

# Cute & Fuzzy Seizure Monsters



BESM

# Cute & Fuzzy Seizure Monsters

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## About the Author

Emily was born in Livonia, Michigan and grew up in Brighton. While in high school, she was best known for writing strange bits of fiction, particularly a tale about rampaging biker grandmothers and an auspicious poem about pocket lint. In college, she joined *Animania*, the local anime fan society, and enjoyed it immensely until she became toxic on too much *Kimagure Orange Road* one infamous Sunday. Emily earned a B.S.E (Computer Engineering) and an M.S.E. (Computer Science and Engineering) from the University of Michigan, fleeing the dark grasp of graduate school in 1997. Since that time, she has worked on several projects for *In Nomine* (SJ Games) and as a columnist for *Pyramid Magazine*. When not programming or writing, Emily enjoys playing electric guitar, endlessly arguing philosophy, spending time with friends, playing video games, and claiming she knows nothing about computers. Emily can be reached through her personal email at [zenith@pave-france.org](mailto:zenith@pave-france.org).

## AUTHOR'S DEDICATION

To my friend Genevieve for teaching me the value of monster eugenics, and to my loving husband Eric for finding me a copy of *Monster Rancher II*, supporting my crazed writing habit in the middle of planning a wedding, laughing at monster cannibalism jokes, and always being there.



## FOREWORD

Love it or hate it, we would be remiss if we didn't publish this book.

The pet monster anime genre has exploded across Japan, North America, and the entire world. Anime has never been more "trendy" than it is today, thanks to a little yellow rat and his pre-adolescent trainer.

So why is it so popular?

Good question. I believe the answer lies in the near perfect construction of the genre's ringleader, *Pokemon*. The phenomenon has a very strong base in video games — a steadily growing market thanks to state-of-the-game-art technology that makes the game experience more dynamic and exciting every day. Adding to this base is *Pokemon's* broad appeal to both young boys and girls. Consider the stereotypes: for boys, there are battles and cool monsters and mean villains; for girls, there are strong women and oh-so-cute fuzzy animals and friendly relationships. Finally, when you add the addictive elements of collectability (anyone remember Cabbage Patch Kids?), the creators of *Pokemon* had a can't-miss hit on their hands. Strong marketing and promotion by Nintendo and its partners snared the North American market.

Then the plethora of others came along, each adding their own take on the subject. The genre had taken root.

I struggled over the decision to publish this book. We wanted to serve the fan base of the popular genre, but didn't want to look like we were "selling out." That just isn't our style. When Emily approached David (the anime line developer) and told him that she'd like to do a serious treatment of the genre but in a satirical tone, I gave the green light for the project.

Admittedly, I still have reservations, but if we can please the fans and have some fun at the same time, then the risk is worth it.

We hope you agree.

Mark C. MacKinnon  
December 2000

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION



AIMO  
2000/11

From anime's inception, there have always been cute, small monsters as sidekicks of major characters. From magical girl shows to mecha anime, talking cats, robots, puppies, mini-dragons, bats and penguins often accompanied the protagonists, looking cute, dispensing sage advice, and occasionally saving their bacon. What they rarely did was fight. It is only recently that anime and video games focusing on battles between adorable little sidekicks spawned a genre all its own — and an overwhelmingly popular one at that.

In 1999, pet monster merchandise outsold all competing toys, games, and collectable cards in both Japan and the United States. It has transcended the normal fads and worked its way into popular culture with millions of little boys and girls imagining they can own and train cute monsters, just like their digital pals.

Anime inspired by the pet monster concept does not focus on complex plots or in-depth character development. Instead, the stories revolve around the triumph of will, expressed through the ideal of conquest and battle. Rather than depicting angst-ridden teenagers and their giant robots, the spotlight here is on children and their pet monsters. These pint-sized protagonists are in a journey of personal self-discovery. They learn important moral lessons by striving to become the world's best fighting monster trainers or raising armies of tiny terrorists to battle evil. Whatever the moral justification is for the ensuing mayhem, pet monster anime always combines humour and combat together to bring a half hour spectacle of flash, tension, and battle. Punches fly! Monsters transform! In the end, the hero emerges victorious with smiles all around, his good friend the (slightly battered) pet monster perched perkily on his shoulder and his gal-pal at his side. No harm, no foul, and everyone is happy (except the losing monsters).

The pet monster genre did not originate in anime, nor even in collectable card games. It emerged in the world of electronic gaming with the February 1996 release of the Nintendo GameBoy game *Poketta Monstaa* (*Pocket Monsters*, shortened to *Pokemon*). *Pokemon* was the brainchild of the small computer game studio Game Freak, Inc, and involved collecting small monsters and combat... lots of combat... hours of combat... miles of combat! To beat the game, the player had to capture powerful creatures in special containers, train them to fight, and wipe the floor with all the other trainers in the game. Originally, *Pokemon* came in two flavours, Red and Green, both of which were subtly different. This was the game's gimmick. Neither colour version contained every monster. To catch them all, players had to link their game to one of the opposite colour and trade monsters, much like trading cards.

