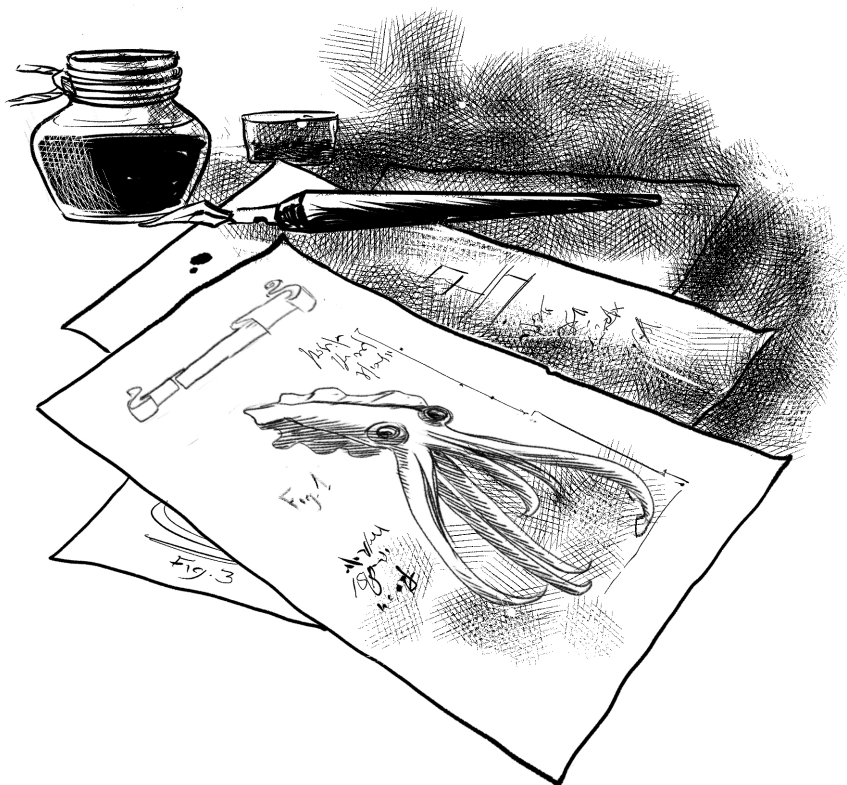


# The Book of Uncommon Beings



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## Introduction

Welcome to this unofficial and non-canonical supplement for Steve Jackson's *The Fantasy Trip*, affectionately known as TFT. But first a bit of background before we get into the book proper.

I fell in love with this gaming system upon the original release of *Melee* and *Wizard* long ago. Acting as the game master for our group, I ran many different RPG systems, but we always returned to TFT as the easiest to play and, plainly put, the most fun. The elegant simplicity of the game and its rules allows true role-playing to come to the fore, and when combat and magic are called for, it's clear how they unfold.

When it was announced that Steve Jackson Games was bringing *The Fantasy Trip* back, I was delighted to see it return. Oddly enough, at the same time I was working on a personal project, a catalogue of the various forms of ghosts and undead in folklore. I showed the project to Steve and, once I added game stats and an adventure, it evolved into *The Book of Unlife*, the first official bestiary published for TFT.

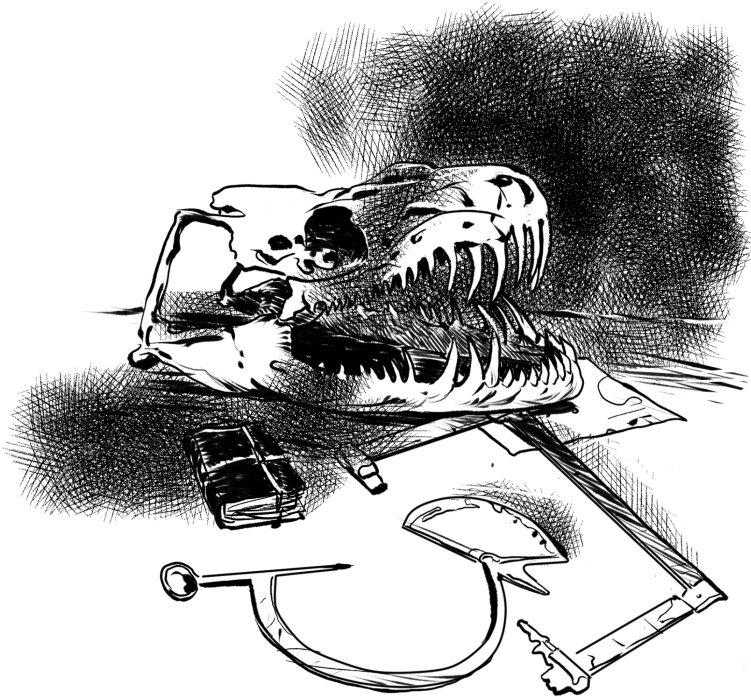
As a biologist and folklorist I've always had a passion for fantastical creatures, and so once *Unlife* was complete I started working on another book. This was to be a compendium of new animals, plants, slimes, and, controversially, intelligent races. While these races were actually varieties of existing uncommon intelligent races, it was decided that it wasn't in the interest of the game system to add more than a dozen new races. There are enough basic races in TFT for plenty of scope in creating multitudinous societies and characters. Some of the other creatures, such as the various titan slimes, were decided not be of interest as canonical creatures either. So I set the book aside.

As of this writing the official TFT *Bestiary* is being prepared for release. Happily, some of the creatures from the original draft of this book were adopted into that tome. That still left behind a large portion of the original book however. Thus it was decided that I'd bring out the remainder as a fanzine, so that GMs are able to pick and choose any races and lifeforms they wish to use, without muddying the official game universe. Hopefully you'll find things of interest here, to spark your own imagination and challenge your players!

Now let's meet these rare and strange beings...



# Intelligent Races



The world of Cidri is vast, with intelligent races both familiar and strange. Among the better known races of Human, Elves, Dwarves and Orcs there are many kinds and cultures. But these people are not the only ones to walk the world. Here we will examine some of the subtypes of Cidri's more unusual peoples – the Saurien, the Stonekin, and the Cephalonian.

### **Saurien**

The most common type of Saurien one meets are those called Reptile Men by the various peoples of Cidri. They resemble humanoid dinosaurs in their reptilian aspect. They are not common, but in the mixed cities of Cidri they are the Saurien race most likely to be encountered. Travel to remote places or distant lands, however, and you may find yourself in the company of the more unusual branches of their family tree.

The Saurien races included here are Ophidian, Tortugan, Scincid, Drakhume, and Sumalakai.

### **Stonekin**

Not all life on Cidri is made of the flesh and blood that we are familiar with. Some of them have a strange metabolism that is more mineral than animal. The naturalists of Cidri divide these two disparate kinds into “blood-life” and “stone-life”, which we here on Earth might term

“carbon-based” and “silicon-based”. Many forms of stone-life have evolved alongside blood-life, and several kinds have even risen to intelligence. While Gargoyles are the best known among the so-called stonekin, there are others who have taken their own evolutionary path on the way to becoming denizens of Cidri.

The stonekin races included here are Sarcophage, Qrifae, Petrosphinx, and Bouphogan. (The Funerary, another stonekin race, can be found in *The Book of Unlife*.)

### **Cephalonian**

Cidri is home to one of the strangest family of beings – the Cephalonians. The most well known of these is the famous Octopus of Cidri, an intelligent and amphibious being which is competent both on land and in the water. Their origins are a mystery, but they have adapted superbly to this world. A number of Cephalonian races can be encountered if the players are both adventurous and unlucky.

The Cephalonian races included here are Blueband Octopus, Mesmerien, Cerachist, Teuthien, and Ctholen.

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## Ophidian

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Ophidian are serpent folk, a shunned and secretive race who dwell in vast old cities deep beneath the land. They are keen observers of the other races of this world, and their historical records reach far back beyond those of most other civilizations, encompassing events that those other races have long since lost records of.

They have a very strict and hierarchical society, and those who breach their customs are exiled to the upper world. Thus the ophidian that one encounters in the world at large are generally outcasts, and their personalities can range from antisocial brutes to cunning villains to dreamy poets.

### *Physiology*

Their individual serpentine aspects vary greatly, and every kind of earthly snake has a counterpart among their people. All have long serpentine necks and tails, and sinuous limbs terminating in hands and feet with long, clawed digits. They have pit sensors below their eyes which detect infrared heat sources, and which function as *Dark Vision* for them. None but the ancient House Agkistrau still retain a venomous bite, and it is from their ranks that the assassins of the Sacred Order of Hooded Sleep are drawn.

