



A LITTLE MORE FAMILIAR

A Sorcerer's Best Friend

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The Company of Five chose a table far from the others as they discussed raiding the fortress of the Wizard of the Black Oaks. Only a scruffy tavern dog lay nearby, curled up before the hearth. "The wizard lives alone," Glamring said. "Shunning the company of others."

"Save, perhaps, for the creatures of the Black Forest," said Meela. "It is said the wizard has many familiars at his command."

"Bah, simple beasts," Kronig said with a dismissive wave of his hand. "I've hunted far worse in the frozen north. Whatever menagerie this wizard commands, it will be no match for us."

The companions talked well into the night. None of them thought anything of it when the hound beside the fire stretched and trotted out into the darkened streets, breaking into a run at the edge of town. My master will be most interested in this, the familiar thought, as the distant trees of the Black Forest beckoned him home.

They are companions, pets, allies, helpers, spies, and friends to wizards and sorcerers, but they're also frequently overlooked and underestimated. They're familiars.

In legend, familiars were often considered spirits, or even demons, that took the form of animals. They are attributed special powers that they use in the service of their masters.

In *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS*, familiars are magical beasts that serve as companions and allies. Wizards and sorcerers are able to select a familiar starting at 1st level. While the system for familiars presented in the *Player's Handbook* provides all the basic information a player needs, there is much more to familiars than meets the eye.

New Familiars

Players and Dungeon Masters might enjoy adding these new familiars to their game:

Bird: A number of different birds can serve as familiars. Birds have the advantage of flight, making them excellent spies and messengers. Typical bird familiars include night birds like owls, along with birds of prey like hawks, falcons, and eagles. Seagoing mages might have gulls or even pelicans as familiars.

Owls have superb night vision, but they tend to be inactive during the day.

Crow and parrot familiars can speak one language (usually Common) in a croaking voice. Predatory birds can hunt or be fed fresh meat (crows will also eat carrion). Other birds generally eat seeds, nuts, and berries.

Dog: Man's best friend can also be an arcanist's best familiar. Dogs have the advantage of being common companions for all kinds of people, so they tend to draw less attention than exotic familiars. They're typically friendly, and they're easy to feed and take care of. Dogs can use their superb senses of smell and hearing to see past simple deceptions. Dog familiars grant their owners a +2 bonus to Sense Motive checks.

Fox: Swift and cunning foxes have long held magical associations. Fox familiars might be of the typical reddish variety or white like the arctic fox, and they display exceptional cleverness. Foxes are found in different types of terrain, and they are carnivores. They're good hunters and even better at evading predators. Fox familiars grant their spellcasters a +2 bonus to Reflex saves.

Hare: The larger cousin of the rabbit, hares are often associated with magic (as the modern magician's feat of

pulling a rabbit from a hat shows). Hares tend to be skittish, although hare familiars are much braver than others of their kind are. They have keen senses of smell and hearing and are swift runners and jumpers. Hare familiars grant their owners a +2 bonus to Listen checks. They eat all sorts of vegetables.

Lizard: A wide variety of small lizards are suitable as familiars, including geckos, iguanas, chameleons, and similar creatures. They tend to be found in warm (usually tropical) forested areas. Lizards are sinuous and usually good climbers, more at home in the treetops than on the ground. They eat insects and small animals, and usually prefer live food, although most will also eat fresh meat or sometimes fruit. Lizard familiars grant their masters a +2 bonus to Climb checks.

Mouse: No familiar is as small and innocuous as a simple mouse, able to move almost anywhere unseen. Mouse familiars provide their masters with a +2 bonus to Hide checks. Mice cannot do any damage in combat. They eat vegetables and grains, primarily.

Otter: Clever otters are amphibious, living near a river, lake, or sea. They're excellent swimmers and divers. Their paws are dexterous enough to crack open the shells of crustaceans and catch fish. An otter familiar grants its master a +2 bonus to Swim checks.