The addictive pleasure of collecting, trading, raising and fighting unique monsters in the framework of a computer role-playing game should not be underestimated. It combines the collecting urge of trading cards with the level-up-and-beat-them-senseless thrills of a computer role-playing game (all wrapped in a universe of cuddly monsters that appeals to boy and girl alike). *Pokemon* sold millions of copies in Japan. It was everywhere. On the heels of success came the predictable deluge of games, action figures, stuffed animals, *manga*, posters, soundtracks, clothing, flavoured rice cakes, and little toys that made cute noises.

There was also a very successful collectable card game. The anime, based on the adventures of a *Pokemon* trainer and his friends, began broadcast in Japan in early 1997, followed swiftly by two major motion pictures. A fad was born.

The success of its *Pocket Monster* cartridge game in Japan inspired Nintendo to extend distribution to North America. Fickle American audiences found *Pokemon Green* unacceptable, however, because of blurred animation and amateur production quality. So, *Pokemon Green* received a graphic update to become *Pokemon Blue*. Both Gameboy cartridges went on sale in September 1998 with explosive results. Coupled with Warner Brother's purchase of the anime series, shown on their WB! Network during prime cartoon viewing hours, *Pokemon* did what Admiral Yamamoto could not. It crossed the Pacific to conquer America in less than a year. Capitalizing on their success, Nintendo continued producing sequels like *Pokemon Yellow*, *Pokemon Pinball*, *Pokemon Silver* and *Pokemon Gold*. There were far more terrifying things in store, however. The pet monsters were breeding.

Step back in time to 1996. About the same period that *Pokemon* first appeared, giant Japanese toy maker Bandai released *Tamagotchi*, the cute virtual pet. Invented by housewife Aki Maita, this toy displayed a small electronic image of a monster contained in a tiny unit the size of a key chain. This required constant attention, much like a real pet, or else it would grow sick and die. People put their lives on hold, even when driving in traffic, to feed and care for their virtual pets. Many owners purposely let their pet die, just to see what would happen. *Tamagotchi* sold eight million units in its first year, and it was imported to North America in 1997, thus beating *Pokemon* to these shores. Its meteoric success with American consumers spawned an entire line of "me-too" products, notably Tiger Electronics' *Giga Pets*. *Giga Pets* introduced the concept of collectable virtual pets released in limited production runs in 1997, whetting the appetite for what was to come. *Tamagotchi* itself did not have the legs of *Pokemon*, but the digital pet phenomena stubbornly refused to die. It lived on in console games.

Various forms of digital pets had been on console games since the mid-1990s. Cyberpunk manga ace Masamune Shirow (*Ghost in the Shell*, *Dominion Tank Police*) even drew illustrations for one of them, the Sony PlayStation game *Suraimu Siyou!* where players raised cute, multicoloured slime creatures. In 1997, TECMO released *Monster Rancher* for the PlayStation. *Monster Rancher* was a monster-raising simulation that allowed players to grow, breed and (most importantly) fight their creations. It was sold as a "monster raising-virtual pet combat simulator" combining the care-and-feeding aspects of *Tamagotchi* and other console breeding games with the core concept of *Pokemon* (cute monsters whaling the tar out of other cute monsters). *Monster Rancher 2* expanded on the idea by adding stronger role-playing elements: monster adventures, extra tournaments, and an increased number of breeds. An anime based on the video games went into production in 1998, with a 1999 release that featured a boy who is sucked into his game console and transported to the pet monster world. It is now available from A.D. Vision.



Bandai was not about to be left out in the cold. The toy empire struck back with their own *Pokemon* homage, *Digimon: Digital Monsters*, a fusion of elements from both its own *Tamagotchi* and its rival *Pokemon*. Released as an anime in 1998, *Digimon* first met with resistance, as the more popular *Pokemon* still held court and the differences between the two seemed nebulous at best. After the young target audience finally tired of *Pokemon*, however, *Digimon's* popularity swelled. The *Pokemon* story line had emphasized the personal development of the heroes while they collected and trained their fuzzy gladiators, but *Digimon* was subtly different. Its story was epic, closer to a traditional computer RPG. The heroes were scrappy kids fighting a war against evil, with their pet monsters as junior coalition partners. With its beachhead secured, Bandai, along with Saban Entertainment, supported *Digimon* with a wave of motion pictures, video games, and their own collectable card game.

Pet monster king *Pokemon* has lost some steam in the face of market saturation and competition, but the genre itself remains as fecund as ever. Games and anime attempting to either challenge the industry's leaders or carve out their own niches have flooded the marketplace over the last few years. *Azure Dreams*, a game based on collecting eggs, raising and, eventually, selling the monsters came out on Playstation in 1998 and for the GameBoy in 2000. If trading in monster flesh did not appeal to consumers, there was always *Jade Cocoon: The Story of Tamamayu*, released for Playstation in 1999. This was essentially *Pokemon* with monster breeding, better graphics, and a mythic plot involving the powers of light and darkness.