Ophidians start with ST 10, DX 8, IQ 8, and MA 10, with 6 extra points to distribute. They have the same combat bonuses as Reptile Men. Their average lifespan is 90 years, with reproductive maturity at 18 and elder age starting at 75.

### *Culture*

The primary goals of ophidian society are maintaining the ancient ways, purging themselves of undesired elements (through exile or sacrifice), and keeping the outer world at bay. Their civilization is ruled by the heads of the seven great Houses, and the social order is maintained by the inquisitor-like Blessed Order of Ceaseless Silence.

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## Tortugan

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Tortugans are instantly identifiable by their heavy shells, which may be draped in fine silks or fancifully ornamented. They are a sociable race with passions for exotic food and drink. They have a love of competitive sports and are renowned for their wrestling prowess. Many tortugans possess photographic memories. They also love to travel, and in their travels will often establish trading posts in order to obtain such desirable items as rare spices and elegant fabrics.

### *Physiology*

Physically they range in semblance from massive island tortoises to sleek aquatic terrapins. Their slow metabolisms mean that it takes them twice as long to heal and recover fatigue as humans. On the plus side they age much slower as well, easily living to twice the average age of humans.

Tortugans start with ST 12, DX 6, IQ 8, and MA 8, with 6 extra points to distribute. Their shell acts as 3 point armor. Their average lifespan is 120 years, with reproductive maturity at 25 and elder age starting at 90.

### *Culture*

Tortugan society has a curious bicameral leadership at the top level. The head of the hereditary royal family, the Potentate, is balanced by an elected figure, the Relegate. Below them is an administrative body like a civil service. The system is full of intricate rules and is exceedingly baroque to outsiders, but appears to work well for the tortugans.

The tortugans have a festival they hold every year called the Tantali, which means “endurance trials”. Various competitive events focus on fortitude, endurance, and stamina tests. Perhaps the most remarkable challenge is the sleep trial, in which competitors prove their ability to sleep through any discomfort and distraction. Champion sleepers have been known to drowse through chilling rainstorms, cacophonous barrages of drumming, and swarms of biting ants.

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## Scincid

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Scincids are forest lizard folk who live in large treehouse communities. They are adept craftsmen, able to create an astounding array of tools and implements from natural materials. They are also skilled at “life-shaping”, the selective breeding of plants and animals to purpose, and have created many domesticated species which are quite different from their wild ancestors.

### *Physiology*

They are a handsome Saurien race, with their finely scaled skin showing brilliantly colored patterns, plus big bright eyes and long mouths that seemingly rest in a smile.

Scincids start with ST 8, DX 10, IQ 8, and MA 12, with 6 extra points to distribute. They have the same combat bonuses as Reptile Men. Their average lifespan is 70 years, with reproductive maturity at 13 and elder age starting at 60.

### *Culture*

By living in large groups they have individuals which can become specialists. There are hunters, gatherers, builders, tool-makers, healers, and life-shapers, among others. They have a written language but most are illiterate, with scribal duties specialized into the historian class. Any scincid can, and will, pitch in with regular community duties, such as cooking, community defense, and child rearing. They have no formal chieftain or ruler, with community decisions being made by consensus. They co-exist harmoniously with other forest-dwelling folks like elves, and are welcoming to well-behaved outsiders.

Both marriage and fidelity are unknown concepts to the scincid. Promiscuity is the norm, and children are raised by the whole community with no regard to lineage. There are no scincid family names, each individual has a single name, suffixed with their specialty if they have one.

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## Drakhume

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Drakhume are a specie of Saurien with dragon lineage. They favor the acquisition of knowledge, the more secret the better, and most also pursue magical studies. They live long and breed slowly, so their numbers are low, and they may be found as royalty in some Saurien societies. There are drakhume who still possess natural dragon powers, like breathing fire or spitting venom.

### *Physiology*

Physically a drakhume looks like a bipedal dragon, tall (seven feet or more) and muscular. They do not have wings, but in other regards they display dragon features, with the long face, gleaming scales, sharp horns, and long barbed tail typical of dragons.

Drakhume start with ST 16, DX 10, IQ 10, and MA 12, with 6 extra points to distribute. Their skin acts as 2 point armor. They do double damage in HTH, and can perform a tail attack for 1d+2. Their average lifespan is 240 years, with reproductive maturity at 30 and elder age starting at 200.

### *Culture*

Drakhume who wander abroad have a magpie spirit, adopting the trends and affectations of whatever culture they find themselves in. They enjoy high fashion and ornamentation, and may be seen dressed, or overdressed, in all manner of finery. They pursue social standing, prestige, and acclaim with the same hunger that their dragon cousins pursue treasure.

Drakhume are said to embody the “society of one” concept, with each individual being utterly autonomous and not answering to anyone. That there aren’t a great number of them, and those who exist are so scattered, reinforces this independence. In the few places where there is a small concentration of drakhume together, it is most often a family, which will have a power structure of its own to contend with.

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## Sumalakai

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Sumalakai dwell in isolated island archipelagos. They are curious and good-natured on the whole, and utterly resistant to the lure of modernity. They find all outside technologies, beliefs, and customs amusing and somewhat mad, and decline taking part in such things, happy in their own traditions. Names are bestowed at coming of age, and describe the individual's personality or notable traits.

### *Physiology*

Sumalakai are comparatively atavistic, retaining features of their amphibian ancestry. They have the wide mouth, protuberant eyes, and webbed hands and feet of frogs. In other ways they resemble marine iguanas, with a long tail they use as a rudder, and

a crest of spikes running down their head and spine. They are adept in the water and can remain submerged for an hour or more.

Sumalakai start with ST 8, DX 8, IQ 8, and MA 10, with 8 extra points to distribute. They have the same combat bonuses as Reptile Men. They have the *Diving* talent naturally and can move and act in water with no penalty or movement reduction. Their average lifespan is 60 years, with reproductive maturity at 9 and elder age starting at 48.

### *Culture*

Their written language consists of pictographic symbols denoting important concepts. They use a token-based counting system, and all trade is barter. Their calendar is based on when foodstuffs ripen and certain fishes and birds arrive.

Sumalakai tribes have a chieftain who arbitrates disputes and makes decisions. Every able-bodied member is expected to be a fisher, hunter, and builder, as needed. There are a few specialist roles, like shaman, two-mouth (translator), say-runner (messenger), and shell-grinder (pigment maker), but overall they have a very generalized society.

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## Sarcophage

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Sarcophages are desert dwellers. They dine exclusively on the flesh of blood-life animals and people, hence their name, and can be extremely dangerous to negotiate with. However, such negotiations can also bring great reward, as sarcophages are known to possess items and knowledge long since lost to other peoples.

### *Physiology*

Sarcophages are sand-colored stonekin resembling a gaunt human melded with a skeletal jackal. They are small, averaging three feet in height, and very quick. They are short-lived, particularly when compared to other stonekin, with the late teens considered relatively old. This is offset by the fact that they are able to breed by their third year. A

female sarcophage will typically have a litter of 3-4 pups, which the parents will tolerate for their first year. From that litter they will select a favorite to pass along their secrets and hidden treasures to, and the others will be left to fend for themselves. Should the favorite perish before the parents, another will be chosen from the next litter.

Sarcophages start with ST 8, DX 10, IQ 8, and MA 12, with 6 extra points to distribute. Their flesh acts as 3 point armor. Their average lifespan is 20 years, with reproductive maturity at 3 and elder age starting at 17.

### *Culture*

Sarcophages have none of the amenities of civilization. They do not make tools, they have no written language, they practice no arts or sciences or magics. They wear no clothes, though they have been known to paint themselves with the blood of recent kills. In spite of all this, they are an intelligent and shrewd race, and should not be underestimated.

Sarcophages instinctively dislike magic and distrust mages. Using magic in their presence is always a risky proposition, and they may react in a strong and negative way.



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## Qrifae

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Qrifae are diminutive stonekin who in many ways look like a jeweled faerie. When in flight their wings shed tiny crystal scales that glitter in the light. Their native speech consists of rapid clicking, with whistling tones that denote emotion. They are accomplished mimics and can learn any language, which they speak with a humming falsetto.

### *Physiology*

Qrifae resemble tiny humans 12 to 16 inches tall, with wings like dragonfly's. Their ears curl up into spiral coils at the top, and they often wear a fancy headdress on their smooth, hairless head. Their clothing is a long length of shimmering gauze that they wrap around their body in different

ways, whatever gives them the most freedom of movement while also looking pretty.

Qrifae start with ST 5, DX 10, IQ 8, and MA 8/16, with 6 extra points to distribute. Their flesh acts as 3 point armor. Larger creatures have a -2 DX penalty to hit them. Their average lifespan is 100 years, with reproductive maturity at 20 and elder age starting at 80.

