

MAGEBEAST - Playtest Version

Nimble creatures born of magic who easily wield eldritch forces.

RACIAL TRAITS

Average Height: 1'0"-1'6" at the shoulder (about the size of a medium dog)

Average Weight: 55-65 lb.

Ability Scores: +2 Constitution, and either +2 Charisma or +2 Intelligence

Size: Small

Speed: 6 squares

Vision: Low-light

Languages: Common, choice of one other

Skill Bonuses: +2 Arcana, +2 Endurance

Magical Construct: You are considered a magical construct. You still eat, breath, and sleep like normal creatures, however you do not age.

Eldritch Body: You can absorb an item's magical powers (see sidebar)

Racial Ability: You gain Absorb Energy as an encounter power.

Absorb Energy

Magebeast Racial Power

You use the energy of an opponent's attack to protect yourself and prepare a counterattack.

Encounter

Free Action

Close Burst 1

Trigger: You, or an ally in the area, are missed by an attack with an energy keyword (Cold, Fire, Force, Lightning, Necrotic, Psychic, Radiant, Thunder) or make a saving throw against an ongoing effect.

Target: You

Effect: You gain temporary hit points equal to you Constitution bonus. If you are bloodied, you gain twice that amount. In addition, until the end of your next turn, the next attack that you make gains a +1 racial bonus to hit and damage equal to your Constitution bonus. The temporary hit points gained and bonus to damage increases to your Constitution modifier +2 at 11th level and your Constitution modifier +4 at 21st level.

Magebeasts are creatures born of magic. Some are deliberate magical creations whereas others are the product of arcane accidents. Most appear as quadrupedal animals, such as canines, felines or drakes. There is an elven legend of a powerful and proud wizard that offended the gods. He was punished by the Forest Lord, forced to wear the shape of an animal, and elves claim that he was the first magebeast. Consequently, magebeasts are usually viewed with pity in elven society.

Play a magebeast if you want...

* to be an exotic, intelligent animal

* to play a resilient character that is often underestimated.

* to be a member or a race that favors implement wielding classes, especially the bard, warlock, or wizard classes.

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Illustration #1

PHYSICAL QUALITIES

Magebeasts vary in shape and coloration. Superficially, they resemble either medium sized dogs, large cats, or small drakes. Regardless of appearance, they all have retractable claws, sharp teeth and are able to speak normal languages. Their bodies are stronger and heavier than their appearance would indicate, though it takes a trained eye to distinguish them from the normal animals that they resemble. Most often, it is the intelligence in their eyes or their non-animal behavior that reveals them for what they are.

Magebeast blood however is very distinct. It is a thick greenish fluid that glows slightly in the dark and evaporates quickly when exposed to air, boiling away in a few minutes. This leaves a distinct smell of ozone in the area which can last for hours.

Despite the fact that Magebeasts are created creatures and are considered magical constructs, they still breath, eat and sleep like normal creatures. They suffer from typical physical ailments that normal creatures are subject to (such as disease, fatigue or poison). However, they do not age. Most magebeasts are also sterile, though there are persistent rumors that some are able to bear offspring.

Eldritch Body

At the end of a long rest, you are able to use a ritual to absorb the power of a magical weapon, implement or armor that you possess. You must maintain physical contact with the item for the full hour it takes the ritual to cast. This ritual has no material component cost other than the target item (which loses its magic).

You are only able to transfer the enchantment for items that you are proficient in, and once you do so, your Eldritch Body counts as the appropriate weapon, implement or armor for purposes of feats, powers, abilities or other prerequisites.

You gain the properties, enhancement bonuses, powers and bonus critical damage of the item absorbed. In addition, once you absorb a magical weapon or armor of the appropriate type, you are able to project a field of force with the same physical characteristics of the item and you may wield that force object as proficiently as a small humanoid creature would. This allows you to use weapon powers with the appropriate weapon damage dice and weapon properties. Projectile weapons that require ammunition cannot be used unless the ammunition is present in your square or is carried by you. Absorbed armor also provides the defense of equivalent armor, including special abilities given to higher level armor made from special materials.

Absorbed magic can be removed from your body without harm and turned into residuum through a normal Disenchant Magic Item ritual.

If you have absorbed more than one weapon or implement, you must choose which one you are using when you make an attack. You can have up to two items active, either an implement or a weapon, and switching to another weapon or implement that you have absorbed takes a minor action. As normal, you may not attack with more than one weapon or implement unless you have other feats or abilities that allow you to do so.

