



Baby Bestiary[®] 2



ANDREAS WALTERS



METAL WEAVE GAMES





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Creator's Note

Wow! I never imagined that I would create not one volume of the *Baby Bestiary*®, but two! This just goes to show how great a supporting fan-base can be. I can't thank you all enough for the effort, energy and enthusiasm that you have put into helping make this project a reality. For those picking this book up for the first time, you will find this a labor of love. A love for the animals and mythologies which have given us fuel to run our amazing adventures. But rather than destroying the creatures from which many fantastic myths and legends have spawned, I want you to take this as an opportunity to be inspired, to want to interact and have complex relationships with these great creatures.

This book is intended to be system- and setting-neutral, meaning there will be no ability scores, DCs, stat blocks, or spells listed (we're making a separate book for that). With two amazingly illustrated books, and plans for a brand line with new adorable creatures, short stories and more, I hope you can enrich your life and games with the cute monsters within these pages.

Thank you for picking up this book and supporting our efforts.

Andreas Walters



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Master of the Beasts

We are beastmasters. We share a sacred bond with the monsters who roam our world. We rescue them, keep them safe and train them to work with and for us. Our path leads us to secrets beyond the ken of normal folk. In exchange for the intimate understanding of beasts, we take on an even greater responsibility to care for them.

Everyone has their own relationship with their beasts. Some treat them as mere pets, to be showpieces for friends, trained to do tricks and to obey commands. Others take in these orphaned monsters as their own children, defending them from the cruel slings and arrows (sometimes literally) of the world. Some of us are teachers, raising up the beasts to be useful and safe companions. No matter how you view our role, mastering beasts can be the most rewarding experience you will ever enjoy.

That said, raising such creatures is far from a safe or even relaxing occupation. I have spent many long nights desperately hunting for my little charges, when they go out chasing a cricket or become enamored of some pretty object on a passing adventurer. I have lectured, cajoled and threatened them without end, in the vain chance of keeping their bestial instincts in check. I stood at the edge of a mighty cliff, and brought a despondent centaur foal back from the edge. Dedicating your life to this cause is exhausting and terrifying, and makes me appreciate all the more the gifts our charges give us.

I wish I could say that my little monsters were safe from the world, but that would be hopelessly optimistic. We must take the utmost care to build environments that support their growth and learning. We must be patient and observant to ward off the base instincts of greed and malice that humanity inflicts on them. We need to uphold our responsibility to the little beasties who bring joy into our lives.

Nature vs Nurture

The young master of beasts is often quite proud of themselves after rearing their first youngling and training them to domesticity. I know I was brimming with self-pride after raising my first xornling, confident that I was now capable of training anything. The incident with my medusa and the duke's servant proved me very wrong, and reminded me of how much there is to know.

When you seek to raise multiple beasts, you must pay attention to any number of concerns. How do you feed and care for each of them appropriately? How do you manage those solitary hunters, who scorn the company of others? How do you maintain a safe pack dynamic that remains in control? How to you socialize the sentient beasts and enable them to grow? How do you keep your baby beasts from predated upon each other?

I wish I had known these secrets when I first stepped down this path. May this wisdom help you avoid repeating my mistakes.

Feeding the Beast

Everything that walks, crawls, slithers, or hovers needs to eat. Good nutrition is of the utmost importance for raising healthy young beasts. Food preparation can be a particular challenge, however, and careful planning is essential. Certain monsters have rather disturbing feeding habits and handling these efficiently will be an important measure of your success.

Feeding vegetarian or omnivorous monsters is the easiest task. The closer that you come to the human diet, the easier it is to simply purchase what you need at a local market. I had a small hut full of oats, hat and millet for my first minotaur calf, but he absolutely loved carrots. He insisted on eating the veggies three times a day, until his pale fur took on an orange tinge. A few of my charges had more unusual dietary preferences, and I was forced to make some deals with local farmers to keep them fed. I once paid a farmer to plant an entire field of milkweed, and she was happy to take my coin.

Some beasts have more unusual tastes, which range from trivial to obscenely expensive to fulfil. I have hauled in wagon-loads of scrap metal, lit massive bonfires, purchased loads of manure and commissioned enchantments to feed my little ones. My favorite critters to feed were treant saplings, I must admit. I simply found a lovely meadow at the side of a gentle stream, and planted the little seed there with some compost. From there, all I had to do was sit and chat with my youngling, teaching them the common tongue and answering their adorable questions.

Unfortunately, many of the monsters we raise have more carnivorous tastes. I find that a supplement of fish does wonders for my furry friends, giving a nice luster to their coats.



More importantly, many of my charges are perfectly fine with spoiled or toxic fish that I have been able to get for a few copper dren. On a similar note, I have taught my kobold kids to hunt rats, which has the merit of feeding them cheaply while educating them on important trapping techniques, in addition to improving their reputation in the local settlements (though locals still remain somewhat wary).

Not every beast can subsist on low quality meat, more's the pity. Chickens and eggs are easy to acquire, but many require more substantial meals. I have purchased goats, cows and other livestock to feed my little monsters, but that gets to be rather expensive in the long term. My best solution is to bring my young "pets" along on hunting expeditions. Small villages will often have problems with giant frogs, rats, or dire-wolves. I have taught my more predatory monsters to hunt down these pests, and the villagers sometimes even pay me out of gratitude!

My greatest complication with feeding is with those beasts who hunger for sentient creatures. Obviously, never let your little monsters get the taste for humans or other demihumans. No matter

the crime, being eaten by a monster is not a just punishment. More importantly, it's a slippery slope when your beasts discover that halflings are tastier than roast chicken. I had a friend who brought her baby hydra along to hunt down goblins who were ambushing merchants. Soon the hydra started to eat orcs, then the city guards. I haven't heard from my friend in months, and I fear for the worst.

Managing Solitaries

Solitary monsters are, in some ways, the most difficult to manage. These are often rather dangerous predators, hunters and abominations who don't play well with others. So long as you can maintain a level of privacy and isolation, a solitary monster has a real opportunity to become a working companion.

Most solitaries tend to be territorial predators. I tend to think of manticores, bulette billies, kraken paralarvae, and house cats as iconic examples of solitary monsters. They can be adorable in their own way, but require a very firm hand. I have found it very useful to introduce them to humans at an early age. These monsters tend to

have a bullying streak, and will obey anyone who they consider dominant. It is useful they learn the lesson early on that humans are much bigger, much stronger, and much more cunning they are. This drastically increases the chances they'll obey you later in life, when the positions are reversed.

Solitaries need a lot of attention and challenges for them to be satisfied. They tend to be proactive, adventurous, and playful. I have consulted with wizards to devise puzzles and illusions that test their mind and bodies. I give them tasks to guard buildings, track stray animals, or scare off giant beasts. So long as you give them an opportunity to prove their dominance over everyone else, they will maintain the confidence they need to thrive.

I find that careful management of their diets is essential. While certain other beasts become more attentive when slightly hungry, I much prefer my carnivorous charges to be full and languid. A well-fed solitary is much more tolerant and willing to learn than a half-starved one. I advise that you never use hunger as a punishment with solitaries.

Herding Socials

Beasts who live in groups are incredibly fun to train. These are the playful explorers who wander through the woods, chasing each other for hours. They eat together, sleep in adorable piles, and hunt like a well-oiled machine if you let them practice.

I have found it easiest to train social beasts because I learned my first trade as a shepherd girl. Sheep and the dogs who corral them taught me a lot about how to manage blink puppies, owlbear cubs, and lightning lizard hatchlings. Granted, sheep are a tad less likely to accidentally eat someone, but the commonality remains.

As a rule, socials tend to be sensitive to the feelings of others. I find it wise to listen carefully to their yips, growls, and hisses for signs of distress. Anxious social beasts are the most likely to lash out, and a little attention can go a long way to easing this stress. Be generous with your affection, brushing fur or scratching the itchy scales above the brow ridges. Be consistent and offer them a predictable routine, so they can be comfortable and concentrate on learning.

Now, food and attention are the best tools for managing social monsters. Offer them their favorite treats when they perform some difficult task or show restraint in the face of stressful

stimuli. When they start acting up, feel free to feed them a little less, or give them the foodstuffs they're less fond of. When they truly act up, consider giving them a time-out and isolate them from their friends. An hour of solitary time can drive social animals up the wall, and reinforce that you mean business!

Teaching Sentients

If solitaries are the most difficult, and social beasts are the easiest, I have to say that sentient monsters are the most rewarding. While each of them thinks in their own way, they're all individuals with hopes, fears and dreams. I consider my sentient charges to be my children of a sort. They bring be a fresh perspective and let me see the world through their alien eyes.

For sentients, I find the first priority is to enable communication. While a rare few individuals are capable of telepathy, most depend on verbal speech or writing to communicate. The question of which language to choose is fraught with controversy amongst our order. There are some who claim that teaching all beasts to speak the common tongue will unite them with society and enable them to interact more easily. There are others who stand firm and proclaim the importance to teach baby beasts their native tongues. Both sides have compelling arguments, and I try to teach my beasts at least the fundamentals of both tongues, if I can. That said, not everyone is willing to learn the naga-tongue, just for the purpose of enriching the lives of their latest project.

There are similar questions, when it comes to issues of culture and faith for sentient beasts. This may seem to be academic and soft-hearted, but adopting a baby from a different background is terribly complicated. There is nothing more heart-wrenching than hearing the little monsters question who they are in the quiet of night. Take care and help them build their own identities, so they can choose their own path. I wish that I had taken that amount of care with my little orange minotaur, before it was too late.

Traveling Together

Travel is a challenge for us all. I often become short-tempered within a few weeks of travel with other human companions, but traveling with baby beasts is far more difficult to manage.

When voyaging overland, I do my level best to avoid using main roads. While a few hours on side roads and hunting paths can be safe, there are far too many merchants and anxious caravan guards for me to be comfortable on the major trade routes. While it is often much slower going, I do find that traveling through the wilds is a safer option. When you have a gaggle of alpha-predators at your side, very few wild animals are likely to bother you. These little wilderness journeys are also fantastic opportunities to teach your little beasties some basic survival skills, so they can build a fire or burrow in the soft earth when occasion arises.

Traveling across the seas is far more difficult, in my experience. Unless you train marine beasts exclusively (and I have nothing against my aquatic peers), you will have great difficulty in traversing the wine-dark seas. Smaller and calmer monsters might be able to remain beneath decks for a few days, if you're able to convince superstitious sailors not to knife you in your sleep. Any flying beasts can travel ahead of the ship, to meet you at your destination, or roost in the rigging. In my experience though, you're unlikely to successfully transport large carnivores on any maritime vessel, regardless of how much coin you spend.

Interspecies Diplomacy

So, you've managed to raise your otyugh to stay out of the garbage, trained your shambling tuffets to stay nearby, and convinced your satyr about the importance of consent. Does that mean that all of your difficult days are over, and that you can take a well-deserved break?

Not so fast.

Turns out that keeping a half-dozen beasts, at varying levels of the food chain, can lead to problems. The first and most important step is to ensure that none of your beasts try to eat each other. Pay attention to the natural predator-prey relationships, and keep the sheep well away from the lions. It takes a great deal of effort to keep the various beasties to cooperate and interact in ways other than violence.

You also need to take care that the monsters don't get too friendly with each other. I heard once of a small clutch of kobolds who trained a cohabiting wyvern and escaped their keeper in the middle of the night. While cooperation is important, take care that the various little ones under your control don't gang up on you!



The True Monsters

So You're a Beastmaster

By joining our order, you have pledged yourself to train and protect the beasts in your care. The question you must ask yourself most honestly is why. There are many people who want to claim beasts, and many of them have far darker motives than you do. They seek to use these little monsters for their pleasure, for military service, for raw magical utility, or simply to satisfy their hatred. You need to be aware of these threats, if you seek to uphold your oath.

We all came to this profession for different reasons. Some sought money and glory, by claiming these prizes of the natural world. Others captured monsters with the hope of directing their beasts to defend the innocent. Others still wanted the magical ingredients necessary to perform miracles, curing plagues or granting life everlasting. While many came from a less than virtuous place, at first, our exposure to the little ones changes us, and makes us better people.

Personal Collections

The most benign use of baby monsters is for a personal collection, or menagerie. Perhaps a knight wishes to ride a pegasus to battle, or a rich lord wishes to fill his court with the sound of satyr song. I met a young girl who, after losing her mother to a plague, asked for a baby owlbear to keep her company. That was the second beast that I'd collected, and the smile on her face was worth the scars.

In some ways, personal collections are excellent places for baby beasts. They get a home of safety and relative comfort, at the price of their freedom.



I know that the world can be harsh, and perhaps this is the safest place for some of the little ones. That said, I still fear that they would wither in captivity and that the beasts would be at the mercies of the powerful. What is to happen when the lord or lady grows tired of their new pet?

Military Service

Humans have always sought beasts to support them in war, from dogs to horses to elephants. It seemed obvious that many of the monsters of the world could offer similar services. A loyal ogre is a walking siege engine, able to devastate a foe's line. Kraken can defend ports, while griffins guard the skies. Monsters have incredible prowess on the battlefield, if you can acquire their services.

Solitary and social beasts lack the capacity to understand the true horrors of war. They trust you, as their beastmaster, and will risk their lives if you ask it of them. In truth, violence and brutality come disturbingly easily to some of these creatures. Holding a hydra back from a battle is harder than unleashing her wrath. For the simpler monsters, military pursuits align with their instincts and natural skill-set. At the same time, they lack a full understanding of the risks they face.

Sentient beasts offer different concerns and opportunities. The intelligent monsters may choose the path of war with open eyes and sharpened blades. Bugbears, for instance, are brilliant tacticians and ones whose culture values military service above all. I tried to prevent a youth from joining the local militia and I will never forget the look of betrayal on his furry face. Many beasts seek mercenary work, with youthful enthusiasm, despite the danger.

If you want the little ones to survive over the long term, I recommend you keep them away from battlefields. Their kind are far too impressionable and dangerous to be used by some princeling.

Magical Components

At least I can comfort myself that military service offers a chance for glory and riches for a young beast. Many magisters and high enchanters look to the very bodies of our charges with greedy eyes. It is a sad fact that many useful potions, artifacts, and rituals demand portions of certain monsters. A troll's blood may be the central component for a potion of regeneration, while a cloak of

displacement comes from the lustrous black fur of a phase cat.

The wonders of arcane enchantments cannot be denied, but I just can't stand for cruel arcanists who slay innocent monsters for their magical power. What ritual is worth the life of a beautiful creature?

I'm sorry. Some scars heal slowly, and I will never forgive the venal enchanter who sacrificed a kirin I raised from foalhood. I hope his enchanted sword did some good in the world, to counter-balance the cruel fate that befell my charge.

Keep your baby beasts safe, I implore you.

Vengeance

Monsters are dangerous, by definition. Most often, we gain baby beasts as a consequence of the harm caused by their parents. The elder monsters are prone to consume, crush or petrify any who get in their way. There are entire mercenary bands and adventuring parties who have formed simply to eliminate these threats to innocent villages. Suffice it to say that there are often hard feelings for all involved.

No matter how innocent a baby beast may be, they may be blamed by the ignorant for the sins of their parents. Many will see your charges as future destroyers and murders, rather than adorable bundles of joy.

More dangerous are those powerful individuals who have been hurt themselves. One duchess, who lost her son to a rampaging troll, vowed never to tolerate beasts in her duchy. She passed a law granting permanent tax exemptions as a bounty for anyone who brought in the head of a monster, and an automatic knighthood for any slain troll. I have steered clear of her lands, for good reason.

Poaching

If all of these dangers were not enough, there is always the risk of kidnapping. It's hard work to raise the beasties, and a few unscrupulous folks decide to take shortcuts. They snatch the little ones from their beastmasters, either for immediate profit or out of a misguided ambition to take on the profession. These are dangerous fools, likely to get themselves killed.

Keep a keen eye on your little monsters, and lock the doors. If you can manage it, I recommend you try to keep a low profile and avoid making your profession known in your travels. This is good

advice in general, of course, but is particularly helpful when trying to hide your adorable little treasures from poachers.

If you do have one of your little ones taken from you, you have a difficult decision to make. No city guard will help you regain your monstrous charges, and may in fact imprison you for consorting with beasts in the first place. You have to choose whether to pursue the poacher yourself, with the help of your remaining beasts. If you don't seek out the poacher in short order, the stolen monster is likely to suffer a terrible fate. If you do begin the hunt, the rest of your little ones are exposed to danger.

A Hopeful Path

I know that my advice to date has been rather gloomy, but it's all meant to warn of the dangers we face. As a master of beasts, you alone can navigate these challenges and carry your younglings to safety. It is a noble calling, and I have faith that you will find your way.

I have raised a dozen beasts to safe, bright futures. That young, martial bugbear I mentioned earlier founded her own mercenary band, hiring themselves out to the various villages along the Thunder Coast. My xornling took on a job at a mine, protecting the human workers from bandits and pointing out rich veins in exchange for silver ingots. I released my hydra into a secluded swamp, where he could finally relax and raise a family.

My young treant grew up to lead an orchard of awakened fruit trees, whose bounty is exchanged for frequent visits by adorable human children. I hear that some of the girls and boys call it "teacher" or "master," which melts my cynical old heart. If you have ever had the pleasure of Tanner's Apple Brandy, you have sampled her wares.

Each of my students taught me something new. I have learned how to listen to the earth's song from my xorn friend. I have helped a young kobold muster the courage to propose to her love. I learned patience from the long days training my little manticores. Some of the lessons were hard-won, but I am a better person for all of it.

ABOLETH SPAWN

Rearing Difficulty
Extremely Difficult
Intelligence
Clever

Believing themselves to be the first sentient creatures in existence, aboleth are an arrogant and cruel species who see all others as pawns to be dominated. Making solitary homes in deep water, they appear to human eyes as obscene amalgamations of fish, eel and worm. While they continue to grow their entire lives, aboleth reach about 55 feet (17 meters) long and up to 30 tons (27 tonnes) by adulthood, making them a challenge to house.

Armed with incredible intelligence and psychic abilities, the aboleth can subjugate sentient minds with little effort, using such slaves to serve their alien whims. Most surface races cannot survive at the crushing, airless depths the aboleth favor, but once dominated its victims are coated in a viscous mucus that replaces their skin with a water-breathing membrane. Should a slave escape, they can never return to the surface without suffocating, as their skin desiccates and their atrophied lungs fail. The same slime is critical to the aboleth's own respiration, although rather than choke, they enter a dormant, helpless state they consider worse than death. More than one beached aboleth has been rescued with great loss of life by its desperate mind-controlled servants, only to slay them all for ever seeing it in a state of weakness.

Aboleth do not die of old age and are incredibly resistant to natural threats. Every few centuries, the urge to reproduce will overcome them, and they will self-fertilize a single egg. The egg is coated in a thick slime and hidden in the depths of its lair where it can be watched. Unlike most other parents, aboleth have a suspicious and exclusive attitude to their progeny. Long before the egg hatches, the adult aboleth makes telepathic contact with its spawn and tests it constantly to make sure it is neither mentally weak nor physically sickly. Once hatched the spawn is already fluent in telepathic communication and knows as much as any educated sentient would by adulthood. This stands it in good stead, for the spawn must quickly escape its parent's home or be killed as a threat.

Aboleth spawn take about a decade to mature. The earlier in this maturing process you acquire them, the better your chances of surviving their company. I must caution that rearing an aboleth is a hopelessly suicidal task for all but the most powerful wizard or psion. Attempting to socialize an aboleth that has already reached adulthood is futile. Somehow acquiring the aboleth egg just before it hatches is ideal, but would require dealing in some manner with the immortal parent.

General Care

Aboleth need access to a large marine environment in which to hunt. As omnivores, they can subsist on any organic matter but far prefer sentient prey, since they can absorb thoughts and memories through psionic osmosis. If the prospect of supplying an aboleth with thinking beings as food seems ethically questionable, then it must be stressed that the aboleth is not the companion for you. Other than the stimulus of sentient minds to consume, the aboleth is dangerously self-sufficient and robust and requires negligible physical care. If one can stomach the presence of such a voraciously insular creature, they respond well to ego stroking, praise and worship by their unkilld food.