### *Culture*

Culturally the qrifae are ruled by what they call D'qitroq, or "The Inexorable Turn". This creed dictates that tradition is complacency, and complacency is stagnation, and stagnation is death. Thus, every 33 years, they completely destroy all the material aspects of their culture – documents, artworks, buildings, even their clothing. After this there is a time of great freedom in which new leaders are chosen, new plans for living are designed, and new homes constructed. All previous laws and taboos are likewise discarded, though certain things they consider immutable (like proscriptions against murder and cruelty). For the next three years their entire culture will be constructed anew, and thirty years after that it will all come down again as the cycles continues.

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## Petrosphinx

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Petrosphinx are quadruped gargoyles. Their communities are often far removed from those of other intelligent races, set in arid rocky landscapes that most species would find inhospitable.

### *Physiology*

Petrosphinx have stocky leonine bodies and features. They are intelligent, but their paw-like hands are not suited for weapon wielding or precision skills. They can perform basic object manipulation, such as opening doors or turning the pages of a book. Huge bat-like wings spring from their shoulders and give them excellent powers of flight. An adult petrosphinx could fly with a grown human upon their back if they so desired.

Petrosphinx start with ST 16, DX 8, IQ 8, and MA 8/16, with 6 extra points to distribute. Their flesh acts as 3 point armor. Their average lifespan is 45 years, with reproductive maturity at 12 and elder age starting at 35.

### *Culture*

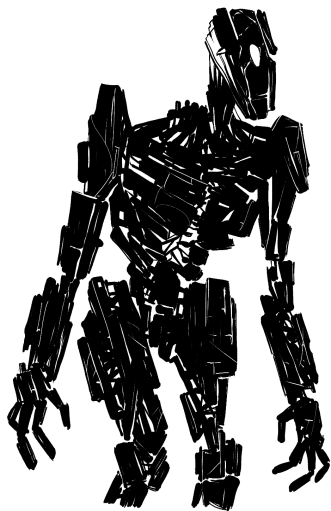
Petrosphinx do not build cities, but live in caves that form in the sides of rocky cliffs. Each community is an extended family, with arrivals and departures occurring as mates are sought and found. Pride is of great importance to the petrosphinx, and family members who bring honor and acclaim are held in great esteem. Those who bring shame are cast out.

Outside of their families petrosphinx have a martial culture, and they consider combat a noble and invigorating pursuit. They are happiest when they have a cause worth fighting for, but will join a battle for the sheer thrill of it as well. Upon meeting new people of any race, often the first questions are about what kinds of struggles are happening in their societies, and how the petrosphinx might insert themselves into those conflicts. A party that gains a petrosphinx ally will have a fierce companion who is always ready for battle.

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## Bouphogan

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The true name of this race is indecipherable, so they are known as the Bouphogan, from what their Neanderthal neighbors call them (*bou-pho-gan*, Neanderthal for “walk-weeping-rock”). They are intelligent stonekin, with a complex and inscrutable social order. Their language is incomprehensible to other races, so bouphogan who interact with other races use those people’s languages, although spoken with a strange syntax.

### *Physiology*

Physically a bouphogan looks like a sculptor began to carve a person before giving up halfway. Their body outline is roughly humanoid, but absent smoothness or curves. Their flesh resembles basalt, with flecks and veins of color running

through it. They are tall and lean, with lank limbs, long-fingered hands, and a high neck. The face is a featureless shield of stone that looks like it has been split down the middle and the two halves set at different heights. Between the halves sits a round gem which is their eye. They perceive visual wavelengths far outside the range of most other races’ senses, and the eye also changes colors with the being’s moods. Below the eye is a slit mouth, which is imperceptible when closed. Bouphogan metabolism does not utilize water, so any water content in their food is excreted down grooves along their cheeks beside the mouth. This is where the “weeping” part of their Neanderthal name comes from.

Bouphogan start with ST 12, DX 8, IQ 8, and MA 10, with 6 extra points to distribute. Their flesh acts as 3 point armor. Their average lifespan is 140 years, with reproductive maturity at 25 and elder age starting at 125.

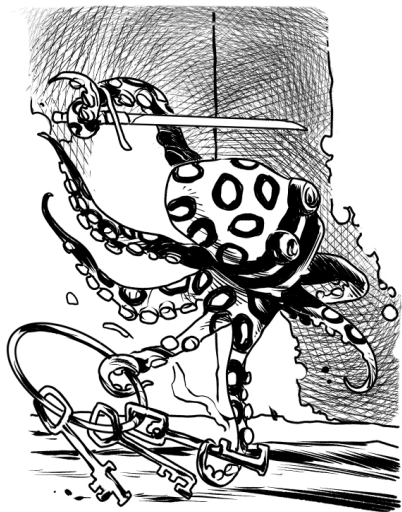
### *Culture*

Bouphogan society and culture is a mystery to outsiders. Their cities are cubic hives full of activity, only a fraction of which makes sense to other races. But they welcome curious visitors all the same.

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## Blueband Octopus

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The blueband octopus are a smaller sized subspecies of the land octopus. They are nimble and cunning, and tend to be cowardly and treacherous.

### *Physiology*

Blueband Octopi have rugose skin and brilliant blue bands of pigment running around the eyes like a permanent bandit's mask. They secrete a contact poison on their skin and anyone whose exposed skin comes into contact with it takes 1d damage unless they make a 3d vs ST roll. Blueband are also able to discharge a cloud of aerosolized ink once per day, which functions in air and water. This ink cloud should be treated as a *Shadow* spell that covers the blueband's megahex and all immediately

adjacent megahexes. Together these traits mean that bluebands make superb assassins.

Blueband Octopi start with ST 14, DX 14, IQ 8, and MA 8, with 4 extra points to distribute. Their skin acts as 2 point armor. They have all the combat abilities of land octopi. Their average lifespan is 32 years, with reproductive maturity at 8 and elder age starting at 27.

### *Culture*

Society in deep water blueband communities is competitive and centered on acquisition of goods and influence. Most encounters with them are at the shoreline, where marauder groups make camps in the shallows. From these camps they mount raids on inland villages and ships traveling the coastline. Each marauder enclave has a bandit chief, often a short-lived position, as treachery is common between blueband.

Blueband Octopi have all the bad traits and vices of their octopi brethren. A blueband may be seen accompanying or working for a octopus, but generally they are distrustful of their larger, smarter kin, and fear falling prey to the same treachery they themselves are constantly plotting.

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## Mesmerien

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Mesmerien are also close kin to the land octopus, but with the physical characteristics of cuttlefish. Mesmerien are less hostile to other races than their octopi kin, but this is because they expect to gain something from those races through guile and manipulation.

### *Physiology*

Mesmerien resemble a walking cuttlefish. A fluttering membrane runs along the sides of their long tapering body. Most striking are their variable skin patterns, which they can alter rapidly to confuse their opponents. These moving patterns, when combined with the mesmerien's mental energies, can also be used in the same way as

the *Control Person* spell, and with the same associated costs.

Mesmerien start with ST 13, DX 14, IQ 12, and MA 8, with 4 extra points to distribute. Their skin acts as 2 point armor. They have all the combat abilities of land octopi. Their average lifespan is 70 years, with reproductive maturity at 15 and elder age starting at 60.

### *Culture*

Mesmerien prize power over all else, and they feel the most respectable way to obtain power is through deception and bluff. The worst thing to a mesmerien is to be fooled or swindled, and prestige is accorded to the one who gains by deceiving others. This ruthless attitude defines mesmerien behavior both within their culture and in their dealings with other races. Magic has some prestige among them, weapon skills less so. They believe it's better to convince others to cast spells and do battle for them.

Land Octopi are wary of dealing with mesmerien, whereas blueband octopi are more likely to respect them, even after the blueband has been duped by one. Mesmerien of low status may be found cozening land dwellers, particularly if they lack the skill to bamboozle their own kind.

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## Cerachist

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Cerachists, also known as Ammonite Priests, are ancient entities, secretive and rarely encountered. They are extremely xenophobic and view all other intelligent life with loathing and dread. They are highly skilled mages, knowing obscure spells that can only be cast using multi-tentacled gestures.

### *Physiology*

Cerachists are covered by a dense coiled shell, with only the tentacled head protruding, exposing light grey flesh that shades to black at the tentacle tips. Their shells are ornamented with sacred sigils and magic stones. They have a semi-magical internal air bladder that allows them to hover and maneuver in air as easily as water.

Cerachists start with ST 18, DX 15, IQ 14, and MA 16, with 4 extra points to distribute. Their shell acts as 5 point armor. They can use four tentacles in combat, but weapon use is rare among them and magic is much preferred. Their average lifespan is 120 years, with reproductive maturity at 20 and elder age starting at 100. They often use dark magic and pacts to extend their lifespan beyond the normal limits, and some elders in their covens are millennia old.