You may only have one magic armor absorbed as active. If you have absorbed more than one, pick one to be your active armor. You may switch to a different one after a short rest.

PLAYING A MAGEBEAST

Since they are quite rare, either being the construction of a powerful being or the result of a magical accident, magebeasts have no true society. Most often, they take on the habits and practices of their creators. The rare few that had normal lives before they were transformed into magebeasts either try to acclimate themselves to their new form in their old society or reject familiar haunts outright and seek out a new place to make their home.

Notes on habits: Due to their natures, they are quite comfortable around magical forces. Lack of tools. Inconspicuous.

Notes on behavior by body type.

Notes on differences between Created vs. Accident, as well as effects of ageless.

Adventuring in Animal Form

Having an animal form creates a few problems for adventuring magebeasts. They are not able to wield most tools or manipulate objects like humanoids can. Some take feats or powers to rectify this, but for the most part, they depend on party members for tasks that require manual dexterity. Their small size also prevents them from wielding the most effective weapons. Classes that use implements are therefore preferred over weapon wielding classes.

Magebeast Characteristics: Whether due to people's reaction to their appearance, or their own intrinsic natures, magebeasts tend to have typical traits depending on their physical form.

- Canine - bold, brave, eager, friendly, loyal, trustworthy
- Feline - graceful, patient, secretive, sneaky, thoughtful
- Drake - agile, proud, quick, tenacious, territorial, wild

Magebeast Names: Magebeasts are most often named according to the culture of their creators or according to a physical characteristic or habit such as Spike, Longtooth, Snow, or Gnaw.

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DUNGEONS & DRAGONS 4th Edition PLAYER'S HANDBOOK, written by Rob Heinsoo, Andy Collins, and James Wyatt; DUNGEON MASTER'S GUIDE, written by James Wyatt; and MONSTER MANUAL, written by Mike Mearls, Stephen Schubert and James Wyatt; PLAYER'S HANDBOOK 2, written by Jeremy Crawford, Mike Mearls, and James Wyatt; MONSTER MANUAL 2, written by Rob Heinsoo, and Chris Sims; Adventurer's Vault, D&D 4E Game System License ©2008, 2009 Wizards of the Coast page 3 of 7 written by Logan Bonner, Eytan Bernstein, and Chris Sims. © 2008, 2009 Wizards of the Coast. All rights reserved.



MAGEBEAST ADVENTURERS

Three sample magebeast adventurers are described below.

Jonnie is a magebeast battlemind. He was born to rich human merchants, and since the day of his birth, strange things happened around him. Objects randomly floated and shadows chased themselves. Thinking to develop this magical gift, his parents enrolled him in the Imperial Academy at a very young age. Unfortunately, his abilities were not magical, but rather psionic in nature and that miscalculation resulted in a tragic magical accident. It left his mind in the body of one of the hunting hounds in the imperial kennels. That accident was several centuries ago and the empire has since splintered into squabbling kingdoms and petty states. He now wanders the land, occasionally checking up on the descendants of both his siblings, as well as the hidden imperial line he helped smuggle into safety when the capital fell.

Laeshanni is a magebeast bard. Her lynx-like form was crafted by a powerful eladrin wizard to serve as a guardian and companion to his heir. The son was a wild and willful sort and it took all of Laeshanni's patience and watchfulness to keep him out of trouble. She has become quite skilled in stealth and surveillance tactics as a result. She prefers to watch from the shadows and speaks rarely, except when delivering yet another lecture or lesson plan. Several years ago, the son disappeared without a trace while she was away on a task given by the wizard. She is now actively hunting around the neighboring lands looking for clues about his disappearance.

Split-tail is a magebeast sorcerer. He has a yellow frill around his head and his blue scaly hide have striped patterns of black and red. He, and his drake clutch mates, were created by an ancient blue dragon to help protect its cavern complex. Unknown to the group, the dragon was slain several decades ago while it was away from its lair and now the clutch guard a cave full of treasure with no master. Split-tail managed to exert his authority over the others and have convinced them of the need to venture forth to find more information. He has volunteered to go on this expedition with a plan to return as soon as he gets information about the whereabouts of their master or until 10 years pass. Secretly, he hopes that he can find someone with enough magical skill to decipher the rituals used for his creation so that he may find a mate.

