

AGE BESTIARY: CHIMERIC CREATURES

A motley collection of animal parts brought together in one terrifying package, chimeric beasts are a mainstay of fantasy fiction, mythology, and roleplaying settings. From the noble half-lion half-eagle griffons to various abominations crafted from twisted occult science or sorcery, these creatures provide a serious challenge to even the hardiest adventurers. Unlike their close cousins, the beastmen, human traits and humanoid forms are rarely seen in such beasts or are seriously overshadowed by the characteristics of other animals. The manticore is a good example of this sort of beast, having a human-like face attached to a wholly inhuman body.

Chimeric Beasts in Myth & Folklore

Chimeric beasts are all over mythology. The most famous, and the namesake of the type, is the Chimera of Greek myth, but griffons, hippogriffs, and others are nearly as well known. Cave paintings and relics from as long ago as the Upper Paleolithic period show creatures that are a mix of various animal parts, both real and imagined. Even the holy texts like the Bible speak of terrible beasts

described as a mix of various creatures combined to form a monstrous whole. The origins of these creatures vary wildly, though many are primordial monsters said to have existed for eons. Others were created by the gods to protect some treasure or torment humanity. Whatever their origins, chimeric beasts combine the most fearsome traits of the animals they resemble.

Some chimeric beasts feature heavily into historic symbolism. The griffon is a mainstay of the heraldry of Europe and many cultures have creatures with various animal parts that represent some noble family, concept, or institu-

tion. In most cases the monsters featured in this way are noble, impressive, and curiously attractive with truly loathsome beasts relegated to the stuff of nightmares.

Chimeric Beasts in Pop Culture

Chimeric beasts have transformed over the years in entertainment. While classic monsters like the griffon or manticore sometimes pop up in fantasy fiction, more often creatures appear that are inspired by chimeric beasts but which have their own distinct designs. Insect traits are combined with a vaguely humanoid shape

and given a biomechanical gloss to form the monsters in the *Alien* films. The museum beast in the film and novel *The Relic* mixes various animal traits to create a creature that really looks like no particular combination of beasts but invokes the same feeling.

Chimeric beasts do see use in some modern media though. Various video games and anime have monsters that are clearly a mix of various animal traits. In some cases, chimeric combinations of real animals are the norm. In the cartoon *Avatar: The Last Airbender* nearly every animal is a combination of two real world creatures. They even occasionally pop up in the crazier modern techno-thrillers as products of twisted science; Jon Mayberry's *Dragon Factory* has a team of covert operatives fighting large catdogs with scorpion tails!

CHIMERIC BEASTS IN PLAY

As mentioned earlier, chimeric beasts are a staple of many fantasy settings. Sure, you've got your dragons and giant snakes and such,

but there's something really cool, scary, and fun about facing down 300 lbs. of angry boar with a snake tail and a wolf head. These chaotic combinations of dangerous animals make for unpredictable and memorable foes.

Not that all chimeric beasts are bad. In some settings, valiant knights ride griffons and other such beasts into battle. Fantasy cultures might raise and breed such beasts for labor, transportation, and combat. Since these creatures are usually portrayed as having animal intelligence, they can often be tamed. However, most of these creatures are still wild and fierce, making true domestication rare.

KATARA: "THE KING IS HAYING A PARTY AT
THE PALACE TONIGHT FOR HIS PET BEAR!"
AANG: "YOU MEAN PLATYPUS-BEAR?"
KATARA: "NO, IT JUST SAYS BEAR..."
SOKKA: "CERTAINLY, YOU MEAN HIS PET
SKUNK-BEAR."

TOPH: "OR HIS ARMADILLO-BEAR."

Aang: "Gopher-Bear?" Katara: "Just... Bear."

TOPH: "THIS PLACE IS WEIRD."

- AYATAR, THE LAST AIRBENDER

CHIMERIC BEAST THEMES

Chimeric beasts usually rely heavily on two themes: the dangers of nature to humanity and the dangers of perverting the natural world. Naturally born chimeric beasts showcase the scariest traits of various already dangerous animals in ways that ratchet up the

tension and dangers of facing down wild beasts.

