Exotic Encounters:

Centaurs



Alex Riggs, Joshua Zaback



Credits

Designers

Alex Riggs, Joshua Zaback

Editor

Rosa Gibbons



Necromancers of the Northwest, LLC 8123 236th St SW, Unit 102 Edmonds, WA, 98026 www.necromancers-online.com

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Introduction

The Pathfinder Bestiary, and the long line of monstrous encyclopedia that came before it, do a great job of attacking the problem of providing game statistics and mechanical information for a very wide variety of creatures. There are a lot of strange creatures from fantasy novels and movies, from ancient mythology, and, as time went on, from the twisted minds of game designers and even GMs, for that matter. Anyone today who tried to go about creating an extensive bestiary of all the different cool and interesting fantasy monsters could fill three or four volumes with three hundred monsters each, and still have a long way left to go, with fans crying out for various "forgotten" monsters to get some attention. That kind of breadth doesn't leave a whole lot of room for depth, and that's where *Exotic Encounters* comes in.

There are all kinds of reasons why you might not want to use a monster stat-block straight from the core rules. For one thing, if your players have a habit of browsing through such books, or are long-time veterans who know the basic ins and outs of most fantasy staples, you may need an unusual stat-block just to throw them a curve ball and teach them that they can't count on their out of character knowledge to take all the mystery out of the game. Alternatively, many GMs can recall a time when they wanted to make use of a certain monster in their game, only to find that it was a few CRs too high or low for what they had in mind. *Exotic Encounters* takes a single, iconic monster, and creates three new variants on that theme. These variants aren't simple tweaks, and are more than simply advancing or removing Hit Dice, though that occurs as well. Each of these three variations on the monster's theme has a specific, flavorful goal in mind, and a role to play, and their statistics entries are gently massaged in order to make them fit those roles. Further, each of these variants comes with brand new specially-crafted special abilities, which are unique to *Exotic Encounters* and not found anywhere else.

This particular installment of *Exotic Encounters* focuses on the centaur. These icons of Greek mythology have fulfilled many roles in fantasy media, from savage barbarian stand-ins for Mongols, Huns, and other nomadic horselords, to fey-like guardians of nature and wilderness, with many roles in between. In Pathfinder, their lowly CR 3 status and the fact that their horselike bodies don't really belong in underground dungeons means that many adventurers may never encounter one, but the new centaurs in this book may just change all that. The first such centaur, the plainsrunner centaur (CR 4) ties into the image of centaurs as steppedwelling nomads, and these centaurs are exceptionally fast and agile, making for incredibly maneuverable opponents. The second centaur in the book, the skyborn centaur (CR 6), is partially celestial in nature, and has great white wings that allow it to fly through the air. It specializes in jousting and duels, and is incredibly proficient at charging with a lance. Finally, the **nightcharger centaur** (**CR 8**) is the spawn of a night hag and a nightmare, and combines their most dreaded powers in new and unusual ways, as well as having its own curse of doom ability, which blocks its victims from having any lucky breaks, and exacerbates the effects of bad luck.

Plainsrunner Centaur

The creature before you appears as a powerful creamcolored stallion from the waist down, but has the appearance of a warrior from the waist up, his bare chest revealing rippling muscles and tan skin, his dark brown hair tied back in a ponytail bound by a leather thong. He hefts his spear in one hand and charges towards you.

CENTAUR, PLAINSRUNNER

CR 4

XP 1,200

N Large monstrous humanoid

Init +11; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 15 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, +1 natural, +2 shield, -1 size) hp 37 (5d10+10) Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +6; -2 vs. fear

OFFENSE

Speed 70 ft.

Melee longspear +7 ($1d8+4/x_3$), 2 hooves +1 (1d6+1) Ranged spear +8 ($1d8+3/x_3$) Space 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft. (10 ft. with longspear)

STATISTICS

Str 15, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 12 Base Atk +5; CMB +8; CMD 20 (24 vs. trip) Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Run Skills Diplomacy +6, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (nature) +5, Perception +12, Survival +10 Languages Common, Elven, Sylvan SQ burst of speed, fleet of foot, skittish, spear mastery, undersized weapons

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate forests and plains **Organization** solitary, pair, band (3-10 plus 2 hunters of 3rd level and 1 leader of 6th level) **Treasure** standard (heavy wooden shield, longspear, five

spears, studded leather armor, other treasure)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Burst of Speed (Ex): Once per day, a plainsrunner centaur can call upon reserves of inner energy, which allow it to act with incredible speed. While benefitting from this ability, the plainsrunner centaur's base movement speed is doubled (increasing to 140 feet), and it can take an additional standard action each round. As long as the plainsrunner centaur is benefitting from this ability, at the beginning of its turn each round, it must succeed on a Constitution check (DC 10 + 1 for each previous round) or the effect ends immediately and the plainsrunner centaur becomes exhausted for 1 round, after which it is fatigued for 1 minute.