Some believed that this endless parade of fuzzy ferocity was becoming too much even for Japan, especially after the anime *Cyber Team in Akihabara* appeared. Released in 1998, *Cyber Team* parodied magical girls, digital pets and cute monsters. This was premature, however, with companies releasing more pet monster-inspired games and anime. *Flint, the Time Detective* (2000) featured a prehistoric boy who travelled through time with his friends and their monsters to stop the forces of evil and idiocy from changing history. *Dragon Warrior Monsters*, by ENIX, rivalled *Pokemon* in depth of available creatures, dungeons to traverse and breeding possibilities. Even some western computer games have fallen under the pet monster spell: famed computer game designer Peter Molyneux's newest project *Black and White* fuses the concept of monster breeding with a God-level strategic simulation game.

As we bounce into the next millennium, the concept of training and breeding cute, fuzzy, violent monsters still attracts an eager audience. Pet monster toys, collectable card, board, video and computer games, anime, stuffed animals, and "story telling games" (RPGs in sheep's clothing) saturate the marketplace. The only thing missing has been an English-language universal simulation of the entire genre in tabletop role-playing format — and it is this yawning gap in our culture which this supplement hopes to exploit.

## USING *fin* SUPPLEMENT

This book is a satirical look at the pet monster genre that adds a "not-very-serious" monster creation, design, and combat rules to the *Big Eyes, Small Mouth (BESM)* role-playing game. It supplies guidelines for GMs who wish to design campaigns or adventures inspired by pet monsters. It provides rules for players to create small cute fuzzy creatures and use them (or use them up) in a quest for fame and glory or a crusade against evil and ugliness.

The Pet Monster genre is not just monster battles. GMs who wish to explore the implications of fantasy societies that treat adorable little beasties as pro-wrestlers; gladiators or slave-soldiers will find useful material for this weighty theme. In the process they may teach their players many valuable lessons (like "God is On the Side of the Cute Battalions"). Even if pet monster campaigns are not on the agenda, the GM may find the critter rules and guidelines useful for other *BESM* campaigns.



# CHAPTER 2: UNTIL DEATH DO US PART: PET MONSTER CAMPAIGNS



Pet Monster campaigns can take place at anytime, anywhere. A young ninja from ancient Japan might train large ice-spitting eyeballs to slay his enemies, or a teenage space captain keep one or two pet critters on board her star cruiser for vermin control against alien creatures infesting the vessel. Most pet monster games, however, take place on a fantasy or alternate Earth where monster ownership is accepted, expected, and universal for everybody (much like people believe all Texans own six-shooters).

It is not the time period that matters. It's the culture of the mass ownership of small, cute, cuddly, fuzzy battle monsters trained to attack at the whim and whimsy of their owners. It is a society that lives for fights, fame and fortune, a society born to battle.

This chapter focuses on that society's customs and conventions: the thrill of ownership (and dominance) of small creatures, the excitement of winning in the ring, the fraternal bonds of friendship between trainer and monster, and the joyful adventures they share while the critter is sent into harms way to do its best pal's bidding. Cute monster-raising cultures are complex, filled with strange sights and stranger people. They even have their own poetry: the heinous rhyming battle-motto.

## ORIGINS OF CUTE MONSTERS

From where do cute monsters originate? How did they get here? Why are they in the shape of man-eating potatoes with a thousand eyes? This section presents some of the possibilities.

### Survival Of THE CUTEST

Through the inscrutable powers of Mother Nature, natural selection, and random genetic mutation, darling monsters evolved from earlier monsters, which, in turn, came from bug-eyed creatures that lived in the sea. These bug-eyed, small-mouthed beasties came from even smaller bug-eyed piles of slime. No one is sure where the slime came from. Maybe it came from other piles of slime, Martian meteorites, or the sneeze of a forgotten deity.

Evolution has thrown some curve balls. Monsters have not always been the modern small, cuddly beings with fangs that curl up in bed with their trainers at night. They once were gargantuan beasts who roamed the land and the seas, eating anyone (trainer or not) they came across. There were great carnivores with huge teeth, great herbivores with not-so-huge but somewhat flatter teeth, and great monsters made of vegetable matter who were eaten into extinction by the herbivores. Eventually, would-be trainers became tired of monsters eating them. They invented gunpowder, and natural selection took its course. The small and adorable remained, while trainers herded the large and unappealing onto the transport trailers and sent them to factories to be processed into the newest fast-food menu item.



Today, monster palaeontology is a fast-growing field of scientific research. What did the critters of yore eat? What did they look like? Can scientists dig up an extinct monster fossil, clone it, and create a race of super-monsters to dominate the planet, or at least, the tournament circuit? The smarter trainers from around the world sign up for study programs, hoping to be the lucky one picked to dig up something really nasty and horrifying, clone it in a test tube, and add it to their monster collections. The dumb ones walk around the wilds all day, waiting to bushwhack some perky and unsuspecting beast.