Rearing

A developing aboleth will continually test your will, probing at your mind with its psychic tendrils, trying to find a foothold or a weak spot it can use to dominate and enslave you. Continuous resistance and strict dominance behavior should eventually exhaust or frustrate the aboleth into docility, though this may take years. It is crucial that you never assume you are entirely safe, even for a second, as aboleth are born bitter, and can bear grudges for centuries.

I recommend you allow the aboleth its own slaves who, once acclimated to and transformed by the slime, can attend to its cleaning, feeding, and grooming needs. Just be careful to ensure that these slaves don't outnumber your own servants and guards, and plan appropriate contingencies so that they can be dealt with when the aboleth inevitably pits them against you. The best means of handling these rebellions is to establish them early on as a regular game, and let them wage war on you to work off their frustrations. Let them take pride in smaller victories with loot and servants it can believe it won through superior tactics.

Perhaps the most striking feature of these exotic creatures is their ancestral memory. Aboleth inherit the memories of all their ancestors, as well as those of their victims, straight out of the egg. Aboleth who become bored, or despondent from lack of dominance, withdraw into a dreamlike hibernation where they relive past lives and pleasurable victories.



The baku presents a particular challenge to prospective beastmasters, being entirely absent from the physical plane where most of us reside. As creatures of spirit, baku resemble a hybrid combination of a bear's body, elephant's nose, ox's tail and the claws of a tiger. Evidence suggests that baku were crafted using leftover parts shortly after the gods finished creating the animals of the physical world, although there is still debate amongst theologians as to which god was responsible.

Aside from their appearance and astral nature, the most peculiar aspect of baku is their diet. They take nourishment primarily from nightmares, although in some cases they may eat other psychic material. There are numerous tales of sorcerers and summoners calling forth a baku to relieve them of their dreams, only for the unsatiated baku to continue feeding on the sleeping caster's unconscious, consuming their aspirations, dreams and desires and leaving them a mere husk. Such issues are likely far rarer than popular tales suggest, but it is worth taking note.

Baku reproduction is hard for physical beings to comprehend. As best as I have been able to discover, baku gender is irrelevant and perhaps nonexistent. During a two-week ovulation period, the primary parent is visited by a number of mates on the astral plane. These take it in turns to merge with the parent, providing some kind of contribution, after which the parent produces one to two offspring through a process that no observer has yet described adequately. The first dreams a calf consumes will be those of its parent, but within the first month it will be weaned onto the dreams of physical beings, after which calves become easier to rear.

At full size, a baku stands nearly 10 feet (3 meters) at the shoulder. However, this is less of a problem than it sounds, since very few physical objects present any kind of barrier to the creature and therefore the size of your enclosure is largely unimportant.

Last century it was believed that a baku pelt, if rendered physical through magic, could be worn to weaken and ward off evil spirits. Baku were extensively hunted and very nearly driven extinct. Today there are very few wild baku left and astral hunting remains a threat, despite no evidence that their pelts contain any real power.

General Care

Feeding a young, weaned baku is actually quite easy. Their appetite starts small, and a trainer can usually offer up his or her own dreams to keep their hunger at bay, though it is recommended to have a psion or illusionist assist in the early days, since they're particularly skilled at separating imagination from the mind. Be careful to wean your baku gradually onto troubling dreams and from there to fully-fledged nightmares, to prevent indigestion.

Calves are friendly and curious, and a delight to work with if kept well-fed. Young baku are particularly susceptible to summoning, but fortunately, your baku cannot be stolen away for long, as even the most sturdy summoning spells will eventually degrade. Baku are loyal creatures, so as long as you have treated yours well it should return to you on its own. If you are concerned, you can get a special anchoring collar to prevent your baku from being summoned.

Training

It is easy to teach baku to consume nightmares on command, since this is in line with their natural inclination, and many a trainer has earned money by hiring out their baku to those plagued with bad dreams. I have done so myself when times were lean, but I cannot emphasize enough the importance of rigorous training to ensure that your baku knows whose dreams to eat and, even more importantly, when to stop. Nothing ruins a reputation faster than word getting about that you have reduced a client to depressed listlessness, as my brother-in-law Percival had the misfortune to discover.

There are a number of possible tricks to teach a baku selective feeding. The best solution I have seen is letting it feed only from a sleeper who wears an identifying item, such as a magic diadem. To prevent your baku from becoming overfed, my recommendation is to keep feeding times short and use a modified summoning spell to call your baku away after about twenty minutes, by which time any dreams should be entirely consumed. Not overfeeding your baku will leave it with a smaller, more manageable, appetite.



BALROG EMBERLING

Rearing Difficulty
Difficult
Intelligence
Basic

Legends suggest balrogs were once benign elementals of fire, corrupted by demonic powers to become fearsome soldiers in the armies of the infernal. Though uncommon in our world, they can still be found in isolated places, deep below the surface where demonkind and magma meet.

Resembling a horned humanoid made of flame and shadow, they match giants in stature and bear great shadowy wings. Being of ephemeral incandescent matter their size and shape are somewhat fluid, allowing them to shrink to pass through narrow spaces like a roiling firecloud, or expanding to strike fear in their enemies.

These beasts are typically driven by the hunger of their twisted inner flame to strike directly and consume their foes. While they can wield weapons on their own accord, their masters may require them to serve in a hellish retinue, so many balrogs tend to be bound to signature weapons as a sign of servitude.

General Care

In taking on an emberling's care, one must believe that the evil afflicting them is not in their true nature. The nightmares of the burning fields of Hell can fade with enough compassion in a positive learning environment. If you seek a balrog merely as a servant, that route has been well-established and is not worthy of comment here. If you wish more than to simply reinforce the chains of their bondage, then read on.

As spirits of fire, the creatures burn everything around them without conscious control so a lava-rich cave, volcano, or a fiery pocket dimension is their best home. In their early years, they cannot long survive outside of direct exposure to fire. A colleague who found themselves in sudden possession of an emberling made use of a large pottery kiln, and I have read of others keeping their charges in forges and bakery ovens as makeshift homes.

Within their first ten years the inner fire becomes self-sustaining, allowing them to roam about more freely. Combined with the rapid development of their wings at this time, it is important that their carer and the local environment is suitably fireproofed and affords them access to new and interesting fuels. A runaway balrog can be devastating, so keep a stockpile of magical incendiaries handy to lure them back when they go exploring.

Rearing

Balrogs begin life as a small spark shed from the body of its parent, usually in a devastating explosion hot enough to melt stone and turn sand to glass. If it is kept hot, the spark takes on physical form and becomes a small smoking ember; this is the stage at which they can be collected and transported in relative safety. Over the course of a few days the ember unfolds into a tiny replica of its adult form. Fortunately for any potential balrog-keeper, the parent rarely notices their progeny has formed, and will likely have moved on.

Unscrupulous wizards are eager to collect these embers for magical experimentation and material summoning rites. A collector must not only be wary of the parent, but of these scavengers following in their wake, and should arm themselves accordingly.

Balrogs are equivalent in intelligence to a wolf, making them trainable but challenging. Their needs are simple enough, requiring only flammable material to spark their interest. They enjoy charred meat of various kinds, but don't consume it so much as play with it till it burns out. One balrog I had the chance to meet kept an everburning torch as a prized possession, curling around it when dormant and batting at it to make the fire change color. Another loved fireworks, and treated them with the same excitement as a child would popping candy.

It is important that the emberling perceive its owner as its master. Perception of fear or weakness early in the emberling's relationship with its owner can be disastrous to its ongoing socialization and training. When playing with an emberling, it's important to maintain eye contact and firm but consistent authority. Cruel treatment, or starving them of fuel, is likely to bring out their demonic heritage.

Balrogs can be trained to speak—in voices like the roar of devouring flames—but never quite achieve the facility with spoken language that humans have. Simple concepts and short sentences can be understood and repeated, but true debate is beyond them since they're used to their fiery nature breaking complex things down into their basic forms.



BEITHIR HATCHLING

Rearing Difficulty
Tricky
Intelligence
Instinctual

The beithir is found in lake areas or swamps, and is often mistaken at first glance for a large lizard or crocodile. This species does not mate, has no gender or reproductive organs, and cannot be born without human intervention. If an ordinary snake dies and is then split in two, the halves will merge together and become a beithir egg. This can occur even if the halves are separated from one another, and halves have been recorded traveling hundreds of miles or even across oceans to reunite. The only way to prevent the creation of a beithir egg is to bury the two halves in separate graves.

Despite the lack of parents or siblings, beithirs are social creatures and can track each other using pheromone deposits, which has led some to conclude they are territorial in nature. Beithirs lack ears, but use their tongues to “hear” vibrations caused by sound. Beithir hatchlings are translucent and faintly blue, and develop deep blue tinted scales after the first few weeks.

Due to their unique origins, beithirs are prized by collectors and can fetch a high price for sellers. The scarcity of naturally occurring beithir eggs leads some unscrupulous breeders to hunt snakes in the wild and chop them in half themselves to speed up the process; however, force-bred beithirs have a duller coloration and more violent temperament, and are not considered as valuable. Thanks to the actions of particularly greedy and gruesome traders, we now know that one snake will only ever produce one beithir, no matter how many parts it’s divided into.

An honest breeder seeking to create high-value eggs is recommended to scavenge or buy naturally-created snake halves. If you’re especially fortunate, you will get both halves or even a newly-formed egg, otherwise you’ll need to follow your half as it roams to find the rest of itself. This can cause problems when the other half in fact belongs to another beithir breeder engaged in a similar quest, and has by necessity led to the creation of some very specific ownership laws.

Hatchlings are very small, often the size of a human hand, though they can grow at an alarming rate if cared for properly, and will generally reach full size in one to two years depending on diet. A fully grown beithir can eat an average-sized human in one bite.

General Care

In the wild, hatchlings are usually found and adopted by mature beithirs, and taught how to hunt for themselves. A young beithir will seek out small prey like mice or fish, but as they grow they will begin to search for larger prey as their size and hunger increase.

If raising your own beithir, you should adopt a similar strategy. Young beithirs have a stomach not much larger than a goldfish, so these are often a good starting point. As they grow, slowly increase the size of your beithir’s meals to ensure they receive adequate nutrition. They’re not picky eaters but find it hard to get excited about food that is already dead, so stick to living prey to keep your beast happy. Letting them chase the food themselves is also a good way of ensuring they receive their daily exercise.

Training

Beithirs are essentially deaf, rendering most vocal command systems useless; however, they are certainly smart enough to understand instructions. Trainers have found success with hand gestures or simple sign language, and some have even pioneered a form of training using specific patterns of vibrations to indicate a particular command. A trained beithir can make an excellent guard-beast or amusing pet.

While in the wild they are distrustful and guarded creatures, if raised around people they can be quite friendly. However, dropping a hatchling is to be avoided at all costs and will generally signal the end of any bond you have formed. Beithirs are extremely afraid of heights and a fall can scar them for life. Leaving even the most amiable beithir unattended with small or delicious-smelling children is also generally discouraged.

Beithirs are drawn to lightning storms, and some even believe they can cause them. A persistent thunderstorm may signal that you’re not having much luck with training your hatchling, and they may need to be released in order to return the weather to its seasonal norm. Bothersome beithirs are frequently set loose during storms as a reliable method of reuniting them with their wild brethren. Just keep a safe distance to avoid becoming their first wild-caught meal.



It is said the first bugbear was created by a wizard who was cursed with multiple phobias. To rid himself of his many terrors he created a beast who would sense his fear and be able to destroy each cause. He called his creation Bogber, for names have power and the creature would not divulge hers. Over the years, Bogber chased away spiders, frogs, gibbering mouthers and many other threats. The wizard and the beast became great friends and when the wizard finally ran out of fears, he released Bogber, thanking the beast for her years of service. Before the beast left, she told the wizard her true name, so if the wizard was ever terrified the beast could be summoned to fight his phobias once more.

Nowadays, bugbears are chiefly bred by goblins, who use them as pets and warbeasts. Bugbears' innate knowledge of what is most terrifying can be used to cause devastation, and goblins employ them as diversions for raids or just for their own twisted amusement.

While they have a basic intelligence, their ability for speech is restricted to simple words and concepts such as "smash," "angry," "hungry," and so on. Most bugbears are raised to be frightful creatures, using their highly-specialized form of empathy to play cruel pranks on unsuspecting victims.

Fully grown bugbears stand around 4 feet (1.2 meters) tall and are as stout as dwarves. They have skin similar to a goblin's, but covered in a fur-like hair. As they grow older bugbears lose this hair and, by adulthood, many bugbears only have fur left atop their heads and covering the tops of their hands.

General Care

Bugbears are not inherently evil, but are prone to bad behavior. Because they can feel other creatures' fears and darker emotions, infant bugbears may act out as a way to release the anxiety these sensations cause. They are too young to understand what they're doing, but they know it makes them feel better. Without careful handling, it's easy for their naturally playful impulses to become twisted into cruelty.

Even when raised to be good, bugbears are incorrigible pranksters. They'll hide behind a door to scare you, or draw on your favorite painting, because they know you don't like it. The best thing you can do for your bugbear kid is to remain calm and controlled

around them, and not let them sense your fear or distress.

Infant bugbears are covered in a soft hair. This hair will fall out as they age, so it's important to care for the bugbear's skin. Frequent oatmeal baths will help to preserve the fur they have and soothe irritated skin.

Bugbears, like most goblinoid creatures, are extremely sensitive to bright lights, and kids even more so. Infants should be trained over several years to acclimatize to the light of day. Most bugbears, even when trained, cannot stand anything brighter.

Rearing

Bugbears have a natural ability to hide in the shadows that verges on the uncanny. If your bugbear seems to have disappeared, don't be concerned (this may well be the reaction they're trying to provoke). Simply place some honey-glazed ham or another sweet treat in a moderately-lit area and wait for them to emerge.

It's important to remain calm and soothing towards your kid no matter how much they try to upset or terrify you. The moment a bugbear feels negative emotions from you, they'll react, and if they have not been properly trained this will come out in acts of violence and disobedience.

Some bugbear caretakers prefer to discipline kids for their pranks. This tactic works, but it will result in a solemn and very serious adult. This humorlessness is against a bugbear's nature, and repressing its natural playfulness can cause the creature to act out in terrible ways when it is angry.

An infant's teeth are even sharper than adult bugbear's; one bite could easily break wood or nip off an errant finger, so be careful when training them. Although their preference is to scare, not maim, kids take some time to learn the difference.

I once met a famed beastmaster who had trained a bugbear as a nanny for her children. Like all of his kind, the creature could sense others' fear, but instead of increasing that fear the bugbear was taught to soothe it with cuddles and play, making him extremely popular with youngsters.



The djinn, or “genies,” originate in a magical realm of infinite air and fire, scattered with islands made of precious metals and gemstones, and it is only in this realm that new djinn are forged. Djinn produce children very rarely and cherish their offspring immensely. An immature djinni is usually referred to as a “djina yni,” or little genie.

When certain cosmic patterns align, partnered adult djinn instinctively begin questing for, and ritually attuning and blending, rare elements from all over their world. Forged in love and blessed with fire, the ingredients coalesce into a perfect egg measuring up to 2 feet (0.6 meters) in length. Unique, etched shapes on the surface represent the combined souls of the parents as well as the new life emerging from their joinder. After a mere three weeks of incubation, the egg hatches into glittering smoke, which immediately coalesces into a djina yni the size of a large human infant. Djina yni age comparably to humans, reaching full maturity at fifteen-years-old.

Bottles

Legends of antiquity describe warfare between humanity and a band of djinn who invaded the mortal world. They were defeated by the great human leader Assad ibn Saeed, who extracted from them the knowledge of binding and controlling djinn to discourage them from ever attacking our world again. That knowledge can still be used to summon, capture, and enslave djinn.

To constrain a djinni requires a vessel sealed with a mighty rune. Such vessels, often called “genie bottles,” can only be constructed from the shell of a djina yni egg. Therefore, acquiring even a fragment of eggshell draws fear and hatred from all djinnkind.

Egg Care

Should you somehow acquire an unhatched genie egg, it is important to keep it as warm as its fiery native realm and to house it in a nest of cloth-of-gold, silk and other luxurious fabrics. Eggs kept on inferior cloth are reported not to hatch, although it’s unclear how the developing djina yni knows. Most vitally, you must keep yourself and the egg hidden, as any djinni who learns of your acquisition will stop at nothing to take it back. As to the question of how to hide from a being that can cross the planes of existence on a whim, there I cannot help you.

Rearing

Considering all the powers that djinn possess when in the mortal realm, keeping even a young djina yni under control will prove a unique and challenging experience.

Newborn djina yni are only partly material and from birth they exhibit sudden hiccups of invisibility and spontaneous hovering. When uncomfortable, the infant djinni may turn to smoke and drift away from whatever bothers it, only to rematerialize a few feet away. By age two, djina yni also begin to shapeshift, flawlessly imitating other creatures around such as pets and livestock.

When throwing a toddler’s tantrum, the djina yni becomes a whirling dust devil, picking up objects as heavy as stone water jars and flinging them all about. The whirlwind effect only gets larger and stronger with age. Meanwhile, the djina yni is continually improving control over its hovering. All of these abilities are instinctive, with the djina yni learning control through use, until the hapless carer faces a mischievous child who can, at will: become immaterial, fly, turn invisible, shape-change, turn to smoke, or burst into a small tornado. Hide and seek alone is an adventure. By age ten, the djina yni learns to transit out of the mortal world altogether, wandering across far dimensions. From then on, a non-djinni caretaker can only do so much and will most likely lose their djina yni entirely once it realizes it has no reason to return.

The obvious solution to this conundrum is to learn the spells required to craft a genie bottle from your convenient eggshell fragments. This will make djina yni-rearing much easier, but to do so is to accept that you are not a carer, but an enslaver. Only you can decide whether that is the road you wish to travel.

One legend tells of a captive djinni ordered to steal a new egg from the djinn world, so that her master might construct more bottles and gain more slaves. Compelled to do as ordered, the djinni went by stealth to the palace of the Djinni Shah and slipped away with his majesty’s newly-crafted egg. The king bent all his might and forces to locate his lost scion and brought a fiery doom to the ambitious sorcerer—just as the djinni had planned.



DRAGON TURTLETTE

Rearing Difficulty
Tricky
Intelligence
Highly Intelligent

The vanishingly rare dragon turtle is possibly the longest-lived creature to roam our world, with records of a few distinctive individuals going back as far as the beginning of written history. They range in size from 1.5 feet (0.5 meters) long at birth to 13 feet (4 meters) at full size, and appear much like standard turtles apart from their elongated neck and draconic head.

Dragon turtles' mental capacity seems to be far beyond that of most other creatures, perhaps even other species of dragon, but it's hard to be sure since they cannot speak in any tongue. It is not even clear how they communicate amongst themselves, although students of lore have suggested a psychic ability so rarefied that it can only be detected by other dragon turtles. Certainly, those trainers who have been fortunate enough to attain a dragon turtle record that they understand everything their trainers say, sometimes before the trainer has said it.

Dragon turtles share the draconic love of hoarding, but it takes a most peculiar form. Dragon turtles often bond with a particular person, living with or near them as long as that person does nothing to displease them. Anyone so blessed will find themselves accumulating wealth through a combination of gifts, inheritance and surprisingly wise investments. Their wealth will continue to grow for however long they remain a dragon turtle's companion. Obviously, this makes dragon turtles incredibly sought-after and only their rarity and choosiness prevents every beastmaster in the world from owning one.

Dragon turtles only become pregnant twice in their lives, laying a single large, leathery egg each time. Eggs are cared for by a single parent at a time, usually the father the first egg and the mother the second. Chosen mates may travel thousands of miles to find each other, although it remains a mystery how each knows where the other is.

Egg Care

If neither parent is available to care for an egg then it must be kept buried exactly 3 feet (almost 1 meter) deep in damp earth that has at least eight hours of daily sunlight. The depth of burial and temperature range must be perfect to achieve a successful hatching. Tropical climates are the most optimal for a nest; however, fire pits dug around the buried egg can also work. Once the hatchling is ready to be born, a calm body of water, like a protected lake, should be provided, since its first instinct will be to take to water.

General Care

Hatchlings' initial appetites are voracious. If they don't have a parent actively hunting for them then the caretaker must provide the hatchling's body weight in fresh fish every day for the first month. After that point the hatchling's initial growth spurt and brain development slows, and a mixed diet of meat and plant matter can be maintained.