Fleet of Foot (Ex): A plainsrunner centaur is capable of retaining grace and clarity even while moving swiftly. The plainsrunner centaur suffers no penalty on Survival checks made to track regardless of the speed at which it is moving, even if it is running. Additionally, the plainsrunner centaur suffers only half the normal penalties to Stealth checks for moving faster than half its speed. Finally, whenever the plainsrunner centaur uses the run action, it can make a single turn of up to 90 degrees at any point during its movement. All other rules for running apply normally.

Skittish (Ex): Plainsrunner centaurs are always on alert, giving them unusually keen powers of perception and ensuring that they are always ready for a fight long before it breaks out, but also leaving them vulnerable to tactics that prey on this hyper-awareness. Plainsrunner centaurs gain a +4 bonus on Initiative checks and Perception checks, but suffer a -2 penalty on saving throws made to resist fear effects.

Spear Mastery (Ex): Plainsrunner centaurs are welltrained at fighting with longspears and are able to use their unusual body structure to better suit them while wielding a spear. Plainsrunner centaurs gain a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls made with a spear or longspear. Additionally, whenever the plainsrunner centaur uses the attack or fullattack action with a longspear, he can choose to treat the weapon as though it did not have reach for the purposes of that attack.

Undersized Weapons (Ex): Although a plainsrunner centaur is Large, its upper torso is the same size as that of a Medium humanoid. As a result, they wield weapons as if they were one size category smaller than their actual size (Medium for most centaurs).

Ecology

Plainsrunner centaurs have much in common with the average centaur, and are notable primarily for their ability to move with incredible speed, both at their natural pace, which is much faster than that of the average centaur, and through their unique bursts of speed, which not only allow them to run incredibly fast, but also transform them into terrifying, lightning-faster berserkers on the battlefield.

As their name implies, plainsrunner centaurs are found primarily in large, flat, open terrain, especially plains and grasslands. They tend to lead nomadic lives, which tend to be very simple. Often, plainsrunner centaurs forgo even simple tents, sleeping beneath the stars. They are generally very wary of outsiders, especially non-centaurs, and are quick to anger and even violence, if they believe that they are being threatened or taken advantage of, but if treated well, they are usually trustworthy, if not precisely friendly, to others. Rarely, a plainsrunner centaur becomes enamored of some aspect of modern living, and decides to leave his clan and set out into the world as an adventurer or merchant. Many of these plainsrunner centaurs eventually join more permanent communities that consist primarily of more standard centaurs.

Skyborn Centaur

The creature before you appears to be a centaur at first glance, but as you look more closely, you see that it has a pair of snow-white wings tucked up against its side, which unfold with a graceful gesture as the creature springs into the air, its hooves gleaming with a silvery light.

CENTAUR, SKYBORN

CR 6

XP 2,400 NG Large monstrous humanoid Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +7 Aura sphere of grace (10 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 18 (+6 armor, +2 Dex, +1 natural, +2 shield, -1 size) hp 68 (8d10+24) Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +8

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft., fly 50 ft. (good); 35 ft. in armor
Melee lance +9/+4 (1d8+3/x3), 4 hooves +4 (1d6+1 plus 1d6 vs. evil creatures)
Ranged spear +9 (1d8+2/x3)
Space 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft. (10 ft. with lance)
Special Attack smite evil (1/day)

STATISTICS

Str 15, Dex 14, Con 17, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 14 Base Atk +8; CMB +11; CMD 23 (27 vs. trip) Feats Combat Reflexes, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Run Skills Diplomacy +10, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (nature) +8, Perception +9, Survival +13 Languages Common, Elven, Sylvan SQ aerial combatant, celestial shod, superior jousting, undersized weapons

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate forests and plains Organization solitary, pair, squad (4 – 8) Treasure standard (breastplate, heavy steel shield, lance, spear, other treasure)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Aerial Combatant (Ex): While flying, a skyborn centaur is able to use all four of its hoof natural attacks. When the skyborn centaur is not flying, it is only able to use two of its hoof natural attacks.