## SPAWN of THE ATOM

A nuclear power plant melted down and blew fallout over the whole of the continent or home islands. Cute forest life suffered beneath horrible mutating radiation. Adorable bunny rabbits and foxes gave birth to a new generation of even cuter super transforming electric rabbits and implacable fox-golems made out of chewy rubber cement. There were also a whole lot of other mutant things resembling nothing more than the fevered dreams of graphic artists in thrall to *yen-crazed* video game industry marketing execs. An army of marauding creatures were born, eating the small and defenseless, destroying homes, and invading the dreams of children.

Someone had to stop these beasts, or better yet, harness them for the greater good of mankind. After the disaster, the first trainers stepped forth, girded with monster-capturing gear, perky smiles, and advertising endorsements. They used the power of technology to ensnare these mutants, broke their wills, and created a new species: the gentle pet monsters we know and love.



## Frankenmon

White-coated scientists hunched over beakers full of frothing DNA molecules, muttering sinister incantations to Watson and Crick. They spent their lives cracking the monster genetic code, and work feverishly to improve it. A little protein sequence prod here, a tweak of chromosome there, and a new species was born, intended to serve as weapons of war.

Once, the monsters were what they appeared to be: fuzzy little gophers, adorable man-eating tigers, cuddly giant lizards, and the simple tomato. With the injection of a retrovirus that modified the genetic structures of these creatures, they became battling monsters with fully loaded weaponry and bullet-resistant armour. Sure, the back room cages brimmed with horrific failures, and the dump with aborted monstrosities, but one cannot make an omelette without breaking a few ova.

Success was achieved. The monsters grew in height, girth, and length (or if they were already big, they shrunk down to a much handier size). Their teeth became whiter than white, their eyes larger than saucers, and their voices sounded like Japanese voice actresses imitating kittens.

People really liked them.

The monsters, being far too huggable to break the enemy's moral, were a wash out as far as military weapons were concerned. The corporation that created them ordered these failures disposed of. Instead, scientists adopted some monsters to give to their kids, and others were simply dumped in the wilderness by a kindly lab technician who could not bear seeing something so cute destroyed. These critters bred, and soon cute monsters were everywhere.

## A Fuzzy HISTORY of THE World

The cute monster has always been there alongside man, not hiding in the shadows, but right out in the open. Cave men hunted with them during the ice age. The Egyptians adored them, and worshipped gods with human bodies and cute monster heads. In the time of ancient Rome, they fought in the circus to entertain the fickle Roman mob. When they were particularly fierce, these gladiator monsters had fresh Christian for breakfast. The first boy trainer was (according to legend) a young Christian would-be martyr named Daniel. Upon being thrown into the arena for execution, he called upon the power of his faith and tamed the fuzzy little fire-breathing winged lion sent to barbecue him. Boy and Monster teamed up, and thus was born Daniel and Spartacat's revolt — or maybe that was a few centuries back when warrior princesses and their blond-furred pets rampaged through Ancient Greece and Republican Rome.

In any case, after Constantine became the first Christian emperor, he assured the cute monster's position in western society. After the Decline and Fall of Rome, they roamed through the Middle Ages. Young nobles rode with them on the hunt, chasing down the King's deer, the wild boar, and Robin Hood. During the Renaissance, artists painted them on the ceilings of cathedrals. Cabin boys kept

them as mascots and rat-hunters, and some were shipwrecked on Caribbean islands, where they thrived in the New World, smoking wild pigs with their fiery breath. These "Buccamonsteers" became the terror of the Spanish Main, attacking treasure ships for their gold, and teaming up with dashing teenage pirates.

In Europe, the cute monster was a pet beloved by all. Napoleon gave one to Josephine. Karl Marx saw how their battles diverted the lower classes from their miserable existence, and wrote that cute fuzzy monsters were the opiate of the people. Queen Victoria kept pure-breds in Buckingham Palace, and exploration societies organized expeditions to Darkest Africa to search for the Source of the Monsters. During World War II, cute monsters and their spunky trainers chased down Nazi spies while at the terrible siege of Leningrad they sustained the Russian garrison.



In modern times, the monsters continued following mankind, or sometimes even preceding them. Sputnik carried a cute monster into space, where it orbited the Earth, making adorable noises that were broadcast across the planet. As the cold war intensified, evil geniuses stroked them tenderly, plotting the demise of dapper British spies. NASA sent a boy and his monster to the moon, where they had many exciting adventures and collected the first lunar monster eggs....

If pet monsters have always existed alongside mankind, it not only explains why they are all over the place today, but it also offers plenty of scope for campaigns where boys, girls and their spunky little pets leave their paw prints on the pages of history.

