and lochs. These creatures have a calmer demeanour than their saltwater cousins, and the young often fetch a good price on the black market. As a result, they have been driven close to extinction and now only occupy the deepest and most isolated places.



# MANTICORE CUB

Rearing Difficulty  
**Complicated**  
Intelligence  
**Clever**

The manticore is an awesome creature, ideally suited to its role as an apex predator. In form, the manticore is a muscular, leonine feline with razor-sharp teeth and claws. To this already formidable arsenal the beast adds a venomous scorpion-like tail and enormous, leathery wings.

The manticore employs a range of strategies in hunting for prey, adapting as necessary for different quarry. Their first approach when dealing with unfamiliar prey is to swoop from the air, seize it in a death grip with its claws and fangs, and sting it repeatedly until it stops struggling, an effective yet brutal method.

Manticores are solitary beasts. Each male claims a large territory which he defends aggressively against intrusion by other males. On occasion, this results in a fight to the death, if the intruder is unwilling or unable to retreat. Manticore matrons do not claim territory but instead hunt widely for prey and potential mates. When a matron enters a male's territory, he ritually challenges her, testing her mettle before either yielding to her or trying to drive her off. After he yields, the matron will remain in his territory for a few days or weeks, hunting with him and testing him with bouts of combat. If the matron decides that the male is a worthy mate, she pounces, bites off his stinger, and breeds with him. On completion of the act, she paralyzes the male with her venom and then devours him.

Claiming the male's territory for her own while she bears her cubs, the matron aggressively defends it against intrusion. After a six-month gestation period she typically gives birth to two to four cubs, half of which are likely to die before becoming adults. Manticores are always to be feared, but this is especially true of a matron who is guarding her cubs. She will viciously and relentlessly attack any perceived threat with little concern for her own safety. Once the cubs are around 1 year old, their mother leaves to resume her peregrinations, taking any female cubs with her and leaving the males to fend for themselves. The males fight among themselves for her abandoned territory, and the losers are driven off to find their own place in the world or killed. After another few months, the matron separates from her female cubs, leaving them to begin their own journeys.

## General Care

Many beastmasters have tried to breed manticores in captivity, but very few have succeeded. Let their bloody, tattered remains stand as an object lesson to those of us with more sense. Manticore matrons are far deadlier than the male of the species, and even if you succeed in keeping one captive for a time, the best you can hope for is that she will kill and eat any males you offer to her. The worst you might expect is left as an exercise for the reader.

It is far safer and easier to capture male manticores from the wild at a very young age. While they are still potent predators (being at least the size of a lion and far more dangerous thanks to their wings and venomous tail) their inexperience makes them relatively easy to catch with nets or pit traps.

Manticores require a steady diet of raw meat to survive, and to thrive they must be allowed to hunt live prey. They get a taste for whatever they are fed in their formative years, as a king who fed his manticore with condemned prisoners discovered to his fatal dismay.

Manticores are fiercely territorial and fly into a violent rage if something invades their space or they are forced out of it. However, a beast that has been acclimated from youth to a small enclosure will contentedly treat this as his entire territorial range.

Building a positive relationship with a manticore cub is largely a matter of staying out of his way and making him regular offerings of food; in this way, the process closely resembles that of bonding with a house cat.

## Training

Some say that manticores are completely untrainable, and I agree to a point. The best you can hope for is to condition the cub, through repetitive stimulation, to preferentially devour victims who are wearing a particular colour or uniform.

The manticore's habit of killing and eating anything that enters his territory makes him an excellent guard animal. However the indiscriminate nature of his predation makes the manticore better suited to guarding an isolated vault rather than the walled gardens of a sultan's palace.



Mimics resemble blobs of goo when they are between shapes. Most often, they assume the form of simple wooden, stone, or metal structures, depending upon their breed. Those could be chests, typical doors, a park bench, a footstool, or other items that are comparably sized to the creatures. On rare occasions, they join forces to comprise larger structures such as sheds, cave entrances, or keep gates.

Their demeanor is as varied as any other species. Some are friendly, while others are vicious. One might pull humorous pranks as another sets itself up as a trap. Having little need for language, it is the unusual mimic that bothers fashioning vocal chords and an orifice for speech, much less learns languages, but they do exist and can be reasoned with.

Courtships involve displays of mimicry by both parties and may last for months, until the pair has decided they've made the right choice of mates. At that point, they join indistinguishably as one in their amorphous state. They tend to find a safe place to shelter during the weeklong process. Any interruptions result in a violent response to the culprit.

Since mimics don't always live in close proximity to one another, they may also reproduce asexually, temporarily exhibiting characteristics of both male and female specimens. The process doubles in time and results in the same violent response if interrupted.

Regardless of reproductive method, the impregnated mimic carries the unborn mimicing for three months. During that time, it limits its mimicry to protect the young. The mimicing may be carried by either the mother or the father. In the case of asexual reproduction, the offspring will be identical to the parent. Otherwise, it will have traits from both.

Most often, mimics of like type will mate. However, there are the occasional hybrids as a result of heterogeneous pairings, the most common being those with the ability to mimic wood and stone, those able to mimic stone and metal, or like hybrid pairs.

When the mimic is at full term, it seeks a hiding spot that offers shelter from the elements, noise, and would-be predators. Labor lasts two to six hours and may be safeguarded by other mimics in the vicinity.

## General Care

Newborn mimics require water and protein found in worms, beetles, and other invertebrates. They simply absorb them into their goo, having no mouth. They eat one-quarter their weight in food and drink one-half their weight in water each day in this stage.

When they reach 4 weeks of age, they have doubled in size and begin developing a mouth, nose, and eyes. Their nutritional needs double as well, and they begin attempting to mimic shapes during this phase.