### *Culture*

Cerachists prefer to remain secluded in their enclaves, and leave only in order to carry out some task that will further their horrifying agenda. To encounter a traveling cerachist is a dreadful omen. They serve old and terrible gods, and they labor to give these deities dominion over the world, then the universe. They would gladly see all other intelligent races enslaved or extirpated.

Any cerachist encountered outside its enclave will be a very powerful wizard. It will know many spells, and will have *Powerstones* among the enchanted jewels affixed to its shell. It will only negotiate if it is clearly outmatched and cannot flee, but it cannot be made to reveal information about its plans or enclave under any condition.

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## Teuthien

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Teuthien are a large and powerful squid-like beings, giants among their amphibious kin. They are the only Cephalonians listed here which could be considered benevolent. They have been known to cooperate with and work alongside other races.

### *Physiology*

Over their lifetime they will grow from a one-hex infant into a seven-hex adult and ultimately into a fourteen-hex elder. They are pink in youth, changing to bright red when mature, with the red further darkening as they age. They possess ten tentacles, eight of which are like those of a land octopus, and two of which are twice as long and terminate in hooked pads. These hooked pads

can be treated in combat as a cestus on a person of the same Strength.

Teuthien adolescents start with ST 30, DX 14, IQ 8, and MA 10, with 4 extra points to distribute. They are four-hex beings, the largest Teuthien size that typically comes onto land. Teuthien adults start with ST 50, DX 14, IQ 9, and MA 10, with 4 extra points to distribute, and are seven-hex beings. Elders are fourteen-hexes in size and can have double the ST of an adult. Teuthien have skin that acts as 2 point armor, and they move at MA 20 in the water. They have all the combat abilities of land octopi. Their average lifespan is 90 years, with reproductive maturity at 20 and elder age starting at 70.

### *Culture*

Teuthien have a keen mercantile streak and often trade using loot from sunken ships. Younger ones may seek employment in order to grow their own treasure horde, often taking work as hired escorts protecting ships along trade routes. Teuthien cease coming onto land after reaching adulthood, as their size makes being on land cumbersome. They are rarely mages.

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## Chtholen

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Chtholen are gigantic intelligent octopi. Also known as Chthonic Kraken, they are fiercely territorial and a renown danger to seafarers. They inhabit very deep waters, but will rise up within reach of the surface when hunting or in order to grapple with ships. Their preferred prey are whales and teuthien. They are solitary beings and are unwilling to cooperate with others of their race. The only time a chtholen meets another of its kind is to mate or to fight to the death for territory.

### *Physiology*

A mature chtholen can be sixty feet in diameter or larger. While they can survive outside of the water, they do not willingly come

onto land, as their bulk makes it unfeasible.

Chtholen start with ST 200, DX 13, IQ 14, and MA 16. Their skin acts as 3 point armor. They have all the combat abilities of land octopi. Their average lifespan is 250 years, with reproductive maturity at 40 and elder age starting at 220.

### *Culture*

A chtholen will lay claim to a seafloor chasm as its home, and from there launch its hunting forays. It lives at depths where the water pressure is so great that most other species have trouble tolerating it for long. Thus a chtholen's trench is also its fortress.

Teuthien have a long-established adversarial relationship with chtholen and have waged highly organized campaigns against them.

While chtholen are intelligent, they have no language, culture, or history. Nor do they appear to regard other races as intelligent. What occupies their lonesome thoughts is known to them alone.



## **As Player Characters**

While the races here are more suited to non-player characters, players may want to play one. These notes discuss the suitability of each. All are uncommon in most parts of Cidri, and will draw attention and strong reactions (of all kinds) everywhere they go.

## **Saurien Player Characters**

The tortugans are the ones most suited to be player characters. They are outgoing, cosmopolitan, and as traders may be found in other communities. The scincid are an adaptable race and can take to other cultures quickly. The ophidian preference for secrecy and subterranean settings means that any player character is almost certainly an outcast. A drakhume makes an impressive and intimidating character, but their nature can make them difficult long-term company. A sumalakai would need compelling reasons to leave the island lifestyle that is so perfectly suited to it.

## **Stonekin Player Characters**

A sarcophage would be very difficult to make into a player character, given their appetite for blood-life and their clannish nature which binds them to their homeland and kin. A qrifae is certainly adventurous enough to

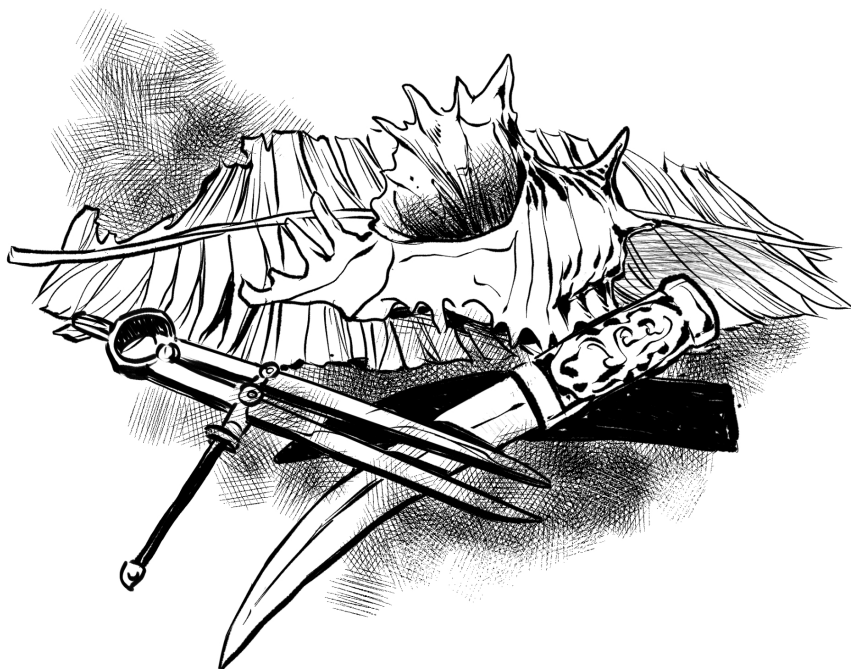
be found in a party, though it is at some risk of being mobbed by human children who want to touch “the little fairy”. A petrosphinx would be challenging to play, given their lack of manual dexterity and the fact that many people are going to assume it is a beast, one either captured by the party or being used as an exotic pack animal. A boughogan could be an interestingly quirky character, if one could get into the strange mindset, though it’s really going to stir up curiosity and whispers everywhere it goes.

## **Cephalonian Player Characters**

Octopi as a whole have a raft of issues that can keep them from being good player characters. That being said, any campaign setting that allows octopi as player characters shouldn’t have a problem accommodating some of the other cephalonians. The blueband octopus is no more problematic to play than the standard octopus, so choosing one over the other does not compound the difficulty. The same is true of the mesmerien. A cerachist is far too xenophobic to join a party of other races. Teuthien are impractically large for player characters, and chtholen are both too huge and too reclusive to be player characters.



# Bestiary



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## Aethstra

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Just as aether, or quintessence, is the fifth element of the alchemists, so too is the Aethstra, or Quintessence Elemental, the fifth kind of elemental being. Like the element itself, this elemental is far rarer than its kindred spirits. It only arises, or is created, where there is a rich source of aether, and this is typically found on planes beyond the material world. It is possible to find a rare deposit of aether upon the world, or to create such through great alchemical labor. Otherwise one will need to pass into a different plane to find a source sufficient for raising an aethstra. Such a place is likely to have these beings already present, and they do not care for outsiders coming and raising slaves from their birth material.

An aethstra looks like a giant starfish made out of a glistening purple-black oily gel. It hovers effortlessly in any medium, be it air, water, or the vacuum of space. At the center of the starfish is a lipless mouth, and near the end of each arm is a cat-like eye with a slit pupil. Aethstra understand and speak every language, though they may not always converse in a tongue the speaker knows.

Aethstra occurring naturally have ST 24, DX 14, IQ 10, and MA 12. Aethstra created by mages have whatever ST the mage gave them. It can strike with its arms to do 1d+3 damage, and can make two such attacks per turn without penalty. Alternately it can use an attack turn to exhale a cloud of entropic quintessence. This acts like a gas bomb attack and has the properties of an *Imprisonment* potion.

Because of the unique magical nature of an aethstra, it gets a 3/IQ saving roll to resist the effect of the *Destroy Elemental* spell. And if it fails and is destroyed, this produces a cloud of entropic quintessence like its special attack described above.