## SOMETHING Else ENTIRELY

If cute monsters did not evolve, were not caused by radiation mutation, and are not the product of a genetic experiment, how did they end up running all over the place? They could be natives of another fantasy world (always a good choice), or have arrived on Earth through interstellar cross-pollination. Maybe UFO aliens are using Earth as a dumping ground for unwanted pets. Perhaps they are the products of a magical experiment gone horribly awry. They might even be the devil's servants — familiars sent here to corrupt unsuspecting innocent children. Who knows? They could have simply manifested one day, and now no one can get rid of the little suckers.

## MONSTER RAISING SOCIETIES

Almost any society could conceivably support pet monsters in some capacity, even if they considered it illegal, immoral, and likely to cause tooth decay. Not all monster-raising societies are equal, however. Some see monster training as a national sport or a right of passage into adulthood, while others approach it as a necessity for national security. It is even possible that monsters exist completely outside of society.

## MONSTER GLADIATORS

The most common monster raising society is one that focuses on cute monster fighting as a national sport, much like hockey or baseball. Monsters are placed in an arena and fight for the glory of their trainers. Everyone can own a monster, but few creatures are of the calibre that can compete on a national or international scale.

Many children grow up dreaming of becoming the greatest trainer in the world. They spend their formative years teaching their household pets to claw the furniture and chew on other neighbourhood kids. Most parents actively discourage these children from teaching the pet dog to fight (assuming their big brother's pet monster has not already eaten the family dog, which seems sadly likely). Society encourages those moppets who show appropriate aptitude to study all the copious magazines, TV shows, video games, databases and other information on the real monsters.



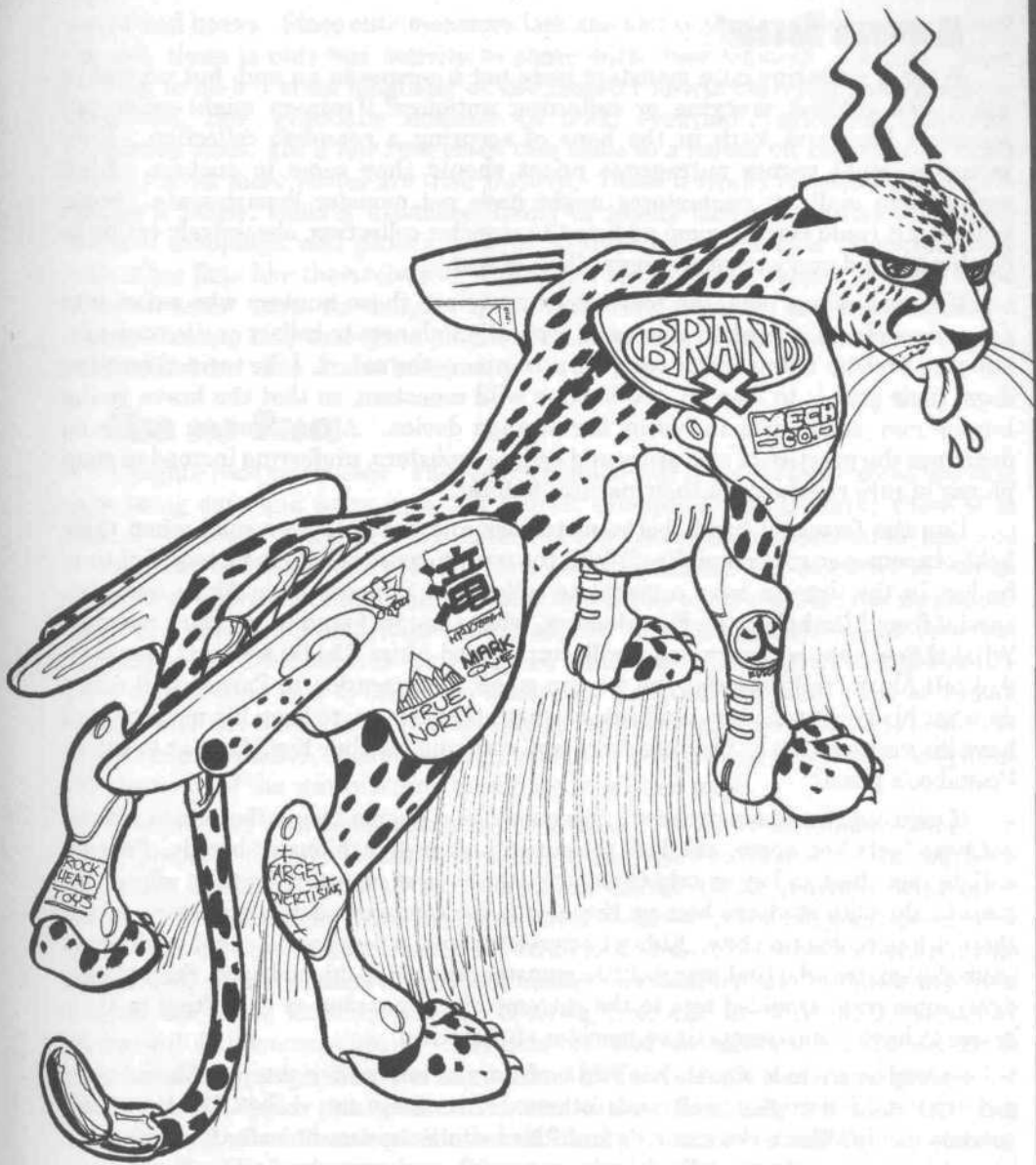
Communities often practice a form of coming-of-age ritual involving cute monsters. It is not uncommon for pre-adolescent boys and girls to become trainers at the tender age of 10, 11 or 12. They then spend weeks or months (but usually no more than 52 episodes) absent from family and school on an extended combat safari. If they come back covered with glory and trailing dozens of pet monsters they are considered full-fledged trainers. Those who do not make the grade usually become so thoroughly sick of the bugs, the lost battles, and the cute little fuzzy monsters' high-pitched voices that they give up their dream. These last unfortunates normally end up becoming high school students, where they meet other ordinary guys or girls, graduate, get jobs, marry and have children who dream of becoming monster trainers.