In the third growth phase, lasting four months, mimiclings continue to eat and drink in the same quantities as the second phase, but they are able to eat small vertebrates, such as mice, birds, and snakes, as well as invertebrates. Their ability to feed by absorption diminishes, necessitating the use of their newly forming mouths. Simultaneously, its eyes become apparent.

It isn't until they reach their year-long fourth phase, akin to the human teenage phase, that they can begin to eat larger animals and cannot be sustained by the average quantity of invertebrates. They require three-quarters their weight in food daily, and their water needs lessen to the same rate. During the course of growth, they become adept with many basic mimicry techniques. They reach adulthood at a year and a half.

Mimiclings are naturally curious and patient. If introduced to others of various species within their first three phases, the chance of befriending them and socializing with them is high. However, like most beings, they can discern emotions and aren't given to tolerate poor treatment.

## Training

A mimicing is inclined to attempt to take the shape of those things in the world around it. Its first attempts at mimicry generally are to replicate the shape of its parent. When the perceived parent is of a different species, it's not uncommon for a mimicing to shape itself into a wooden-looking shoe or stone-looking arm.

If you allow the mimicing in its goo state to envelop an appendage, it will learn that shape much faster than by just trying to mirror it. Be careful not to allow it to stay on your skin for more than an hour, as the enzymes its body uses for various processes can cause irritation or rash.





# MINOTAUR CALF

Rearing Difficulty  
**Tricky**  
Intelligence  
**Civilized**

Standing at 9 feet (3 m) tall, covered in short fur and bearing the head of a cow or bull the minotaur is a fearsome, but commonly misunderstood, creature. During the rise of the Taurus constellation, the bull Minotaur will pursue the cow Minotaur, navigating her labyrinth by the light of the stars to locate his mate before the stars have set.

The gestation period of the minotaur averages 10 months. Born live, the calves are fully formed and respond naturally to stimuli. The minotaur adults will remain as a pair, nurturing the calf until it is of an age (approximately 4 years) to survive on its own. Minotaur calves mature at a similar rate to bovines, growing quickly, but their lifespan is more akin to humans. Once a calf reaches the age of maturity, they are placed in the center of their mother's labyrinth and must navigate themselves out before they are considered adults.

Constellations and the stars are very important to the minotaur. As they grow, they are taught the secrets of the stars and how to understand and decipher their meanings. Some might say there is magic in their way of dealing with the stars, with their unnatural abilities to navigate, predict, and comprehend stellar movements and events. A minotaur calf is named after the star it is born under until it has reached the age of maturity, and then it chooses a constellation under which it will live, guiding its life with the stars, and renames itself.

Minotaurs possess an ability to navigate with the stars, to predict oncoming weather and stellar events, and extreme prowess in battle. They also have unwavering dedication to solving puzzles. When presented with a puzzle, the minotaur must solve it or experience a wave of depression. When solved, however, the minotaur is rejuvenated. Minotaurs navigate labyrinths with particular ease, and calves are no exception. Without this skill, the minotaur calves would likely not survive their early years living in the labyrinth of their mothers. This skill also helps them to protect themselves once they have built their own labyrinth or assumed the labyrinth of their fallen parents.

## General Care

Minotaurs are strictly vegetarian and do not eat any meat. This is contrary to some tales of them devouring adventurers in a bestial fashion. If presented with meat as their only option, minotaurs will refuse the food even unto starvation. Bull calves and some cow calves will develop horns that must be regularly sharpened and filed to avoid overgrowth. A minotaur's fur must be cleaned on a regular basis, otherwise it will be tangled and caked with mud and dirt. Bathing is recommended. Most minotaur calves do not mind these baths and will accept them with pleasure. Minotaur calves are especially stubborn as they reach the age of maturity, but they are docile until approximately age 3. They are easy to work with and teach new skills. However, it is important to remember that minotaurs are sentient creatures with their own needs and desires. Treating them with respect is vital, for they can easily turn on those who would desire to control them, and an angry minotaur is not easily calmed.

## Rearing

Puzzle play is at the core of raising a healthy and sane minotaur calf. Even more so than human toddlers they quickly grasp any toy that involves geometry, and once verbal some take this cleverness into wordplay and riddles, though mazes remain their first love. I have had great success building small labyrinths out of wooden blocks and, later, teaching calves gardening with hedge mazes (which they enjoy even more if the hedges are edible). Be prepared too for many late nights stargazing and watching stellar events with your calf, and answering their slow but thoughtful questions about the world.

For good health and stimulus, hide a salt lick somewhere in a maze for them to find, and move it often.

Minotaur horns are widely prized on the black market, and a full skull can go for a sizeable bounty. Some cultures perceive minotaurs as wise observers, capable of living in peace while in close proximity to their mazes. This typically comes from a deep-rooted respect for the minotaur and would probably move people to protect the minotaur if anything threatened them.



# NIGHTMARE COLT

Rearing Difficulty  
**Complicated**  
Intelligence  
**Intelligent**

Nightmares are intelligent equines with thick black coats, shining hooves that strike sparks with every step, and manes and tails made of black flames. The front hooves end in talon-like toes, and nightmares have pronounced fangs, such as their elongated canine teeth. Smoke issues from their nostrils in accordance with the strength of their emotions, and they are reputed to give off noticeable heat if touched.

Nightmares live in small family groups upon the plains of Hell. As even the nine levels of Hell experience seasons, every three years, the vast plains dry out and turn a deep shade of orange. Here, nightmare stallions begin courting females, creating complex patterns and paths of fire in the fields for the females' delight. Once a mate is selected and consummation is achieved in the usual equine fashion, the mare begins to swell with the pregnancy while the stallion gathers food and protects her. After three months, the mare gives birth to a single small egg covered in a glittering layer of ash. The stallion digs a hole for the egg, and it glows with a lava-like heat once seated. The stallion and mare share turns gathering food, protecting each other, and caring for their egg. After six months, the egg hatches, and a nightmare colt emerge. It nurses on the boiling milk from its mother as well as regurgitated grass from its father's mouth, and it is able to walk shortly after birth. Its coat is the same orange as the grasses of the hellish plains, and the colt will curl up in a hollow while its parents hunt, blending in perfectly with the ground.