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## Bonecur

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The Bonecur is a nocturnal dog-like creature that exhumes and devours whatever carcasses and corpses it finds, eating even the bones. Because of this it also called a Ghoul Dog, though it is not often found living near ghouls, since it competes with them for the same food supply. A bonecur resembles a hairless hound with bony plates that parallel its internal skeleton. These plates help protect and reinforce the animal as it digs deep holes to reach its food. The bony plates grow along the ribs, spine, paws, and skull, making the beast appear as though chunks of its flesh have fallen off.

Bonecurs are usually found in cooperative packs of three to six adults, plus any pups under nine months. They are not hunters, but they will fight if threatened. They

are skilled at scenting the dead and dying. If they find a dying animal or person who is too weak to resist, they will bury it alive with the idea of returning later for a feast.

A grown bonecur is the size of a large dog, weighing on average around 90 pounds. It is stocky with long, strong legs. The skin is reddish-brown and the bony plates are yellow-white. The eyes are grey, pale blue, or one of each color. They have thick claws and heavy footpads for digging. Their jaws are extremely powerful, able to crack bones. Their tail is a tapered nub, and unlike regular dogs it is not used to express emotional states. There is little hierarchy within a pack, so infighting is rare. A domesticated bonecur is sometimes kept by necromancers, nosferatu, and other such persons, where it is useful both as a guardian and for disposing of corpses.

An adult bonecur has a ST from 8 to 10, DX 14, IQ 6 and MA 12. Their bony plates and tough hide act as 2 point armor. Because of their powerful jaws, their bite does 1d+3 damage. They can also lock onto limbs with their bite. To extricate yourself from such a bite requires a ST Contest (see *In The Labyrinth* for Contest rules).

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## Corpse Butter

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Corpse Butter is a pallid yellow slime that favors crevices in cavern walls, disused wells, and mine shafts. It subsists on the life swarming those stony surfaces, but if larger prey passes near it will strike, throwing out thick ropy tendrils to snare its prey. It then pulls back into its crevice, dragging the prey with it, until compression kills the victim. It reproduces via sexual spores and grows at whatever rate its food supply will allow. It has the typical slime aversion to light, and weapons enchanted with light or fire do an extra +2 damage to the slime. All sizes of Corpse Butter have DX 11, IQ 1, and MA 0. Only their strength and range varies.

### Minor

ST of 10+1d. This size feeds off cave beetles, bats, and other nuisance-level prey. Its tendrils reach within the megahex of its crevice. Anything caught in its tendrils suffer a -4 DX penalty while snared, plus a point of constriction damage each round. Targets can get free by killing the slime or making a 3/ST roll.

### Standard

ST 20+3d. This size can snare players and 1-hex animals with ease. Its tendrils act as a *Rope* spell, and when the prey's DX is effectively 0 they are pulled into the crevice, suffering 1d points of damage per turn. Armor protects against compression for the first turn. Its tendrils can reach within two megahexes of the crevice, and the slime can attack up to three hexes worth of target in range.

### Major

ST 50+5d. This size can snare 4-hex animals and impede larger ones. Its tendrils can reach any target within three megahexes of the crevice and are treated as a *Giant Rope* spell. Any prey falling to 0 DX is pulled into the crevice, where they will suffer 2d damage per turn (again, armor only protects on the first turn). This monster can snare up to five hexes worth of target.

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## Dreamruin

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Dreamruin is an oneirophyte, a magical plant that draws some of its sustenance from the dreams of nearby people and animals. This pale plant lacks chlorophyll and grows in shady, hidden places. Much of its nutrients comes from decaying matter in the soil, but it augments its diet by leeching dream energy from sleepers. This manifests in the dreamer first as unsettling dreams of sickness and confusion, which worsen over time into full-blown night terrors. If the dreamruin patch isn't destroyed or the victim moved out of range, the sufferer will eventually have dreamless sleep which can make them paranoid, violent, insane, or dead.

Dreamruin grows in long translucent tubular stalks, which evoke the fingers of the dead clawing up from their graves. It

sprouts ragged purple-blue flowers at ground level when in bloom, which later yield small orange berries that rodents and insects eat and scatter in their dung. It often grows out of sight, sometimes underneath the floorboards of a house, where it can feed on dreams undetected. Dogs and cats are disturbed by its presence and may give clues as to its location. Any dreaming creature is vulnerable to dreamruin's predations.

One other effect of the plant's psychic properties is that its presence can disrupt illusions. Any image or illusion in the same hex or an adjacent hex to a dreamruin will intermittently flicker. A roll should be made for the plant in these situations, and if automatic success is rolled the image or illusion is "disbelieved". Otherwise if the image or illusion moves away from the plant the flickering will cease.

Dreamruin berries are useful in creating sleeping draughts. The pollen from the flowers has an opiate effect, and one can find dreamruin being grown in secret by those who prize this property.

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## Dune Scourge

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This spherical desert-dwelling slime protects itself from sunlight with a constantly-renewed coating of sand, which it picks up as it rolls through the desert seeking organic matter. The slime beneath the shell is an iridescent nacreous green, covered with adhesive white fibers that help collect and hold the sand. They reproduce by mitosis, budding off dozens of new scourges, only a few of which survive to reach full size. They are solitary creatures, in part because the opportunistic scourges are also cannibals.

Adapted to extreme climates, very little harms a dune scourge. Their sandy shell acts as armor. The slime beneath the shell is averse to light, but it is difficult to expose it without cutting off enough flesh

to kill it outright. A large body of water could kill one, as it would wash off the sand coating, then the water would eventually saturate and burst the scourge if it couldn't escape.

Unusually, this slime appears to have a degree of intelligence, though it is of a different sort than what we commonly define intelligence to be.

### Spawning

These "infant" scourges are freshly budded off of a parent. They are range in size from 3 to 8 inches (7 to 20 cm). They are a nuisance, seeking out any kind of organic matter to devour. They don't go after active prey, but can be a problem to incapacitated beings or provisions. They are active at night, to avoid the daytime predations of their own larger relatives. They do one point of damage per turn to unresisting targets, so be sure to keep the sick and unconscious clear of them. Spawlings have ST 6, DX 8, IQ 4, and MA 8, with 1 point of armor.

### Instar

Spawlings that survive begin their growth to adulthood. Instar stage scourges range from 1 to 14 feet (one half to 5 meters) in size. An instar will attempt to engulf part of their prey and then slowly absorb the whole. Prey successfully struck suffers a -4 DX



penalty and cannot use the engulfed extremity. The scourge breaks down prey with digestive enzymes and sandy grit, doing 1d damage per turn. If the head is engulfed, the victim will suffocate, taking an extra 2 points of damage per turn. Instars have ST 8 per foot of diameter, DX 9, IQ 5, and MA 10, with 2 points of armor.

### Adult

Mature and ready to reproduce, a scourge adult is 20 feet (6 meters) or more in size. It is surprisingly swift and cunning. Resting during the extreme temperatures of day or night, it is most active in the twilight hours around dawn and dusk. It attempts to engulf prey, and is large and fast enough to attempt a full engulfment of 1-hex and 2-hex creatures. It does so by trying to move into the prey's hex(es), and the prey must make a 3/DX roll to evade. Partially engulfed creatures suffer a -4 DX penalty, and fully engulfed ones suffer -6 DX and have an effective MA of 0. They suffer 2d damage per turn from the digestive process. An adult scourge may fully engulf up to 4 hexes worth of prey in one encounter. Adults have ST 10 per foot of diameter, DX 10, IQ 6, and MA 12, with 3 points of armor.

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## Dupliculata

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The Dupliculata are a class of creatures with the shared ability of projecting an image duplicate of themselves. The species are not directly related, but the underlying cause of this talent (be it magical or genetic) is the same. In each case the duplicate image is a mirror reverse of the original, moving and acting in reflection of the original. It is projected at a certain distance, and then moves in mirror fashion related to the original. At least three species have been discovered with this talent – Legerdemice, Panglamoura, and Jagerfaux.

**Legerdemice** are small grey mice with white chests and long fuzzy tails. They use their image casting talent to distract predators and give the true mouse the chance to escape. Some children keep them

as amusing pets. They are considered a nuisance creature for combat purposes. They have ST 1, DX 13, IQ 5, and MA 10.

**Panglamoura** (pictured) are very large pangolins, relatives of the glyptodont. The female's scales are lustrous blue, while the male's are bronze with blue stripes. Their digging claws are startlingly white. They are herbivores with few natural predators. Their image casting is largely used in mating displays, where the male will perform an elaborate dance with his duplicate to impress a potential mate. If threatened a panglamoura will project its image at a distance and then move in the opposite direction, hoping to lead the predator astray. They have ST 25, DX 10, IQ 5, and MA 6. Their scales act as 5 point armor. They can do 1d+2 damage with their claws if injured or provoked, but otherwise they will simply curl into an armored ball until the predator gives up and goes away.