In other societies, it is not so extreme. Kids still go to school, and it is No Monsters in Class on pain of detention or (gasp!) confiscation. A lucky few, however, may have the opportunity to attend special academies or summer camps where professional trainers show them how to teach real, but very small, darling monsters to obey their commands. Not all kids are so lucky, though, and some must make do with bush-league extra-curricular sports or amateur battles fought in village greens, basketball courts, city dumps, and old used car lots.

Trainers may cut their monster's teeth in little league duels or unsupervised challenges with other wandering kids, but the pinnacle of the sport is the tournaments. These take place in front of large crowds (or larger TV audiences, if a modern-day setting). They are far too competitive for just anyone to make it to the top. In hopes of making it big, legions of wannabe trainers find themselves fighting in small-time stadiums, dojos, gyms and back alleyways, making just enough money to get by. Others return to the academies of their youth to teach the next generation of trainers, hoping to tutor that one gifted child with a shot at the big time.

An entire culture may grow up around winning and losing whilst being gawked at by hundreds or even millions of people. There will be slogans, advertisements, prime media placements, agents, product endorsements and the fanatical devotion to the hometown boys or girls. There is also money — lots of money — on the line, in the form of prizes, as well as pay-outs from the bookies collecting on the bets. If the sport is big enough, organized crime may even become involved, attempting to fix matches and putting pressure on those who will not co-operate.

Pet monster sports may spawn a whole support industry devoted to trainers including the sale of cute monster food, play-toys, beds, litter boxes, cleaning supplies, medications, cages, whips, and shock collars. If the technology allows, the electronics industry might produce pocket devices programmed with interesting titbits and data on monsters, special detectors, storage devices and analyzers. Successful trainers or cute monsters may endorse particular products. Really successful trainers may earn positions with monster merchandising companies or even the chance of becoming a "company demo team." Is this "selling out" or simply "promoting the sport?" Every trainer must make his or her own decision.



Not everyone will be happy with the kind of society created by pet monster sports. There will always be flak from groups who consider it cruel, worthless and likely to lead to violent anti-social behavior. Society usually dismisses these individuals as spoilsports who just need to get out once in a while, though these reform advocates are often found beat-up and scorched in back alleys.

## MONSTER Safari!

What if collecting cute monsters were not a means to an end, but an end in itself, like goldfish fancying or collecting antiques? Trainers might trade pet monsters back and forth in the hope of securing a complete collection. Rare monsters could garner outrageous prices should they come to auction. Even mainstream malls or superstores might have pet monster departments. Some individuals could even become addicted to monster collecting, obsessively trying to catch each and every creature, regardless of cost.

If monsters are pets, the true adventurers are those hunters who safari into dangerous places, trackless wastes or even alien planets to collect or discover new and rare breeds. Often one or two pets accompany the safari. Like trained hunting dogs, their goal is to leap on and subdue wild monsters, so that the brave young hunter may stuff them in his or her storage device. A few hunters may even denounce the practice of capturing and selling monsters, preferring instead to snap photos of rare creatures in their natural habitat.

Can the fraternal bonds between trainer and monster stay solid when their hobby becomes so commercialized? Will the true purpose of cute monsters, fighting, be lost in the urge to have a complete collection? Suppose little Akira owns his special friend Peekaboo the Eye Monster, whose egg he found in the park one day. What if Peekaboo was rare and a collector offered Akira \$3,000 for him? Mom and dad tell Akira "sell Peekaboo, so we can go on that vacation to Paris!" Will Akira do what his heart tells him, and resist temptation? Or try to keep his monster and have his vacation too by hunting down and catching another Eye Monster to sell in Peekaboo's place?