From a young age, dragon turtles have an innate love of beauty and will only live in places they consider aesthetically pleasing. To keep your animal content, it is recommended to have several homes, ideally in very different locations and climates; you can move yourself and the young dragon turtle around every few months.

Rearing

Dragon turtles' sheer intellect makes training them both incredibly easy and impossible. One does not train a dragon turtle so much as make one's wishes known and then let it decide what it will do on its own.

Dragon turtles are peace-loving and actively avoid conflict, but if a situation displeases them they will not hesitate to depart. Those who have tried to control a dragon turtle through imprisonment or force quickly find themselves without a dragon turtle, including those who report releasing the animal themselves, without being able to explain why. There are also stories of owners losing their dragon turtles after becoming so rich that they succumbed to arrogance, their egotism driving away the very means of their prosperity. In these tales the unfortunate owner inevitably loses everything, although I question how much of this is truth and how much parable.

If you wish to prosper, I suggest being polite, well-behaved and friendly towards your dragon turtle at all times. That way, if you're very fortunate, you may enjoy a long and fruitful companionship.

A strange effect that has been observed in dragon turtle owners is the alteration of their speech patterns. This may be subtle or pronounced, but often includes pronoun confusion, such as a tendency to refer to themselves as "my companion" and their animal as "I," rather than the other way around.



ELDER GODSPAWN

Rearing Difficulty
Extremely Dangerous
Intelligence
Superior

WARNING: Extremely Dangerous

Don't. Just don't. I have previously detailed some of the most dangerous beasts and how one might go about raising and training them, but I implore any beastmaster delusional and megalomaniacal enough to consider this process to engage in something less world-breaking. Something like crochet, or leaf-collecting, or even small scale genocide.

In order that I might dissuade those who, inevitably, will attempt the task anyway, I shall give my best attempt at outlining the challenges that would face such an endeavor. For the rest of you, we can be assured that this has never been successful in recorded history by the simple observation that we are still here to consider it.

Acquisition

One does not simply find Godspawn. Their arrivals are predestined, prophesied or engineered by forces beyond mortal ken, and often accompanied with signs and portents that rock the world. A demon's offspring may send milk sour and cause the beasts of a town to be born with two heads; the spawn of Elder Gods are heralded by raining stars, earth-shattering quakes, or great plague and warfare. For every such arrival that has been recorded, there are those who seek to claim the spawn and see it fulfil its dire potential, and those who rise up to stop them.

Having been chosen by fate to raise such an entity, consider the following essential ingredients to your charge's ascension:

First, the resources required to bring about the transformation of a Godspawn to its true divinity are enormous. No mere cult would be capable. An entire nation or equivalent organization may be sufficient to fulfil the many steps, foretold no doubt in some ancient, worm-riddled tome of blasphemies. Sacrifices by the thousand, staged in grand ceremony or in obscure locations, require logistical chains that make merely waging war seem trivial.

Second, the priesthood of such a being must by necessity be made of willing martyrs and the mindlessly devout, for individual lives are beneath a

Godspawn's notice. Zealots of this kind are relatively rare (thank the gods), so to feed and maintain the bloody hierarchy of corrupted power I would think that several generations of cultural indoctrination and training are required. An entire segment of society would need to be portioned off, methodically broken, trained to unquestioning loyalty and brutality, and then allowed to practice on the remainder for decades preceding the Godspawn's arrival. Keeping such a society viable is in itself a mammoth undertaking, far exceeding the raising of any individual beast you might find between these pages.

Care & Rearing

Once the spawn is acquired it will have specific needs that will be communicated in some form to the faithful. Bouts of insanity accompanied by bloody scrawlings, the exploding of the viscera of sacrifices in arcane patterns, or the roiling of clouds beneath a blackened sun will be interpreted by deranged oracles as instructions on its desires. One legend, of an undersea Godspawn purported to bring about the Ruin of Ages, speaks of the nascent divinity requiring tons and tons of gold dust and bone powder sprinkled on the waters above its bower, taken from the most cherished possessions of its victims. Another describes the building of a tower with no doors, rising to the moon. These requests seem impossible to sane readers, but as the conditions are met more and more of the impossible comes within the power of a Godspawn's servants. Twisted ritual magic will be necessary, too, and inevitably targeted by enemies seeking to prevent doomsday.

The final transformation may require a rare conjunction of the heavens, or some grand act of depravity that marks the world forever, enabling the full power of the Godspawn to enter the mortal realm. By this stage even other gods may have stepped in, so one can look forward to a plethora of potential apocalyptic events.

Apology

Should this page one day become part of the religious text of a society such as I describe above, I offer my deepest condolences and hope in earnest that the reader will be called by brighter powers to oppose their masters.

I have unearthed records of an historical "Xzyl'mh-qaag and the Cult of the Bleeding Eye" that seem to match many of my suppositions. What I did not expect was that, having been foiled at the last step by a band of brave heroes, the Bloodweeping Storm took the form of a shy but friendly anthropomorphic octopus with a penchant for candy apples. The gods work in mysterious ways.



A curious beast known only amongst the island forests of Ilendeia, the enfield is a unique critter whose history is deeply connected to islander society. The Taoiseach Ó Cellaigh selflessly protected his king from a killing blow, allowing their people to win freedom from their ancient foe, the Fir Bholg. As Ó Cellaigh fell, the three-faced goddess of battle, death, and wisdom called forth the enfield from the sea to guard his body, and serve forever as a symbol of her favor.

The modern-day population of these creatures is still small, and they're shown great respect by Ilendeians of all walks of life, symbolizing the connection of the people to their traditional land. A foreigner harming, caging or stealing an enfield pup for any reason is likely to be met with a lynch mob, and it's considered unlucky to touch an enfield at all (unless it touches you first) unless you are of Ó Cellaigh blood.

In the wild they're playful and carefree, and seem to hunt only when the whim takes them rather than out of hunger. They have been known to shepherd lost children back to safety, give warning calls when foes approach a settlement, and lead the poor to gold. Should an Ó Cellaigh of good moral standing be in mortal danger, any enfield close by will fly to their aid and fight ferociously to save them. Cruel leaders and selfish lords have been caught out in this manner, when an enfield arrives during conflict and sits by, watching them die.

Their strange relationship with death is also a point of interest. Like other psychopomps, their appearance can herald death, though mostly it's to lie their head on the knees of the elderly before they pass in their sleep. The distinctive high-pitched cry of a fox's passion and an eagle's loneliness often marks the passing of royalty.

When an enfield is found dead, the remains are moved with reverence to the second largest burial mound the Ó Cellaigh clan maintains. One feather from the right foreleg is kept to join the royal regalia, and one feather from the left foreleg is given as a gift to the one who found the body.

The famous ranger, Cullen Ó Cellaigh, is followed everywhere by his enfield companion, Reynard. Bards have made the friendship famous through songs about their meeting, their exploits defeating the Fir Bholg at the Battle of the Bay of Klop, as well as their adventures deep within the forest of Ard Mhic Nasca. Some hint that Reynard is the smart one of the pair.

General Care

Finding an enfield pup is a meaningful moment, for it means you have been chosen by the servants of a goddess. It also traditionally comes with formal adoption into the Ó Cellaigh clan, since an enfield taken unwillingly will fight to be free with every breath but an enfield who has chosen a caretaker is friendly and curious. They don't breed outside the islands, and nobody yet has kept one alive in captivity for more than a few months.

In the wild, enfield dens are dug into high cliffs or other hard to reach places, where one or two pups are raised by the parents every few years. These dens will be within a few hundred feet of the site of a battle or duel where a true hero fell, and the mated pair will bring small natural offerings to leave there in the spring.

In their first two months of life, an enfield pup bonded to a custodian will drink fox, greyhound, lion or wolf milk, and no other. Once weaned, it eats berries, small prey mammals, fruit, fresh-water or coastal fish and crabs, and drinks stream water.

One quirk of raising a healthy enfield is the use of bones. Once old enough to hunt for itself, an enfield pup will become interested in graveyards, mortuaries or ossuaries and spend many hours sniffing carefully around them. Eventually, they'll dig up a single bone, usually the long bone of arm or leg, of a person who showed great loyalty and selflessness to their people. While it may appear they would gnaw on this bone, it will never be marked or broken, but be kept in the den and gummed thoughtfully. Those custodians who have known the source of the bone say that their enfield comes to behave like that person.

Training

Training an enfield is challenging, since they're free-willed and single-minded. Consider it more a growing friendship where neither is master, and treat them with respect and loyalty, and they will do the same for you. While they don't seem to learn specific commands, they are highly empathic and will often do what you wanted without being told. That said, holding their bone makes them instantly docile and obedient, but they have excellent memories for being coerced.



GARGOYLE MOULDING

Rearing Difficulty
Difficult
Intelligence
Intelligent

The first gargoyles were built to protect and defend holy places, brought to life with powerful soul-binding magics that have since been declared blasphemous. Despite the outlawing of their creation, gargoyles themselves retain a strong association with churches and other elaborate structures and are still widely used as guardians by both civic and holy leaders.

The genius in their original design was to perfectly blend in with the surrounding architecture. This combines with their natural gift of “freezing”—becoming perfectly still—to make it impossible for even the keenest observer to tell if the gargoyle is alive or a statue, and poorer churches often take advantage of this by using replicas.

Gargoyles are capable of reproduction, although they do so infrequently. For this they use an innate magic related to that which originally created them, which has escaped prohibition since the churches are anxious to keep their protectors. A gargoyle wishing to reproduce first binds a second soul within itself, gestates it for twelve months, then births it in a lump of stone called a “geode.” Over several weeks the parent uses instinct to carve away the excess material from the geode, uncovering the infant within. Once fully-emerged, gargoyles mature about the same rate as a typical human child, reaching their full size and final form after roughly twenty years.

Their natural instinct as guardians makes most gargoyles excellent caretakers and teachers to their own and other creatures’ young. Removing the child from a gargoyle parent will make it pine inconsolably and potentially turn violent, so I strongly recommend against it. Most gargoyle moulds simply don’t need rearing, unless you find one that has lost its parent or you’re willing to take steps most would consider unethical.

General Care

Gargoyle moulds fuel their growth by eating virtually anything without apparent discomfort or illness, although they show a preference for clay, rock and other minerals. Once fully-grown, gargoyles are still capable of eating and will do so when it is considered polite to share a meal, but they claim that sunlight is generally enough to sustain them. Eating appears to increase their rate of healing, as does their freezing ability.

As young gargoyles grow, their skin is prone to cracking and chipping. This is normal, but uncomfortable, and a variation on the stoneskin spell may be applied to help keep your gargoyle’s skin healthy and supple.

Rearing

An immature gargoyle is relatively easy to rear, since they retain the memories of their previous life. Depending on the age of the soul used, some education may be required, but otherwise the main goal of training is to help them adjust to their new bodies. As infants, gargoyles have incredibly strong and resilient bodies, though be warned: they’re easily capable of damaging their surroundings by accident. I recommend using gentle guidance in the early months, as they learn to interact safely with the world.

Young gargoyles can often seem to be not paying attention, but this is because they typically freeze when taking in new information. You may find this lack of responsiveness frustrating, but in fact gargoyles have a higher rate of recall for events and facts witnessed while frozen than when they are active. Do not be disheartened if your student appears to stop paying attention, as this means they’re actually very interested in what you are teaching.

Although too heavy for flight, gargoyles can sustain long-distance gliding so you must be prepared to help and train young gargoyles in this activity. Being equipped or trained in magical flight is of great help in keeping up with your student. Begin by having them leap off low buildings where the chance of injury is minimal and gradually work your way up to soaring from the tallest building or mountain in your region. Reassure your student regularly and remind them of their new body’s endurance in case of falls. This psychological conditioning is just as important as learning the physical procedure of flying, since a gargoyle child will naturally freeze when frightened and doing so while soaring is extremely dangerous.

The original source of gargoyle souls was condemned prisoners who were deemed worthy of a chance at redemption. Modern gargoyles use any soul they consider deserves a second chance, often choosing terminally-ill children or those whose bodies are failing them beyond repair. There are even stories of gargoyles falling in love with other humanoids and, in their twilight years, granting them a second life in stone.



Harpies are generally found in mountainous regions near large bodies of water, where the winds are the strongest. They scavenge twigs, moss, shed antlers, and even collect their own downy feathers as well as colorful ribbons, to make large nests on cliffs. Each harpy requires a substantial feeding ground, although they will situate their nests close together if the food supply is sufficient.

The species consists solely of females. Reproduction is achieved through a prolonged, one-sided courtship with a human male, who seems to be chosen for a thick head of hair and well-defined upper torso. The harpy will engage with her chosen mate by stealing any food he has taken a bite of and singing to him while he sleeps. Once the target produces a human child with a wife or lover, the harpy will steal the child and take it back to her nest. Targeted males always father female children during this period, perhaps as a result of the harpy's song.

With the father forgotten, the harpy lavishes attention on her new child and sings to her constantly. She also nuzzles the child's arms and legs to coat them with fluid from special glands in her cheeks. Her song activates the magical fluid, causing feathers to sprout from the child's body over a period of days. The child's arms will transform into wings and her legs to talons, and the new baby harpy is ready to try her first flight within a year. Harpies can care for up to two children at a time, and may go back to the same suitor for each.

General Care

Harpies are omnivorous and require several pounds of food per day. Fastidious creatures, they will spend a portion of each day preening their feathers, as well as using water to clean their skin and hair. They comb their hair with their talons, and will rub their teeth along branches to remove any debris.

Black market dealers sometimes attempt to quicken the breeding process by placing orphan girls within harpy nests. A harpy will not harm a child so placed, instead often attempting to deposit them with childless human couples. There are also reports of harpies turning on breeders who attempt to place a child with them, particularly if the child was abducted or obtained through other shady means.

Although harpies live solitary lives, they react positively to other harpies if captivity brings them together. The older harpy will allow the younger to groom her feathers before regurgitating a particularly tasty morsel in thanks. If left overnight, harpies will always sleep close together, murmuring a strange song most of which is not quite within human hearing range.

Harpies' favorite pastime is singing. They are fantastic mimics and, while they have no oral language of their own, can reproduce human singing and the sounds of most instruments. One effect of harpy song is to induce a dreamlike state in any creature they have shared food with. Targets of this ability report a strange sense of "floating within their body" and frequently perform actions they don't remember, such as unlatching windows. The prudent trainer is advised to invest in earplugs.

Rearing

As harpies are moderately intelligent, training should be undertaken with care. I would advise against men rearing harpies, or women with male partners, as the risk of the harpy choosing that man as a suitable mate can be quite high. Keep an eye on your harpy child when around male servants, friends or visitors, since they will warble at attractive men at many an opportunity. Harpies have been known to learn a wide variety of commands, and respect is key to keeping a well-trained harpy happy.

With the right training, harpies can be extremely useful in law enforcement, as they have an instinctive ability to identify murderers and other villains, particularly those who have killed their own family members. When asked by their trainer if a subject is guilty, a harpy will spend several moments looking over the person while humming softly. If she determines guilt, she will fly at the culprit with talons bared, her sweet song spiraling into a vicious shriek. If the person is innocent, she will continue to coo and quickly lose interest in them. This method of detection has never been known to fail, although many courts of law will not accept it as evidence. It should also be noted that harpy identification does not guarantee the subject committed the particular crime being investigated, only that they have some serious misdeed in their past.



Many trainers have mastered the eagle and the horse, but fewer have tried to raise a hippogriff, which combines the best and worst of each beast. Unlike horses, which have been domesticated for generations, the hippogriff is still essentially a wild animal. This makes trained hippogriffs quite the commodity and kingdoms around the world will pay a handsome sum for hippogriff mounts for their lords, heroes or even their armies. The wealthiest cities have entire squads of flying cuirassiers mounted on hippogriffs, capable of breathtaking aerial attacks.

Usually, the only way a hippogriff will accept a rider is if it is trained from birth. While individual wild hippogriffs have been broken to harness in the past, this is an incredibly dangerous endeavor and should only be undertaken by the most skilled animal trainers.

For the rest of us, it is far easier to find a hippogriff egg and raise it ourselves. This need not mean stealing from a living mother, as hippogriffs are often poached by hunting parties who prize their feathers and meat. If you find a dead hippogriff mare it is imperative to look for a nest—most likely nearby—as an egg or young foal left motherless will not survive. It is a monster trainer's duty to care for such animals in need, and a cautious trainer can offer a foal close to the same level of care as its own mother.

Egg Care

It is easiest to incubate a hippogriff egg in its original nest, where it will be covered in a blanket of down harvested from the mother's neck and chest. With care, it is possible to transport the nest whole to your desired location. Otherwise, use feather blankets to keep the egg warm, but not hot.

General Care

Hippogriffs are highly energetic and need to be given enough room to run and fly. If you try to coop a hippogriff up in a small space, it will soon become listless, stop eating, and eventually develop Cramping Sickness, which can lead to death. Giving your colt or filly enough room is the single most important thing you can do for it.

A good hippogriff aviary would be a large pasture enclosed under a cage tall enough for the foal to play in the air. If you cannot afford such a cage, or a wizard to cast invisible walls, another method is to tether your foal so it cannot fly away. Some trainers have invented special leg-bands that keep a hippogriff from flying too far without restricting its movement. Others use a traditional rope and tether tied to the hippogriff's pastern (just above the rear hoof). This last method, while cheapest, is controversial, since it presents great risk of injury. Even a hippogriff trained on the tether from a young age will forget its presence if badly spooked.

Being wild animals, hippogriffs are skilled at keeping themselves clean and groomed. They use their beaks to preen their feathers and brush their coat and tail, sometimes sitting up on their haunches to use their front claws as well. Most hippogriffs don't mind getting wet and may even enjoy a short bath, if you have a convenient lake.

Training

Whether you wish to train a hippogriff as your own faithful steed or just auction it off to the highest bidder, the training method is the same. It's important to allow the foal to imprint on you from birth, becoming familiar with your voice and touch. This bonding partially overrides a hippogriff's natural instincts and you should be able to train it in a similar manner to a horse.

A hippogriff's early months should be spent familiarizing it with urban or rural sights and sounds, as a beast that startles easily will be difficult to train. Over time, you can then work your animal through wearing a harness and saddle, standing and moving on command, and eventually taking a rider. Note that hippogriffs require special saddles that don't restrict wing movement.

Some trainers teach their animals how to hunt for themselves and then return to the trainer's side, but this is not advisable. Firstly, tapping into their hunting instincts risks undoing your efforts at domestication, and they may simply return to the wild. Secondly, as a hippogriff's preferred prey size is about that of a lamb or domestic dog, your neighbors are likely to object.



HOUND ARCHON PUP

Rearing Difficulty
Tricky
Intelligence
Civilized

Dog-lovers know that all dogs are angels, but some more literally than others. Hound archons are supernatural creatures from the celestial realms who walk among us and watch over our world. On the mortal plane they can take on any large, canine form, but generally appear in their natural shape as a winged, furred, well-muscled humanoid with the head of a dog.

Some sages believe they are natives of the celestial realms who guard us out of holy duty, while others argue they are the reincarnations of earthly dogs who were treated kindly, and whose loyalty towards their masters draws them back to this plane to aid other worthy folk. The archons themselves remain silent upon this mystery.

All hound archons are driven by a constant sense of responsibility. Most begin their lives as personal guardians, but since their lifespan is measured in centuries they often outlive their charge and take on other roles. Whether as wandering knights, loyal soldiers or simply the friendly neighbor who can repair whatever is broken, they are only happy when helping others.

Hound archons are equally at home on two legs or four, though the latter is less common due to their sensitivity to social ridicule. This is a shame, as their four-legged running speed is almost unmatched. For some reason, this self-consciousness does not extend to clothes, for which they feel little need except in the coldest climes. Those who live regularly among other people will sometimes be persuaded to cover themselves up, out of respect for their neighbors' sense of decency (or possibly inadequacy).

Acquiring a Hound Archon

Archon pups cannot be purchased from even the most specialized dealers: do not trust anyone who claims they can sell you one, as it will be an ordinary dog that has been magically altered. This practice is unethical, but sadly commonplace.

Likewise, stealing a pup from the celestial realms cannot be recommended, on either a moral or practical basis. To raise an archon pup, you must come across one largely by chance. There are two ways this can happen:

Individuals who are destined to be great heroes often receive a pair of guardian pups, which turn up on their doorstep or follow them home during childhood. If the child's parents are smart, they will raise the pups alongside their own offspring, who will be protected against everything from evil forces to local bullies. Unfortunately, since hound archons are a rare sight, many people do not recognize the strange animals following their child around and may drive them away. Rejected pups will adopt as a surrogate ward anyone who takes them in and shows them goodwill, and often grow into particularly conscientious guardians.