## General Care

Although colts are vegetarians, most adult nightmares primarily consume meat from the small demons that populate the infernal plains in rabbit-

Nightmares thrive on their native plane of Hell but can survive on most non-aquatic planes. They prefer beds of dry grass and seem amused at their handler's panic when said beds are set aflame when they lay down. Their front hooves are very much sought after on the black market, as gloves can be fashioned from them allowing the wearer to inflict nightmares on any person whose blood is smeared on the talons.

like burrows. Demon marrow is a delicacy to them, and can be used as a reward in limited amounts. They use their clawed front hooves to dig the creatures from the ground, so burying imps for them to find can be made into a play activity, while tossing them a quasit before a good rub-down will endear you immensely.

Grooming is accomplished with their sandpaper-like tongue. As a sign of affection, it is usually only practiced among family groups. Nightmares are standoffish toward others of their own kind; it can take several seasons for a couple to come together. They are aggressively violent toward humanoids, and they openly mock other four-legged creatures.

## Rearing

The overwhelming challenge in taking on a Nightmare colt is that your beast is, instinctively, a demonic predator who invades sleep and thrives on terror. This is not a business to be entered lightly, and you should be prepared either to put down the creature if it shows resistance to control training, or be prepared to accept the death and mayhem your charge will cause.

That said, even these denizens of Hell respond to a kind word and positive reinforcement. If captured or found very young, while still vegetarian, nightmares can be trained as companions and mounts. Make the transition to their adult meat diet with large amounts of fish and poultry, so that its hunger is not first sated with mammal meat. If you are sure enough of your state of mind, sleep close to the stable and let the foal's inclination to delve into dreams find you waiting, with the same patient kindness you show while awake. Nightmares learn to be aware of their effect on others' dreams, and while wild nightmares will relish the fear they cause, tame nightmares can learn to tread cautiously and leave a mind merely uneasy and disturbed. There is no known way to prevent the fear effect entirely, which is why they are so often employed as weapons to ruin morale. They are intelligent enough to be soothed if convinced that they are giving their nightmares to "bad people" and can be taught a simple sense of justice.



# OWLBEAR CUBS

Rearing Difficulty  
**Tricky**  
Intelligence  
**Clever**

It is believed owlbears began as freakish creations of a wizard experimenting with animal hybridization. They intended to create a winged bear to fly into battle, but the creature's bones were not hollow. One owlbear pair escaped the wizard's tower, and while spellcaster was never heard from again, their creations are now a common sight in the deep forests of the world.

Regardless of origin, the owlbear's appearance is certainly unique. Standing 8-½ to 10 feet (2.5 to 3 m) tall when fully grown, the owlbear has the body of a bear but the wings and beak of an owl. Most of its body is covered in coarse fur, but its arm-like wings are feathered and end in sharp talons.

Owlbear pairs mate for life, and over the course of thirty years of adult life they may have as many as seventy offspring. Cubs mature to nearly full size within the first year and begin producing offspring as soon as they find a suitable mate. Female owlbears compete for their pick of eligible males in the area, and males do likewise, leading to alpha couples ruling a huge territory of up to a dozen other pairs. Woe be to the person who stumbles upon an owlbear colony during mating season.

## Egg Care

Owlbear mothers carry their eggs internally for an extended period of time, and are able to choose when conditions are best for laying. Cubs hatch about one week after the eggs are laid, which means the window of time for stealing an owlbear egg from its clutch is very narrow. Most owlbear cubs in captivity are acquired after they hatch, and must be kept at owlbear body temperature at all times. Male owlbears typically snuggle up with the eggs until they hatch, which gives mother owlbears time to recover from giving birth.

## General Care

Owlbears are tenacious and ferocious beasts. Even in captivity it can be difficult to tame them, although a cub who has been domesticated since birth may impress upon one to two people it views as its mother and father (regardless of the actual gender of the couple). You must establish a parental role with an

owlbear cub very early in its life, otherwise it will only ever view you as its next meal.

Owlbears are ravenous carnivores who prefer to hunt their own food. Wild owlbear cubs are taught to hunt within the first week of their lives and afterward are expected to feed themselves if they wish to survive, so it's important to raise your own cub in a similar manner. They learn to hunt best when tracking difficult prey such as squirrels and chipmunks, so start with those and lead up to larger and faster meals as your cub ages.

Don't be surprised if your cub's uncouth eating habits lead to matted fur and sticky feathers. If you value your own hide, you won't try to give your cub a proper bath, but most owlbears do enjoy swimming so you can at least tempt it to rinse itself off now and then if necessary.

## Training

Owlbear cubs respond best to two things: food and aggression. When training your cub, it's best to remember that a good meal will keep it placated but a firm hand is required to make it respect and obey you. This doesn't mean you should mistreat your cub—on the contrary, hitting an owlbear of any age is a surefire way to wind up as its lunch—but you should use an authoritative voice and establish strict boundaries if you want your cub to follow your lead.

Because of their generally foul temperament, it's difficult to raise an owlbear to do anything but hunt or fight alongside you. With practice (and a lot of patience), you may be able to train your pet beast to act as a guard, but the creature's short attention span makes this difficult. To rear a guard owlbear you must regularly introduce prey into the area you wish the beast to protect. Eventually, it will learn that it doesn't need to wander away to find food, and it will stay within the vicinity you're trying to control.

The most unexpected tactic an owlbear uses in hunting makes use of their underpowered wings. Though far too heavy to fly or even glide, fit owlbears can manage an assisted leap, which they often use at the end of a charge to surprise an opponent expecting to meet them front-on. The tonne or more of bear-weight they drop on their foe is usually enough to kill most prey.