If monsters are mainstreamed, there may be a stigma facing those kids who do not have "pets," or worse, who lack the cutest and most fashionable breeds. Parents will do their best to buy or otherwise acquire the best monster they can afford. In schools, the elite students become those with the strongest, cutest monsters, which their rich parents often buy. Kids who purchase from a pedigreed kennel might even snub classmates who find mangy little monsters the old fashioned way. Society may drive some poor, troubled tots to the extreme of pet napping or egg-lifting in their desire to have a cute competitive monster of their own.

Society treats kids who do not own monsters as not quite right, just like a boy or girl who does not play well with others. Are they anti-social? Do they lack sportsmanship? Was it the mother's fault? Ex-trainers become Monster Psychologists. They appear on morning talk shows, wear suits, and write books like "Love Your Monster, Love Your Kids." Restaurants and shows treat them like dignitaries, and people often let them cut ahead of the long ticket lines at sporting events.

There is a dark side to the pet monster hobby. A few collectors become so obsessed with cute monsters that they drift apart from normal society. Often they are so attached to their monster collections that they do not even let them fight for fear of losing even one of their precious brood. This produces pet monsters that are no longer the lean, mean, fighting machines nature intended; instead they grow

torpid and heavy, Since cute monsters lack the ability to play video games or surf the net, there is only one activity to share with their trainers ... eating. With nothing to do but stare longingly at the monster sports channels and munch on junk food, they gradually increase in bulk, eventually attaining awkward, ponderous sizes. (In a few rare cases this leads to a career on the monster sumo circuit.) Even more pitiful are their owners. These woefully obsessed individuals endure a lonely, solitary existence, living in smelly basement rooms filled with monster droppings, and getting little or no fresh air or exercise. They talk only with other fans like themselves — if they can speak at all. Indeed, some of these cute monster fans no longer speak coherent human sentences, instead communicating only through a pidgin of monster talk. There is one thing we can be thankful for: they do not breed.

## WAR and Peace

Knights rode warhorses. The Aztecs trained war dogs. Is there some law that says being cute and fuzzy gets you a draft exemption? Well, maybe there is in Japan, but not in America. Fortunately, pet monsters are not human beings, and as such, can be conveniently bred in vats and on ranches. The modern "no human casualties" approach of the United States to war has made monster use inevitable. They are cheap, reproducible, biodegradable, non-toxic (mostly) and very low maintenance. After all, it is easier to feed a huge army of acid spitting golem-like piles of rock than it is to feed, arm and equip a regular standing army of human beings who need real food, real weapons, real clothing and real pensions. Pet monsters are smaller, cheaper, faster, and their *genki*, gung-ho attitude keeps the effectiveness of the war machine humming at a fever pitch.

The problem with using monsters in the military is that (like humans) they need to be properly trained to kill things before they can be sent out into the field. Normally, monsters want to eat, sleep, and maybe tussle playfully with other monsters by beating the living daylights out of them but not causing any permanent harm. It takes a strong trainer to turn these cute and cuddly creatures into disciplined, effective infantry who can master the military arts of forced marches, digging fox holes, flanking attacks, covering fire, and knowing when to salute. Successful drill-trainers are in great demand, and the military may be willing to overlook minor issues (like "you say you're 18? You look 12, son") in order to enlist the very best possible pet monster trainers. Since cute monsters fight better when they have a good relationship with their officers, some trainers may even accompany their monster platoons overseas. Of course, they are supposed to stay well behind the lines when the fur ball goes up. Whether they do so is another question.

The regulars may consist of volunteer or vat-bred monsters, but what if the war turns fierce and casualties mount? The government may need to conscript children's pet monsters as well. When the telegram from the draft board arrives and your pet monster's number is up, will you do your duty and send it off to monster boot camp? That is a question each and every boy or girl must answer. There are whispers of the Underground Railroad, a network of safe houses, a



perilous journey to the great white north. No pet monster can make it to across the border alone, however. Heck, most of them couldn't cross the street without help. If the monster is to escape, its trainer must run away with it, abandoning family and flag. The monster stares at its owner with soulful eyes, ignorant of its fate. On a distant battlefield half the world away, cute things go over the top and into the fire. Every day at school, little boys and girls are receiving "The Army regrets to inform the owner of..." letters. It's a hard choice, but there are only two decisions. Or are there?

Perhaps serving or running isn't the answer. Maybe society itself is sick. Is there a cancer in the body politic? How can the President send cute fuzzy creatures into violent mass combat? (Violent single combat is fine, though.) Was war even declared?



Enough is enough. The genetic manipulation and mass production of these creatures is cruel. Conscription is slavery! End the war! Bring our fuzzy monsters home! Protest groups form around the lunch counters in the elementary schools and high schools. The pint-sized radicals prepare to march. They dress in tank tops, sailor suits, and perky caps. Society recognizes them by their unkempt, spiky multi-chromatic hair, their anime sticker-emblazoned lunch boxes, their fuzzy little monsters, their pocket consoles. They wave large, crayon-written signs reading "Give our monsters back!," "Fight duels, not war!" and "Our monsters are ours, you big meanies!" They chant "Hey, Hey, L.B.J., How Many Fuzzies Did You Kill Today!" Boom boxes blare out their frightening anthems, the rap songs that list their monster's powers and lineage.