The other way to acquire a pup is even more unlikely. Some archons arrive on this plane not to watch over a specific person, but a specific place. These often take the form of unassuming strays wandering the streets or corridors of an area, subtly guarding their posts for years. Befriending a stray puppy is therefore always worth doing; there is little cost for such a kindness, and while the animal is unlikely to be an archon, it has been known to happen.

General Care

By the time they reach the our realm, archon pups are already mobile and can eat soft, ground meat. They grow fast, taking a year to reach their adult size, but do not reach intellectual maturity until five years or so. Since full-grown archons stand well over 6 feet (almost 2 meters), this is a particularly challenging period for surrogate parents. During this time they need a lot of play, a lot of cuddling, a firm set of boundaries, and a diet rich in meat protein.

Many people struggle with knowing whether to care for their furry children as dogs or people. The answer lies somewhere in the middle. For instance, your archons should be taught to sit at the table and eat with a knife and fork, but should not be expected to sleep in a bed, as they are far more comfortable curled up by the fire. My recommendation is to be open and observant, encouraging civilized behaviors that do not distress your pups and accepting the habits that remain stubbornly canine. Bathroom training is the one exception, if you want your archons to be accepted in society.

A hound archon will never, ever chase a stick, and it is recommended you do not insult yours by attempting it.



HYDRA SNAKELET

Rearing Difficulty
Dangerous
Intelligence
Instinctual

WARNING: Extremely Dangerous

Hail the hydra, serpent queen of the swamp. Her many heads are wreathed in laurels of their own poisonous breath, and her blood is so toxic that even the smell of it can kill.

Hydrae are not immortal—though the myths would have you believe otherwise—but live for two centuries or more. Each lives a solitary life in the heart of a swamp or marsh, surrounded for miles around by the lethal miasma of her breath.

The hydra has no need to hunt. Each day when the sun is high and the swamp steams warmly, she emerges from her subterranean lair and devours the creatures who have succumbed to her breath since she last fed. Some lie half-paralyzed and gasping for air and she eats these first, for she likes her food alive and squirming. She swallows small animals whole, but seizes larger prey and holds it in the air with several of her heads while the others each take it in turn to hold and consume. It's a terrible thing to watch a living body twist and turn and jerk between her many jaws like a drop of water skittering in a hot frying pan.

The hydra has at least seven heads, but may have more. If one of her heads is severed its neck splits and grows two more over a matter of seconds. The number of heads a hydra can sustain is determined by her size: a large and ancient specimen could have over a hundred heads, but the usual maximum is twenty or so. When she reaches her limit, the hydra will begin to slough older or injured heads in order to grow new ones. Hydrae have been known to gnaw off their own heads, so even if a specimen has never been attacked she may have more than seven.

All hydrae are female, and each reproduces only a few times in her centuries-long life. To do so, she leaves her territory and buries a single viable egg in composting organic matter. She bites herself and soaks the nest in her toxic blood to protect it from predators, then abandons the egg to its fate.

Live hydrae have been captured successfully in the past, but I cannot in good conscience recommend attempting this feat. By far the most common way to acquire a hydra is in the egg, once the mother has left it. If you're lucky enough to find a nest, can survive the toxic smell of the mother's blood, and avoid the fast and excruciatingly painful death that results from getting any of that blood on your skin, it's a simple matter to pack the egg in compost and take it home.

Egg Care

A hydra's egg must be kept warm and moist, and the best way to do this is to keep it in a composter that maintains swamp-like conditions. The egg does not need to be turned or otherwise coddled, but if its leathery shell is allowed to dry out or its temperature drops too much, it will die. The egg is more resistant to temperature increases, and many breeders believe that maintaining a higher temperature and soaking the egg in blood throughout incubation will result in a particularly powerful specimen. In my opinion, this is nonsense.

General Care

Hydrae prefer a damp environment and will become sickly if you fail to keep them properly hydrated. They grow rapidly after hatching and need a substantial quantity of small prey to fuel their development. An adult hydra must consume a bull's worth of meat every week to stay fit and healthy.

Hydrae handle most temperatures well, becoming more active and energetic as it gets warmer—most keepers therefore maintain a cool environment in their beast's enclosure to render them manageable.

Containment of the hydra's caustic breath is a foremost consideration, as it can endanger every living thing for miles around. I highly recommend using special masks or charms to protect yourself from her miasma; the air shield spell works marvelously.

Training

Your young hydra will react very well to live food used as motivation, but you must have the attention of all her heads when trying to train her. You will need a large stick to tap any heads that are acting out of line until all heads are properly conditioned. Have additional sticks on standby, because your hydra's fangs will make short work of them.

This entry was kindly contributed by Vernon Hormithrax, a fellow beastmaster who has been corresponding regularly since the publication of my first volume.



KRAKEN PARALARVAE

Rearing Difficulty
Difficult
Intelligence
Clever

Contrary to popular belief, kraken are not giant sea-monsters, but are found in swamps, fresh- and salt-water marshlands, or any watery area thick with plant matter. Closely related to octopuses and squids, they reach at most 15 feet (4.5 meters) in length. They are, however, indiscriminate in their feeding habits, making a mature kraken a danger to small boats and shore traffic.

When at rest, kraken spread out their bodies and change color to blend with the aquatic vegetation, making them excellent ambush predators. Some kraken have small spines in their tentacles that are used to attack prey and leech fluids from the victim, and all kraken have a large beak beneath their ring of tentacles which is capable of crushing anything from shell and bone to metal armor.

Kraken lack separate genders, and can both create and fertilize their own eggs, although they prefer not to. Usually solitary creatures, during breeding they instinctively leave their territories to seek out deeper water and band together, enfolding one another in what looks very much like genuine affection. They remain in these breeding groups for up to a year, after which they will separate and return to their own territories to lay eggs. After laying, the adult will guard its egg sacs for several weeks, moving on when the sacs have thickened sufficiently. About twenty days after that the new krakens hatch, devour their egg sacs and leave the nursery.

Kraken are very sensitive to sound and don't like music or loud noises. Ongoing loud sounds discomfort and irritate them, and quickly encourage them to move to a new location. This can be very useful in gaining access to their eggs, although be warned that a sufficiently upset kraken may choose to lash out at the source of irritation in lieu of fleeing.

Egg Sac Care

Kraken egg sacs require no direct care other than to maintain the temperature and salinity in which the eggs were laid. Egg sacs and juvenile krakens do not cope well with sudden changes and may die.

A fascinating hunting strategy seen in swamp-based kraken is to place one or two tentacles out of the water and allow them to dry out, providing a passable disguise as an exposed mangrove root. Oblivious creatures walking over them are quickly swept underwater and consumed.

General Care

Once your kraken hatches, continue to maintain its tank with water resembling that of its origin. Kraken are not fussy eaters and will take any prey that can fit through their beaks. They should be encouraged to capture their own food, but a clean habitat is important to ensure rubbish is not accidentally consumed. Remember not to upset them with singing or other loud noises.

Newborn kraken are less than a foot in length and grow slowly during the first three years of life. During this time they are particularly vulnerable to predation, so their instinct is to stay constantly camouflaged. This occasionally leads inexperienced caretakers to lose their animal by emptying out its tank, in the belief that it has already escaped. After three years, the kraken experiences a rapid period of growth that brings it up to full size over a matter of months. Be prepared for this growth spurt, or you may lose your tank—and possibly your house.

Mature kraken are far more tolerant of changes to their water conditions. At some point, however, their breeding instincts will emerge. This will be obvious, as your previously independent animal will begin trying to attach itself to friendly or tolerant creatures of any species. There is no harm to this, so long as the new playmates are large enough to avoid accidental smothering or drowning, and many caretakers encourage this cuddling behavior for the health of the kraken. If you're lucky, you may even obtain new kraken as a result.

Training

Wild kraken are self-sufficient from birth and consider any other species predator or prey, but hand-raised animals can develop functional relationships with their carer. Patience and careful training are necessary to teach krakens to be gentle with smaller creatures, but they have successfully been trained to capture without killing and even rescue people from drowning.

Kraken are curious and clever, and often show a knack for puzzles. They can easily solve block jigsaws or untie knots, and many trainers encourage puzzle-solving to keep them entertained and boost intelligence and dexterity. Some unscrupulous handlers have even used juvenile kraken for shadier tasks like lock-picking or theft.



LIGHTNING LIZARDLINGS

Rearing Difficulty
Tricky
Intelligence
Clever

The misleadingly-named lightning lizard is not in fact a lizard, but a dinosaur. Like their close cousin, the velociraptor, lightning lizards are quick, agile, and smart. Adult lizards can grow up to 1 foot (0.3 meters) tall, although many are smaller. Hatchlings are tiny, measuring a mere 3 inches (8 centimeters) when they hatch, and ride on their parent's (or owner's) head for the first few months of their lives to avoid being squashed. These beasts are fun and friendly, and are the perfect pet if you want something that will keep you busy, and don't mind a few singed nose hairs along the way.

Naturally social animals, in the wild lightning lizards live and hunt in a family group, called a lounge. They communicate with each other through a wide variety of chirps and hisses, indicating everything from affection and playfulness to hunger, fear or aggression. Lightning lizards raised from the egg are utterly loyal and will view you as just another member of their family.

Lightning lizards are carnivorous and will eat anything with a heartbeat, if it is smaller than them. In the wild it's not uncommon for a lounge to go after larger targets, but only if it poses little risk to them. Individual lizards are also happy to hunt their own prey, and a few lightning lizards about your home will keep it pest-free.

Egg Care

Lightning lizard eggs are oblong, an inch long and have a soft, opaque shell. They must have an electrical current run through them at least once a day, and preferably constantly, in order to stay viable. If you don't have access to appropriate magic, or a parent lizard to nurture the egg, carefully submerging it in a tank with electric eels will do the job. The water should be kept warm enough to heat the eggs, but make sure to remove them after half an hour, as their shells are water-permeable and any more risks oversaturating them.

General Care

Unless you plan to take your new pet everywhere with you, it's advisable to raise two or three together so these highly social animals don't become lonely. Lightning lizards show affection by shocking, so don't be surprised the first time you see your new hatchlings rolling around zapping one another.

Despite their tiny size, lightning lizard hatchlings have mighty personalities. They can be wily pranksters, and if they feel bored or you're doing something they don't like, you'll know it. A shock to the toes or the back of the leg is just part and parcel of owning these tricky creatures. Due to their high animal intelligence, it is recommended to make sure your pets get at least three hours of engaged activity each day to keep them happy and stimulated.

Native to the tropics, these small creatures are not cold-blooded, but love warmth. Their small size and close proximity to the ground means that they're more susceptible to freezing in cold weather. Keep them indoors in winter or year-round in colder areas, and if traveling in a cold climate, make sure to keep your lizards wrapped up tight or against your own body for warmth (the latter will also help keep you warm, if lightly singed).

Lightning lizards love storms. Owners of these beasts can often tell when a storm is coming days before it arrives, because of the excited chirps released by their lizards. If the climate is warm enough, allow your lizards outside to frolic in bad weather and you will see them perform a unique dance to display their excitement: wildly bobbing their heads from side-to-side, slapping their feet on the ground, and emitting tiny shocks.

Training

A lightning lizard's bond with their owner makes them easy to train. They're easily motivated by food, especially unusual treats like bacon, and can learn anything you might teach a smart dog, as well as more complex commands like rudimentary tool-use.

Many hunters use a lounge of lightning lizards for catching small creatures like rabbits, because of their speed and trainability. The lounge is able to run ahead of their owner, encircle their prey, and trap them in a lightning barrier set up between each beast. The closer lightning lizards are to one another, the stronger the electrical current becomes. In recent times, hunting with lightning lizards has also become a popular pastime among the children of nobles.



A common species of swampy jungles, the semi-aquatic lizardfolk thrive in hot, humid environments. They are widely regarded as brutal, unintelligent monsters, highly territorial and easily provoked. In reality, this blatant falsehood is a disheartening symptom of more “advanced” species’ xenophobia. Although technologically underdeveloped, lizardfolk—or varanids, to use one of their own names for themselves—have a complex culture and deep spiritual beliefs, which they will go to great lengths to protect against attempts to “civilize” them. Since their preferred habitat is valued by non-varanid societies for its richness in food and other resources, confrontations are common.

How varanid society functioned prior to contact with other species is now, alas, a matter of speculation, as much of their current culture has been shaped by their fierce independence in the face of centuries of prejudice, enslavement and even attempted extermination. This has turned them into a strongly martial people, suspicious of outsiders and ready to defend themselves from any perceived threat.

Their parenting style is no exception. Whelps are taught to be highly independent, and are able to care for themselves within a year of hatching; they explore and learn the hazards of the marshes through direct experience. Although this means parents leaving their children to their own devices, no whelp is ever truly unprotected, since the entire tribe will keep an eye on them. Even varanids of another tribe will generally return a wandering whelp to their kin, if they find one getting into trouble.

As with any communal, sentient species, it is highly unethical to remove eggs or young from their parent tribe. However, given the regularity of clashes with other species, you may well come across an orphaned egg or hatchling. Raising a varanid is very rewarding, although you must be prepared to encounter prejudice against both yourself and your ward.

Egg Care

To ensure proper hatching, lizardfolk eggs need to be kept warm and safe in a humid crèche. Unlike birds, lizardfolk do not sit on their eggs to keep them warm, but use a well-insulated nest situated inside an earthen mound. Creating artificial humidity can lead to foreign moulds growing on the eggs, which can weaken the shell and potentially harm the infant, so eggs may require occasional gentle cleaning.

General Care

A whelp’s first year of life is their most vulnerable. Initially somewhat frail, they must spend the first weeks after hatching in shallow water, where they learn to swim and hold their breath for long periods. Feed your varanid on pre-chewed or otherwise softened meat during this time.

Once their legs grow strong enough, whelps will voluntarily leave their pool and start to wander around, intensely curious about everything. Normally, this is the period where they would observe and learn their tribe’s lifestyle, so it’s important to set a good example of the behavior you want your varanid to follow. At this point they will lose their egg teeth and grow in proper fangs, and can transition to a diet of cooked meat and vegetables.

Lizardfolk scales remain soft and routinely shed during the first nine months of their life, after which they begin to grow in their harder, more durable adult scales. Outside of humid environments, it’s important your varanid spends plenty of time in water, otherwise their scales may dry out and become brittle and itchy.

Rearing

Although lizardfolk tribes are renowned for their combat prowess, those who have raised varanids away from their kind observe that their natural instincts are friendly and inquisitive rather than martial. I myself reared a whelp named Yarik who took a keen interest in my hobby of needlework and who was able to surpass me in the art despite his large claws.

Nonetheless, there are many who see lizardfolk as good for nothing but warriors. If you really must raise your varanid to fight, they prefer to learn aggressive combat styles that favor hit-and-run tactics. In swampy areas, they’re capable of camouflaging themselves in deep pools, breaking out of the water to strike viciously and then sinking back down to let their opponent weaken before striking again.

Lizardfolk lairs are often regarded as sinister, evil places due to the tendency for the varanids to decorate them with the bones of defeated enemies and burning braziers to their reptilian gods. To the lizardfolk, lair decoration is an important part of their culture, with their intimidating décor designed to honor their deities, exhibit their skill in battle and frighten away non-varanid intruders. Unfortunately, for most non-varanids it only enhances their impression of the “savage lizards.”



MEDUSA DAUGHTER

Rearing Difficulty
Difficult
Intelligence
Civilized

My thanks to the esteemed scholar Athanasia of Lytos for her research on the nature of medusae.

Legends say that the medusae are actually an offshoot of the naga, descended from an ancient faction whose hatred of humankind led to a war of extermination so disastrous that the naga's own gods intervened. The rebel naga were cursed and their bodies transformed to be completely human from the waist up, sharing the visage of their hated enemy. Furthermore, they were cursed so that anyone they gazed upon in anger would be turned to stone. These medusae, as they came to be known, were exiled from all other peoples, sent into hiding to nurse forever their bitter hatred.

The medusa's human-like head supports a hydra crown of eight scaled appendages closely emulating small asps, each terminating in a triangular head complete with eyes, mouth, venomous fangs, and a ganglial swelling sufficient to strike at targets and flinch from threats without involving the main brain. The "asps" have no other organs and do not eat, although they serve an important purpose in medusa digestion as detailed below. Their acidic venom poisons normal creatures but medusae are immune.

The medusa's upper body has stiffened vertebrae, to keep it erect above the flexible snake abdomen, and contains the lungs and large heart. Adults weigh 150–300 pounds (68–136 kilograms), with a total body length of 10–15 feet (3–4.5 meters).

Most unusual is the "medusal gaze," a psychic or magical effect not well understood. By an effort of will, supported by external generation of a fear state in the victim, the medusa causes swift and unnatural transformation of a living creature's body into a stone-like, immobile substance composed primarily of calcium. It is this calcified flesh on which the medusa feeds.

The medusa's digestive processes are unique. Before consumption by the true head, prey is chewed upon by the cranial asps, injecting corrosive venom to soften and process the stony material so the medusa can eat it. Special stomach acids further break down the fragments so the medusa's gut can extract nutrition, most of which is stored in fat reserves that allow them to go long periods without feeding. When pregnant, however, the mother-to-be must eat frequently.

Contrary to popular belief, medusae are not all female but are hermaphroditic, which has not prevented "daughter" becoming the accepted term for their young. Breeding takes place between a mated

pair, after which one or both gives live birth. Medusae do not lactate, but crush their victims to powder and give it to daughters as a paste with water.

During their childhood years, maturing individuals learn to use and focus their medusal gaze through a concentrated glare from the main eyes. A daughter gains resistance to the gaze effect through exposure to the glares of parents and siblings.

Cures

Alchemists speak of one natural remedy for calcification. The healer must extract large quantities of medusa snake venom, or the stomach acids of any obligate petrivores (rock-eating creatures), and brew the liquid into a foamy solution. Carefully soaking the calcified body can soften the flesh to normal. Sometimes the victim even survives.

General Care

A daughter of medusa is as intelligent and complex as a human child and even more challenging to rear. Infants cannot create the petrified flesh they need to eat for best health, so the preferred larder is a "statue garden" of victims petrified by adult medusae. Some writings suggest substituting a diet of powdered bone, blood, and crushed limestone, with unknown success.

If brought to maturity, a medusa could be a powerful ally or a dangerous servant. The deadly gaze is by no means constant, so a cautious caretaker might attempt this feat, but young medusae are as prone as any sentient to temper tantrums towards their parent figures, especially as they near adolescence. Even the best-natured daughter may one day glare at you in anger. Depending on the maturity of the medusa and the honest intensity of dislike, a hapless caregiver could feel anything from a momentary tingle of numbness to the horrifying onrush of total, unintended petrification.

There is one glimmer of hope. Instinctive fear, as old as humankind's revulsion at serpents, feeds the magic of the medusal gaze. The breath catches, muscles seize, the heart skips—and if the victim cannot resist, their vitality flees in terror. However, a carer who can resist this fear, whether through careful conditioning or strong magic, might survive their daughter's anger and live to play with them another day.



Of all the strange creatures described within these pages, myconids may well be the strangest. It's impossible to raise a young myconid, at least deliberately, although if you live in a damp, well-wooded area then you may find you have raised some quite by accident. In truth the fungoid beings we call "myconids," even at their smallest and cutest, are already well advanced in years.

Each begins life as a sentient network of millions of microscopic filaments spread throughout the soil. These networks overlap one another, and range in size from a few square feet to an entire forest. In a sense, they are the earth itself come to life, although the nature of that life is so alien to most thinking beings that communication is near impossible, let alone understanding. Nonetheless, this constitutes decades—sometimes even centuries—of a myconid's life, during which they form social groups, teach young filaments the ways of their culture, invent songs, tell stories and generally live rich and meaningful lives.

Myconids as we know them emerge only in their later years, when they're ready to procreate. This is no matter of simple copulation; myconids seek true love, and will remain in their humanoid forms for as long as it takes to find it.

While aboveground, they gather in colonies and are welcoming to visitors, but tend to avoid contact with the other civilizations. This may be inherited caution, since they have historically been blamed as the source of ruined crops or even plagues. It doesn't help that they cannot form words in any tongue, mostly communicating with outsiders via gestures. Among themselves, myconids commune through touch, soft humming, and the beautiful fungal tapestries they leave behind to tell their stories.