Raccoon: Raccoons are well known for the black "mask" of fur on their faces, making them look like stereotypical burglars. They live up to this reputation by cleverly finding their way into food stores and the like, using their paws almost like hands. Raccoons are found in a variety of climates and eat a wide

FAMILIAR BONUS CHART

Familiar	Bonus
Bird	varies
Dog	+2 Sense Motive
Fox	+2 Reflex saves
Hare	+2 Listen
Lizard	+2 Climb
Mouse	+2 Hide
Otter	+2 Swim
Raccoon	+2 Pick Pockets
Skunk	musk attack
Squirrel	+2 Reflex saves

range of foods (as any camper or farmer will attest). Raccoon familiars grant a +2 bonus to Pick Pockets checks to their masters.

Skunk: The skunk is renowned for its primary means of defense: spraying a foul-smelling musk at its enemies. This musk requires the skunk to make a successful ranged touch attack at a target within 10 feet. Success means the target must make a Fortitude save (DC 14) or be nauseated for 1d4 rounds. A skunk familiar's master is immune to the musk attacks of all skunks. Only one target can be affected by the musk, and it can only be used once per day. Skunks are omnivorous and particularly enjoy eating insects.

Squirrel: Squirrels are excellent climbers and jumpers. Their teeth are strong enough to gnaw through soft wood, leather, or rope, given a few minutes. Their paws are also dexterous enough to pick up small objects and hold them (although they can't carry them, since they walk on all fours). They eat fruits, nuts, and grains. A master with a squirrel familiar gains a +2 bonus to Reflex saves.

NEW FAMILIARS

Dog: as listed in the *Monster Manual*.

Fox: CR 1/4; Tiny Animal; HD 1/2 d8+1; hp 5; Init +4 (Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 17 (+2 size, +4 Dex, +1 natural); Atk +1 melee (1d3, bite); SQ scent; Face 2 1/2 ft. by 2 1/2 ft.; Reach 0 ft.; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +1; Str 10, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 7.

Skills: Hide +4, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Spot +2, Swim +2, Wilderness Lore +1*. Foxes have a +4 racial bonus to Wilderness Lore checks when tracking by scent.

Hare: CR —; Tiny Animal; HD 1/2 d8; hp 4; Init +4 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+2 size, +4 Dex); Atk none; SQ scent; Face 2 1/2 ft. by 2 1/2 ft.; Reach 0 ft.; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +1; Str 3, Dex 18, Con 11, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 7.

Skills: Hide +5, Jump +12, Listen +8, Spot +2.

Lizard: as listed in the *Monster Manual*.

Mouse: CR —; Fine Animal; HD 1/4 d8; hp 1; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 15 ft., climb 15 ft.; AC 20 (+8 size, +2 Dex); Atk none; SQ scent; Face 1/2 ft. by 1/2 ft.; Reach 0 ft.; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 2, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 3.

Skills: Balance +10, Climb +10, Hide +26, Move Silently +10.

Otter: CR —; Tiny Animal; HD 1/2 d8; hp 2; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 20 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 14 (+2 Dex, +2 size); Atk none; SQ scent; Face 2 1/2 ft. by 2 1/2 ft.; Reach 0 ft.; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 3, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 7.

Skills: Hide +14, Move Silently +6, Swim +10.

Raccoon: CR 1/3; Tiny Animal; HD 1d8+2; hp 6; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+2 size, +3 Dex, +1 natural); Atk +2 melee (1d4+1, bite); SQ scent; Face 2 1/2 ft. by 2 1/2 ft.; Reach 0 ft.; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 5.

Skills: Hide +6, Listen +5, Move Silently +10, Spot +4, Swim +2.

Skunk: CR 1/4; Tiny Animal; HD 1/2 d8; hp 2; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+2 size, +2 Dex); Atk +2 melee (1d3-1, bite); SA musk; SQ scent; Face 2 1/2 ft. by 2 1/2 ft.; Reach 0 ft.; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 5.

Skills: Climb +4, Hide +10, Listen +5, Move Silently +7, Spot +4.

Squirrel: CR —; Diminutive Animal; HD 1/4 d8; hp 1; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 10 ft., climb 15 ft.; AC 17 (+4 size, +3 Dex); Atk none; SQ scent; Face 1 ft. by 1 ft.; Reach 0 ft.; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 2, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills: Climb +15, Hide +22, Move Silently +11, Listen +9. Squirrels gain a +4 racial bonus to Climb, Hide, and Move Silently checks.