# PHASE KITTEN

Rearing Difficulty  
**Complicated**  
Intelligence  
**Clever**

Phase tigers, also known as fooler beasts or lash panthers, resemble black-furred tigers with six legs and four sharp-ridged tentacles. Sages believe that the original population slipped through from another plane, and that their strange detachment from their own visible images results from imperfect alignment with this material dimension. Light hitting the tiger encounters a high-energy distortion field and displaces by 3 feet (1m).

The animals roam deep wilderness as solitary hunters. A phase tiger stalks with its image further from the prey than its body, making it effectively invisible in good cover. Then it pounces close, bloodies the prey with lashes from its spiny tentacles, and jumps away to keep its position unknown. When it tires of this game, or if injured, it knocks the creature over, pins it down, rakes out its guts with four powerful hind claws, then feasts. By age two the phase tiger is fully mature, 700 to 800 pounds (360 kg), and a vicious predator. It will defend its home territory, which can be quite large, even against much larger creatures.

Mating occurs every two years, on average, and the male has no role in protecting the female or raising the young. Gestation takes 16 weeks, with the mother cat decreasing her hunting range and gorging on lesser prey such as chipmunks, nests of bird eggs, and even grubs. In the last week she finds a cave or digs out a den. At parturition, her phase effect intensifies. Her image flickers and jumps, finally stabilizing up to 30 feet (9 m) away. The image might appear above ground, giving away her position, though most creatures flee from the thrashing and yowling. Should any find her hiding spot, she attacks by surprise in her state of heightened sensitivity.

The cubs, or kittens, are born in a state of stress, and their images appear at random from the spot of birth. Displacement declines only slowly with maturity. Each kitten weighs about three pounds (1.4 kg) and they cling to the mother and nurse. They do not open their eyes for a week, but do stagger around on their six stubby legs, mewling and bumping into things, while their images bonk their heads on nothing. The mother's own image gradually stabilizes as she recovers from birth injuries caused by the kittens' tentacle spikes. If she dies, the kittens quickly follow her. A litter of nursing phase kittens presents a wildly random

appearance, and they nurse most of the time for two months. Any prolonged exposure to cold, or a day without nursing, makes the cub unlikely to survive. Blink dogs can smell a cub's position and attempt to catch it by teleporting, while it scampers about in terror; such chases can go on until the kitten collapses in exhaustion.

## General Care

Starting at eight weeks of age, a phase kitten can survive in captivity. It requires nursing from a bottle and constant attention. Milk from most animals does not nourish the kitten, perhaps due to its interdimensional nature. For some reason, cat's milk works, requiring a tiger-sized animal or a whole stable of smaller cats. Only phase tiger milk gives the thick black coat; otherwise, the growing kitten takes on random fur color and pattern, reducing its market value. Some report successfully imitating a milk sample by careful use of food magic. Kittens thrive and learn better when at least two grow up together, though keeping track of them can be a challenge. By four months their tentacles are strong, and sharp enough to badly cut an incautious handler.

## Training

At six months, after gradual introduction of meat, training begins. The cat weighs around 150 pounds (68 kg), "8 feet (2.5 m)", and "one foot (0.3 m) closer per month, down to 3 feet (1 m). The cat intelligently watches trainers hunt and imitates them in play. It eats part of each kill. Some trainers use particular prey, including intelligent beings like goblins or human children, to instill the growing tiger with a taste for that meat. Over time, trainers move to maiming prey and letting the cat finish it off. At age one year, the cat can hunt on its own. Weighing around 400 pounds (180kg), it easily brings down man-sized foes.

The cat recognizes only one master, and only obeys limited commands which it then ignores when injured.

An adult phase tiger must hunt and kill live prey every day, or it becomes irritable and listless. Several reports claim that, after persistent abuse, a phase tiger will sometimes just disappear, perhaps fading back to its original plane, or into nothingness.





# PHOENIX HATCHLING

Rearing Difficulty  
**Complicated**  
Intelligence  
**Superior**

Phoenixes are birds of elemental fire found in arid, volcanically active regions. Symbolising the circle of life for many cultures, these fantastic creatures are not immortal (contrary to popular belief); rather, they possess a unique life cycle of near-seamless death and rebirth.

Phoenixes can live for more than half a millennium and mate, at most, once a century; it is therefore rare for new phoenixes to be born. After mating, the female lays a clutch of two to three eggs at a suitable nesting site, usually within the caldera of a volcano or in a magma valley. The eggs require constant, intense heat for incubation, and must be rotated frequently to maintain an even temperature.

In its first month of life, a phoenix hatchling is entirely dependent upon its parents for the prodigious amounts of food required to fuel its growth and its fiery nature. While the nest contains unhatched eggs, only one of the adults will leave to find food, but once all have hatched (or proved infertile), both must leave the nest for hours at a time to find food for the newborn hatchlings. This is the most dangerous time in a hatchling's life, for they are vulnerable to predation by dragons, salamanders, and other creatures from the Elemental Plane of Fire who also enjoy the intense heat of volcanic regions. Survival is often a matter of how successfully their parents have chosen the nest site, and adult phoenixes will tend to reuse successful breeding grounds again and again over the course of their long lives.

Once the phoenix is fully fledged, its excellent flying ability and growing intelligence aid its continued survival, but should these prove insufficient, the phoenix is now capable of a unique trick: the ability to will its own rebirth.

When a phoenix becomes severely injured, infected with a serious disease, or frail with old age, it will find a nesting site and build a ritualistic pyre on which to immolate itself. From its own ashes it will reemerge as a fledgling, capable of flight but unable to access memories and knowledge from its past lives until it has lived for at least a century.