When two or more myconids fall in love, there is a short but intense courtship period, after which they perform their mysterious mating ritual in a private grove under the full moon. This aspect of myconid culture is a closely guarded secret; all we know for sure is that it culminates at sunrise with the lovers sinking to the ground to die in each other's arms. Their colony will bury them where they lie and, as their bodies break down, their children will be released from within to begin their own unfathomable, earthy lives.

General Care

Myconids feed off decay, although not out of sinister intentions; it is simply their diet, which they see as connecting them to the natural cycle of life and death. They prefer rotting wood, but can eat any decomposing organic matter. Around non-myconids they tend to be very private about meals, probably because they realize other beings are easily unsettled by their eating habits and choice of food.

Smaller myconids have sensitive skin and bruise very easily, so great care must be taken in touching them. They respond affectionately to gentle stroking, especially when accompanied by music.

Rearing

Even a newly-sprouted myconid bears a thorough education from their time underground, but should you find yourself raising one away from a colony, they'll need special supervision. They will know which yellow algae can heal their wounds and how to deter a hungry dire-wombat, but not how to avoid moving carts or why the hay packed into a bed frame is not for storing rotting food. They're uncomfortable in sterile environments, and deeply frustrated by other humanoids' need to control growing things. To them, if a poisonous plant has sprouted in a town park, its ability to survive there merits respect, not destruction. It's hard to know whether a myconid ever truly understands what you say to them, but if they trust you they will allow themselves to be directed.

Myconids who have not yet found love can last aboveground for decades, and continue to grow in stature throughout. If you're hard-hearted enough to keep yours solitary, it will eventually be as big as a house, although myconids who reach this age and size become increasingly indrawn and may only move a couple of times a year. If you prefer to help your companion in its quest, take it traveling; colonies can be found in most woods, and will gladly welcome newcomers seeking their soulmates.

For centuries, scholars were baffled by myconid reproduction. Prior to the groundbreaking work of elven naturalist Chases-the-Wind, it was generally believed that they sprang fully-formed from any ground upon which the blood of a he-goat had been spilled. In the scholars' defense, the myconids never tried to correct them on this point. In the myconids' defense, the scholars never asked.



NAGA HATCHLING

Rearing Difficulty
Complicated
Intelligence
Civilized

Naga are a rare species of serpentfolk who live only on the remote Pilpintu delta, although evidence suggests they were once more widespread. They believe themselves to be the children of ancient, forgotten gods. True or not, they are certainly long-lived, possessed of significant power, and venerated by other local sentients.

Naga live for hundreds, if not thousands, of years. Perhaps unsurprisingly, they do not mate for life. Female naga typically take a mate for thirty or forty years and lay as many as two hundred eggs during that time. After they reach their first century they become infertile and part ways with their mate. They are not solitary creatures, but they do prefer their space.

Naga eggs are laid in clutches of twenty into a nest of dyed silk within an elaborate bejeweled gazebo, and then abandoned until hatching. Respect and fear prevent all but the most foolhardy sentients from stealing them, but predators and the elements take their toll and most of the eggs don't hatch. The naga see this as a test of worthiness, doting lavishly upon successful hatchlings. Others may see this custom as callous, but given the sheer number of eggs naga lay it is fortunate for the rest of us that they don't all bear fruit.

Approximately one in ten naga is female, making women a precious commodity to their people. Because each only takes one mate during her fertile years there is fierce competition among males for the honor, and confrontations among their men are often deadly.

Naga possess innate powers akin to sorcery over all forms of water. Their affinity with rain and rivers is likely what has given rise to their worship by other species, for whom the blessings of the naga can be the difference between drought and prosperity.

Egg Care

Naga eggs are hardy by necessity, so no special incubation is required. All you need to provide is a comfortable nest and a warm room where the eggs will be kept dry and safe from predation. However, since naga lactate, it is vital to have naga milk or an equivalent substance on hand for the new hatchling,

which will not be able to digest mammalian milk. I have come by some outlandish tales on how one might acquire naga milk, but nothing reputable.

Given the naga's eccentric view of their young, the good news is that you needn't worry about vengeful parents seeking out their lost egg. The bad news is that, should you successfully hatch the egg, the same parents will see your snakelet as their treasured scion and take great pains to recover it. Fortunately, most naga never leave their home delta, so as long as you stay away from this territory you should be fine.

General Care

Naga snakelets take at least two decades to grow to maturity, so don't take one on unless you are ready to invest a significant amount of time in them. Growth is their only area of delayed development: snakelets are mobile straight out of the egg, begin speaking within a week and can hold an intelligent conversation by two months. They are smarter than most humans by age ten.

Even naga who have never met their own kind or been worshiped by anyone have an instinctive sense of superiority. Their attitude will be familiar to cat-owners, except that cats are smaller, slower, and cannot flood your house on a whim. Raising a snakelet requires a careful balance of establishing your authority and pandering to their ego, so if you're not fond of playing mind games, this is probably not the creature for you. However, if you can hold out for the first few challenging years your naga should grow to care as much for you as you do for them.

A naga's watery powers do not fully manifest until their teenage years, which gives you plenty of time to figure out how to cope with a magical genius before you actually have one on your hands. As their abilities develop, it is important to give your snakelet ample opportunities to experiment, lest they get bored and make their own. Every naga's abilities are slightly different, so learn what yours can do and set up practice sessions accordingly. Naga will master most skills on their own, provided ample stimulation and reading material.

Naga society is matriarchal and ruled over by the eldest female, or raanee. The exact age of the current raanee is unknown, but stories of her name and deeds date back at least two thousand years.



OGRE MAGI APPRENTICE

Rearing Difficulty
Difficult
Intelligence
Civilized

Ogre magi live to subjugate. Powerful and highly intelligent, these creatures view most others as lesser beings and a major element of magi culture involves bending others to their will. The most successful clans have enslaved entire settlements of other peoples, using them for servants and playthings.

Magi are imposing figures: 10 feet (3 meters) tall, with rippling muscles and sharp teeth. They possess numerous innate magical abilities, including shapeshifting, invisibility, and transforming their bodies into air, fire or any number of other substances. When in their natural form, their skin has a deep indigo tone and they're surprisingly charismatic, in an overwhelming, awe-inspiring sort of way. Small wonder other beings are easily cowed by them.

When not bullying the local populace or thwarting would-be vanquishers, ogre magi lead surprisingly normal lives. They have a clan hierarchy with a chieftess and her mates at the top; they farm, or at least enslave peasants to farm for them; and they enjoy music and other leisure activities. Their music is actually rather pleasant, but I shudder to contemplate their preferred sports.

Despite living in clans with a rigid hierarchy, ogre magi show little attachment to one another and rarely mate for life. A female mage may have as many as three mates at once and both males and females fight zealously over the best partners. Between infighting, attacks by heroes, and their own sporting pursuits, few magi live to old age, so their apparent detachment may be simple prudence.

Young magi are born about 3 feet (roughly 1 meter) tall and weigh as much as 40 pounds (18 kilograms). It takes about twenty-five years to reach full maturity, during which time they increase in weight by a factor of twenty. Magi children must be able to fight from an early age to avoid being killed by their mother's other mates, so they play games that hone their fighting prowess and magical abilities.

Although the name "ogre mage" implies they are ogres, magi are actually a completely different species, and that name is only used by ignorant outsiders. In their native tongues, magi refer to themselves by a number of names, all of which translate roughly to "dominant master race."

General Care

Ogre magi aren't particularly nurturing toward their young, so it's no surprise that mage babies and children end up in the care of other species. Whether you choose to bring an ogre mage into your life or have simply been tasked with raising your mistress's young for her, the method is much the same.

Baby magi are similar to human babies, in that they eat, sleep, and defecate a lot. Infants subsist largely on milk, and if their mother isn't available then yak's milk is the next best substitute (preferably dire-yak if you can get it). After the first year or so the toddler, which will be about 5 feet (1.5 meters) in height, can move on to more substantial foods such as the yak itself. Their teeth are well-suited to eating meat, and they'll need plenty of it to build the muscles they need to support their height.

Rearing

Like any child, you must teach your infant mage to walk, talk, and use the facilities. These are all mundane aspects of parenting, although significantly more challenging with a child rapidly reaching your height.

Once your mage becomes sure on their feet, it's important to keep them active. Ogre magi who don't build enough muscle mass and bone density by the time they're 6 foot (2 meters) tend to have health problems later in life. It can be difficult to get magi raised amongst smaller creatures involved in shared sports, so you may need to get creative. Building large obstacle courses is a great way to encourage both physical and mental growth.

Developing your mage's mind is just as important as their body—as their intellect improves, they'll be better able to harness their magical talents. These begin to manifest at age four, so be on the lookout and be ready to use strict discipline to keep them from running rings around you.

As intelligent creatures, ogre magi aren't inherently cruel. They possess the capacity to learn peaceful ways if raised away from a society that promotes violence. If you're not simply nannying for their biological mother, you can choose how to teach your mage, but be warned: a mage raised with proper morals can be a powerful force for justice, but if you try to raise your mage for evil then they'll take to it very well, and will soon be stronger and smarter than you.



I am particularly honored by chronicler Grondak Quellingfist's expertise and assistance on this subject.

Orcs are great lovers of beauty and art, and our children are no different. The music of metal scraping against bone, the narrative of an epic combat, the romance of running free across an open battlefield: nothing in life is lost on orcs. We are instinctually drawn to pieces of art with deep emotional value, whether that is blood spilled on the grass or an opera singer's heartbreaking solo.

Orclings are born roughly the size of human babies, but with thicker skin and far greater strength. They develop teeth early on and are weaned off their mother's milk after only a few weeks.

Orclings display a deep lust for life in their boisterous nature. They run as soon as they can walk and laugh and yell as soon as they can talk, delighting in the sounds they can make. They also love to roughhouse with their parents and fellows. As sturdy children themselves, they tend to treat everyone else as equally sturdy. Orclings don't pass, they throw; they don't pull, they tug; and they don't cry, they roar. Orc parents often opt for wooden utensils and housewares during their children's first years.

Orcs have had a difficult history with the other races. When an orc makes an agreement, they keep to it, and their entire community is considered responsible for each orc's actions. This causes issues when, for example, an orc tribe is neighbor to a human settlement and both parties have agreed to stay off each other's lands. If the orcs then find a human hunting on their land, they would demand a reasonable punishment for this transgression, from both the individual and the settlement. Humans often see these demands as unreasonably steep, and thus a problem develops.

Likewise, orc habits are often misunderstood and seen by other races as brutish and rude. We eat messily to show enjoyment, brawl to show affection, and are loud when expressing any type of emotion. For orclings, this is a thousand-fold.

Orclings love to headbutt. This is a natural instinct and a show of affection. Since orc heads are harder than most other races', an orcling headbutt has been known to cause their adopted caretakers significant injury. If you're raising an orcling, refrain from tapping or patting them on the head, as this will only stimulate their natural urge. And remember, a broken nose means they love you.

General Care

While orclings are hardy babies, because of their rapid speed of growth they suffer a lot of discomfort, especially at night. The first years of orc parenthood feature many sleepless nights from their child's crying. One solution is singing lullabies. Orcs have a highly refined sense of hearing, making us excellent hunters when we're older, and this also means we enjoy a good song.

The Storm Rolling In *(a popular orc lullaby)*

Thunder, thunder, crash, crash, crash!

Little orcling, smash, smash, smash!

Call the storm in with your fists,

Call it to you from the mists.

Wind to wrap you safe in bed,

Lightning plays above your head.

Ground it shakes you soft to sleep,

Dream of play and tales and meat.

Orcs only grow one set of teeth. This can be a problem with baby orcs, who often like to explore the world by chewing. Eating rocks, gnawing on doors, and the like, can cause orcling teeth to chip, which is painful and permanent. The two protruding canine teeth are especially susceptible. Many parents rub things their infants often chew on with lemon, because orcs hate the taste of anything sour.

Rearing

The best parents for an orcling are their own kin, but occasionally a child will lose their tribe and be adopted by another race. I myself was raised by humans, although I have since joined the Cliffleaper tribe and adopted a more suitable name.

Orcs tend to see the world in black and white. Things are one way or the other, there is no in-between. This makes us particularly susceptible to conditioning. Teaching a baby orc to suppress their natural orcishness and act as a human or an elf would takes time and patience, but once an orcling learns how they're "meant" to behave their innate sense of duty and honor will keep them on that path. If raised to be good, they can become a paragon of the word. However, if they're raised evil they can commit terrible acts.



Otyughin are frightening-looking and foul-smelling creatures. They have thick skin, usually covered in filth and grime, and carry their eyes on a waving tentacle rather than on their head. Not only are they large, uncouth, and unattractive, they also smell terrible. They cover themselves in their own dung, which brings its own distinct scent and can convey strange new diseases to handlers.

All of this makes raising an otyugh an overwhelming task, and you may wonder why anyone would bother, but the otyughin have a rabid following in the beastmaster community. Although far from the most glamorous, they're one of the most practical creatures described in this book, since their diet is primarily garbage and refuse. Their stomachs are hardy enough to digest even the most foul or magically-contaminated waste, making them perfect for cleaning up battlefields or rubbish dumps, cleansing contaminated fields or simply providing a personal garbage disposal system.

Given its predilection for filth, it's easy to write off the otyugh as a mindless, disgusting beast, but in reality they're quite intelligent and can even learn to speak in the common tongue. An adult otyugh may be willing to work with you, if you can overcome the communication barrier and have a sufficiently compelling reward to offer—conveniently for beastmasters, they are partial to rare and unusual animal droppings—but an otyugh raised from the egg can be a companion for life.

Otyughin are scavengers who live in sewers and dungeons. They move around frequently, but you can tell when you're near one or its nest by the distinctive smell. The nest itself is a heaped mound of refuse and muck, within which parents bury two to four eggs. Although predisposed to care for their eggs, otyughin have little interest in the fates of their young once hatched, and are often willing to trade beastmasters an egg in exchange for unicorn scats or a similar prize.

Inevitably, some beastmasters cannot conceive of such a repellent being as intelligent, and treat them as animals to be captured. However, even a young otyugh is well able to defend itself, as its eyeless tentacles carry poisoned barbs that can bring down a full-grown man.

Egg Care

An otyugh egg is durable and doesn't require much more than a warm, wet place to hatch. Protected by a dark, clay-like shell, it's easy to transport and difficult to disturb. Acquiring an egg early is recommended, as otyughin whose eggs have been incubated in materials other than garbage tend to be less odorous.

General Care

The most important aspect of raising a baby otyugh is replicating its natural environment. When the creature is small, it is easy to build a shelter for it: someplace cool, dark, wet, and pungent. As it grows larger, it may need to be relocated to a cave deep underground or a convenient section of sewer. Some municipalities welcome friendly otyughin in their pipes, while in others your charge will need to be hidden.

Otyughin young are extremely self-sufficient and need little from you. That said, if you wish to build up a relationship with yours, I recommend visiting it daily and gifting it with refuse rather than leaving it to scavenge for itself. Otyughin raised from the egg with love and attention can often form a strong bond with a beastmaster, even to the point of modulating their natural dung-spreading behavior in deference to their friend's squeamish nose and delicate immune system. They will still prefer the feel of something coating their skin, though, so if your otyugh is thoughtful enough to do this for you, providing a vigorous mud scrub is an appropriate form of thanks.

Rearing

If you wish to employ an otyugh for more than just companionship—and most who raise them do—it helps to acclimatize them to their working conditions from an early age. Otyughin usually spend their entire lives underground, so taking them on regular trips to the surface is essential to build up a tolerance to sunlight and wind. Start with still, heavily overcast days and work up from there, and make sure to have a ready supply of mud, compost or muck to slather over your companion as needed, since outside conditions rapidly dry out their skin.

An otyugh who has been properly acclimatized will be able to stay outside comfortably for hours, vacuuming up whatever waste you desire cleared. Raising fabulous creatures is rarely a cheap pastime, but some of the more successful beastmasters have been able to fund their practice entirely through rewards from grateful monarchs and landowners.



PEGASUS FOAL

Rearing Difficulty
Easy
Intelligence
Instinctual

This entry was written with the help of eminent scholar and pegasus master Belle R. Ophon.

There is no creature more majestic than the adult pegasus. Combining the beauty and power of a thoroughbred racehorse with mighty, feathered wings, the pegasus conquers the imagination of all who witness its flight.

The pegasus is not a creature of natural origin and, indeed, could not exist without magic. Its wings are large and powerfully muscled, but are not sufficient to the task of lifting it into the air by strength alone. Your humble author has proved mathematically that the adult pegasus would need wings four times as large to lift itself, but this would add so much weight to the beast that it would need even bigger wings... and so on into infinity.

As always when mathematics fails to explain a phenomenon, magic provides the answer. The first pegasi were made in ancient times by an anonymous sorcerer, who infused their feathers with elemental magic capable of controlling and enhancing the flow of air under and around them. When a pegasus flaps its wings during takeoff, the downdraft is strong enough to knock an unprepared handler off their feet.

The pegasus's wings and magical properties breed true, even when mated with a normal horse, but the strongest and most valuable specimens are those born of two pegasi. As their population has never been large, the natural consequence of unscrupulous breeding is a rise in bloodline disorders ranging from a surly temperament to congenital deafness.

Despite the risk of such disorders, purchasing a pegasus foal from a reputable breeder is the only viable option for most would-be keepers. Due to escapes, there are a small number of pegasi living among herds of wild horses, but wild pegasi are fierce protectors of their young. Even if you survive the attempt to extract a foal from its herd, the beast will be difficult to break and may spend the rest of its life as an ornery, resentful liability.

Pegasus feathers are a useful resource and always in demand. Pre-molt feathers maintain the ability to generate air flow for around a year after being plucked and are frequently used in ventilation systems and the like. The larger the feather, the more wind it can generate, but the slower it will be replaced through regrowth. Legal supply is therefore strictly limited to a small number of feathers per pegasus per year, but there is a roaring black market amongst unscrupulous traders who don't care where the feathers come from.

General Care

For the most part looking after a pegasus is very similar to caring for a normal horse, but there are some considerations that any potential owner must keep in mind. First, pegasi must eat twice as much as a normal horse to meet the energy requirements of their wings and flight magic, more if they have recently engaged in an extended flight. They also have special dietary needs to maintain healthy feathers: this primarily consists of orange and green vegetables such as carrots and broccoli. Pegasi cannot preen or groom themselves as birds can, so they require (and thoroughly enjoy) daily grooming.

Pegasi must be exercised regularly, both on the ground and in the air. They're sociable by nature and prefer to be exercised in company, so keepers with only one pegasus must either band with other local owners or hope their beast will be content with mounted flights. A beast who has not been exercised on the ground will become lethargic and sickly, while one lacking aerial exercise will begin to lose the magic that empowers its flight, a condition that can eventually become total and permanent.

Training

Many of the techniques used to train horses can be applied to training their winged cousins, with allowances made for their greater intelligence and, of course, their ability to fly. Imagine trying to break a bucking stallion that can launch itself hundreds of feet into the air, making a fall almost certainly lethal. It's also virtually impossible to catch an escaped pegasus unless you can fly or have another winged mount on hand.

Pegasi respond best to a firm but gentle demeanor. Attempting to assert yourself too forcefully will result in the beast becoming utterly intractable, but treat a pegasus too mildly and it simply won't respect you.

If you do successfully train a pegasus you couldn't hope for a smarter or more loyal mount. You may need to provision for him in your last will and testament, however, as the lifespan of these noble creatures is well in excess of most human lifetimes.



PERYTON HINULUS

Rearing Difficulty
Difficult
Intelligence
Clever

A vicious predator of malignant origin, the peryton is found in the northernmost forests and highlands of the world. Its existence is credited to the Saltos druidic sect of the late first century, who created it in vengeance for the desecration of pristine wilderness. A supernaturally-driven killer, the peryton is the perfect tool for the job.

Peryton stand 7 feet (2 meters) tall including their barbed antlers, with a wingspan of over 20 feet (6 meters). Their talons are easily 4 inches (10 centimeters) long each, and they are strong enough to carry a fully-grown orc into the air before releasing them to be dashed on the ground below. Their hides are incredibly tough, penetrable only by silver weapons and certain magics. Their most chilling feature, however, is their shadow.