New Animals

Players are not necessarily limited to the list of animals above. Nearly any small animal can be suitable as a familiar, given the DM's permission. Campaign worlds might even include new animals unknown on Earth, like the otak from Ursula K. LeGuin's *Wizard of Earthsea*, or the jhereg from Steven Brust's novel of the same name. New familiar types should fall into the general range of abilities given in the *Player's Handbook*.

Familiar Feats

Wizards and sorcerers can acquire a number of feats relating to their familiars. These feats generally improve the

FAMILIAR TIP

Familiars can be useful allies for characters of any class. Rogues can use a clever raccoon or crow familiars as an extra pair of hands or eyes in their work (to say nothing of having an ally to help them get out of tight spots). A performing animal can be part of a bard's act. Clerics might have familiars sacred to their deity, while familiars for rangers or barbarians can serve as guides, companions, and helpers in the wilderness.

abilities of the familiar, making it more useful to its master, but they are only available to a wizard or sorcerer with a familiar. At the DM's option, they might also be available to druids with animal companions.

ENSPELL FAMILIAR

General

You can cast spells on your familiar over a distance.

Benefit: You are always considered to be in contact your familiar for the purpose of casting shared spells. Thus any spell you cast on yourself also affects your familiar, as long as it is within 1 mile of you.

Normal: The familiar must be within 5 feet of the caster at the time such a spell is cast.

EXTRA FAMILIAR

General

You have an additional familiar.

Benefit: By taking this feat you get an additional animal familiar of a type described in the *Player's Handbook* (or this article, with the DM's permission). This familiar can be the same type of animal as your first, or a different type. Existing familiar feats apply to the new familiar. So if you have the Construct Familiar feat, for example, the new familiar you call can be a construct. The sorcerer or wizard gains all the benefits of both familiars, but identical bonuses from multiple familiars don't stack. For example, a wizard with both an owl and a cat familiar receives only a +2 bonus to Move Silently checks, not a +4 bonus.

Special: A character can gain this feat multiple times. Each time you take the feat, you can call another familiar.

Special Familiars

Familiars are normally magical beasts with certain special abilities. By taking one of the following feats when the familiar is called, a wizard or sorcerer can have a special type of familiar with additional abilities. These feats only apply to a familiar or familiars called after the feats are taken; they cannot grant new abilities to a familiar you already have.

CONSTRUCT FAMILIAR

General

Your familiar is a construct rather than a living being.

Benefit: Rather than a living creature, your familiar is a magical construct, a mechanical creature animated by magic. The arcane spellcaster must still specify a specific animal to call as a familiar; the familiar that appears, however, is a construct version of that creature. See page 5 in the *Monster Manual* for construct special qualities. Note that you cannot convert an existing non-construct familiar to a construct familiar by taking this feat.

TOKEN FAMILIAR

General

Your familiar can assume an innocuous, inanimate form.

Benefit: Your familiar can, on command, assume a small, inanimate form, much like a *figurine of wondrous power* (see the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide* for details). The form can be any Diminutive, stone, hand-held object, typically a statuette of the familiar. In this form, the familiar does not require food or care, and it is easy to hide, but its powers are unavailable to you while in its statue form. The familiar in its statuette form still has a mind, but it cannot use any of its senses, special attacks, or special qualities. If its inanimate form is broken or destroyed, the familiar is slain. It can return to its normal form upon command.

UNDEAD FAMILIAR

General

Your familiar is an undead creature.

Benefit: Rather than a living creature, your familiar is an undead version of a normal animal. See page 6 in the *Monster Manual* for undead special qualities. Note that you cannot convert an existing non-undead familiar to an undead familiar by taking this feat,

although if your familiar is slain and you have this feat, you can reanimate your dead familiar with a *raise dead* spell. Undead familiars tend to be associated with characters of evil alignment, particularly necromancers.