Feats

Arcane Hand

Prerequisite: Magebeast

Benefit: You gain the use of the wizard class feature Mage Hand, except that you activate or sustain it as a move action instead of a minor action unless you already possess the class feature. When manipulating objects in your own square, or adjacent squares, you may use your normal Strength score. As soon as an object moves further away, it abides by the normal limitations of Mage Hand.

Arcane Rush

Prerequisite: Magebeast, Warlock's Curse class feature

Benefit: - Instead of your normal pact boon ability you can instead attempt to empower yourself by absorbing the life energy of your cursed target. When your pact boon triggers, instead of the normal effect, you can roll a saving throw against an ongoing effect or add an energy type to the next attack you make until the end of your next turn. Choose from Cold, Fire, Force, Lightning, Necrotic, Psychic, Radiant, or Thunder. Your next attack gains that keyword in addition to its normal effects and keywords.

Energy Conversion

Prerequisite: Magebeast, Psionic Augmentation class feature

Benefit: When you use your Absorb Energy racial power, instead of gaining temporary hit points, you may instead recover 1 power point. This increases to 2 power points at 21st level.

Improved Absorb Energy

Prerequisite: Magebeast, Absorb Energy racial power

Benefit: The area of effect is increased to Close Burst 5 and you can apply your bonus to hit and damage to all of your attacks until the end of your next turn.

Improved Eldritch Body

Prerequisite: Magebeast, Eldritch Body racial feature

Benefit: You are able to use your Eldritch Body feature as if you were a medium sized humanoid and you can switch between absorbed implements or weapons as a free action during your turn.

Magic Infused Body

Prerequisite: Magebeast, Paragon Tier

Benefit: Increase the number of your healing surges by 2 and add your Constitution modifier to your healing surge value.

Mageblood Fury

Prerequisite: Magebeast, Sorcerer

Benefit: When your Absorb Energy racial power is triggered, if your next attack is a sorcerer at-will or encounter attack power, it deals half damage on a miss.

Mnemonic Spellbook

Prerequisite: Spellbook Class Feature

Benefit: You are able to remember all of the esoteric formulas needed for your spells and do not need a physical spellbook. You are also able to remember rituals without the need for a physical ritual book. This feat does not reduce the cost or time to learn spells or master any rituals.

Runescribed Hide

Prerequisite: Magebeast, Swordmage Warding class feature

Benefit: At the beginning of your turn, instead of applying your Swordmage Warding bonus to AC, you may instead apply it as a power bonus to either your Fortitude, Reflex, or Will defense. This effect lasts until the beginning of your next turn.

Shed Magic

Prerequisite: Magebeast

Benefit: When you use your Second Wind, you may also make a saving throw. If this saving throw is against ongoing damage, you gain a +5 bonus to the roll.

Classes ideal for Magebeasts: Bard, Warlocks, Wizards, Sorcerer, Battlemind, Swordmage, Psion, Artificer, Ardent

Paragon Paths

Arcane Nexus - constructs only, boost construct traits, absorb energy to boost others, Leader

Soulblade - Prereq: Eldritch Body or Ki Focus, bonuses when using ki or EB weapon, Striker

Mageblood Adept - construct or fey origin, spend healing surges to power magic, Striker

Monster Stats

Skirmisher 5, 18

Artillery 7, 20

Controller (leader) 6, 19

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Designer Notes

The Eldritch Body class feature is mostly designed to mitigate the inability of creatures without hands to wield normal items. If a Magebeast had hands or the ability to wear normal armor, then it can be dropped without any trouble. Since enhancement bonuses from items are needed for balance, I couldn't just leave their use out. I also didn't like the idea of just giving them inherent bonuses to attacks/defense without items, though I did consider it.

I think their racial ability is balanced. The frequency of the trigger will vary tremendously, giving the PC limited control. It's less temp hit points than warforged get and the bonus to attack is also smaller than others, especially considering the fact that it's applied prior to an attack rather than after like half-orcs, and is not guaranteed to hit unlike Tieflings.

I still need to check through DDI to see if there are any overlap of names or powers.

Some feats might be better suited as alternate racial powers that could be swapped in for normal powers.

Need to get a clearer answer from WotC on whether or not all future classes will have Themes incorporated into their structure, in which case I can construct a magebeast racial Theme.

Need to come up with more class and power source specific feats, fill out the paragon paths, and write up the monster versions of magebeasts.

Need illustrations.

Need to reformat to double columns.

Need to edit everything.

Email any comments to cedric@familiar-ground.com