Their artificially created brethren are examples of what happens when one uses sorcery or science to mess with Mother Nature, or when one simply ticks off the gods. This latter category are often the undoing of their creators, and even a god might find their new "pet" too fierce to be truly controlled.



1_D6+3

MANTICORE

Melding of Lion, man, and scorpion, this beast is a terror of the desert sands.

Abilities (Focuses)		
-1	Communication	
6	Constitution	
1	Cunning	
3	Dexterity (Bite, Sting)	
1	Magic	
2	Perception (Hearing, Smelling)	
6	Strength (Claw, Might)	
2	Willpower	

Combat Ratings		
15 Speed		65 Health
13 Defense	4	Armor Rating
Attacks		
Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage
Віте	+5	1д6+6
Claw	+6	206+6

+5 Powers

FAVORED STUNTS: Knock Prone, Lightning Attack, Mighty Blow

POISON STING: For 4 SP (2 SP if part of a Sting attack), the manticore can strike a blow that injects its poison into a target. This poison is debilitating and targets receive a –2 Dexterity on all checks and suffer 1d6 damage that ignores armor each turn until they make a Constitution check TN 9 or have a healing spell cast upon them. Spells used to stop the poison restore no health, but they do purge the body of the manticore's venom.

Tough Hide: Grants an Armor Rating of 4.

STING

FLYING: (Winged manticores only.) Winged manticores can fly a Speed 18 in addition to their normal speed.

DIFFERENT Breeds

The following are a collection of various chimeric beasts commonly found in fantasy settings, myth, and media. They can be augmented as necessary with templates and by applying modifiers such as epic or heroic to create even greater menaces.

MANTICORE

Lion-bodied with a human face filled with rows of shark-like teeth and sporting a tail tipped with poisoned spikes,, the manticore is a horror bred for slaughter. Some versions of this beast have bat-like wings while others are ground-bound. This monster's favorite prey is humans and other sentient humanoids.

In fact, its name means "man-eater." Savage and cunning, the manticore nevertheless displays little in the way of intelligence, though some sorcerers have managed to train these monsters as guardians.



CHIMERA

This accursed three-headed horror is the slayer of heroes and a living plague on the innocent.

Abilities (Focuses)		
0	Communication	
7	Constitution (Stamina)	
2	Cunning	
3	Dexterity (Bite, Breath Weapon)	
1	Magic	
4	Perception (Seeing, Smelling)	
7	Strength (Claw, Intimidation, Might)	
2	Willpower (Courage)	

	Combat Ratings			

15/17 Speed (Ground/Flight) 80 Health 13 Defense 6 Armor Rating

Attacks			
Weapon	ATTACK ROLL	Damage	
Віте	+5	1д6+7	
Breath Weapon	+5	2р6	
Claw	+9	2д6+7	

Powers FAVORED STUNTS: Dual Strike (2 SP), Lightning Attack (1 SP),

Dragon's Breath: The chimera's breath weapon can be used at 6 yards for short range and 12 yards for long range. For 2 SP, this breath weapon ignores armor and affects everyone in a 4 yard radius of the chosen target who doesn't succeed in a Dexterity (Acrobatics) vs. Dexterity (Breath Weapon) test. For 4 SP, in addition to these effects all who take damage suffer an additional 1d6 damage during the chimera's next turn (or what would be its turn if it dies).

THREE HEADS ARE BETTER THAN ONE: The chimera's three heads give it superior perception and attacks. For 4 SP, an attacker can target one of these heads and if the chimera takes damage from the attack in excess of its Constitution (7), the head is disabled. For each head that is disabled, the chimera suffers one of these effects: lose the Breath Weapon and Dragon's Breath power, or add +1 SP to the cost of Dual Strike and Lightning Attack. Once two heads are disabled, the chimera must be killed through normal means and its heads can no longer be disabled.

Tough Hide: the chimera's magically tough hide gives it an Armor Rating of 6.

GRIFFON

Sometimes used as steeds, these magical half-eagle half-lion beasts are fierce, proud, and deadly.