If a phoenix's mate is reborn, it must make a choice. Most choose a clean break, flying to new territory and beginning a new life, but some choose to be reborn at the same time, allowing the option of eternity in one another's company.

## Egg Care

Artificially incubating a phoenix egg is difficult but not impossible. Once removed from the nest, the egg must immediately be placed in a suitable incubator; it will die if it cools below the temperature of molten iron for more than a few minutes.

The egg's temperature must then be held steady for up to six months while the hatchling develops. The most reliable technique is to use a magical heat source, but others have achieved the same result by placing the egg in the heart of a smelter that is kept in constant operation.

## General Care

Phoenix hatchlings require a hot, dry environment with a nearby source of intense heat in which to bask, like a fire or forge. Their appetite is voracious in their first year, and they must be fed a steady supply of small live prey, incense, herbs, and fruits. To prevent them from falling ill, they must also be provided with lava rocks, which the hatchlings scrape with their beaks to gain vital minerals and grit to aid their digestion.

Phoenixes do not agree with water, and a hatchling must never be doused or immersed. They gain sufficient moisture from their diet and do not need to have water supplied to them. A phoenix will contentedly bathe itself in sand or pumice and should not need to be groomed by its keeper; if a hatchling is listless and refuses to bathe, this is a sure sign that its keeper is failing to intellectually stimulate the bird.

Phoenix hatchlings are very intelligent and should never be considered as something to train. Rather, they should be respected, guided, and encouraged into certain behaviours much like a human child. It is essential to develop a positive relationship with the bird as it grows in confidence and intelligence, respecting its space and its physical and emotional needs. As the bird's intellect forms, with all the curiosity of a child and the extraordinary reasoning ability of a library sage, it is important to challenge it mentally with lessons of history, arcane teachings and a variety of puzzles. They really enjoy moral dilemmas. An unstimulated phoenix can grow sullen or even violent as it acts out its frustrations.



# RAKSHASA KITTEN

Rearing Difficulty  
**Complicated**  
Intelligence  
**Civilized**

Rakshasa are powerful sorcerers and shapeshifters that, in their native state, appear as anthropomorphic tigers, walking upright on two legs with feet which are similar to but broader than tiger paws. They can move quickly on all fours should they feel the need. Their hands resemble tiger paws with an opposable thumb. While a rakshasa's sharp claws and carnivore's teeth suit them well for battle, they rarely engage in physical combat, relying most often on their natural prowess in the field of magic to debilitate their enemies.

Rarely found in their native form, rakshasas can take on the appearance of other humanoids: humans, elves, even dwarves, though few will ever admit to this fact. In such a form, they are, to the race they are impersonating, extremely attractive and alluring, almost preternaturally so. This is another means of control over the rakshasa's "prey"; instead of consuming humans, many rakshasas prefer to win them over as loyal servants. Some may even mate with humans to create a clan of hybrid beings predisposed to defend, protect, and serve them with singular devotion. These children appear human but share the rakshasa's arcane gifts.

Rakshasa who choose each other as mates will remain partnered for life. The courtship of rakshasa is as at least as complex as between two humans. Rakshasa value innate magical abilities, power, beauty, and intelligence, and they are extremely picky when choosing a mate to spend the rest of their lives with. When a mated pair of rakshasa chooses to have a litter, they remove themselves from civilization to spend time raising their kittens together.

Rakshasa females produce one to three kittens in a litter. These offspring mature incredibly quickly, aging nearly the equivalent of one human year in a mere month. A rakshasa pair will remain in their secluded hideaway for a full year with their litter, until the kittens are the equivalent mentally and physically to a 12-year-old human. At this point, the kittens will have mastered their shapeshifting abilities well enough to infiltrate normal society, prompting the rakshasa family to return "home."

## General Care

For the first six months of their lives, rakshasa kittens generally nurse from their mother. Orphaned rakshasa kittens, or those that have been separated from their parents, can survive on human milk from

a nursemaid. However, at around the middle of their first year, they will wean to a primarily carnivorous diet. To bond with their infants during the first few weeks, rakshasa parents use their tongues to groom their newborn kittens. After this they swap to bathing their young in warm baths like humans.

Like infant humans, rakshasas require constant companionship when they are newborns; those that are not held and stroked often in their first month will find it much more difficult to interact positively with other sentient beings and may become socially maladjusted. Rakshasa parents will sleep curled up with their infants for the first few months, reinforcing their family unit. If you are raising rakshasa kittens from a very early age, this practice is highly recommended to encourage a good relationship with the kitten.

## Rearing

Rakshasa kittens are exceptionally bright; they are able to learn how to read and speak within their first two months. Their magical talent begin to manifest around the third month (earlier for extremely precocious kittens). At first they are barely able to control these abilities, which make them extremely dangerous. A kitten throwing a tantrum may set a room on fire or cause objects to levitate violently, so be prepared.

Rakshasa kittens, even those that are orphaned at birth, are unlikely to regard their human caretakers as parents. However, even a rakshasa that is predisposed to mischief or evil deeds can possess an extreme depth of feeling for human surrogate families. Do not be surprised if your kitten develops feelings of superiority over you. It is important to acknowledge a kitten's impressive intellect and arcane ability, while laying down boundaries and maintaining authority. Do not be dismissive of their questions, but be firm in your position as caretaker.

Rakshasa kittens are best distracted with knowledge. In their first year of life, they will be excited to learn not only how to control their innate magic but also to intimately understand the history, religion, culture, and language of many different regions and peoples. The more you teach them, the more likely it is that your relationship will remain positive. Likewise, the more genuine care you show toward a rakshasa kitten, the more likely it is that this care will be reciprocated.



# RUST WEEVIL

Rearing Difficulty  
**Complicated**  
Intelligence  
**Instinctual**

Neither fish nor fowl, the rust monster has a quadrupedal body similar in appearance to an enormous beetle, with feathered, moth-like feelers on head and tail, and a chitinous exoskeleton.