Undead familiars can be turned or rebuked. Use the familiar's effective Hit Dice (see the *Player's Handbook*, page 51) for the purposes of turning or rebuking. A familiar fleeing or cowering as the result of a successful turn can't obey commands from the master (any more than it could while fearstruck or paralyzed). Raising a destroyed undead familiar brings it back as a living creature.

Familiar Spells

Spellcasters can use a number of spells to enhance the abilities of their familiars and make them more useful, both in and out of combat. See the *Player's Handbook* for details on these and other spells.

Enlarge: This spell can make a familiar larger and stronger, although it does not improve hit points, Armor Class, and so on.

Mirror Image: Casters can use share spells to cast this spell on their familiars, creating a flurry of familiars to confound opponents.

Polymorph Other: A *polymorph other* spell can turn the familiar into any creature the caster wishes (including a humanoid), while retaining its loyalty, empathic link, and inherent magical abilities (like spell resistance). This can be dangerous, however, especially if the new form is intended for combat purposes.

New Spells

Familiar's Sense

Divination

Level: Sor/Wiz 2

Range: See text

Components: V, S

Duration: 1 minute/level

Casting Time: 1 action

Target: Caster's familiar

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

Familiar's sense allows you to perceive some of what your familiar does, regardless of the distance between you. As a partial action each round for the duration of the spell, you can replace one of your senses with one of your familiar's senses. For example, the

round the spell is cast, you can choose sight and see only through your familiar's eyes. The following round, you can choose hearing and hear only what your familiar hears, but regain your own sight. The familiar doesn't lose any of its senses while you borrow them.

The spell does not grant you the ability to communicate with your familiar if it is outside the range of the empathic link. You use your normal Listen and Spot skills to notice things, modified by the familiar's Alertness feat. Lead or magical protections block the spell.

Familiar's Touch

Conjuration

Level: Sor/Wiz 2

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Components: V, S

Duration: 1 minute/level

Casting Time: 1 action

Target: Caster's familiar

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

After casting this spell, you can cast any spells with a range of Touch through your familiar (your familiar touches the intended target to deliver the spell's effect). Unlike the normal familiar touch ability (see the *Player's Handbook*, page 51), you and your familiar do not need to be in physical contact when the spell is cast. The familiar must still make a touch attack against the target to deliver the spell.

Share Life

Necromancy

Level: Sor/Wiz 2

Range: Touch

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

Casting Time: 1 full round

Target: Caster's familiar

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

Share life allows you to transfer some of your life-force to your familiar. You can transfer a number of hit points equal to your level to your familiar by touch, healing any damage it has suffered by taking the damage onto yourself. You cannot increase your familiar's hit points beyond its normal level; you can only heal damage it has suffered.



Familiar's Form

Necromancy

Level: Sor/Wiz 3

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Components: V, S

Duration: Until the caster returns to his body

Casting Time: 1 full round

Area of Effect: Caster's familiar

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

With a round of concentration, you can transfer your mind and spirit into your familiar's body as if you were using a *magic jar* spell (see the *Player's Handbook* for details). Your familiar's spirit is harmlessly suppressed while you inhabit its body, while your body falls into a death-like trance. You can use your familiar's body as if it were your own. If your familiar is normally capable of speech, you can cast spells with verbal components. If your body is killed while you are in your familiar's form, you become trapped there. If your familiar dies while you are possessing it, you are automatically returned to your own body and suffer the normal effects of your familiar's demise.

You cannot return to your own body unless your familiar is within the range of the spell.

Call Familiar

Transmutation [Teleportation]

Level: Sor/Wiz 3

Range: 1 mile

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

Casting Time: 1 action

Target: Caster's familiar

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

This spell summons your familiar into your presence from up to 1 mile away (within the range of your empathic link). The familiar appears immediately, anywhere within arm's reach of you.

Keeping Your Familiar

When treated well, a familiar makes a valuable companion. Familiars are great for supplying last-minute rescues when the heroes are captured and imprisoned by the villain; they can steal keys, gnaw through ropes, and provide great distractions. Familiars can also run (or hop, or fly) for help when their master is in trouble. A surprise attack from a familiar can distract an enemy at a vital moment, giving the heroes the upper hand. In short, a familiar is a valuable ally for anyone to have.