

## **A Familiar Handbook**

### **How to obtain a familiar**

Warlock 3 - Pact of the Chain class option

Wizard 1 - Find Familiar 1st level spell

Bard - Magical Secrets to learn Find Familiar

Rogue/Arcane Trickster 3 - Find Familiar as unrestricted 1st level spell

Fighter/Eldritch Knight 3 - Find familiar as unrestricted 1st level spell

Feat - Ritual Caster with book containing Find Familiar

Feat - Magic Initiate select Find Familiar

With feat access, familiars are not just for casters. Other classes may find some of their unique abilities useful to help them better fulfill their own role within the party.

### **What familiars are available, and what do they do**

Entries are among PH, DMG and Basic Rules

Type becomes Celestial, Fiend or Fey:

#### **Base**

Bat: fly, blindsight (through sound), advantage on Perception/hearing

Cat: advantage on Perception/smell, stealth

Crab: blindsight, stealth, aquatic

Frog: darkvision, aquatic

Hawk: fly, advantage on Perception/sight

Lizard: darkvision

Octopus: darkvision, stealth, aquatic-only

Owl: fly, darkvision, stealth, advantage on perception sight/hearing

Poisonous Snake: blindsight, poison

Fish(quipper): darkvision, aquatic-only

Rat: darkvision, advantage on Perception/smell

Raven: fly, mimicry

Sea Horse: aquatic only

Spider: darkvision, poison, spider climb

Weasel: stealth, advantage on perception smell/hearing

#### **Variant**

Imp (Warlock/Variant): resistances, immunities, darkvision and devil's sight, poison, invisibility, 10ft shared magic resistance with master, speech

Pseudodragon (Warlock/Variant): fly, stealth, blindsight, darkvision, advantage on perception, poison with poisoned state, 10ft shared magic resistance with master  
Quasit (Warlock/Variant): stealth, resistances, immunities, darkvision, shapechange, invisibility, poison with poisoned state, 10ft shared magic resistance with master, scare, speech  
Sprite (Warlock/Variant): stealth, invisibility, poison brewer, speech  
Crawling Claw (Mage/Variant): blindsight, immunities

**Any Tiny (Variant):** As per Mage (MM p.347). **Assumed no higher than CR1 as per Imp & Quasit.**

Faerie Dragon (red, orange, yellow): fly, stealth, darkvision, superior invisibility, magic resistance, innate spellcasting, euphoric breath, language  
Pixie: fly, stealth, magic resistance, innate spellcasting, superior invisibility, language  
Stirge: fly, darkvision  
Badger: darkvision, keen smell  
Flying snake: fly, blindsight, poison  
Scorpion: blindsight, poison

### **What to give a familiar**

Should the familiar have the physical means and intelligence to use equipment, there are many good cheap tactical items for them to use their action in combat to utilize.

Wands that do not require attunement by spellcaster: magic missile, fear  
Bag of Tricks: put more allies on the field, between you and the enemy  
Eversmoking Bottle: conceal your location or a retreat  
Potion of Healing/restoring consumables: keep it around to feed you in case you get knocked out  
Item of Commanding Elementals: have the familiar use its concentration  
Circlet of Blasting: a little nuking  
Cube of Force: delay initiative tactically to have familiar protect you with cube round to round  
Deck of Illusions: reasonable illusionist and use its move action to manipulate  
Eyes of Charming: might as well have the familiar use its attunement

### **What to tell a familiar to do**

Attack: only a Warlock with Pact of the Chain allows a familiar to take the attack option, forgoing one of their own attacks to allow the familiar to attack. Delivering poison as an Imp or Quasit could be a powerful debuff, but as soon as their invisibility is blown, they are at dire risk.

Scout: several familiars are well suited to scout, using flight and invisibility to their advantage. Others have enhanced senses or darkvision that might keep you safe.

Deliver a touch spell: potentially far more rewarding than simply attacking

Activate items: win at action economy. Quasit, Imp and Sprite have speech to activate items requiring a command word.

Store items: have the familiar store items with it when dismissed to its extradimensional pocket space.

Absorb spells: spells like sleep will likely be consumed first by the familiar.

Poison weapons/ammo: have the familiar slobber its natural poison all over you or your allies weapons/ammo. Sprites have a unique poison they craft. Poisons that apply the poisoned condition is an incredible debuff.

Sacrifice to a trap: 10gp and time vs. harm to a party member

Long-range attack (sambojin): As Warlock 5, Conjure Animals spell, Voice of the Chain Master invocation. Send familiar, preferably one with invisibility, along with conjured swarms. Command swarms through the familiar using VoCM. Miles long attack range. Provided you have a conjuring magic item, the familiar may also use its concentration to bring forth and command an additional conjuration.

Help (aDMg): A familiar can use the help action if within 5 feet of an enemy, granting advantage on the next attack. It can use the help action to gain you the advantage on the next ability check as well. The help action must be taken before your turn. It is simple enough for invisible familiars to distract the opponent with sound, and certainly those who are riding along with you into melee.

## **Notes**

The Variant familiars are worth their weight in gold. A straightforward strategy is to keep your familiar in the hood of your cloak, using you as cover to hide - note the additional weight you are now carrying. This allows the familiar to provide you with shared magic resistance, and snipe activations of any magic items they are attuned to or you have stashed in the hood for them to use.

You will likely need a strategy for keeping your familiar alive, most notably from AoE damage. The Imp at least has immunity to fire damage. Abjurers have additional tools such as Arcane

Ward they can use to keep the familiar from taking damage. That said, the cost to replace a familiar is just 10gp and the time to cast the ritual again.