While they tend to be solitary, rust monsters make an annual pilgrimage from their territory to a spawning ground, where the female will be courted by several males at a time. After she has picked her suitor, the male rust monster will lay his sperm in a special organ inside the female, where she can release it at will. Once impregnated, the female will wander off to find an ideal hatching ground. This may take several weeks, but once the female has found her spot, she will release the sperm and assemble her nest. To do so, she takes several rusted items and creates a little rust ball into which she will lay her eggs, a clutch of 12-15, after which she leaves the weevils to their fate. A month later the rust weevils will munch their way out of the rust ball, spend a few hours waiting for their chitin to dry and harden, and leave the nest to find their own food.

## Egg Care

Rust monster eggs are the size, and often the shape, of an ogre head, and are usually red or tan in colour. They have a smooth rubbery surface, and is usually hidden inside the rust ball in a dark nook. If you do find a rust monster egg and wish to take it home, you should handle it carefully so as not to break the surface. Keep it in a dark place, with plenty of ferrous metal surrounding it, and within four weeks you will have a hungry little rust weevil on your hands.

From bitter experience, I cannot stress enough how **ESSENTIAL** it is that you keep metals you do not wish devoured at least 50feet (15 m) away from the weevils **AT ALL TIMES** (the blacksmith next door still has no idea what happened to his anvil, but I'd rather not repeat the mistake).

## General Care

As might be apparent from the name, eust monsters like to eat rusted and oxidized metals. While they're not overly fussy about where the metal comes from (swords, spades, buckles etc), they are partial to iron and steel. Precious metals such as gold and mithril will be consumed, but only if there is nothing else. They

will drink water, but very rarely and prefer to have a small bowl sweetened with honey or fruit juice.

Again, from personal experience I advised you not to feed your rust monster magical artifacts as the magic can have unwelcome, and sometimes dire, side-effects as it passes through the monster's digestive tract.

Despite their appetites rust monsters are friendly creatures who only become agitated when they sense metal. They are quite sensitive and can detect its presence up to 40 feet (12 m) away. As long as you have only wood, leather or stone items on you, you should be fine. They can become positively affectionate over time, and have the same level of intelligence as a large dog.

Rust monsters seem to enjoy having their chitin plates caressed, and in order to bond with your creature, we advise giving it regular brushing and polishing sessions. However, as they are solitary creatures, be careful not to crowd it with too much attention, but wait for it to seek your company.

## Training

Rust monsters are easy to train thanks to their relatively high intelligence and docile personalities. Keeping them well-fed may be costly, but as long as your monster isn't starving for metal it can be quite easy to raise. You will need to adapt certain tools to use only wooden or stone materials. If you plan on putting your rust weevil on a leash you must make sure it does not fasten by a metal clasp. If you need to keep your pet in a cage, make sure it's made entirely of wood or bone.

Like many pets, you can train your weevil to do tricks by demonstrating the desired behavior and rewarding it with treats when it performs to your expectations. Avoid negative reinforcement with your pet, though; mistreated rust monsters tend to be passive aggressive. I once knew an orc who hit his poor weevil, and the next morning he awoke to a nasty draft--his pet ate all of the hinges off his doors.

They are often not traded on the black market, as those most likely to collect esoteric items and creatures rarely want to deal with the rust monster's obsessive greed for metal. On the other hand, infesting an enemy keep with the critters makes for a good prelude to assault.



# SPHINX KITTEN

Rearing Difficulty  
**Complicated**  
Intelligence  
**Superior**

The legendary sphinx is a creature that is both adored and feared. They can be distinguished by their unique appearance; the body of a powerful lion, the reaching wingspan of a great roc, and the torso and head of a beautiful human. Their great intelligence surpasses that of most humanoids and they are masters of lore, magic and riddles, with which they love to challenge others. Their intellect is only rivaled by the precision and acuity with which they hunt. The greatest myths of their kind revolve around heroes asking for a sphinx's supreme wisdom to aid in their quests but only receiving it when they can match wits with the creature.

Mating habits are no different. Both sphinx genders are on the lookout for another of their kind who can match or surpass their own hunting prowess (they are part lion after all) and mental affinity. The female puts the male through a series of physical challenges to see if he can keep up with her in the hunt, and the male creates trials of intellect for the female to overcome. Only when they meet each other's high standards do they bond as a pair and begin breeding.

Gestation lasts for about six months, and a female sphinx only produces a single kitten at a time. This low birthrate, and their preference for isolated dens in difficult terrain, makes the sphinx a rare creature to encounter.

Birth is usually in a heavily protected location atop rocky cliffs, surrounded by magical barriers to keep unwanted explorers out. About nine months after giving birth, the parents go their separate ways and agree together which of them will take the child to continue its education. Their supremely logical minds render a decision swiftly, and there is rarely any dissent between them on this topic. The absent parent may never see their child again, unless circumstances put the caring parent at risk or the child seeks them out.

An inadequate or cruel upbringing can result in quite a different story. A sphinx kitten's voracious intellect will focus on the physical, the tricks of the hunt and techniques of killing, and by adolescence evolve into a deadly sociopathy. Even a kitten on this path is truly dangerous, leveraging its adorably innocent appearance to indulge in malevolent playfulness.

## General Care

For the first six months of life, a sphinx kitten is its parents' pride and joy and as a surrogate parent you should treat your kitten likewise. Cuddle the kitten, and give it regular grooming with a wet towel to replicate the tongue baths its natural parents would give, and stimulate its mind by speaking to it in as many languages as you can. It will prefer meat and fresh berries, and steadfastly ignore vegetables, but fruit makes a nice treat to reward scholarly achievements.