Celestial Shod (Su): A skyborn centaur's hooves are as hard as steel, and have a silvery sheen to them. Its hoof natural attacks overcome damage reduction as though they were both silver and good-aligned, and deal an additional 1d6 points of damage to evil targets. **Sphere of Grace (Su):** A skyborn centaur exudes a palpable aura of holy energy which is invigorating for good-aligned characters and frightening to evil-aligned characters. Any good-aligned characters within 10 feet of the skyborn centaur gain the benefits of the *aid* spell for as long as they remain within 10 feet of the skyborn centaur. Evil-aligned characters within 10 feet of the skyborn centaur must succeed on a Will save (DC 16) or become shaken for as long as they remain within 10 feet of the skyborn centaur, and for 1d4 rounds thereafter. An evil-aligned creature that succeeds on this saving throw is immune to this effect for 24 hours. The part of this ability that affects evil-aligned characters is a good mindaffecting fear effect, and the saving throw DC is Charismabased.

Superior Jousting (Ex): Skyborn centaurs are masters of mounted combat, and are experts at using their lances to devastating effect. Whenever a skyborn centaur uses the charge action, he can move up to three times his speed, rather than only up to twice his speed. Additionally, if he moves more than twice his speed as part of the charge, then his lance deals three times as much damage as it normally would (typically 3d8+9). This bonus damage is multiplied in the event of a critical hit.

Undersized Weapons (Ex): Although a skyborn centaur is Large, its upper torso is the same size as that of a Medium humanoid. As a result, they wield weapons as if they were one size category smaller than their actual size (Medium for most skyborn centaurs).

Ecology

These rare and majestic creatures are the result of a union between a good-aligned outsider and a pegasus, although in rare cases, they can also be born of the union between a good-aligned outsider and a centaur who is pure of heart and mind. Most skyborn centaurs become holy warriors, and they have a fierce and righteous anger towards the wicked, who they slay without remorse. To those with at least reasonably-pure hearts (ie., non-evil characters), a skyborn centaur is typically quite warm and gentle, however, showing a softer side that one could not guess at while watching them trample demonic foes beneath their glorious silver hooves.

Though they are not outsiders and are almost always born on the material plane, skyborn centaurs are typically taken by their outsider parent (oftentimes along with the skyborn centaur's mundane parent) and raised in one of the upper plains, where they cavort amongst the clouds, and, in most cases, eventually join one of several celestial legions. Those that do not wish for a military life are free to do as they choose, however, and many skyborn centaurs choose to return to the material plane, where they often serve as the leader (and moral compass) to a band of roving centaurs.

Nightcharger Centaur

The creature before you appears to be a proud, muscle-bound black horse with a midnight-black coat, but where its head should be arises the twisted torso of a coalskinned humanoid, his body misshapen and twisted, with strange growths of unusual muscle. His skin is covered with warts and blisters and his lank black hair obscures his ashen face, except for his eyes, which burn with a crimson glow.

CENTAUR, NIGHTCHARGER

CR 8

XP 4,800

N Large monstrous humanoid

Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +15

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 18 (+6 armor, +2 Dex, +1 natural, +2 shield, -1 size) hp 85 (10d10+30) Fort +5, Ref +9, Will +9

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.; 35 ft. in armor Melee longsword +14/+9 (1d8+4/19-20), 2 hooves +6 (1d6+2 plus 1d6 fire) Ranged spear +11 (1d8+2/x3) Space 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft. Special Attacks curse of doom, dream haunting, ethereal step

STATISTICS

Str 19, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 16 Base Atk +10; CMB +15; CMD 27 (31 vs. trip) Feats Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Run, Toughness, Weapon Focus (longsword) Skills Diplomacy +13, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (nature) +10, Perception +10, Survival +15 Languages Common, Elven, Sylvan SQ undersized weapons ECOLOGY

Environment temperate forests and plains **Organization** solitary, pair, band (3-10 plus 2 hunters of 3rd level and 1 leader of 6th level) **Treasure** standard (breastplate, heavy steel shield, longsword, spear, other treasure)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Curse of Doom (Su): As a standard action, a nightcharger centaur can pronounce a curse of doom on a single creature within 60 feet that it can see and hear. That creature must succeed on a Will save (DC 16) or fall under the curse. Creatures affected by the curse are incapable of achieving a critical success on any rolls (including critical hits), and whenever the character rolls a critical failure, he also suffers 2d6 points of damage. Damage inflicted in this way does not heal naturally, and cannot be healed magically unless the caster succeeds on a caster level check (DC 20). A nightcharger centaur's curse of doom can only be lifted by *break enchantment*, or more powerful magic, although the nightcharger centaur can only have one creature affected by his curse of doom at any given time. If he uses the ability on another creature, the first creature is no longer affected.

