



AGE BESTIARY

CHIMERIC CREATURES

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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 hardest 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 institution. 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 cat-dogs 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 HAVING 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."
 - AVATAR, 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.



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
Bite	+5	1d6+6
Claw	+6	2d6+6
Sting	+5	1d6+3

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.

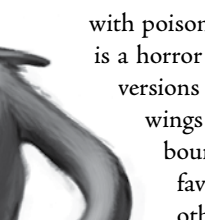
TOUGH HIDE: Grants an Armor Rating of 4.

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 mantichora 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 mantichora nevertheless displays little in the way of intelligence, though some sorcerers have managed to train these monsters as guardians.



COCKATRICE

APPEARING AS AN AWKWARD MIX OF SERPENT AND ROOSTER,
THIS MONSTER CAN PETRIFY VICTIMS WITH A GLANCE.

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.

CREDITS

DESIGN: JACK NORRIS DEVELOPMENT: CHRIS PRAMAS
EDITING: EVAN SASS GRAPHIC DESIGN: HAL MANGOLD
INTERIOR ART: BRITT MARTIN

PUBLISHER, AGE SYSTEM DESIGN: CHRIS PRAMAS

GREEN RONIN STAFF: PAULINE BENNEY, JOE CARRIKER, STEVE KENSON, JON LEITHEUSSER, NICOLE LINDROOS, HAL MANGOLD, JACK NORRIS, CHRIS PRAMAS, DONNA PRIOR, EVAN SASS, MARC SCHMALZ AND OWEN K.C. STEPHENS

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3815 S. Othello St. Suite 100, #304 Seattle, WA 98118
EMAIL: custserv@greenronin.com **WEB SITE:** greenronin.com



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 Set 1 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 Perception. –2 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.