By 12 months, most kittens can cast at least a levitation spell for its own amusement. This is also the age where its chosen parent begins to teach them to hunt. The child's first prey is something small, typically a rat or squirrel, and it is important to celebrate the first such act with lots of encouragement, as fussy or squeamish sphinxes tend toward dependence, and some will go on to build cults of humanoids devoted to their service rather than do the work themselves. When reaching 2 years of age, a sphinx kitten's wings should have sufficiently developed to carry it for its first flight; I recommend you get hold of some magical means of flying yourself, to coax it into the air and join it on its first aerial forays.

Born with the the power of intellect and the prowess of their parents, sphinx kittens need to be constantly challenged by their caretakers to properly develop. They require the expertise of a skilled huntsman and a sorcerer to teach them of the hunt and to wield their natural arcane powers. A kitten raised this way is a well of untapped potential, and it takes a true polymath of a beastmaster, or a group of dedicated experts, to give the kitten an education equivalent to its sphinx parents. Above all, nurture and encourage them to excel in their studies and expose them to as many varied cultures as you can so they do not become aloof or bored. They will eventually, inevitably, leave to explore the world but building a strong bond of respect and a solid foundation of knowledge will give you a marvellous friend for life.





# TITAN TYKE

Rearing Difficulty  
**Extremely Difficult**  
Intelligence  
**Instinctual**

*The Unending Horror. The Moving Blade. Death of the Kasha'hareen, Destroyer of Civilizations.* The titan is more than just a creature of legend, it is a brutal nightmare made flesh. It is 60 feet (18 m) and 6 tons (5.4 tonnes) of brutality packaged in red scales and sharp spines. Its horns and jagged blades growing from its back are more than just adornments, they are almost infinitely sharp blades capable of cutting through the hardest materials.

The titan is the only creature that appears in draconic legends serving as a creature of fear. One of their tales, "Boagerund the Red," tells of a great dragon that went mining for gemstones to fill his hoard. In the deepest roots of a mountain, he uncovered a gemstone like no other, locked inside a geode of marble. He took the stone to his lair where he coveted and obsessed over its magnificence and beauty. So enthralled he became with the gem that, to prevent its loss, he devoured it. The stone effected a profound transformation upon him: his body twisted and his mind turned to constant, raging and uncontrolled destruction. During the change his bellows shook the mountain to rubble and cracked the earth to its molten heart.

Encounters with titan young are rare and often become legends in themselves. An old elven story speaks of the ruin of one of their greatest cities, which began with a young princess discovering an infant titan in the wild. She sang it a melody, and the creature followed her home. She used a lullaby to place it in a deep slumber. When the city was sacked by invaders and the princess silenced there was no one to continue the song, and the great beast rose and destroyed the invaders, as well as what remained of the elven city.

It is rumored that the titans that walk the realm are but whelps of an even larger beast. May the gods have pity on us and save us should their progenitor ever be found.

## Egg Care

Every century or so, the titan is known to lay eggs, leaving them in its wake without care or concern, as creatures instinctively stay far away from these sites for good reason. The egg appears like a black craggy boulder standing about 20 feet (6 m) high. It is practically impossible to distinguish save for the

instinctive unease one feels in its presence, until a few days before hatching, when it cracks to expose the colorful albumen.

The incubation time of the egg varies. My best guess would put it between a few decades to a whole century before hatching. Most scholars will say that a discovered egg should be transported far from any civilisation one might care for, if anyone brave enough can be found to move it.

## General Care

If you are unlucky enough to find yourself in the company of a young titan who has not immediately devoured you, it would make sense to provide it an ample supply of food and a lot of space where the creature can roam. There is no way you're going to keep this creature cooped up. If you have the luxury of space, I would keep the tyke constrained to a vast mountain canyon or in a controlled extradimensional plane where you can minimise the damage. The titan is an omnivore and can eat almost anything for sustenance, but will seek out and chase fresh meat before eating plants. It will gorge itself upon staggering quantities of food before, finally, entering a deep slumber. I strongly suggest you bring a cabal of wizards to cast growth on the available herds to extend the food source.

## Training

Don't. Just don't. Every legend ever written about the titan suggests that at best, it will stay still only to let you walk close enough to be eaten. If a gem similar to the fabled original could be found, perhaps there might be a way to contain it, or at least turn it toward someone else's demise, but such plans are the domain of the mad and hopelessly evil.

If I'm wrong, though, please write me a letter outlining the technique and I shall publish it in my next book.

An orcish version of the Princess' Lullaby legend suggests the girl had a voice 'like a harpy'. While singing would not be my first reaction to a Titan, perhaps there is more to this rumour.



# TREANT SAPLING

Rearing Difficulty  
**Easy**  
Intelligence  
**Civilized**

Many cultures attribute special powers to their native trees. That may be in part due to treants. These long-lived sentient trees are found in the depths of old growth forests and remote locations. Some of the bravest and most adventurous have spawned a slow migration across the globe.

They appear as normal trees, until you notice their limbs moving against the wind or hear them whispering to their woody brethren in slow creaking, rustling voices.

When the fae blessed the ground of the first treants, they imagined only that their creations would guard the woods where they lived. It was a testament to the fickleness of fairy magic that they also evolved to procreate, developed reasoning and the capacity to speak with mind and voice, and move across the land.

Like their mundane cousins, treants may be born of seed, although methods vary. Willow-like treants join limbs over the course of the spring and summer seasons, yielding seeds which fall beneath them as they explore their union. Other types mimic natural trees' seed production. In any event, seeds will only develop into saplings if the correct, rare conditions are met.

Treants resembling banyans merge into one in a tangle of their limb-roots. This year-long endeavor produces up to four young who split off from their parents as saplings.

Treants have also attempted to graft part of themselves onto trees as they have seen orchard masters do. There's a one in 10 chance of success and it can't be attempted more than once a year. Grafting works best if they take twigs from their bodies to graft onto mundane saplings. If it takes hold, the treant will overwhelm the sapling within three months and will have characteristics of its parent and the mundane sapling.

