



“Most Terrible Beast” by Daniel Silberberg, © Orion’s Bell LLC. Accessed at deviantArt [here](#)

[In the *Wizard of Oz* movie, Oz appears to all four of Dorothy’s party simultaneously, as a giant head. In the book *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, each character has a separate audience with the Wizard, and he appears in different forms to each of them. The giant head meets with Dorothy, an angelic woman meets with the Scarecrow, and the Cowardly Lion meets a ball of fire. The beast above is how he appears to the Tin Woodsman. Now, of course, the Wizard is a humbug, and the Beast is merely a giant marionette. But it’s such a cool design that I wanted to make it a creature for real. Maybe in your game, this is what the Wizard really is, and his little bald human form is just a disguise...]

Zatab

CR 16 LN Aberration

This terrible beast is slightly smaller than an elephant, with five spindly legs supporting a hairy body with five long arms. Its head is that of a rhinoceros, but with five glittering eyes.

A zatab, or wizard beast, is a strange creature native to the First World. According to legend, they were an early creation of the gods, gifted both physical and magical might before it was decided that magical potential and great strength should be separated. Zatabs are few and far between, and few associate with each other, instead allowing themselves to be surrounded with disciples, apprentices and sycophants. A zatab is a natural schemer, and often has a dozen plots to enrich itself, dispose of rivals and expand its territory.

A zatab most often comes into conflict with adventurers when it decides that they have grown too powerful, or if they have something the creature desires. They are typically prepared enough for combat to cast defensive spells on themselves. If caught off guard, they will often retreat for several rounds before returning properly prepared. Most zatabs prepare a wide variety of offensive, defensive and utility spells to shape the course of battle. They will often charge headlong into melee after softening up opposition with spells, and typically have an escape plan at the ready in case the battle turns against them.

Although they are not evil, most zatabs are proud and jealous creatures, and are distrustful of other spellcasters. They may employ adventurers to assassinate competitors for them, promising great rewards if their mission is accepted. Few zatabs will hesitate to take hostages to secure their position if they must, and often have non-lethal but incapacitating spells on hand to transform such creatures into statues or harmless animals. They are consummate shapeshifters, and enjoy trying on new forms the way other creatures change clothes. Every zatab considers its lair a palace, and if they do not have mundane treasures with which to decorate, they will rely on magical means or trickery to make their homes suitably lavish.

Each zatab specializes in a different school of magic, but illusion and transmutation are the most common choices.

Zatab CR 16

XP 76,800

LN Huge aberration (extraplanar, shapechanger)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., Perception +28, scent

Defense

AC 31, touch 11, flat-footed 28 (-2 size, +3 Dex, +20 natural)

hp 230 (20d8+140)

Fort +13, **Ref** +11, **Will** +17; +5 vs. mind-influencing effects

DR 10/cold iron and magic; **SR** 27

Defensive Abilities force of personality

Offense

Speed 40 ft., climb 30 ft.

Melee gore +21 (2d6+8), 5 slams +21 (1d8+8)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks magic-bane, powerful charge (gore, 4d6+16), trample (DC 28, 2d6+12)

Spells CL 14th, concentration +21 (+25 casting defensively)

7th—empowered *cone of cold* (DC 22), *ethereal jaunt*, *greater teleport*, *project image* (DC 24)

6th—*chain lightning* (DC 23), *disintegrate* (DC 24), *flesh to stone* (DC 24), *transformation*, *veil*

5th—*baleful polymorph* (DC 23), *break enchantment*, *mirage arcana* (DC 22), *polymorph*, *telekinesis* (DC 23)

4th—*fire shield*, *greater invisibility*, *mass reduce person* (DC 22), empowered *scorching ray*, *scrying* (DC 21), *wall of fire*

3rd—*arcane sight*, *dispel magic*, *displacement*, *fireball* (DC 20), *fly*, *haste*, *slow* (DC 21)

2nd—*blur*, *fox's cunning*, *mirror image*, *resist energy*, *scorching ray* (x2), *see invisibility*

1st—*expeditious retreat*, *identify*, *mage armor*, *magic missile* (x2), *protection from chaos* (DC 18), *shield*

0th—*arcane mark*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 17), *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*

Specialist School transmutation; **Opposition Schools** enchantment, necromancy.

Statistics

Str 27, **Dex** 17, **Con** 24, **Int** 24, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 21

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +25; **CMD** 38 (46 vs. trip)

Feats Arcane Strike, Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Empower Spell, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Nimble Moves, Spell Focus (transmutation)

Skills Bluff +25, Climb +47, Disguise +25, Intimidate +28, Knowledge (arcana) +30, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +27, Knowledge (nature) +27, Linguistics +27, Perception +28, Spellcraft +30, Use

Magic Device +25; **Racial Modifiers** +16 Climb

Languages Aklo, Common, Draconic, Sylvan, 20 others

SQ change shape (humanoid, *alter self*), expert climber, sound mimicry (animal sounds, voices)

Ecology

Environment any mountains or underground (First World)

Organization solitary

Treasure double standard (spellbook, other treasure)

Special Abilities

Expert Climber (Ex) A zatab gains the equivalent of a non-magical *spider climb* effect. This increases its racial bonus on Climb checks to +16.

Force of Personality (Su) A zatab adds its Charisma bonus as an insight bonus to all saving throws against mind-influencing effects.

Magic-Bane (Ex) A zatab gains a +2 bonus to all attack and weapon damage rolls made against creatures that can cast arcane spells. Such creatures also suffer a -2 penalty on all saving throws made against spells cast by a zatab.

Spells A zatab can cast spells as a 14th level wizard. It gains the benefit of an arcane school for the purposes of preparing spells, but not for the purposes of school powers. It does not gain any additional abilities of the wizard class.