

# Sophonts of Equus

For people who want to play space ponies.

## Lore:

The planet Equus is unique in a few major ways. The most obvious of these from space is its geocentric arrangement; both its sun and its moon orbit the planet. Second is the peculiar form of energy, which the locals colloquially refer to as 'magic', that all life from that planet naturally both exudes and makes use of. Equus's most important oddity, for our interests, is its panoply of sapient races<sup>[1]</sup>: races which would take to adventure amongst the stars with the same single-minded enthusiasm they do with everything else.

As for why Equus-natives found their way into space as part of a multi-planetary empire, there's actually a fairly simple reason: It was starting to get rather crowded at the top.

Pony<sup>[2]</sup> society is mainly made up of three tribes: strong earth ponies, speedy pegasi, and sorcerous unicorns. Alicorns, being ageless beings of immense magical abilities while exhibiting characteristics of all three of the main pony tribes, naturally gravitate towards the top of the social order as princes and princesses. Since alicorns tended to be exceptionally rare throughout most of Equus's history<sup>[3]</sup>, the fact that all alicorns technically had the same rank wasn't much of a problem.

And then it was discovered that any children of alicorns would, themselves, also be alicorns.

When Brighter Beam was crowned as the twelfth alicorn prince of books<sup>[4]</sup>, he decided that he was rather fed-up with the status-quo and would go and found his own planet. Plenty of eager colonists of myriad races joined him.

Today, ponies and other Equans are best known for their skill in climate engineering, their magical abilities and affinities, and their generally optimistic and cheerful culture.

## Sophont Types:

*On cutie marks:* One of the main ways that a pony's magic expresses itself is through giving that pony a knack for a certain skill. When a pony discovers what this 'special talent' is, a pictogram representing it

[1]: We'll just be focusing on the three most common types of ponies for now, but I could throw in some research on gryphons, dragons, chiropterans, et al if enough people show interest

[2]: The most dominant and predominant of Equus's sapient species

[3]: As the main way alicorns were made was when one of the three main tribes achieved a certain sort of enlightenment, something that usually only happened every few millennia

[4]: Specifically, the prince of historical fiction, short-form

will appear on both of their flanks. The appearance of a cutie mark typically happens during late childhood, and is seen as the beginning of the transition from child to adult in pony culture. The cutie mark lends ponies in general a sometimes infuriating level of self-assuredness normally only seen in PhDs of other races. In-game, the cutie mark is represented as two additional skill ranks in any one skill, accompanied by a specialty in that skill. Every pony has a cutie mark.

#### Earth Ponies:

- Bonus Skill Ranks: +2 to any one skill, and one specialty in that skill (cutie mark), +1 to endurance, +1 to mechanic, +1 to medicine
- Skill Check Penalties: -3 to intimidate sophonts not native to Equus.
- Special Rules:
  - No hands: Weapons with more than one grip required can only be used if they are stationed. Weapons can be stationed on a battle saddle (that the player starts with for free) as an action. (One-grip weapons can be held in the mouth.)
  - Natural Weapon: You have a natural buck attack (damage: athletics + 2).
- Max hp: 9 + Endurance

#### Unicorns (advanced sophont type, because magic is complicated):

- Bonus Skill Ranks: +2 to any one skill, and one specialty in that skill (cutie mark), +1 to Telekinesis, +1 to either blast or shield, +1 to inspire
- Skill Check Penalties: -3 to intimidate sophonts not native to Equus.
- Special Rules:
  - Has access to the Telekinesis, Blast, and Shield skills naturally.
    - Telekinesis: Who needs hands? Not you! (Well, as long as your horn is working.) You may perform any task requiring up to two grips, and may do so from up to 5m away per skill rank. Carrying anything larger than a weapon requires one action per turn. (Note: any rolls made using Telekinesis still use their normal skill, e.g. a melee weapon would still require a melee roll, despite being used from across the room.)
      - Specialties: heavy, multi
      - Heavy: Why yes, you *do* lift. If your company is feeling cheap, they could use you as a freight crane. (Each instance of heavy lifting requires two grips, and large objects must be picked up one at a time rather than all at once.)
      - Multi: There's something special about being able to point a plethora of PEA-shooters at a person (even if you can only really aim one of them). Ignore the usual two-grip limit on telekinesis.
    - Blast: Also, you can kill them with your brai—er, magic. You may cast offensive spells as a ranged weapon attack using this skill.
      - Stats for the spells are generated using the custom (ranged) weapon rules, where each rank in this skill counts as two supply available for building it.

- NOTE: For the purposes of Failure-Prone and similar weapon qualities, your horn is treated as your weapon. Should your horn become damaged due to irresponsible spellcasting, you will be unable to perform Telekinesis, shoot Blasts, or produce Shields until your horn has been repaired with either a TN 15 medicine check or the application of a slapstick or similar device. Also, having your horn explode hurts like the dickens.
  - Specialties: projectile, beam, nonlethal
- Shield: Stay out of my bubble! You can use an action to project a bubble shield centered around yourself. Foes can't walk through it, and it moves with you. In its base state, the bubble only protects you. The bubble provides DR vs attacks from outside it equal to your ranks in Shield. After absorbing damage equal to your ranks in Shield, the shield shatters. The shield can be re-upped the same way it was cast in the first place.
  - Specialties: deflector, team
  - Deflector: Some attacks bounce right off! In addition to DR, your shields also provide a defense bonus equal to  $\frac{1}{2}$  your Shield ranks (rounded down, minimum one).
  - Team: My bubble is your bubble. You now have the option to cast a shield bubble (still centered around yourself) that envelopes nearby teammates (and enemies, oops!), granting them the same bonuses against anything outside of the bubble. This bubble takes two actions to cast (or re-up), and requires one action per turn to maintain.
- Max hp: 7 + Endurance

#### Pegasi:

- Bonus Skill Ranks: +2 to any one skill, and one specialty in that skill (cutie mark), +1 to Athletics plus free flight specialty, +1 to perception plus free sight specialty.
- Skill Check Penalties: -3 to intimidate sophonts not native to Equus, -1 to endurance checks.
- Special Rules:
  - Wings are Handy: You may use your wings to grip things, as long as you're not using them to fly at the time. If you want to use weapons or tools while flying, you'll have to either use flying armor or operate them earth pony style.
- Max hp: 8 + Endurance