**Jagerfaux** are the most dangerous of the dupliculata discussed here. These large forest hunters resemble jaguars with moss-colored fur dappled with dark splotches. Their coat provides camouflage, so that someone actively seeking it must make a 4d vs IQ roll to spot it. A Naturalist gets a 3d vs IQ roll for the same. When hunting, a jagerfaux will

project their duplicate in a way to drive their prey closer to the beast. A mated pair will hunt together, both using their duplicates. They have ST 11, DX 14, IQ 6, and MA 14. Their fur acts as 1 point armor, and they do 1d+2 damage with claws or bite.

The image duplicates cast by dupliculata function under the same rules as magically conjured *Images*. They can be disbelieved, and will vanish if forcibly struck. The images cannot do any direct damage, nor can they physically affect things. Since they mirror the movements of their caster, they can be easier for intelligent beings to detect than other illusions, as their movement will often be out of sync with their surroundings. For example, on rough terrain the footfalls of the duplicate are unlikely to match up with those of the real beast treading uneven ground. But in the animal world these images can be key to surviving another day.

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## Grandma Shush

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Grandma Shush is the folk name for a strange being that visits remote homes and cottages where children live. There is no reliable description of the being, though it is believed to be quite large, given the rumble of its ponderous footsteps. But these footsteps are only heard when it departs, and it can be virtually silent when it approaches a house at night. There it will gently rap on the door and call out in the sweet voice of an old woman, “Darling children, come out!” There is a strange quality to the words, as though they are being said by rote like a parrot would say them, rather than with comprehension. If the call doesn’t work right away, Grandma Shush will repeat these words and similar phrases, until either someone answers the door or it grows tired of the wait and thumps away on its massive legs. Should someone answer the door,

child or adult, they typically are never seen again.

Grandma Shush seems particularly adept at finding homes where the children’s guardians are absent or inattentive. Parents who fear the attentions of Grandma Shush have been known to rub their children’s nightclothes with henbane leaves, which is rumored to confound the being’s ability to sniff out children. The folk name for the creature comes from its grandmotherly voice, and from parents urging their children to be quiet and lay still if they should hear it outside. Stories of the creature have spread beyond the places where it is usually encountered, and naturally some parents use these stories to get their children to quiet down at bedtime.

Grandma Shush has ST 100, DX 10, IQ 7, and MA 8. If it wins a fight it will vanish with the bodies of the slain, and if defeated its body will vanish. Any survivors who saw it will not be able to entirely agree on a description of the being.

Grandma Shush is most often discussed in human and halfling communities, though the orcs have similar stories about a being they call Mamu Griz.

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## Great Vernal Moth

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Great Vernal Moths are mimic insect which, as adults, resemble the leaves of their host trees. This allows them to hide in plain sight among the tree's foliage, or even take the place of fallen leaves. Their caterpillars feed on tree sap and exude a honeydew that the adults collect. If agitated, the adults release an irritating dust to protect the swarm. This dust can induce respiratory distress in some beings.

Adults change color with the seasons, becoming gold, orange, or red, before laying eggs and turning brown at the end of their lifespan. The caterpillars pupate and both the eggs and pupae overwinter. Adults emerge and eggs hatch when the host tree

begins to bud. The caterpillars look like twigs on the branches, the head clasping the bark with the proboscis sunk into a sap vein, and the posterior held erect, where the honeydew droplet is excreted. The moth's eggs are tiny and blend in with the host tree's bark, while the pupae resemble the nuts or seeds of the host tree.

This moth is harmless except during its adult color changes, when it turns from green to other colors. This color change signals the breeding season, and like mosquitoes they require blood to produce their eggs. They will take blood from dead animals, but will also swarm live ones. The sight of a tree's entire foliage coming to life and attacking is a terrifying experience.

Varieties of great vernal moth mimic trees as diverse as maples, ginkgoes, poplars, and sycamores, as well as some native to Cidri.

Great Vernal Moths in their green adult phase are not aggressive beyond releasing an irritant dust. Breeding adults will draw blood with their sharp proboscis, and this is treated as a vampire bat attack in game terms. The adult moths have ST 1, DX 14, IQ 2 and MA 16. As small flying creatures they are -4 DX to hit.

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## Lépunct

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Lépunct are faerie folk, occupying the liminal world between the natural and the magical. They are teleporting tricksters, appearing and vanishing at will as they play their japes upon hapless mortals. Their pranks range from harmless to deadly, though rarely with malice. As ageless beings they see the lives of mortals as tiny and swiftly passing, and thus give them little more regard than we might the life of a fly.

Physically a lépunct resembles a small child intermixed with a rabbit, similar to how a faun or satyr is an admixture of human and goat. The face is completely like a rabbit's, including the long ears, hence the folk name "Rabbit Children". It is sometimes possible

to placate them with gifts of butter, flower garlands, millet cakes, or dishes of honeyed wine. If they are particularly pleased they may even do a good deed in return, though sometimes their good intentions turn out problematic as well.

When traveling in quiet places one may catch the sound of lépunct singing. Their voices are high and lilting, joining together in a chorus of simple rhymes. It's said that one should not follow this song, nor do anything to interrupt it. Some of this is mere folksy caution, but given the mercurial natures of the rabbit children, drawing their attention in these ways seldom leads to good outcomes.

Lépunct are most likely to interact with the players by pulling pranks on them. They will not engage in combat and will simply vanish if threatened, to wreak havoc on the aggressor at a later date. If the players actually manage to ambush and attempt to injure one, the retribution will be especially harsh, with a cruel sense of humor behind the punishment. Lépunct attributes are meaningless, as they are unearthly and their skills are supernatural.

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## Living Lake

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The Living Lake slime has no trouble enduring daylight, as it has the same refractory index as water and thus light passes through it. It dwells in large bodies of water, where it can be difficult to distinguish. What gives it away is the debris and fish/animal skeletons suspended inside it, which appear to be stubbornly hovering in place within the water until you discern the slime itself. Very large specimens of this slime may occupy much of a lake bed, and the oceanic version is often studded with the rotting timbers and scattered treasure of ships lost at sea.

The stats are highly dependent on the size of the slime. These slimes are slow and have a low

metabolism, and thus do not overgraze the bodies of water they live in. At the GM's discretion the one encountered by players may have recently fed, and if so it will not attack the players, though it will still act as an encumbrance to movement. They are attracted to vibrations, so their prey is disproportionately composed of land creatures that enter the water and make a lot of bother, as opposed to comparatively silent water creatures like fish, who are usually only caught when they blunder into the slime. All sizes of this slime require a 4d saving throw versus IQ to discern prior to being attacked, or 3d for players with *Naturalist* or *Seamanship* talents.

Thanks to the aqueous nature of both the slime and its environment, missile weapons only do half damage to the creature, due to momentum dampening effects. Likewise fire is only half as effective. These slimes are however especially weak to phosphorus and chemical compounds strong in this element, taking triple damage from such things. This weakness is why you find skeletons encased in these slimes – the slimes form a clear cyst around the bones, so that the phosphorus in them doesn't leach into the slime's flesh.

Some naturalists speculate that the water slime is a very small form of the living lake. In essence regards a living creature as a body of water and attempts to inhabit it. Once it has fed enough times this way, it eventually grows large enough to take up its benthic form of existence.

All living lake slimes have DX 1, IQ 1, and MA 1. The ST varies by size.

### **Living Pond**

These smaller living lakes dwell in correspondingly smaller bodies of water. Contact with one works very much like a *Sticky Floor* spell. The slime will pull on its prey, exerting 1d in fatigue per turn. If the victim reaches 0 ST from the fatigue costs, it is pulled under and drowned, to be subsumed and digested at leisure. Those caught in this slime may attempt a 3d throw to pull free, if there is adjacent clear hex to move/swim into. A living pond has ST 30+5d and occupies 1 hex per 5 ST points (rounding up).

### **Living Lake**

These large slimes dwell in lakes, often those surrounded by woodlands, which are a rich source of prey such as deer seeking to swim across the lake. Like the smaller form, they behave as a *Sticky Floor* spell once they ooze onto their prey, and they do 1d+2 per turn in fatigue damage.

The pull-free throw for this slime is 4d versus ST, and also requires an adjacent clear hex. A living lake has ST 80×1d and occupies 1 hex per 10 ST points (rounding up), as it is much thicker vertically than a living pond.