Abilities (Focuses)		
0	Сом	MMUNICATION
4	Constit	rution (Stamina)
1		Cunning
4	Dexter	ity (Bite, Flying)
1		Magic
3	P	ERCEPTION
4	Streng	гн (Claw, Might)
2	Willpe	ower (Courage)
Combat Ratings		
14/22 Speed (Ground/Flight) 45 Healt		45 Health
	14 Defense	3 Armor Rating

CHIMERA

The namesake for a whole category of similar monsters, the chimera is a three-headed brute none but the most stalwart heroes can stand against. Sporting lion, goat, and dragon heads and possessing the ability to breath fire or toxic gas, the first of its kind was a terror spawned from a primordial monstermother that also gave birth to various other twisted creatures. Like many of its kind it's solitary, rarely encountered except as a lone threat.

GRIFFON

Possessing the hindquarters and ferocity of a lion and the head, wings, and forelimbs of an eagle, griffons are more highly

	Attacks	
Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage
Віте	+7	2р6+4
Claw	+7	1ъ6+7
Wing Buffet	+4	1д6+4

Powers FAVORED STUNTS: Knock Prone, Mighty Blow, Skirmish, Seize the

FLYING HIGH: When using Skirmish while flying, double the movement gained with each SP spent.

NATURAL ARMOR: Add 3 to Armor Rating to reflect tough hide and general durability.

regarded than many chimeric beasts. Many noble houses use the griffon as their symbol and some cultures even train these proud and dangerous beasts as flying mounts. A trained griffon is a loyal companion, though its wild cousins are a menace to shepherds and horse breeders in rural communities.

HAWKBEAR

One example of many possible creatures that combine the power of a great bear with the hunting instincts of a predatory bird, the hawkbear appears as bear-like in shape but is feathered like a bird with a hawk's head. These creatures are often the product of some magical experiment, though they can breed in the wild and some variants might be natural creatures. Like bears, these monsters are encountered in forest areas alone or in small groups.

HAWKBEAR

This mix of ursine and avian forms is a HYPERAGGRESSIVE PREDATOR WHO COMBINES THE BEST AND WORST TRAITS OF BOTH.

Abilities (Focuses)		
-1	Communication	
6	Constitution (Stamina)	
0	Cunning	
3	Dexterity (Bite)	
1	Magic	
2	Perception	
7	Strength (Claw, Intimidation, Might)	
1	Willpower (Courage)	

C	Combat Ratings
13 Speed	70 Health
13 Defense	3 Armor Rating

	Attacks	
Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage
Віте	+5	1д6+10
Claw	+9	2D6+7

Powers

FAVORED STUNTS: Knock Prone (1 SP), Mighty Blow, Threaten

HORRIFYING SHRIEK: For 4 SP the hawkbear can emit a terrifying shriek that requires all within 6 yards of the creature to make a Willpower (Courage) vs. Strength (Intimidation) test or take a -1penalty to their actions for the rest of the combat.

NATURAL ARMOR: Add 3 to Armor Rating to reflect tough hide and general durability.

QUICK BITE: For 2 SP, the hawkbear can make a second bite attack against the same opponent. Doubles on this roll do not generate more SPs.

COCKATRICE

Appearing as an awkward mix of serpent and rooster, THIS MONSTER CAN PETRIFY VICTIMS WITH A GLANCE.

Abilities (Focuses)		
-1	Communication	
4	Constitution	
1	Cunning	
1	Dexterity (Bite)	
3	Magic (Gaze)	
1	Perception	
2	Strength (Claw)	
1	Willpower	

Combat Ratings		
12/15 Speed (Ground/Flight)	55 Health	
11 Defense	1 Armor Rating	

Attacks	
Attack Roll	Damage
+3	1 _D 6+5
+4	1 _D 6+3
	Attack Roll +3

Powers

FAVORED STUNTS: Lightning Attack, Skirmish

PETRIFYING GAZE: The cockatrice can lock its gaze with a target and attempt to turn the target to stone. The target rolls a Willpower (Discipine) test vs. the monster's Magic (Gaze) to avert their eyes in time. Failure means the target takes a cumulative -1 penalty on all Dexterity and Strength related actions until the end of the battle. If the cockatrice rolls a critical on its check, it increase this penalty to −2 for 3 SP and can turn the target to stone, leaving them aware but unable to move, for 5 SP. Petrified characters must be healed by magic or divine intervention.

NATURAL ARMOR: Add 1 to Armor Rating to reflect tough hide and general durability.