In the northern regions, when a sentient being of any species causes significant damage to the wilderness, a peryton will be conceived that casts that person's shadow. Whatever this unfortunate is doing, their second shadow does also: running, dancing and drinking upon some rocky perch or traversing the ground below a soaring form. Meanwhile, the peryton that bears the shadow will be seeking, always, the one to whom it belongs, for the creature cannot cast its own shadow until it has consumed that person's heart.

Despite their unusual conception, peryton are still born of other peryton, although no mating is required. An adult simply becomes gravid, giving birth a mere week later to a small but fully-formed young, or hinulus. Despite having no breeding instinct, peryton will still form pairs or small family groups, hunting together, caring for their hinuli and, when they're old enough to leave the nest, often accompanying them on their shadow-hunt. Peryton instinctively know their target when they are close by, although they may roam for many years before they reach that point. Often, their victim has moved on and long since forgotten whatever act led to the spawning of their doom.

Although terrifying when on the hunt, peryton that have gained their own shadows are content to remain in their native forests, preying on medium to large game. They're not automatically aggressive to intruders, but are very protective of their hinuli.

General Care

Peryton thrive on a varied diet of meat, blood and offal. Their deer-like head causes some handlers to try feeding them vegetation, and they can survive on this, but a prolonged diet without animal products leads to dull plumage and eyesight, and general lethargy. A well-fed hinulus grows incredibly rapidly, reaching full size in just eighteen days. It begins practice flights at two weeks and sprouts its first full rack of antlers by day twenty-one, at which point it is ready to leave on its shadow-hunt.

A peryton that has not cast off its false shadow will be constantly restless, and aggressively violent towards any non-peryton. Even assuming you manage to capture such a beast, at best it will ignore you and at worst try to kill you outright. By contrast, once an animal has dispatched its target, eaten their heart and gained its own shadow, it becomes much more relaxed in temperament and may even be friendly and biddable towards people who offer it respect and tempting treats. Since no known magic is capable of altering a peryton's false shadow or fooling its hunting instinct, this presents a particularly uncomfortable dilemma for a would-be handler.

Training

Training a false-shadowed peryton is essentially impossible; some "trainers" will beat them into submission, but this achieves nothing. However, assuming you've found a way to de-shadow your peryton (and without going into too much speculation as to how) and have otherwise treated it well, you should be able to teach it a number of useful tasks, from guarding your home to hunting game with you.

Be warned, though, that peryton are naturally social creatures and a lone animal will always be a little flighty. No matter how far from their native forests you keep one, it's always possible that one day a chase of wild peryton will pass overhead on a shadow-hunt, and your pet will take wing and disappear.

The *Tome of Parsynax*, the Great Horned Dragon, speaks of his alliance with a chase of wild peryton that lived near his forest lair. If any interlopers were discovered in the forest and considered a threat, Parsynax dispatched the peryton to destroy them. In return, Parsynax rewarded them with a steady supply of meat from his massive kobold army.



PSEUDODRAGON WYRMLING

Rearing Difficulty
Tricky
Intelligence
Intelligent

Pseudodragons are nimble, telepathic, housecat-sized dragonkin. They may be found in any climate, inhabiting rocky, forested hills. Much as a tiny lapdog carries the spirit and ferocity of wolves, pseudodragons are as intelligent, fierce and protective as their gargantuan cousins, and thus are often sought as companions for the wealthy and powerful. Unfortunately for them, pseudodragons do not suffer fools lightly. The wise seek one as a friend, never a pet. Juveniles are especially attracted to find familiar spells, and this is the most common method of acquiring one as a companion—and the safest for both of you.

Pseudodragons lay mottled brown eggs, roughly the size of chicken eggs, in clutches of five to eight. These are guarded by both parents for the six weeks of incubation. A newly-hatched pseudodragon is relatively weak, relying on its parents for protection and sustenance, but within a few months they are ready to take care of themselves. Although they leave their parents' nest at this point, they are social creatures and frequently stay close to home unless they find more interesting company. At this age they are especially curious and often seek out wizards, druids, and rangers, presuming that master spellcasters have especially interesting stories and food to share.

Although cute, pseudodragons are far from defenseless. In addition to claws and teeth, they possess a sharp stinger in their tails, the venom of which is potent enough to send even an adult troll into a deep slumber. At hatching, their venom is already at full potency, although their stingers are too soft to break skin for the first few weeks. Unfortunately, juveniles are not particularly selective and often sting when startled, angered, or merely mischievous.

General Care

Pseudodragons are omnivorous, but have highly individual tastes, which develop over time. Expect your companion to decide one day that nothing will do but fish, but by the next to have sworn off seafood entirely. I recommend keeping a wide variety of possible meals on-hand. Stimulating their appetite through play-hunting (or genuine hunting, when mature) is also advised.

All young pseudodragons must learn to fly. This is usually achieved by their parents chasing them out of the nest and then supporting them while they find

their wings, a trick that is difficult for flightless carers to replicate. If you can afford a flight spell, good for you. If you cannot, try to find a cliff small enough that you can survive repeatedly running off it.

Immature pseudodragons sleep sixteen hours a day, but in short bursts lasting no more than a few minutes at a time. This plays havoc with their attention span, which does not bother them but can drive a carer to distraction. Since they do not need extended rest, but you probably do, for sanity's sake I advise taking on an assistant to keep them occupied at night.

During shedding and the accompanying growth spurt, they are itchy and uncomfortable, and make sure everyone knows it. At this time, kindly carers will ensure easy access to firm surfaces for scratching, warm baths for soothing, and plenty of their favorite foods for comfort.

Rearing

There is no "taming" a pseudodragon—they mature in a few years, achieve an intelligence comparable to humans, and have an independent streak that is only slightly tempered by close bonding to those who reared or enspelled them.

Raising a pseudodragon is often a lesson in patience. The first few years are spent absorbing knowledge and skills at an incredible rate, so they will get into everything with insatiable curiosity and ask endless rounds of "why?" Since this is the time when pseudodragons are also small enough to easily hide in a pocket or rucksack, if you have visitors it's not uncommon for your companion to disappear for days at a time, returning with new skills and sometimes a salty vocabulary.

Once your companion has matured, however, their company can be a joy. An adult pseudodragon is wise, witty, and charming, and loves to use their knowledge to help their family—which they considers anyone who has raised them, cared for them, and helped them build their many hoards.

Like dragons, pseudodragons have a strong hoarding instinct, and at a young age begin stockpiling small items, typically of a specific type such as buttons or scented soaps. This persists until they lose interest, at which point they abandon that hoard and find something else to collect. More than a few wizards have discovered their missing spell components piled in their familiar's nest.



PURPLE WORM VIOLET

Rearing Difficulty
Difficult
Intelligence
Instinctual

No trip through the hot deserts of the world is without the risk of running into a purple worm. This beast can grow up to 80 feet (24 meters) long, with an armored exoskeleton and a maw wide enough to devour almost anything, and its animal mind has only one focus: its next meal. While it spends the majority of its time burrowing underground, it can sense vibrations from surface creatures up to 5 miles (8 kilometers) away, and can travel under the earth at up to 20 miles (32 kilometers) per hour to reach them.

If meeting an adult worm is dangerous, trying to obtain its eggs is truly dicing with death. You cannot simply thief from a nest, since the female purple worm carries her eggs with her everywhere she goes. Males have five rows of razor-sharp teeth but females have only four, behind which lie a set of cushioned cavities. It is here their eggs are stored, resembling teeth themselves in what may be considered a form of camouflage, although the mind boggles to consider what they might need to be hidden from. Generally, eggs are acquired from the rare instances in which an incubating parent is killed, though adventurous (or insane) beastmasters have been known to dive into a worm's maw, grab hold of one of the stored eggs and then cut their way out of the yellow-tinted underbelly and escape.

Mating produces up to ten eggs, which incubate for around six months before the young, often called violets, erupt from their mother's mouth. At hatching, they are 6 feet (2 meters) in length, and already a match for most predators. Although a newly-hatched violet is technically easier to get hold of than an egg, it's still very hazardous to approach a purple worm during hatching, as standing too close can lead to an experience akin to having multiple devouring maws vomited up on you.

Egg Care

Since eggs are used to being in the warm, humid environment of the mother's mouth, care must be taken that they don't dry out. The recommended method is to store them in a small sauna and spray them thoroughly with warm water at least a dozen times a day. The survival rate for eggs outside the mother is about ten percent, and violets born this way are often smaller than their wild counterparts.

General Care

Violets, from the moment of hatching, are focused on one decision: what is food and what is not? They will chew on anything they can fit their maw around, including an unwary handler. Thus the first thing your violet must learn is that you should be categorized as "not food." One way to do this is to restrain your violet from catching its own food and instead deliver it fresh meats on a regular basis. This will gain you the designation of "thing that brings food," which can go a long way towards creating a bond between you.

For the first month, a violet's burrowing strength is low enough that you can restrain your hatchling in a metal cage. It is vital that it bonds with you during this time, as once it grows stronger nothing short of powerful magic will keep it contained. Once you feel confident in your bond, release your violet to dig around in the earth and it should return at its regular mealtimes. You will lose its interest if feeding ceases or it finds more interesting fare elsewhere, so find out what type of meat it likes best and keep large amounts of that on hand. Under no circumstances let your worm get a taste of humanoid meat, as once it does it will prefer that to all other meats.

Training

Purple worms are not the smartest creatures out there. At most, they can learn three or four commands, especially if they involve eating. As their vision is poor, they operate primarily from vibration-sense, so stomping rhythmic patterns on the ground is the most effective way to give commands such as "rise up," "descend" and even (although not for the faint of heart) "leap" or "catch." As long as they are rewarded with a treat, purple worms will happily perform these tricks as often as their trainer requests.

Purple worms molt regularly while growing, and one of the benefits to raising one is utilizing its leftover armor. You can make a pretty penny by selling this to an armorsmith, or even fashion it into your own regal armor, which has the added benefit of making you less likely to be attacked by other purple worms.



REMORHAZ CHRYSTID

Rearing Difficulty
Difficult
Intelligence
Instinctual

Also known as a polar worm, a remorhaz enters the world as a centipede-like creature about 15 inches (38 centimeters) long. Voracious, aggressive, and unpredictable, over the course of two years these undisputed lords of the tundra grow to 25 feet and 5 tons (7.6 meters and 5.4 tonnes).

The remorhaz's most striking feature is its ability to generate extreme amounts of body heat. Hatchlings are already uncomfortable to touch for extended periods without some form of protection, and within a week grow hot enough to burrow through solid ice. The air in an active lair and immediately around a remorhaz always smells faintly dry and smoky.

Covered in scales ranging from blue-white to silver in color, a hatchling's carapace feels slightly greasy and smooth, hardening into a rough surface like basalt as the creature ages. A row of short spikes line their spine. From its second year, the remorhaz is capable of "igniting," causing these spikes to glow red-hot, and using them to set fire to attackers and other flammable objects.

As adults, males sport a spined frill along the sides of the body, beginning behind the head and extending for about a third of their length. The male keeps this frill folded against his body except during mating season, when he uses it to display his superiority over other prospective mates, extending it and rising up on his lower third to look even larger and more menacing.

Mated pairs remain together, sharing the female's territory, until the eggs hatch. The devoted mother digs out a nesting lair in the ice, lays her clutch of ten to fifteen eggs, and then wraps around them to keep them warm, remaining in the lair throughout the nine months of incubation. The father brings her food and defends the nest with his life until the eggs hatch, after which he departs, returning to his previous range and leaving the mother to care for and feed the hatchlings.

Young remorhazes stay in the lair until they ignite, whereupon they disperse to find and claim their own territories, although many do not live that long. Too big to be considered a meal by most animals, they usually fall prey to other, larger remorhazes.

Remorhazes only vocalize when fighting or mating, when they produce high-pitched screams or wet hisses. Rarely, one will be a "clicker," tapping with its mandibles together in an almost absent-minded rhythm.

Egg Care

Accidentally discovering a clutch is an extremely dangerous event, so most eggs are acquired by adventurers who deliberately seek out remorhaz lairs and kill the parents. Eggs are 10 inches (25 centimeters) in diameter, leathery, and amazingly resistant to temperature extremes. They can survive in a frozen state for years, but will not hatch without warmth.

Several eggs usually start to hatch simultaneously if one begins, so one infant remorhaz cannot cannibalize the entire clutch. Without supervision, an average clutch results in three to five successful hatchlings, who immediately consume their less-developed siblings' eggs.

General Care

Only extremely capable and dedicated trainers should consider raising remorhazes. To fuel their immense heat they must eat organic matter relentlessly, starting with their own eggshells, unhatched eggs, and even tundra vegetation, and moving on to any carcasses or live prey they come across. Anything less than 800 pounds (363 kilograms) of food per day will lead to starvation.

They molt weekly, gaining 4 inches (10 centimeters) in length each time. After consuming the old scales, they hide for an hour or two as their new exoskeleton hardens and heats up. By the end of the first year, at nearly 20 feet (6 meters) long, they reach maximum temperature and their growth slows. By this time, you will need to have them in a suitably large cage of non-flammable material with a high melting point. Remorhazes gain another 5 feet (1.5 meters) over the next year, molting with each season. Once mature, they grow very slowly, sometimes going decades between molts. Their heavy, triangular dental plates regenerate throughout their lifetime, with new plates replacing broken or lost ones in a matter of weeks.

The remorhaz's frozen habitat presents another limitation to rearing. They need an icy environment akin to their native permafrost, or else they will overheat and expire.

Training

Though a remorhaz raised from an egg may appear to recognize its trainer, and may even be capable of learning a few tricks with sufficient reinforcement, they never lose their temperamental demeanor. More than one trainer has fatally discovered a supposedly-friendly beast was "not in the mood" to be instructed that day. All beastmasters agree that no remorhaz is ever truly tame.



Satyrs are intelligent, half-human, half-goat creatures, and are a common sight in most woodlands. Usually seen as a human with the legs and ears of a goat, they are adept shapeshifters and can transform fully into either creature at will, although most prefer their hybrid form.

Satyrs in hybrid form are generally a little smaller than an average human of the same age. Despite being shapeshifters, they are still susceptible to aging. They are also unable to alter their physical characteristics, making individuals easily identifiable.

Peaceful and fun-loving, satyrs are rarely found working or hunting, and you will generally see them dancing, singing and playing music, and drinking to excess. They are excellent musicians and can master any instrument almost instantly. Their music has a unique effect on forest animals, which commonly appear to dance alongside them; it is thus they save themselves the task of hunting, although they always give thanks to their dancing companions before they feast.

While satyrs require a great deal of alcohol to become intoxicated, they drink so frequently and so heavily that this happens fairly often. A drunken satyr will often forget the form they're in and change parts of themselves without warning, leading to some unfortunate and unsettling combinations. The other result of their drinking is a great many casual romantic encounters, although given their relaxed attitude to shapeshifting it is perhaps best not to dwell on that thought. Satyrs are non-monogamous and change partners freely and with ease.

Drunk or sober, satyrs stay together in close-knit kinship groups, but will join together with strangers when the need arises. Being with other satyrs appears necessary to their long-term survival and well-being. As a result, despite their carefree demeanors they are very protective of each other and treat raising children and caring for the elderly as shared activities.

Despite their intelligence, the few satyrs that have abandoned or, more likely, been banished from their kin quickly lose their language and culture, becoming frighteningly animalistic. There are even records of feral satyrs practicing cannibalism, though other satyrs are quick to hunt down any that do. Evidence suggests this mental degradation is directly linked to exclusion from group dancing rituals, and among satyrs it is even called "losing step."

General Care

While there is much debate on whether keeping satyrs away from their kin is acceptable, it does happen and great care must be taken, especially if you intend to release them into a family group later.

Satyrs hate to be indoors, so the best environment for one is a wooded area where the temperature is mild. When temperatures vary too far in either direction, satyrs will cease shapeshifting and stay in the most comfortable form, which can be disastrous for their long-term development.

Satyrs are naturally omnivorous and require a high-calorie diet to fuel their constant activity. Kids begin drinking low-alcohol meads from birth and it is very important that they do, as the near-toxic brews made by an adult satyr would quickly kill those without a lifetime's built-up tolerance (note that this recommendation does not apply to human or other children, for whom alcohol at an early age can be very harmful).

The natural instinct of satyrs is to avoid bathing. This is not a good thing. The collective experience of many beastmasters suggests that, while kids raised by non-satyrs will be able to develop and maintain standards of hygiene, upon reintroduction into a satyr community they will quickly be taught to drop these habits.

Rearing

Kids constantly want to play, so gaining their focus can be a challenge and perseverance is required to teach them even the most basic of tasks. If you can find a way to hold their attention, though, they are fast learners. Young satyrs in the wild learn by watching their elders, so try to demonstrate the kind of behavior you would like your kid to learn. If you have some ability with music or dancing, this will be a boon.

It is essential that satyrs raised away from their family be kept in large groups, to prevent depression and antisocial behavior. Unfortunately, large groups of satyrs tend to dance and drink, making it nearly impossible to undertake effective teaching. If you have children or other young creatures at a similar level of intelligence and energy, it is possible for a very young satyr to bond with them in lieu of the kid's own kind. However, satyrs will instinctively long for their own, so this is recommended only as a short-term solution. In the end, satyrs are only truly happy with other satyrs.



SEA LION PUP

Rearing Difficulty
Difficult
Intelligence
Instinctual

Sea lions are actually marine reptiles, and have little in common with their namesake beyond a passing resemblance. Though their forward half possesses a leonine face and two paw-like feet, and a thick “mane” runs the length of their body, the further back you go the more reptilian they appear, lacking back legs entirely and tapering into a thick, muscular tail. Being cold-blooded, they are only found in the warmer waters of tropical oceans.

Their so-called mane is not hair, but a type of seaweed that only grows between the armored back-plates of adult sea lions. Both species benefit from this symbiosis: the plant filters out excess salt from the seawater the lion takes in, which would otherwise poison it over time, and the lion provides transport between different nutrient-rich waters from which the seaweed draws sustenance, giving it an advantage over its sedentary cousins.

Mating occurs in late autumn. Lionesses in estrus congregate at secluded coastal swamps, grooming and decorating their manes for display, for males are in short supply and there is fierce competition to attract one. Once a pair have mated, the lioness leaves the water to lay her eggs in the mud and bury them. She then returns to the sea, while the father remains nearby to guard the clutch.

He will not leave his post for the five months of incubation, gradually growing weaker from starvation. It is thus safest to acquire an egg after four months, when the shell has hardened enough for transport and the father is less of a threat. Be aware, though—even near death, he can find reserves of shocking strength if he sees the nest at risk, and will not hesitate to kill intruders.

Shortly before hatching, the mother returns and uncovers her eggs, even helping the cubs to break out of their shells. By this point the father has finally succumbed to starvation. His corpse attracts hoards of fish, upon which the newborn cubs/pups feed.

Mother and cubs remain at the swamp for one to two years, while the cubs’ manes develop, before moving out into deeper, saltier waters. Here she teaches them to hunt, often in the company of other mothers and their young. Once grown, the young disperse, though they will return to the same swamp to mate. Lionesses breed up to ten times over the course of their lives, though obviously males breed only once.

Egg Care

If you have secured an egg, bury it shallowly in damp sand or mud. To avoid harm, ensure your nest does not dry out. Once springtime arrives you should remain by the nest, listening for the faint chirrups that announce the cub is fully-developed, and be ready to dig it out, crack its shell if necessary, and provide its first meal.

General Care

The single biggest mistake made in rearing a sea lion is to introduce it into saltwater; unfortunately, a cub without its mother will never develop the mane necessary to ocean survival. Lionesses raising young will regularly lick their own manes and their cubs’ backs, transferring spores across and facilitating the seaweed’s own reproduction. A lion that reaches adulthood without a mother must be restricted to freshwater lakes and is doomed to remain in captivity, since its seagoing instincts will endanger it if released.

Since immersion in saltwater usually scours a lion’s scales, maneless lions require regular rough scrubbing. Take care around the spinal area, as the plates here are much softer and prone to cracking without their protective seaweed. Sea lions are carnivorous, eating fish and white meats; however, they occasionally need water plants such as kelp to aid digestion.