### **Living Sea**

This is the marine version of the slime, found in large salt-water bodies. It grows very large and can present a hazard to shipping in shallow channels. Vessels encountering it suffer the same kind of *Sticky Floor* effects as living creatures. It does an appalling 2d fatigue damage per turn. Some sailors in regions known to harbor these slime have taken to bringing a live sheep or goat along, which they throw overboard during the journey in the hopes of sating any living sea beneath them. A living sea has ST 150×1d and occupies 1 hex per 15 ST points (rounding up).

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## Pastepot

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This tropical slime is white, streaked with dark smears of dirt and organic effluvia. It resembles in color and texture the paste used by bookbinding scribes. This hideous and rapaciously omnivorous horror is fully immune to sunlight. It will steadily devour a swathe through the jungle, consuming anything that cannot evade or resist it. Stone-life beings, such as stonekin races and stone beetles, are immune to its digestive enzymes, though can still be overwhelmed and crushed or suffocated in one. A few creatures, like basilisks, will actually eat the flesh of a pastepot.

Players are likely to only encounter one size of pastepot, and that size is "huge". Pastepots

spend a large portion of their life in a sort of fungal form, living as a vast mat under the soil and slowly feeding off decaying matter. It is only when the mass is ready to reproduce that it takes on this giant moving-and-eating form. The mat gathers together and surges out of the soil, setting off on a frenzy of devouring and moving like a wave through the jungle, consuming what it can in preparation of reproduction. Most living things caught within the pastepot will take 2d damage per turn, except for those creatures which have immunity to the slime. It may run its devouring course for a quarter mile or more. When the pastepot has consumed sufficient mass it becomes quiescent, and later stalked fruiting bodies erupt from the surface of the slime. These release spores that will form the next generation of pastepots, and the remaining mass dies and liquifies. A pastepot covers 1 hex per 10 ST and engulfs by overrunning hexes occupied by prey.

Pastepots have ST 100×1d, DX 1, IQ 1, and MA 4. They take no damage from sunlight. Edged and piercing weapons are ineffectual against it, and other melee weapons only do half damage, rounding down. Fire and flaming weapons do normal damage, however.



## Volcants

One of the partner species found near pastepot mats are a variety of stone-life insect known as volcants. These superficially resemble ants about two inches long and possessing twelve legs. Volcants radiate ambient heat, hence their name. They tend to a pastepot during its quiet growth stage, even protecting it. After the pastepot matures, fruits, and dies, the volcants then mobilize to collect the liquified flesh. This harvest can sustain their colony for a year or more.

Volcants have ST 1, DX 10, IQ 2, and MA 12. They are not normally hostile, but if riled they can be treated like rats in combat. A colony can run to thousands of ants, so it's wise not to aggravate them needlessly.

Apart from pastepots, the primary food sources of volcants are fungi and other slime species. They are equally resistant to the corrosive effects of green, red, and brown slimes, and can feed on them as well. In areas where volcants occur naturally, locals have been known to use them as pest control against various slimes and molds.

## Pariah Tree

Another partner specie found where pastepots occur are pariah trees. These are primitive cycads which have evolved an unusual defense mechanism. They produce a toxic sap which they are able to spray out in a mist from hard nodules along the tree trunk. This sap is poisonous to most of the plants and pests that would otherwise encroach upon the tree, and it also keeps the pastepot from eating the tree. There is often a small dead clearing around these trees, which is what gives them their name. The sap spray can reach up to five hexes from the tree, depending on wind conditions. The sap only does 1 point of damage per turn, but the damage continues for 5 turns unless it is washed off or otherwise counteracted. Armor protects, but the sap corrodes most armor types as well.

The only time a mature pariah tree is harmless is when it is fruiting. The tree produces fruit that resembles small coconuts, with smooth pink flesh over a fibrous hull. The tree counts on animals to carry away the fruit, where the seeds inside can spread and take root. There is no toxin in the fruit, only slightly sweet liquid and chewy pulp.

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## Pwdre Ser

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There are no reliable witness accounts of the whole creatures, who dwell high up in the atmosphere and which are drawn to storm clouds. They are a colonial organism made of hundreds of slimes aggregated as a single vast mass, forming an air-filled bladder that keeps the colony aloft. Violent storms may tear segments of the colony off, raining them down in chunks of what is called "pwdre ser" (Welsh for "rot of the stars"). Some falls of this matter is inoffensive, while others have a sickening acrid odor or caustic properties. The chunks may be clear, or transparently colored, or contain strands of colored fibers. This material is notoriously difficult to collect, as it evaporates within hours, leaving only a thin film behind.

Fragments of pwdre ser may cause acid damage on contact or induce nausea from its stench. A living colony is rarely encountered, unless one is flying high above the cloud layer.

This titan slime has ST 100×2d, DX 1, IQ 1, and a variable MA. The MA varies because the colony floats and moves where the wind bears it, though it can exert some influence to the effect of MA 3 in the direction it wishes to go. Most times it prefers to travel towards storm clouds and away from anything that causes it pain.

The size of the colony is 1 hex per 5 ST points. Every 5 points of damage reduces the colony size by one hex, and any damage done beyond half the colony's ST has a 50% chance of destroying the integrity of the colony's air sac, sending the whole mass crashing to the ground.

Pwdre Ser is immune to electrical damage, and is believed to draw sustenance from electricity. When a colony is damaged by a storm it is usually due to hailstones and other airborne abrasives. This slime is not vulnerable to light. Piercing weapons do double damage to the colony.

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## Savant Forest & Sapryns

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The Savant Forest is a gestalt, each Savant Tree part of a connected, intelligent group organism. The original forest covers thousands of acres, and offshoots form smaller independent forests elsewhere, some covering whole islands. Each forest is integrated with its ecosystem, and the savant trees grow among other forest trees. The forest produces its own tenders, foresters, and protectors, in the form of the Sapryns.

Sapryns are mobile beings of living wood, roughly humanoid in shape. Some are as small as halflings, others rival giants in size. They are part of the forest group mind and are instantly aware of anything that occurs

within the forest's domain. The trees find this humanoid form useful for tending the forest and for interacting with other races.

Savant Trees are 100-125 feet tall when mature, with trunks 8-10 feet in diameter. The branches grow in a conical spiral at the crown of the tree, and are covered in succulent green leaves. Seeds grow from small yellow flowers into smooth teardrop-shaped nuts. Sapryns are grown inside hard galls on the tree's roots.

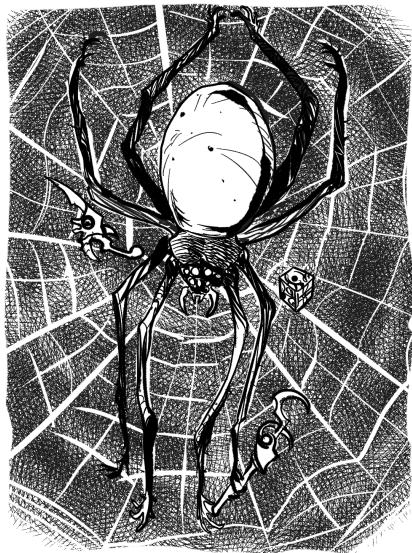
A sapryn's body is made of interwoven wood fibers, with patches of green leafy scales to gather sunlight. Chlorophyll cells give them basic monochrome vision, and they can also see heat like a pit viper does. They are keenly sensitive to air motion. They hear in a lower register than humans, but can discriminate speech and language. They can also perceive seismic shifts that presage an earthquake.

Sapryn of human size have ST 6+1d, DX 8+1d, IQ 50 and MA 10. Smaller and larger variants have proportional ST values. Their IQ is actually that of the forest itself, which is very difficult to measure in human metrics.

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## Tessarachnid

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Tessarachnid are intelligent spider-like beings with the ability to move between dimensions. They do this by constructing a web in the form of a tesseract, a four-dimensional shape that they can travel across from one three-dimensional space to another. They are distantly related to *Gate Spiders*, who share some of their space-warping ability, but tessarachnid are more advanced.

Physically a tessarachnid takes up about as much space as a grown cow, though much of this is its legs. They average eleven feet in length and six feet in width when stretched out, or eight by five when standing normally on bent legs. In a pinch they can squeeze through a gap as narrow as two

feet wide. They are two-hex beings in their normal posture.

While they superficially resemble a giant spider, there are a number of evolutionary differences. The legs end in retractable digits which are capable of fine dexterity and tool use. The exoskeleton is reinforced with internal chitinous struts that give the body greater support and strength. They have twelve eyes, four of which see along the axis beyond three-dimensional perception. The palps around the mouth are highly refined, giving the tessarachnid sophisticated powers of speech. They are less hairy than common spiders, with small clusters of sensory hairs along the legs and around the “hands” which function much the same as cat’s whiskers. Their individual colors and markings vary greatly, but all of them have a base body covering of pearlescent grey-white chitin. All tessarachnid Citizens are female; the males are smaller, weaker, and lack higher reason, though they can still cross dimensions instinctively.