HIPPOCAMP

These aquatic horses are often used by marine races as steeds and guardians.

	Abilities (Focuses)
0	Communication
5	Constitution (Stamina)
0	Cunning
1	Dexterity (Bite)
0	Magic
1	Perception
3	Strength (Slam)
2	Willpower
	Combat Ratings
0/1/0	(C /F) 45 II

0	Magic
1	Perception
3	Strength (Slam)
2	Willpower
Co	ombat Ratings
2/16 Speed (Ground/Fli	ght) 45 Health
11 Defense	2 Armor Rating

Attacks			
Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage	
Віте	+3	1 _D 6+3	
Slam	+5	1д6+4	
	Powers		
FAVORED STUNTS: Knock Prone, Skirmish			
NATURAL ARMOR: Add 2 to Armor Rating to reflect tough hide and general durability.			



QUESTING BEAST

Elusive and rare, this hybrid creature is often HUNTED BY HEROES AND LORDS TO PROVE THEIR PIETY AND WORTH.

Abilities (Focuses)		
0	Communication	
7	Constitution (Stamina)	
3	Cunning	
4	Dexterity (Bite, Stealth)	
3	Magic (Curse)	
2	Perception (Tracking)	
6	Strength (Claw)	
3	Willpower (Courage)	

William (Goodling)	
	Combat Ratings
16 Speed	90 Health
14 Defense	5 Armor Rating

	Attacks	
Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage
Віте	+6	1 _D 6+6
Claw	+8	2р6+6
Unarmed	+3	1ъ3+4

Powers

FAVORED STUNTS: Dual Strike, Knock Prone (1 SP), Lightning Strike, Skirmish

Mystic Hide: Add 5 to Armor Rating to reflect tough hide and magical protections.

QUESTING CURSE: For 5 SP, the questing beast can curse a character who encounters it. The character must make a Willpower (Discipline) test vs. the creature's Magic (Curse) ability. Failure means the character is now obsessed with hunting the beast and gains a goal to find and capture or kill the creature. This curse can be removed by hunting the creature successfully or by spending a day in contemplation and prayer at a holy site and attempting the test again and succeeding. Each failed attempt to throw off this curse incurs a cumulative -1 penalty to future checks.

REGENERATION: Unless harmed by blessed objects or holy magic, the questing beast regenerates 5 Health each turn.

SNAPPING JAWS: If using Lightning Strike or Dual Strike stunts with a Bite attack, it may perform these stunts for -1 SP.

Vanish: For 4 SP the questing beast can vanish from sight and appear up to 30 yards away. If it reappears out of sight of other characters, it can use Dexterity (Stealth) to avoid detection with a +2 bonus to attempts to locate it.

COCKATRICE

A mix of feathers and scales, this rooster-headed beast possesses a serpentine tail and birdlike wings. While fierce and potentially dangerous in close combat, its most dangerous ability is its power to turn others to stone with a look. Some legends say only the lowly weasel is immune to the cockatrice's gaze, though this could be mere folklore.

YALI

A tusked cat with serpentine traits, this jungle PREDATOR IS AS DANGEROUS AS IT IS EXOTIC.

Abilities (Focuses)		
0	Communication	
6	Constitution	
2	Cunning	
4	Dexterity (Bite, Stealth)	
1	Magic	
2	Perception (Tracking)	
6	Strength (Claw, Gore, Intimidation, Might)	
3	Willpower	

	Combat Ratings
18 Speed	60 Health
14 Defense	4 Armor Rating

Attacks		
Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage
Віте	+7	2D6+6
Claws	+8	1 _D 6+9
Gore	+8	1 _D 6+7

Powers

FAVORED STUNTS: Knock Prone, Lightning Attack (3 SP)

CHARGE: May use their tusks for a charging attack that does 1d6+7 Damage and allows them to move up to 4 yards to attack for 4 SPs. This is considered a gore attack and can be performed in addition to a normal attack but rolling doubles doesn't grant additional stunt points.

NATURAL ARMOR: Add 4 to Armor Rating to reflect tough hide and general durability.

HIPPOCAMP

Aquatic beasts with a horse's head and forelimbs and the body of a sea serpent, these creatures are often used as steeds for aquatic humanoid races. Many sea gods are depicted as riding in great chariots drawn by the largest and most spectacular examples of this creature. Not particularly aggressive, they can still be dangerous if their territory is threatened.