Finally, there is magic, though the fae are not free with their lessons or talent, so unless one simply wants to create a treant from raw magic (or more likely a wood golem), it's unlikely you'll find a first-generation treant.

It takes 12-16 months for a treant's offspring to develop into a sapling regardless of reproduction method. Most varieties protect the pre-sapling state by sheltering it within the female's body. Both parents

teach it of treant life during that time, transferring collective and individual memories at the cellular level. At eight months, it can respond in small ways. Birth when it comes is swift, a simple splitting of the bark and the emergence and rooting of the new sprout under the shelter of its parent's boughs.

## General Care

Treant saplings require sunlight, water, and soil, although exactly what kind depends upon the variety of treant. Natural compounds can be used to augment the soil. Experiment on mundane trees with fish meal, vegetable peels, blood, or even mineral dust to ensure your treant sapling has everything needed for robust growth. Dig carrion you find from small animals and birds into the soil around the base. They must root for the first two months of their lives and begin to walk at 2-8 months.

Saplings start to understand speech after 10 months. It won't be able to form words of its own until it's reached at least a year of age. If a sapling is not exposed to speech within the first two years of its life, it will learn language more slowly than a human child would.

They can be transplanted but prefer to stay within 30 miles (48 km) of their birth until they have reached adolescence, 5-25 years of age depending on variety. If you have befriended a sapling, you may be able to lure it with tales of adventure. Generally not interested in the workings of those beyond the copses of their homelands, a person who plays up seeing new woods or exotic treants has a much better chance of success than one who offers coins.

Saplings may try to shape themselves into something bipedal and narrow enough to be somewhat disguisable. It makes it easier to travel with people that way. Treant friends should be aware that they become sluggish in the winter, and positively sprightly in the spring when their sap rises.

The major limitation of treant companions is their aversion to campfires. After a long winter of cold camping, your woody friend may look less than appealing, but I have yet to prevent one from putting a fire out unless it's caused by natural lightning strike.

The best perk about working with treants is one always has a storyteller handy.



# WYVERN ELVER

Rearing Difficulty  
**Extremely Difficult**  
Intelligence  
**Instinctual**

The wyvern is a large, rare flying reptile which lives in high mountainous regions. A dose of poison from the tail stinger of an adult is strong enough to kill a horse, and from their eyries they prey on the goats, deer, and sheep that populate the mountainside. Domestic flocks are easy pickings for wyverns and are considered a dire threat to the herd, leaving shepherds to seek out adventurers to wipe out the nests.

A full-grown matron reaches a length of 30 feet (9 m), half of which is tail, with a wingspan that matches their length. Their nests I can best describe as a deep cup, practically the size of an inverted barn. Its steep sides prevent prey or elvers from escaping. By instinct, they construct their eyries above steep cliffs or on sheer peaks, making it difficult for aggressors to reach the nest by climbing. The female wrenches up mid-sized trees for its construction and lines it with leaf litter and fur stripped from kills. Much to my surprise, druids of my acquaintance inform me that this clearing of trees is part of the forest's natural regrowth cycle. Mountaineers and hunters learn to recognize these denuded patches to tell when they have entered the hunting territory of a wyvern.

Wyverns mate once a year and do so mid-flight. To produce viable eggs, the female must feast on blood for several days in a row. When ready, her wings flush bright red, and she takes to the air issuing a distinctive, shrill mating cry that can be heard for miles. Any males in the area respond by giving chase, as the female flies higher and higher. The strongest male catches her, often after bloody mid-air battles with his competitors. For the act of fertilization, the male wraps his wings tightly about the female and the coupled reptiles plummet downward. Two months after mating, the matron lays a clutch of five to eight leathery, spherical eggs 1.5 feet (0.5 m) in diameter. The eggs are incubated for six weeks prior to hatching. Typically, one of the eggs will not hatch and is consumed by the hatchlings.

## Egg Care

The mother wyvern's frequent absences for hunting afford opportunities to steal eggs, though at great risk for she does not roam far. Wise hunters do not attempt to capture elvers, as their

cries of distress will bring the mother rushing to the nest in protective rage. If you happen to get hold of a wyvern egg, keep it out of the sun, as the leathery eggs would die from drying out.

## General Care

Wvern elvers emerge weighing a spindly 15 pounds (7 kg), with a 3-foot (1 m) span to their infant wings. The mother provides freshly killed prey until they are about two weeks old, then moves to small or dying game for the elvers to practice hunting. Even young, the poison from a elver can cause severe pain, and while not enough to kill a human alone, it's still not fun to get stung, especially if there is more than one hungry wyrmling around.

In four to five weeks, the wyvern can flutter around the nest. A few make it over the edge, generally plunging over cliffs to their deaths. In three months, they can fly. Once the elver makes its first game kill, the mother abandons the nest and the babies until the next mating period, leaving the fledgeling wyverns to survive on their own. Survivability for the wyrmlings after the mother leaves is mixed, depending on the available food sources and whether adventurers or predators get to them.

## Training

So far, wyverns appear to be quite resistant to domestication, with attempts leading to limited and typically disastrous results. I have only found one tribe of mountain kobolds that have successfully mastered the wyvern, though how it's done is still a matter of speculation. I intend to make a field trip one day and learn their techniques. Armies have been known to put wyverns in fragile wicker cages and launch them into enemy ranks to cause havoc.

Mountain goblins love to collect elvers and cut off their tails to extract the poison, which they mix with hot sap and dip onto the heads of their crude javelins. Being goblins, they expect to lose a few comrades in the endeavor. When they can manage to capture the young alive in leather sacks, their shamans tell them to crop the wings, bury the wyrmlings up to the neck, and fatten them on toadstools soaked in blood. They believe this practice increases the volume and potency of the venom.













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