Dream Haunting (Su): A nightcharger centaur can visit the dreams of chaotic or evil targets by becoming ethereal, then standing over the creature, pinning it down with its ethereal hooves. The sleeper suffers tormenting dreams and takes 1d6 points of damage per hour that the nightcharger centaur maintains this effect. It is very difficult for a character affected by this ability to awaken, as the nightcharger centaur metaphysically "pins" the target's spirit down, and even after eight hours of sleep he will not awaken on his own. The character can attempt a Will save (DC 18) once per hour to awaken. A success ends the effect (although if the creature resumes sleeping, the nightcharger centaur can begin again. Other creatures can attempt to waken the affected creature as a standard action, and this allows the affected creature to make a new saving throw to awaken with a + 2 bonus. If the affected creature suffers damage of any kind from any source other than the nightcharger centaur, he awakens immediately, ending the effect. Alternatively, another ethereal being can stop the nightcharger centaur by confronting and defeating it. The saving throw DC is Charisma-based.

Ethereal Step (Sp): A nightcharger centaur can enter the ethereal plane as a standard action. This functions as *etherealness*, except that the nightcharger centaur can remain in the ethereal plane indefinitely. The nightcharger centaur can return from the ethereal plane as a standard action. The nightcharger centaur can use this ability three times per day (returning to the material plane does not count as a daily use of this ability).

Smoke (Su): As a standard action, a nightcharger centaur's can exhale a cloud of black smoke that chokes and blinds foes, filling a 15-foot radius burst centered on the nightcharger centaur. Anyone in the area must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 17) or become sickened until 1d6 minutes after leaving the area. The smoke acts as *obscuring mist* for the purposes of concealment. The smoke persists for a number of rounds equal to the nightcharger centaur's Constitution modifier (typically 2). The save DC is Constitution-based.

Undersized Weapons (Ex): Although a centaur is Large, its upper torso is the same size as that of a Medium humanoid. As a result, they wield weapons as if they were one size category smaller than their actual size (Medium for most centaurs).

Ecology

These horrible creatures are the result of a night hag coupling with a nightmare, an event that occurs far more frequently than many would care to consider. The horrible, twisted creatures always have incredibly ugly human features, although their equine parts are largely normal in appearance. They are almost universally evil and cruel, often far more so than either of their parents, and their sadistic streak knows no bounds. Permission to copy, modify and distribute the files collectively known as the System Reference Document ("SRD") is granted solely through the use of the Open Gaming License, Version 1.0a.

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There are all kinds of reasons why you might not want to use a monster stat-block straight from the core rules. For one thing, if your players have a habit of browsing through such books, or are long-time veterans who know the basic ins and outs of most fantasy staples, you may need an unusual stat-block just to throw them a curve ball and teach them that they can't count on their out of character knowledge to take all the mystery out of the game. Alternatively, many GMs can recall a time when they wanted to make use of a certain monster in their game, only to find that it was a few QRs too high or low for what they had in mind.

Geotic Gneounters takes a single, iconic monster, and creates three new variants on that theme. These variants aren't simple tweaks, and are more than simply advancing or removing hit Dice, though that occurs as well. Each of these three variations on the monster's theme has a specific, flavorful goal in mind, and a role to play, and their statistics entries are gently massaged in order to make them fit those roles. Further, each of these variants comes with brand new specially-crafted special abilities, which are unique to *Exotic Encounters* and not found anywhere else.

This particular installment of Gootic Gnounters focuses on the centaur. These icons of Greek mythology have fulfilled many roles in fantasy media, from savage barbarian stand-ins for Mongols, Juns, and other nomadic horselords, to fey-like guardians of nature and wilderness, with many roles in between. In *Pathfinder*, their lowly CR 3 status and the fact that their horselike bodies don't really belong in underground dungeons means that many adventurers may never encounter one, but the new centaurs in this book may just change all that. The first such centaur, the plainsrunner centaur (CR 4) ties into the image of centaurs as steppe-dwelling nomads, and these centaurs are exceptionally fast and agile, making for incredibly maneuverable opponents. The second centaur in the book, the skyborn centaur (CR 6), is partially edestial in nature, and has great white wings that allow it to fly through the air. It specializes in jousting and duels, and is incredibly proficient at charging with a lance. Finally, the nightcharger centaur (CR 8) is the spawn of a night hag and a nightmare, and combines their most dreaded powers in new and unusual ways, as well as having its own curse of doom ability, which blocks its victims from having any ludy breaks, and cencerbates the effects of bad luck.