QUESTING BEAST

Possessing the body of a leopard, head of a snake, stag forelegs, and lion hindquarters, this monster is the product of a cursed incestuous union and may be demonic in origin. Despite it being a subject of many hunts by famed warriors, its name in fact comes from the canine-like bark or "questing" noise it makes. The questing beast is notoriously elusive, and some of the greatest hunters and warriors have sought it for years without ever capturing or killing it. It is thought that there is only one questing beast, but there could be more hiding in the forests or far from civilization.

YALI

Yali possess a catlike body with a lion's head that sports elephant like tusks and a serpentlike tail. Combining power with grace, these creatures dwell in deep jungles in warmer climes and are exceptionally dangerous and territorial. Some cultures revere these beasts, carving their images into temples and even using them to guard sacred treasures.

CUSTOMIZATION

Chimeric beasts can be customized to create different types. The most common is to add Epic, Heroic, or Elite modifications to create powerful individual creatures. Some, like the questing beast or the chimera, might only exist as a sole powerful version. In such cases, don't be afraid to boost the might of these monsters; a unique and powerful creature the PCs must deal with can be the focus of an entire campaign arc.

Adding some talents or powers from character classes is another way to customize these monsters. Monsters with human-like intelligence could easily learn the ways of the warrior, the tricks of the rogue, or even magic. In the case of magic, spells might be learned or simply a side effect of the creature's inherent magical nature.

Another way to customize chimeric beasts is to roll your own. Using the following tables, you can generate new and different hybrid creatures to menace a PC group.

ANIMAL PARTS

Roll 2d6 three times and combine results. All chimeric beasts receive focuses with any attacks they gain from these rolls. If you get the same result, roll again or apply the bonus again if the animal type includes multiple types of creature.

If necessary, customize these results further with additional focuses and minor ability tweaks. Also decide if this creature is a twisted experiment or pet of some divine or infernal power or if they are naturally occurring in the setting. If they are magically created, add +2 Magic Rating. If they are natural, add +1 Perception.

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SIZE	
2D6 ROLL	Size
2–5	SMALL: large rat to medium dog sized (Strength and Constitution 2, Dexterity 4, Willpower 1, Health 25, Speed 12)
5–8	MEDIUM: man to horse sized (Strength and Constitution 3, Dexterity 3, Willpower 2, Health 40, Speed 14)
9–10	Large: lion or bear sized (Strength and Constitution 4, Dexterity 3, Willpower 2, Health 55, Speed 14)
11–12	Huge: elephant or larger sized (Strength and Constitution 6, Dexterity 2, Willpower 3, Health 70, Speed 16)

ANIMAL PARTS		
2D6 ROLL	Animal	Effects
2–4	Snake/Reptile	+1 Dexterity, Dexterity (Bite) attack that does 1d6 base damage. Add poison bite stunt identical to giant spider in <i>Dragon Age</i> Set 1 <i>Gamemaster's Guide</i> (p. 35), +1 Armor Rating
5	Fish/Aquatic	+1 Strength and Constitution, -1 Communication, can breathe underwater and swim at base speed +2. Add +1 Armor Rating and Constitution (Swimming) focus.
6	Bear	+2 Strength and Constitution. Health +5. +2 Armor Rating. Add Strength (Intimidation, Might) and Willpower (Courage) focuses.
7–8	Canine/Feline	+1 Dexterity, Perception, and Constitution, Dexterity (Bite) attack that does 1d6+1 base damage and Strength (Claw) attack that adds 2d6 base damage. +1 Armor Rating and +2 Speed. Add Perception (Tracking) or Dexterity (Stealth) focus.
9–10	Bird	+1 Dexterity and Perception. Add Flying move at base speed +10. Add Dexterity (Bite) attack that does 1d6 base damage.
11	Insect	+1 Constitution and Perception2 Communication. +5 Health. +3 Armor Rating.
12	Other	Roll twice and combine the effects or add bonuses and powers derived from other creatures. For example, a dragon might provide fire breath and wings; a mole the ability to burrow and sense targets in total darkness; or a squid or octopus could provide grasping tentacles and swimming ability.