

KIDS ON BROOMS - FREE CONTENT FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2020

# KIDS ON BROOMS

Presents An Excerpt from

*Professor Bharadvaj's*  
**BOOK OF BEASTS**

By Doug Levandowski

## INTRODUCTION

Having journeyed the world over and seen countless wondrous creatures, I decided to write this tome to explain what to expect when venturing into the unexpected. In this volume, I'll tell you about what you might expect if you encounter a mythical beast, what to do in the terrifying circumstance that you come into conflict with something far scarier than you, and how to record information about any new species you might find.

To put this another way, this document will discuss the kinds of stats that creatures will have, how to create them for your players to face, and how to best manage encounters involving them.

## WHAT TO EXPECT IF YOU ENCOUNTER A MYTHICAL BEAST

It should come as no surprise that the creatures you could encounter in the world will be much different than you or me. Humanoid creatures—such as humans, minotaurs, centaurs, orcs, and the like—are all pretty similar. Sure, some have greener skin over their bones, more bull horns on their heads, or more of a horse-like body below their torso. But in the end, their general “stats” if you will are going to be the same. Everyone is very good at some things and very bad at some things.

This is not so with mythical beasts. Some, like pixies, are very weak, very bad at fighting, quite uncharming, not tough, but are very fast and rather clever. If they’re approached, they’re likely to just flit away. But they can certainly be caught by an especially fast humanoid. Other creatures, like dragons, are the stuff of nightmares when compared to humans. Their strength is far beyond ours, their intellect rivals the greatest scholars, their ability to withstand is beyond ours . . . Simply put, their abilities outstrip ours.

When encountering mythical creatures, do not expect that they will have the same range of strengths and weaknesses as humanoids. Expect, to use the cliché, the unexpected.

To put this in mechanical terms, creatures of a species that isn’t playable may have stats that a playable species could not. While all playable species should be expected to have one stat associated with each of the 6 sizes of dice, non-playable species should not.

The stats for pixies, for example, would be as follows:

PIXIE					
Brains	Brawn	Fight	Flight	Charm	Grit
d12	1	d4	d20	d6	d2

They will be far weaker than the typical character, and a playable character is very likely to survive without any real injuries if a pixie were to attack them physically. Case in point, the pixie does not roll any check for Brawn; it simply always gets a 1.

Many of the stats for a dragon, on the other hand, would be far higher than any playable character's stats would be:

DRAGON					
Brains	Brawn	Fight	Flight	Charm	Grit
d20	d20+20	3d10	d10	d10	2d20

By contrast, dragons would be likely to kill a playable character with a single chomp of their terrible jaws. Facing a dragon in single combat is a nearly surefire way to die. In this case, the dragon, being as large and strong as it is, cannot get lower than a 21 on a Brawn check—more than a player could get without a Lucky Break.

## WHAT TO DO IN THE TERRIFYING CIRCUMSTANCE THAT YOU COME INTO CONFLICT WITH SOMETHING FAR SCARIER THAN YOU

In my travels, I have more than once angered something much more powerful than I am. After all, I am a scholar, not a pugilist or soldier! Usually, it is my wits that have saved my skin from being flambéd, but I know others who have used other skills. Certainly, it depends on the kind of mythical beast that confronts you. Dragons, for example, though powerful in every way, are arrogant because of their pride. Once, when venturing deep into the Lascaux caves to discover their secrets, I found a slumbering dragon whom I accidentally awakened. Though she was none too happy to be roused, I was eventually able to placate her by appealing to her pride.

Another time, when being pursued through the streets of Hyderabad by a disgruntled rakshasa, I managed to be fleet-of-foot enough to hide from it in a crowded alleyway, waiting until the sun came up to confront it directly. Then, with a bit of ingenuity, I managed to set a trap, only agreeing to set it free if it left Hyderabad for good and returned to the wilderness from which it slunk, never to terrorize my beloved city again.

Remember, dear reader, there is always a way to elude death when confronting any beast. Whether your wits supply you with that solution, though, is another matter! Keep your eyes wide and your wits bright for clues as to what might help you!

Thinking about the dragon described earlier, roleplaying, not rolling dice, was key to surviving that encounter. If the creature can be placated, then figuring out what it wants and giving that to it is key. In other cases, creatures have weaknesses that the GM can hint at for the players, making it easier to defeat the monster. But with very powerful creatures, combat isn't likely to be the solution—at least not without finding a way to weaken it first!

## WHAT TO DO WITH THE TENDEREST BEASTS OF THE WORLD

It is also true that, when confronting beasts less formidable than you, destroying them should not be your first response. For one, you never know what monstrosity may live in symbiosis with those weaker creatures. Upsetting a balance in nature could have disastrous effects for you down the road . . . or even immediately. Second, many mythical creatures are protected by the Endangered Fantastical Creatures Registry Act. Having once defended myself in front of the Counsel for the Ethical Use of Magic for a supposed EFCRA violation, I can assure you that even if you are in the right, the mere experience is more than any caster should want to endure. Even if you could swat a pixie from the sky as easily as a dragon could flatten you, consider the longer-term consequences.

While there won't be as many mechanical ways to keep characters from harming creatures weaker than humans, you can certainly throw in narrative reasons that they'll have to handle them in other ways. There is, of course, the rule that using magic to kill results in the character immediately becoming an NPC. But even beyond that, obligate your players to be more creative than just punching something! Or, flip it on its head; they aren't in conflict with the little creatures, they have to save them from something coming after them. Maybe it's a predator. Maybe it's a collector. Whatever it is, you could give them a reason to work with, not against, a creature.

Well, gentle reader, I'll end there at the risk of waxing long. Besides, I remember the days of reading textbooks, and I'd rather you read what I say then begin your exploration of the world around you. Be careful, both for your own and the creatures' sakes, and enjoy! There are such wondrous beasts to find in the world around you, likely many that have never been catalogued! So what are you waiting for? Your class to be over? Cut it! Your parents' permission? Assume it! Go! Discover!