Training

While swimming is instinctual, cubs are usually taught to hunt by their mothers. A captive sea lion can live happily on hand-outs, but trainers that wish their lion to hunt for itself will need to hunt with it, because cubs learn by example. You can simulate hunting by “catching” easy prey such as beached turtles or already-dead fish. Your cub will quickly catch on and outpace you, so this can fortunately be abandoned fairly quickly.

Although adult sea lions are naturally solitary, maneless lions seem not to fully mature and have the potential to form a lifelong attachment to their surrogate mothers, becoming loyal and protective companions. I recall a grisly tale whereby a band of pirates sought to separate a sailor from her companion lion, resulting in the wholesale slaughter of the thirty-strong crew; only the sailor walked away.



SHAMBLING TUFFET

Rearing Difficulty
Difficult
Intelligence
Instinctual

Shambling mounds are curious and fascinating creatures. These seemingly animate piles of forest matter are actually an aware ground-creeping plant. This plant forms the structure of the mound, allowing it to move and collect debris. This detritus not only provides a protective coat for the plant, but also its food source. One can tell the relative age of a mound by how large a pile it is; tales have been told of adventurers who have climbed to the top of a hillock, only to have it grumble and move off with them still atop.

Mounds are very resilient; by keeping their sensitive control organs at the center of their structure, the materials around them provide a protective barrier. They can also move swiftly—using thick tendrils to form limbs allows the mound to scuttle away from danger, or defend itself. It can even use these tendrils to climb, though it prefers to stick to flat ground.

Given their diet and proclivities, it should be no surprise that they make their homes in large forests or swamps; they abhor the desolate wastes of deserts and mountains. Shambling mounds travel where there is food, and can range for many miles. While they do not have territory, they can be hostile to those who intrude on, and particularly damage, their home forests.

As a plant, shambling mounds follow the standard yearly cycle of seasons. After a winter of hibernation, they flower come springtime, and wait for insects to pollinate. Once pollinated, fruit begins to develop, and the mound starts collecting extra debris to nourish and protect its fledging offspring. During this time it will stay in familiar areas, as the offspring develop over the warmer months and begin to gather their own debris. Towards the end of summer, the tuffets start to drop off the parent mound and go their own way. By this point they are about the diameter of an oxtail, and this is also the best time to acquire one.

Tuffet Care

Shamblers are not a pet for city dwellers, smallholders, or people who prefer manicured lawns. Caring for them in the right environs is an incredibly simple task—all they really require is space and food—but creating those environs can be tricky if you don't own vast holdings.

It should come as no surprise then, that very few people have managed to keep shambling mounds successfully. One of the more famous examples was a reclusive wizard who had his tower in the middle of a very large, walled estate; allowing the grounds to go

fallow, he introduced a group of mounds to further deter trespassers.

Putting aside the requirement for space, all a shambling tuffet needs in order to become a mound is a food source. Heavily wooded areas are ideal, but even a well-managed orchard or kitchen garden can help to provide cuttings. Shamblers are not picky about their organic matter, but as in many areas of life, variety is key; different sized pieces of wood help to add structure, different lengths of plant matter will give your tuffet volume, and food scraps or garden clippings will help feed it. This variety also allows them to construct both the rigid interior structures and flexible outer layers that give them their surprising mobility. A tuffet given only mulch will be fat but unmoving, and one given only sticks will be stiff and weak.

Training

Training is a tricky affair, and not for the undisciplined. For all their animation, shamblers are still plants at heart, and will respond effectively to things that plants care about. You should first discover what the tuffets favorite coating material is. This could be anything from a specific mineral in the mud to particular herbs, muddled carcasses, flowerbeds or fragrant herbs. Once this is known, always present yourself to the tuffet with the musk of that coating. From this point on, the tuffet will see you as an “ideal tuffet,” following your movements like an elephant. Plants learn very slowly, so be prepared for several years of conditioning before you have an independent mound. This is usually too much for most collectors and trainers, who will hire druids with greater patience and tolerance for the smell of nature to do the job for them.

Fruit makes a practical training focus, as it is both portable and favored by tuffets. Teaching the tuffet to protect the one who smells of peaches, or to attack anything smelling of tomatoes (such as when struck by them, or stealing them), can make your vegetable companion a useful asset.

The soil atop a shambler is very fertile, though it becomes dead and dry when removed. This property is of interest to apothecaries and herbalists who constantly seek rare ingredients, and inventive tuffet trainers who have transformed shambling mounds into walking supplies of wolfsbane, aconite and nightshade.



SHRIEKER BUTTON

Rearing Difficulty
Tricky
Intelligence
Instinctual

Shrieker mushrooms are a fungus with the ability to emit an intense (and obnoxious) shrieking noise whenever disturbed. To get an idea, picture yourself in an echoey cavern with one hundred tea kettles screaming simultaneously. If that mental exercise alone doesn't give you a migraine, you're probably a good candidate to cultivate this species.

Shriekers are among the least-understood of all fungi because, frankly, nobody wants to go near them. They wither away into brittle husks within minutes of death, so the only way to study them is alive, up close, and with wax plugs in your ears. As babies, or buttons, their screams are not as intense, so most research is conducted on colonies of tiny mushrooms which have yet to mature.

We do know that they mature slowly relative to other fungi. Some mushrooms mature in as little as a few hours, but shriekers take a week to become fully grown. I hypothesize this is because it takes time to develop the (as yet unidentified) means of creating their signature sound.

General Care

As fungi, shriekers grow best in cool and damp locations. Their nutrients come from organic matter in their soil, but they don't need much to grow. Uniquely, these mushrooms also require calm and still environments, since they shriek in response to light, sound, and movement; I believe this is a defense mechanism used to deter creatures who might trample or consume them. It certainly deters everything else.

In cultivation, you must ensure your buttons remain as undisturbed as possible. I've found it best to sprinkle shrieker spores onto loamy soil, cover them with a solid box and then let them be. Some cultivators advocate for regular sprinkling with powdered trollhide or other exotic materials, but I find they'll grow fastest and loudest if they don't get much attention at all.

Shrieker buttons can be consumed, although only raw and within minutes of being harvested. Most humanoids don't consider them worth the effort, but orcs treat them as a delicacy and sometimes cultivate them in cavern gardens. Picked fresh, they're consumed as appetizers on special occasions or at feasts. If you're ever a guest of orcs, remember it's best not to chew—that only prolongs the screeching sound.

Because shrieker buttons are highly susceptible to motion, once established I encourage you to move them as little as possible. It can be tempting to place them in a lidded container and carry them off to market (or wherever you plan to make use of them), but the very act of moving them may cause damage. It's best to grow them as close to their intended final home as possible, and I don't recommend trying to cultivate them in earthquake zones, on boats, or anywhere you would expect to commonly feel explosions.

Similarly, it's important to keep their habitat as silent as possible. Low noises like a buzzing fly or dripping water won't disturb them, but you wouldn't want to grow them anywhere you might find raucous adventurers or other noisy animals.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, keep your buttons in a dark place. Short periods of dim light are acceptable, such as opening the lid to check on them by candlelight, but too much light will make them dry up in a matter of minutes. Direct torchlight makes them groan and prolonged exposure may be fatal, but sunlight will instantly wilt them.

This may all sound very complicated, but it's easy to tell if it is working. Simply keep your ears open: if you hear your buttons screaming on a regular basis, you're doing something wrong.

Training

You don't train shriekers so much as you prime them for later use. Their noisy talent makes them a great alarm and deterrent if you own treasures or artifacts you don't wish to have pilfered. Few creatures are stealthy enough to avoiding pushing their buttons (get it?), and a strong colony is capable of disorienting or even incapacitating a would-be thief with a few seconds of shrill screams.

The difficulty is that shriekers must be grown in or near the area you wish to ward, so if that area isn't naturally dark, moist, and silent then the odds are against you. Over time, a colony can adapt to small, constant amounts of light and motion, so you could conceivably try growing buttons in slightly more hostile environments. However, growing them in these conditions tends to diminish their sound intensity, so you'll want to keep a close ear out for them.



SIMURGH PUP

Rearing Difficulty
Extremely Difficult
Intelligence
Clever

Found only on the dry and rocky Wiyābān Tablelands, simurghat populate the sparse oases scattered across the landscape. They are seen by the local peoples as a symbol of fertility and luck. Caravans often follow them to water, and to sight one flying overhead can mean the difference between life and death for an ill-prepared traveler.

While lithe and slender-looking, a simurgh has strength comparable with that of an elephant, which it will use to protect its territory when necessary. In general, though, they are far from combative creatures. They can learn to recognize individual people, and will become very friendly with travelers who visit their territory regularly.

Simurghat live in flocks of one female and up to five males. When the hen reaches her third year, she goes into heat and her wings shine with inner light in a dramatic display of color and fertility. Her steps leave a trail of flowers and her howl is more melodic than finest sorna music. She mates once with each of her males, and three months later produces a litter of pups, always one pup per father.

As adults, simurghat boast a 9 foot (2.7 meters) wingspan, but their newborn are small enough to be held in one hand. For their first month, they are nursed by their mother, but once they have weaned off her each of the fathers takes one pup literally under his wing. He will teach his pup how to fly, to maneuver deftly in the air, to forage for non-poisonous fruits, and to hunt rodents and other small prey. Most importantly, he will teach them how to hide from strangers. No hunter of the Wiyābān would ever touch a simurgh, but foreigners love their colorful feathers for display and to use as spell components, and will hunt them when they can.

The pup's bond with their father is very important, because once the mother has no more milk to give them, she will die. It may seem tragic, but this is a natural part of the simurgh life cycle, and vital to the health of the Wiyābān landscape. Where each hen falls, a strong and beautiful tree sprouts, forming

the backbone of the oasis ecosystem. Without the simurgh's sacrifice, most oases would eventually wither away, a phenomenon in which many poets have seen great symbolism.

Once the pups mature, they and their fathers will leave their oasis and seek out new flocks, either together or separately. The largest hen of the new generation will usually remain behind, claiming her territory and using a particularly haunting howl to advertise her availability for mates.

General Care

Simurgh pups are easy to care for once they trust you. Playful and happy, they are a delightful addition to any household. Their omnivorous diet makes them easy to feed, although it is wise to give them both meat and fruits to keep their temperament balanced. Too much meat will make a pup aggressive and unpredictable, while a diet of only fruit make them manically energetic.

Simurghat are self-cleaners and rarely need assistance. All you need provide is a body of water and they will love diving in to clear dirt from their feathers and fur. They shake themselves to remove most of the water, afterwards resembling great puffy balls while they dry.

Rearing

While they make wonderful pets without any training, trained simurghat are peerless trackers and scouts. They are far smarter than the cleverest domesticated dog, and with the right treatment will be staunchly loyal to their trainer. All this makes a well-trained simurgh the ideal companion to any ranger or hunter, although the training process is complex.

Pups instinctively crave the care and education of a father. A trainer has the opportunity to step in and be a surrogate for this role, but it requires a careful simulation of simurgh parenting. You will need to perfectly mimic a father's calls, wear false ears with an enchantment or clever mechanism that lets you simulate different "expressions," and should ideally use simurgh scent to mask your own. Fortunately, this is only necessary while pups are learning; once their training becomes habit, they will never lose it.

While they'd never initiate it on their own and will refuse it if given a choice, something eerie happens if a simurgh ingests human meat. Their face changes to resemble that of the human they ate, and their barks and howls sound like the cries of the dead. These effects only last a few nights, but it isn't an enjoyable experience for anyone involved.



TARASQUE HATCHLING

Rearing Difficulty
Challenging
Intelligence
Clever

The tarasque is a fearsome beast with a vicious temperament. A hunter and ambush predator, it sports six clawed legs; a thick hide; a horned shell on its back and belly; and a lion's head with razor-sharp teeth. Fully grown, its body measures 10 feet (3 meters) long, and its muscular tail doubles that. The bony barb at the end is a poisonous stinger that is used to weaken prey.

Naturally amphibious, the tarasque prefers warm, swampy regions. It hunts equally well on land or in the water, and is known to take on large prey by breaching out of murky water and dragging them under. This attack is capable of overturning or sinking small fishing vessels, which many tarasques have learned to recognize as a source of food—and not only for the fish.

Although stories claiming there is only ever one tarasque are inaccurate, there are certainly not many. They are hermaphroditic and reproduce only once, either sexually or asexually. Each begins its life with three unfertilized eggs in pockets inside its shell, which grow as the creature does. Most tarasques will find a mate at some point in their lives, but even once fertilized the eggs remain dormant until their parent reaches an advanced age. If a tarasque is unable to find a mate, they will eventually self-fertilize.

Finally, when the parent is very old, the eggs begin to develop, requiring three months of rapid incubation. In the process they draw a vast amount of sustenance from their already aged parent, which will usually become too weak to hunt and will simply find a sheltered spot to lie and wait. When they hatch, the newborns each dislodge a horn on the parent's shell and wriggle free, small but fully formed. At this point or soon after the parent will die, and the sight of a healthy hatchling emerging from its expiring progenitor is likely the source of legends of the creature's singular nature.

Egg Care

Some beastmasters have captured tarasque hatchlings in the wild, but it is less dangerous and more common to recover an egg from the shell of an animal that has died prematurely. It is unfortunately impossible to tell whether an egg has been fertilized, so you will simply have to try your luck.

Roughly the size of a grapefruit, tarasque eggs have leathery shells and need a hot, moist, enclosed space to

finish incubating. The most successful method I have heard of involves a livestock carcass left in the sun, although this takes a strong constitution to consider. Fortunately, fertilized eggs develop more rapidly outside of the parent, and require no more than a week to incubate in captivity. Unless the egg was already partially-developed, this results in smaller, weaker hatchlings, but some trainers consider this a boon.

Strangely, if left in cool, damp storage, a tarasque egg will keep indefinitely; in one documented case, an egg has been hatched after spending seven years in a bell jar full of grain alcohol.

General Care

A tarasque grows very quickly in size and strength, and is soon able to burst most mundane barriers. This, combined with the fact that tarasques aren't usually raised by parents, makes rearing one a challenging endeavor.

The creature's amphibious nature also creates difficulties. Unless you can manage to create a supervised environment both on the shore and underwater, you will have to decide between allowing your beast to go unattended at times or denying it access to water altogether. Tarasques do not physically need to swim, but instinctively desire to and will become hostile if prevented.

Otherwise, the tarasque requires a warm, muddy den, preferably within sight of water. An obligate carnivore, it should eat over 100 pounds (45 kilograms) of fresh meat or carrion three times a day by the time it is six-months-old. It fed properly, it will reach full size by the end of its first year.

Training

Tarasques can learn several dozen commands and are capable of complex tasks such as guarding a location from only some types of person. Training requires constant encouragement through food-based rewards, although you must absolutely avoid interrupting a feeding tarasque. They often seem petulant when learning a new trick, but this is just their natural behavior and experienced trainers state that each animal has a distinct personality.

While they can be taught to restrain their natural aggression, they rarely become docile and will increasingly act out as they grow older. The judicious use of blinders, similar to a falcon's hood, can be very useful when trying to keep a tarasque calm.



TATZELWURM KIT

Rearing Difficulty
Tricky
Intelligence
Clever

The tatzelwurm is a subgenus of dragons that has developed into a series of distinct subtypes. The Felicitus (cat-headed tatzelwurm) is thought to be the oldest form, and to have given rise to the alternatives through matings with more mundane creatures. The subtypes recognized thus far are: Snox (fox-headed), Lutrae (otter-headed), Veturlas (ermine-headed), and Surcatta (meerkat-headed).

All subtypes are characterized by a long serpentine body, adorned along the spine with fur of different colorations rather than scaled ridges, and two short legs on the forebody. Each subtype of this warm-blooded reptile tends towards different climates: Snox and Felicitus can be found in temperate urban or wooded environs, while Surcatta makes its home in the savanna, and Veturlas in the much colder climes of the tundra. Lutrae makes its home near freshwater in all but the coldest of regions.

Tatzelwurms are sociable creatures, living in packs of four to eight. Lone tatzelwurms are rare, but not unknown. While mating can occur at any time of year—as long as food is plentiful—an adult tatzelwurm will only mate every three years. Surcatta and Veturlas both lay eggs, burying them for hydration and warmth respectively; the other subtypes give live births, and stay with their young to nurture. Despite the inherent risks associated with taking a kit from under its parent's nose, there are many Felicitus, Snox and Lutrae tatzelwurm available on the market—the egg-laying forms, while easier to take, are much harder to find. Kits start out at the length of a forearm, developing into an adult over five years and, depending on diet and exercise, can grow to the length of a reclining orc.

General Care

Tatzelwurm kits of all subtypes are easy to care for. Strictly carnivorous, they will eat rodents, birds, game and fish. While typically they hunt live prey, in captivity they will happily consume freshly killed or even cooked meats. They will adapt to most climates, though Surcatta prefer to be kept warm, and Lutrae require a pool or other water feature to swim in.

Tatzelwurms of all ages like to play a great deal, with each other but just as much with other creatures. Insatiably curious, they show a remarkable lack of fear and will investigate any potential playmate, be they humanoid, animal or slaverling monstrosity.

Tatzelwurms “chat” almost constantly, making a wide variety of chittering noises that seem to depend on the occasion. Their bodies are as flexible as a snake's, and they especially like to loop themselves around warm objects such as a handler's shoulders, so provide plenty of structures to explore and be prepared to bear the weight of your kit if and when it decides you are its favorite place to nap.

Training

Tatzelwurms' natural playfulness and intelligence—they're at least as smart as a young child—make them easy to train to many small tasks. They enjoy challenges such as opening jars and retrieving objects from hard-to-reach places. Since they're eminently distractible, it's important to keep them focused using a reward system. My own Snox would do practically anything for a scrap of boar jerky, which they would only receive upon successful completion of their tasks.

For those who choose to put their tatzelwurm to more use than simple entertainment, their lithe bodies and predatory instincts makes them particularly suited to accompanying hunters. They can rout rabbits from a warren with ease, slip unnoticed through long grasses or pluck fish from the water. The main challenge is training them to reliably return their catch to their handler, so here it's especially important to have a reward your animal will consider more interesting than the one already in its mouth.

Fair warning though: the tatzelwurm's intelligence and curiosity will be your downfall if they're not stimulated enough. A bored tatzelwurm is unlikely to run away, but has the potential to be highly destructive, as it will make its own fun by emptying, unpacking, unraveling and generally taking apart anything it can get its paws on. Once a tatzelwurm reaches full size, it is practically impossible to keep out of anywhere it wants to investigate—which will be everywhere.

While most people see tatzelwurms as being pets or working creatures—or just a nuisance—some societies find them particularly beautiful, and have taken to holding pageants for them and their handlers. Great prestige and wealth can arise from these events if you happen to own an especially attractive creature.



TROGLODYTE TADPOLE

Rearing Difficulty
Easy
Intelligence
Instinctual

Troglodytes are amphibious creature found in many of the shallower seas. In appearance, they can crudely be described as fish with legs, and like fish they come in many varieties, shapes and colors, although the Rushton Green is by far the most commonly seen and the most popular breed to own.

Although troglodytes can breathe out of water, and will leave the sea to escape predators or contamination, they can only survive on land for short periods before drying out and expiring. Their four legs are capable of supporting them and when necessary they can run as fast as a small horse, but they have very poor coordination and tend to overbalance if they stop suddenly. To make matters worse, they lack eyes, ears, or any other form of sense that might be useful in navigating out of the water. Leaving the water is thus only used as a last resort, and is often no safer for the unfortunate troglodyte than whatever prompted it to try.

In the ocean, however, troglodytes are graceful and speedy swimmers. Their sensitive skin detects electromagnetic fields, allowing them to navigate, hunt and escape most predators with ease. They can swim in the deepest of oceans when desired, but need to return to shallower waters to rest, sleeping on the ocean floor. By changing their internal air pressure at will, they can alter their level of buoyancy, allowing them to swim through the upper waters after fish or run along the sandy floor while they dig for shellfish.

Troglodytes mate once a year and give birth to live young, but seem to forget their children as soon as they are born and may even try to snack on any that don't move fast enough.

General Care

Troglodytes are gentle and harmless pets. When trying to maintain one, a custom-built environment is required to replicate their ocean habitat. For those living inland, the only option is to construct a pit or magical enclosure filled with salt water. Since a full-grown troglodyte can reach up to 6½ feet (nearly 2 meters), this tank must be big enough to accommodate a large and energetic dog, and the water will need to be changed regularly to ensure the salt content does not drop, as this will make your troglodyte ill.