Tessarachnid have a complex civilization built around their dimension-spanning travels. Every Citizen has great personal freedom within their society, but each is also answerable to the judgments of a panopticon council known as the Deathless. This

council consists of the greatest of their race, brought to the edge of immortality by the science and magic of a million worlds. The decisions and decrees of The Deathless might seem arbitrary and uneven to outsiders, but they are predicated on millennia of experience with thousands of realities. While the tesseractid do not have time travel, they do have so much experience that they can detect recurring patterns in history and intervene accordingly. This intervention usually occurs through the agency of the Correctors.

The Correctors are the truly dangerous members of tesseractid society. They are functionaries of the Deathless, and are highly skilled tesseractid who carry out those missions which the Deathless deem important to maintaining their definition of universal order. Correctors work for a higher goal, so their individual actions can seem unfair, cruel, and abhorrent, even if the ultimate goal is a noble one. One doesn't even need to be directly in the path of a Corrector to be swept up in the aftermath, as Correctors are typically deployed when severe intervention is called for, and their actions can have far-reaching consequences. Each Corrector is empowered to make decisions in the field that their orders don't cover, but in extreme

circumstances they will call for further orders from the Deathless.

Encounters with tesseractid, as with Mnoren, are rare indeed. It is rumored that, long before the creation of Cidri, a vast reality-spanning war waged between the Mnoren, tesseractid, and demons. It's not known if any were allies, or if each fought the others. If this did happen, there is no sign of such a battle raging now. Male tesseractid, if encountered, are little better than animals and as such can pose a danger to players. Players who encounter a female Citizen tesseractid may be meeting a scholar, an explorer, or even an adventurer. She is likely to have access to bizarre and outrageous technology and artifacts from other worlds, which she will keep out of the hands of the locals.

Citizen tesseractid have ST 14+1d, DX 9+1d, IQ 24+2d, and MA 12. Corrector tesseractid have ST 17+1d, DX 11+1d, IQ 29+2d, and MA 12. Male tesseractid have ST 9+1d, DX 12, IQ 6, and MA 14. Every tesseractid can shift across four-dimensional space in three turns, vanishing and re-entering normal space elsewhere.

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## Thoqht

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Mages, psychics, mediums and scholars cannot agree whether thoqht are living beings or spirits. What is known is that a thoqht starts its existence in an intangible state on an astral plane. It can cross into this world, but is imperceptible and ineffectual. The one thing it can do in our world seems to also be its sole interest – stealing parts from the dead to build its own body. It isn't known why, but a thoqht only ever takes a single part from any corpse. It may be a bone, an organ, a patch of skin, or a tuft of hair. Both the bodies of intelligent races and dead animals may be pilfered this way. The thoqht slowly constructs over time a whole body, though how such a thing functions is unknown. Until the body is complete, it remains in the

invisible, imperceptible state of the thoqht itself. Only when it is finished does it come to “life” and is fully visible and tangible, driven by the thoqht inside.

The actions that an embodied thoqht takes are nonsensical and incomprehensible. One entered a temple with a basket of doves, which it then released and stood watching as they flew about, wailing to itself all the while. Another built a great bonfire in the center of a village and then stood within in until its body was ash. Once an embodied thoqht appears in the world it will not return to its own, and sooner or later its arbitrary actions bring it into conflict. It may attack, or bring an attack upon itself. This has led more than one scholar to suggest that the thoqht are naturally immortal beings who build these bodies when they desire at last to die. The counter argument is that thoqht are simply capricious and inscrutable, as all things from other realms must be.

Thoqht bodies vary wildly depending on what they are pieced together from. They generally have ST 8 - 24, DX 8 - 14, IQ 7, and MA 8 - 12.

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## Undine Shroud

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Undine Shroud is a huge fungus mat that grows on the surface of the ocean, with tendrils that hang below to snare fish that seeks shelter in its shade. It also derives sustenance from sunlight, and is nibbled upon by other fish as well. In many ways it is the fungal equivalent of Sargasso weed.

A ship traveling under good winds may run into a mass of undine shroud and become mired. When this happens the shroud enters a different lifecycle stage. Slowly the shroud will engulf the ship, sending tendrils into the wood to digest it. Any other organic matter which cannot escape will also be digested. A shroud can enveloped

a raft or other small boat within a day, a galleon within a week, and all but the largest sailing vessels in two weeks.

At a distance an undine shroud looks similar to the pale water over a shoal or sandbar. Drawing closer reveals the spongy mass of lumpen and wrinkled fungal tissue. The snaring tendrils resemble bright red worms, and are both sticky and caustic. Prodding, walking upon, or piercing a shroud will bring forth tendrils as well as a slippery murky grey ichor.

Undine Shrouds have ST 80x1d, DX 8, IQ 1, and MA 1. They cover 1 hex per 5 ST. It can be very difficult to extract one's ship from a shroud, as weapons only do half damage. Fire is efficacious, doing double damage, but carries the danger of setting the ship alight. The surface of a undine shroud acts like a *Slippery Floor* spell, and the tendrils do 1 point of damage on each successful hit. The tendrils can strike underneath worn armor, but natural and magical protection can reduce damage. The damage is cumulative like insect stings however, so no-one will want to spend long upon a shroud's surface.

## Pronunciation Guide

| <b>Term</b>  | <b>Pronunciation</b> |
|--------------|----------------------|
| Aethstra     | āth·strə             |
| Bonecur      | bōn·kur              |
| Bouphogan    | bōw·fō·gan           |
| Cerachist    | serə·kist            |
| Chtholen     | ch·thō·l̥n           |
| D'qitroq     | də·kē·trok           |
| Drakhume     | drak·húm             |
| Jagerfaux    | yā·gər·fō            |
| Legerdemice  | lə·jər·də·mīs        |
| Lépunct      | lā·punkt             |
| Mesmerien    | mez·mer·ē·ən         |
| Ophidian     | ō·fid·ē·an           |
| Panglamoura  | pan·glə·mòr·ə        |
| Petrosphinx  | petrō·sfinks         |
| Pwdre Ser    | pú·drə ser           |
| Qrifae       | krē·fā               |
| Sapryn       | sap·rin              |
| Sarcophage   | sar·kō·fāj           |
| Scincid      | skin·kid             |
| Sumalakai    | sú·ma·la·kī          |
| Tessarachnid | tes·ə·rak·nid        |
| Teuthien     | túth·ē·ən            |
| Thoqoht      | thó·qwòt             |
| Tortugan     | tór·tú·gan           |



## Acknowledgments

Very little is created in a vacuum, and I would like to acknowledge some of the inspirations for certain beings in this book.

*Ophidian* - Inspiration here from the Lovecraft Mythos writers circle's serpent folk, particularly those described by Robert E. Howard.

*Pwdre Ser* - Thanks go to William Corliss, doyen of unusual natural phenomenae, who documented, among other things, falls of *pwdre ser* on our own planet.

*Dune Scourge* - This creature was inspired in part by the Julian May short story "Dune Roller", though it is ultimately a very different being.

*Pastepot* - Very much inspired by the "doughpot" from the Stanley G. Weinbaum short stories "Parasite Planet" and "The Lotus Eaters".

*Undine Shroud* - Inspired by the nautical horrors of William Hope Hodgson, especially that in the short story "The Derelict".

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I would like to thank Michela Da Sacco for her excellent illustrations, as well as her innate understanding of the material. She captured the ideas very deftly and brought them to life with a flourish.

I would also like to thank Steve Jackson for his brilliant game, and for letting me continue to play in his universe. His input and guidance has been a positive boon for me as a game writer.

## Bonus Art

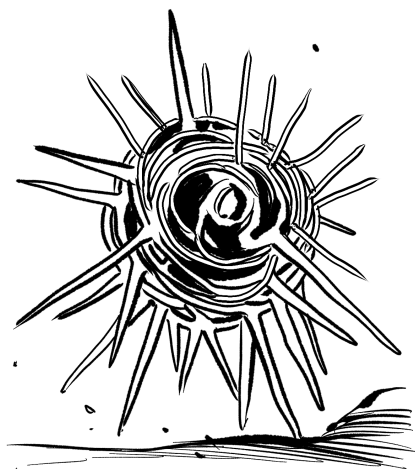
Here is the original commissioned artwork for the entries which have since become official creatures in the TFT game universe. The first three shown here were chosen for inclusion in the *TFT Bestiary*.



**Sinstoner**



**Tepes Briar**



**Vitranth**



**Schismada**

The Schismada can be found in the official TFT adventure, *Quick Quest 8: The Maddening Song*.