Those with homes near the ocean will often fence off an enclosure in the sea, as it offers both their natural

salt water and easy access to visitors. In either case, however, a troglodyte contained to a small area will quickly exhaust any pre-existing food sources, so you must stock its home with live fish and crustaceans daily.

All of this makes troglodytes impractical pets for most. But despite this, or perhaps because of this, they are a surprisingly popular status symbol among wealthy outdoors types. Professional breeders will often crossbreed different subspecies to produce dazzling colors that are seldom seen in the wild.

Troglodytes are not especially social creatures, and tend to largely ignore other troglodytes except to mate. They are quite happy alone in an enclosure, provided enough live food and room to move. Shellfish are best buried in the sand, to provide stimulation. Troglodytes have extremely sharp teeth, but seem reluctant to use them except to crack open the shells of their food.

Rearing

It is nearly impossible to teach a troglodyte. The young seem to possess all their required skills from birth, and to lack the ability to acquire new skills. They generally do not appear to notice or care about much at all beyond the search for food, the avoidance of bigger animals, and mating at the appropriate time. Otherwise, theirs appear to be lives of blissful nothingness.

Since troglodytes are very good at detecting and running from predators, some optimistic "trainers" have been able to make troglodytes clear mazes or move objects in their way by strategically frightening them into fleeing. The moment the object of fear is removed, however, the troglodyte will immediately return to its general wanderings, and they do not appear to remember a previous solution if forced to repeat it.

Some trainers believe that they could harness water movements or electrical currents to encourage troglodytes to perform complex tasks; however, no one has yet managed to achieve this.

Troglodyte land races were once quite popular, although more as a form of comedy than a serious sport. Since most contestants tended to stand still, fall over or run head-first into obstacles, there was seldom a winner except by pure chance.



TROLL BUDDIE

Rearing Difficulty
Difficult
Intelligence
Basic

Special thanks to the excitable Master Hormithrax for lending his expertise.

Most scholars agree that all trolls descend from a single ur-specimen, probably the result of arcane experimentation. There is less agreement on whether this monstrous humanoid was the intended result or a grand mistake. Today, small populations of trolls dwell in most mountainous areas and cavern complexes. A troll lives and grows indefinitely, limited only by the carcasses available to cram into its ever-hungry gut. Their unnatural vitality allows them to recover quickly from grievous injury, even dismemberment.

Trolls reproduce asexually. When food is plentiful and conditions stay benign for a sustained period, an adult troll may bud. Part of the troll's body begins to swell. Gradually an arm, leg, shoulder, back, or belly fattens and stretches, soon reaching an inconvenient size. The adult lumbers around with the hypertrophied member for several months, eating ravenously.

When it can no longer move well enough to hunt, the troll drags itself into privacy and endures several more days of increasing pain. The bud bulges and moves. It thrusts forth stubs, which strain and stretch into chunky limbs. Fingers and toes pop out, then extrude blunt claws. A head rears up from the mass, eyes emerging as vague features come together. The bud's mouth tears open and it breathes and mews on its own. The back of the body splits—gradually and painfully—from the parent, to the howls of both. Finally, thrashing and whining, the baby troll pulls free, a new member of the tribe.

Both the parent and the new “buddie” must immediately regenerate to heal the wound of partition. It is the first test of the child's fitness to survive, and a test of the continuing strength of the parent. The buddie's deep back wound heals in a tough scar that thickens into extremely hard, jagged layers, giving each troll its armored back.

The new buddie appears as a squat little version of an adult troll. It stalks about on stumpy legs, or scampers on all fours, trying to catch bugs, mice, or anything else that might feed its awakening hunger. It stands 18–24 inches (46–61 centimeters) high, with lumpy limbs and a hunched posture.

Breeding

Humans have long tried to breed trolls, usually for military purposes, but the professional “budder” has a difficult job. Wild trolls react poorly to capture and, unless somehow made to feel totally at home, they don't bud in captivity no matter how well-fed. Instead, they use the glut of food to grow ever larger and stronger, and test the bonds of slavery at every chance.

Therefore, ambitious governments and wealthy folk looking for guardian monsters pay handsomely for the capture of wild troll buddies. Such a creature must be very young indeed when sold, so that it bonds to the new master.

General Care

A troll buddie does not need complicated care. When small they can eat nuts, hay, and similar fodder, but they do better on flesh, even grubs and offal. The creatures grow quickly given an ample supply of food.

An owner who wishes their troll to be more than a dangerous exhibit must imprint the creature within its first three months, feeding it personally so the buddie associates that one person with survival. After that, a regimen of reward and punishment trains the troll to restrain its highly aggressive nature when commanded by its master.

At age one year, a well-fed young troll averages 60 pounds (27 kilograms) in weight and stands a muscular 3 feet (roughly 1 meter) tall. By this stage it loses its ability to process vegetable matter; it must have meat, and lots of it. It can begin to learn simple commands and exhibit rudimentary intelligence. Treated with extraordinary patience and attention, by age three a troll can engage in limited conversation. However, no matter how well-trained, a troll remains by nature a vicious predator, ever hungry for flesh, and the master must always exercise vigilance and enforce strict discipline.

Outsiders who encounter budding trolls view them with surprise and horror. Often they bring back exaggerated reports, calling the race malformed and hideous, not understanding that the hunchback, clubfoot, or asymmetric arm they saw serves an important purpose ensuring the future of the troll race.



UMBERAL EREBECT NYMPH

Rearing Difficulty
Extremely Difficult
Intelligence
Clever

Most people know umber erebecks as 500 pounds (228 kilograms) of hard-shelled fury whose great strength and disorienting visual attack make them a threat to be reckoned with. Their piercing shriek, echoing through a cave or mine shaft, gives unwary travelers only a moment to prepare themselves if an umberal erebeck is on the attack.

These insectoid creatures have excellent low-light vision, four hefty limbs as well as two vestigial limbs hidden beneath their carapace, and the ability to temporarily confuse other species with a vision-based psychic attack. Despite their brutish reputation umberal erebecks are more than simple monsters, able to fashion and use complex tools and work in groups to solve difficult problems.

In the wild, umberal erebecks gather in loosely-organized families, where a dominant female will keep watch while the males hunt for food. Highly territorial, it is these females that are usually encountered, charging to defend their family from a perceived threat. At 7 feet (roughly 2 meters) tall, they're almost twice as big as the males and compete fiercely for territory and mates, with only the largest and most aggressive females surviving to lead a family.

Their cleverness and fighting prowess make tame umberal erebecks prized by subterranean races as servitors or guards. As difficult to control and expensive to feed as they are, possession of umberal erebeck is a sign of great wealth and power.

Egg Care

Wild umberal erebecks keep their eggs safe from predation by hiding them in well-protected crèches. Each egg secretes a pheromone that lets the family know it is healthy, with unviable eggs removed to prevent contamination of the clutch. Uumberal erebecks can smell this scent for up to 2 miles (just over 3 kilometers) and will track stolen eggs across vast distances.

Should you survive acquiring an egg, it needs to be kept warm and out of direct sunlight.

General Care

Newly-hatched umberal erebecks are limbless and a mere foot in length, but grow quickly if fed a diet of raw meat mixed with ground bone. Their arms and legs develop within their first week and within a fortnight they're upright and mobile. Uumberal erebecks' exoskeletons are more like tough leather during this stage but harden quickly with a good diet.

Uumberal erebeck nymphs are curious and playful and

will respond well to a parent or handler's affection. Their instincts develop quickly and they soon begin to hunt for grubs and spiders. A nymph sheds its exoskeleton approximately monthly until it reaches its mature height at eighteen months. After each shedding, the new carapace takes a few days to harden, so it's important to keep nymphs indoors during this vulnerable time. Otherwise, they're very hardy and will even regrow lost limbs, although they run the risk of infection any time they lose a body part.

Though omnivorous, umberal erebecks prefer meat and require plenty of calcium to maintain their exoskeletons. If provided with whole carcasses, they'll happily devour the bones of their prey, crunching them to pieces with their powerful mandibles and dissolving them with acidic saliva.

Training

Nymphs raised by a handler can be taught to understand simple phrases in any language and to serve a multitude of purposes. A nymph might simply be trained to use its brute strength and claws in combat, but they can also be taught to use tools and handle objects with care for use in any industry that requires heavy lifting.

Although initially willing to take instruction from any parent figure, females that reach maturity will start to test their handler's strength as they develop a natural instinct to fight for supremacy. It's not uncommon for them to turn on a handler that shows signs of weakness, which is why many handlers employ psychics to help maintain control. Males usually remain submissive and easier to manage, although their smaller size lowers their market value.

Aside from aggression, the largest difficulty in training an umberal erebeck is dealing with its "confusing gaze," although there are spells available to help strengthen the mind. Since this ability requires the umberal erebeck to focus all four eyes on a subject, some handlers recommend removing one eye while the nymph is still young. While this does disable their ability, umberal erebecks depend upon both sets of eyes for balance and depth perception, and a nymph thus treated will never reach its full potential.

Uumberal erebecks that escape captivity have been known to join existing wild families. Those that do seem to pass on the training they've received in the tools, weapons and even languages of other races. Over time, this is leading to the organization of quite complex umberal erebeck tribes in some areas.



UNICORN FOAL

Rearing Difficulty
Extremely Difficult
Intelligence
Unconfirmed

Normally found in pristine, old-growth forests, the unicorn is a rare and solitary creature. They possess a limited power of illusion, which they use to protect their territory by misdirecting and confusing outsiders. Many a would-be forester has found themselves walking through seeming desert or fleeing shadowy, half-seen monsters. Nonetheless, individual animals may become quite friendly towards a particular person or group of people, if approached with care and respect.

Unicorns are uniformly sexless and reproduce through parthenogenesis. Their lack of mating instincts may explain the legend that they can only be tamed by virgins, since they become noticeably disturbed by the scent of people who have recently copulated. However, a week or so of abstinence should suffice to let you safely come near all but the most sensitive beasts.

When a unicorn decides to bear young, it first seeks out the highest mountain in the area. Unicorns require a quickening to start the process, and so will wait on the mountain until a fierce spring storm occurs and their horn is struck directly by lightning. Unharméd, the animal will then return to their forest and, over the next months, gather soft moss, grasses and fern fronds into a birthing bed. After ten months, the parent gives birth to a single foal and licks it clean before settling down to rest.

The newborn takes its first wobbly steps shortly after birth, and will be fully mobile within a day. For the first few weeks it stays close to the birthing area, grazing only with its parent nearby and sleeping while the parent leaves to forage further afield. Foals stay with their parents for the first two to three years of life, before seeking out their own forest to inhabit. Unicorns are extremely long-lived, and reproduce rarely.

General Care

Like most ruminants, unicorns require several pounds of plant matter a day and will spend hours simply grazing. They also require a mineral component, especially while growing, for horn development and maintenance. In the wild, this is usually acquired by licking rocks and natural seepage points, although they enjoy salt licks when provided.

Unicorns are extremely fastidious and prefer to bathe daily. In the absence of water, they may find a

dusty spot to roll enthusiastically before shaking off, a very horse-like behavior. Unlike horses, though, the unicorn's coat will gleam after this treatment without a speck of dust. They like to keep their horn sharp by running it along rocks or, if no rocks are available, their own hooves, although in the wild it is only used as a weapon if their illusions have failed them.

Training

Unicorns are resistant to training, nor do they enjoy being ridden, and even the lightest bridle or collar will barely be tolerated. Mundane materials cannot hold them, and many an individual who thought themselves the lucky owner of a unicorn has awoken to an empty paddock, barn, or chains.

Although magic can provide ways around these challenges, there is heated debate in beastmaster circles over the ethics of breaking in a unicorn as you would a horse. When observed in the wild, some of their behaviors suggest a high degree of sentience, such as recognizing their own reflections in still pools of water and using complex illusions to teach their foals about the dangers of the outside world. A parent will chase their foal through the forest, uttering a long, warbling cry mimicking a trumpet, and accompanied by illusory "huntsmen." Failure to escape is punished by sharp nips to the foal's ears and flanks, to drive home the message.

Those who have only ever seen unicorns in captivity tend to dismiss such records as fanciful, since a "tame" unicorn is a very different beast. Domesticated unicorns become sullen and withdrawn and show little interest in their surroundings or the desire to interact with other beings. Many captive unicorns never display their power of illusion at all, although attempts to exhibit one publically may cause its horn to fade from sight and its brilliant white coat to darken, giving the appearance of a normal horse until it is taken from public view.

Wild unicorns have a puckish sense of humor and love playing pranks on those they feel comfortable with, dropping all pretense of dignity. They will commonly employ harmless illusions to obscure the location of small objects, set up pratfalls, and help them steal people's food. However, should a joke cause actual harm they'll display immediate distress, and should be soothed with cuddling and reassurances of friendship.



WOLPERTINGER KIT

Rearing Difficulty
Difficult
Intelligence
Instinctual

At one time considered a myth, the wolpertinger is a reclusive creature that lives deep within montane forests. Their bodies resemble a hybrid of rabbit, deer and pheasant, although they may in fact be more closely related to griffins and hippogriffs, being similarly possessed of six limbs and mix of fur and feathers. All wolpertingers have horns, with females bearing short, straight prongs while males grow larger, multipronged antlers.

Beyond their strange appearance, their most striking feature is their speed and ability to transition seamlessly between flying and running. When threatened, a covey of wolpertingers will scatter instantly, half taking to the air in a mess of wings and half bounding away in every possible direction, to cause maximum confusion to any predator trying to single out one animal.

During the mating season, it is common for males to confront one another by stamping their feet on the ground, spreading their wings, growling, and rattling their antlers. These displays rarely lead to actual battles, as generally the smaller male will back down, but if two males are evenly matched then a bloody fight for dominance will sometimes break out. At the end of the mating season male wolpertingers shed their horns, rubbing them against trees to assist in removal and leaving behind distinctive marks. If you're trying to determine whether a forest contains wolpertingers, visiting in late summer and looking for antler marks low down on trees is one reliable method.

A pregnant female will continue to hunt and forage for four to six weeks, after which her mate helps her build a burrow and brings her food for the rest of her term. A single pregnancy may produce as many as twelve kits, and when conditions are good, parents will breed twice in the same season. As a result, wolpertinger populations go through a periodic cycle of boom and bust, multiplying to plague proportions before running short of food and receding to near-extinction, only to begin again.

General Care

Wolpertinger kits are blind and helpless for the first two weeks of their lives and need constant care and protection. If you acquire one this young, you will need to keep it in a warm, dark pouch and feed it on tepid wolpertinger milk from a teat, although rabbit's milk may be substituted. After weaning, wolpertingers are

omnivorous; in the wild, they eat everything from earthworms, spiders and small game to grass, leaves and tubers. In captivity, they will readily adjust their diet to include anything you feed them, although a variety of meat and vegetation is essential to their health.

If you have more than one male, it's strongly advised to separate them during spring, otherwise their mating instincts may lead them to injure each other. You may also wish to keep them separated from the females, unless you want your collection to rapidly multiply.

Training

Some wolpertinger owners will tell you that training is impossible, but in fact it just requires patience. Wolpertingers are smart, social animals that respond well to food-based incentives. As a prey species, however, they are easily frightened by shouting or violence. Any attempt to punish your wolpertinger will make it run away and, due to their nimbleness on ground and in the air, it may be difficult to retrieve.

Give your animal plenty of time to get to know and trust you, allowing it to sniff your scent, acclimatize to the sound of your voice and, in its own time, perch on your hand or shoulder, making sure to reward this progress. A wolpertinger that trusts its handler may be taught any number of simple commands, such as "come," "sit up," "jump," and "fly."

You may think your wolpertinger is attacking you if it suddenly gives you a sharp bite on the hand or foot, but this is simply their method of seeking attention. Don't let them become persistent biters, however, as this indicates that they're trying to assert dominance over you.

The wolpertinger was once called "The Woodsman's Bane." According to legend, woodcutters who went deep into the mountains seeking prime cuts of timber would find their camps ravaged by hordes of small but quick moving animals. Every bit of organic matter would be consumed, sometimes even the woodsmen's clothes and tents, forcing them to head for home lest they starve or freeze. These stories usually held that the forest itself was taking revenge on its pillagers, but based on current knowledge it seems likely that these woodcutters simply had the misfortune to stumble into wolpertinger habitat during a population boom.



Native to the magical realm of earth, xorn were introduced to the mortal realm last century. They are large, barrel-shaped creatures that display radial symmetry rather than bilateral, bearing three legs and three arms surrounding a central maw. What appears to be a single eye is, in fact an elaborate vibrational sensor, used to detect seismic communications. Adult xorn range from 8 to 15 feet (2.4 to 4.6 meters) in length.

Our knowledge of the xorn largely comes from post-mortem study, since the creatures spend their entire lives inside solid rock. It's unclear exactly how they move through rock as if through water, but scholars speculate they maintain a semi-solid state called "phasing," using their muscular arms to "swim" through the earth while their extremely solid legs and feet drum against each other to create strong vibrations. These tremors serve multiple purposes: they vibrate the substance of the rock to make it easier to pass through, they allow xorn to detect each other's presence, and they help xorn sense desirable minerals by their seismic "reflections." Xorn feed on mineral seams, with a preference for rare and precious metals.

Although solitary by nature, on their home plane xorn are peaceful and communicative amongst themselves; visitors report an almost constant vibration through their feet from the subterranean calls. On the mortal realm, possibly because of food shortage, xorn are territorial and aggressive, and communicate only during mating.

No one has yet discovered how to sex a xorn, or how many different sexes they have. On their home plane, three or four xorn are involved in mating, although their roles are unclear. When a xorn finds a large deposit of fine sand near a volcanic vent, they will drum to attract mates. Procreation takes several days, after which the xorn deposit up to twelve eggs in the sand before parting company. On our plane, due to their sparse population, reproduction often involves only two xorn, which may contribute to the species' meaner temperament here. Beastmasters may therefore wish to seek xorn eggs in the earthen realms, but be warned that many kingdoms rule it illegal to introduce more xorn into our realm.

Egg Care

Xorn eggshells are made not from calcium, but from a unique substance combining several ingested minerals, and are incredibly solid. Over five months, the volcanically-heated sand slowly softens the shell, until the developed xornling can escape. For this reason, it is best to keep your xorn eggs in a similar environment. Should you not have access to a volcano, xorn eggs can be kept in a container of fine sand as close as possible to a smithing forge.

General Care

Once your xornlings hatch, transfer them to a large enclosure filled with sand and loose earth. Very young xornlings cannot fully control their phasing ability and easily become stuck within harder rock, causing both beast and carer a great deal of distress. Xornlings up to five or six weeks of age should be fed soft metals such as copper or tin, along with the occasional treat of gold or silver if you can afford it. Break the material into small chunks and stir it through the upper strata of the enclosure, where your xornlings will instinctively hunt it out. If you are lucky, you may catch a glimpse of an arm or back as they feed near the surface.

As xornlings grow, their digestive strength and phasing ability both improve. Move them into a large enclosure of mixed rock types and densities to keep them stimulated, and introduce harder minerals into their diet over time. Xornlings can only phase through earth-based substances, so construct your enclosure of wood or similar to prevent accidental escape.

Even xornlings raised from the egg will not show affection in any way we understand. They may be interested in your movements above them, and can be taught to surface for treats, but don't expect to feel appreciated. It may be disappointing to see almost nothing of your pets, but xorn instinctively prefer to be subterranean and will be miserable if kept out in the air.

Xorn were originally introduced to the mortal realm by ambitious prospectors who believed the creatures would lead them to rich ore seams, but who soon lost track of the xorn once they disappeared into the earth. Today, xorn have become a common pest of mineshafts, where their love of gems and precious metals often leads to clashes with the proprietors. Despite several concerted attempts at population control, it seems likely xorn are here to stay.









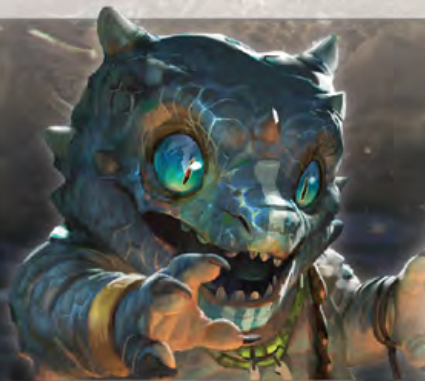
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