It is a hot summer of discontent. The kids have occupied the schools, and they will not come out. (They are supposed to be in the schools, but not on summer break.) The janitor calls the school board. The school board calls the parents. The parents are helpless. Heck, if they've been lax enough to let their kids own stone golems and fire-breathing rabbits, it's a bit late to enforce discipline now.

Normal cops are helpless against the kids' monsters. The hard-core radicals (the 12-year-olds) barricaded themselves in the homerooms, the gym and the cafeteria. They have a six-week supply of monster pet food and a growing list of demands, starting with No More War and ending with an all-anime channel. There is unrest in other cities and news crews gather like vultures. The trainers form coalitions with other radical student groups (like Fair Allowance and The Right to Recess). Kids everywhere burn their pet monster draft cards. It is a revolution that is brewing on the home front and the fate of the war itself may be in jeopardy. There is only one thing left to do: contact the governor, declare martial law, and call out the pet monsters of the National Guard to storm the schools. This is the ultimate battle: pet monster against pet monster.

## **FUZZ ON THE STREETS**

Not all societies recognize the God-given right for every post-pubescent kid to have his or her own fuzzy battle toy. What if society did not consider collecting and fighting battles using cute monsters a sport, but instead a sin, an addiction, or even a disease like alcoholism or gambling? Society might see the sport of fuzzy fighting monsters as harmful to the delicate psyches of developing children. After all, the so-called sport's focus on monster mayhem could put the idea that violence is an acceptable form of conflict resolution into minds of small children! It might be cruel to the monsters, too. It is obvious anyone who believes this just does not understand the close bonds that exist between boy or girl and fuzzy monster, as forged in the burning crucible of battle. Leaving that aside, however, and imagine what such an Orwellian society would be like should these anti-monster views become the dominant paradigm.

In such sad places, ownership of pet monsters is illegal. Instead of being a healthy pass-time for children and a popular spectator sport, monster fighting is a counter-culture activity, with outlaw fight clubs operating in old warehouses,

secret passwords to get in, and the ever-present chance of being raided by the cops. Organized crime, which promotes illegal gambling and especially brutal monster duels, may take over some fight clubs. Others may simply be outlaw fraternities of fighters and fans who live only for the thrill of the ring.

Inner-city street gangs could also dominate cute monster ownership, with rival factions competing for control of city turf and staging regular duels in back alleys behind housing projects or bleak inner-city parks. Their initiation rituals would include kidnapping baby monsters or monster eggs from rival gang territories, or running a gauntlet of fuzzy terrors. Some gangs may do it just for the fighting and the monsters, while others engage in criminal acts like dealing eggs to pre-teens. They would not like each other much, would they?

### ANOTHER BUG HUNT

Species exist in intricate ecological relationships. When these grow unbalanced, all manner of hell can break loose, from plagues of bunny rabbits ravaging Australia to strange saucer-shaped beasts attacking our livestock. In order to stop such annoyances, people may breed, raise and train pet monsters to hunt down certain kinds of vermin. Their targets may be rats in the corn, crows in the fields, marauding chipmunks, giant termites, or, worst of all, IRS agents.

To be proper foes of pet monsters, the pests should be especially dangerous, threatening human life itself. What if tiny, ferocious alien parasite-rats with acid blood and poison fangs invaded the world? Left unchecked, they could grow into giant people-eating monsters, lay hordes of eggs, and overrun the world. In their larval stage, these tiny terrors are too small and fast to find easily; they hide in air ducts, sewers and bird's nests, and no one believes they are real until too late. They eat cats and ferrets for breakfast, and have puppy dogs and sewer workers for lunch. There is only one thing that can stop them: a team of pint-sized kids with their own fierce pet monsters, who can hunt them down and root them out...flame them before they breed!

### THE ONCE AND FUTURE MONSTER

What if there was a world where mini-dragons darted through the sky, frolicking pixies filled the woods, and stone golems ambled happily through the mountains? It would be a place of joy and wonders for about half an hour, after which an Evil Dark Lord would be sure to arise, corrupting the dragons into terrible fire-breathing monsters, turning the pixies into vampires and the stone golems into vile poison-spitting mountain trolls. He would kill anyone who resisted his power, then raise them from the dead as part of his zombie army.

Most locals with any leadership potential are likely to have died and been transformed into undead minions, joined the winning side, or had the brains to flee to the next kingdom. Now the only chance the surviving cute things (and a few human peasants) have is to import outside mercenaries. To this end, the last of the pixie-mages or the local princess-goddess or the finger of fate opens up a dimensional portal to Earth, drawing in a bunch of potential hope-bringers. Due

to mass limitations in the extra-dimensional spell used to bring them here, they all happen to be kids. Will these interdimensional exiles have the necessary guts, fortitude, youth and favour of destiny to oppose evil and corruption? Maybe, but just to make sure, the surviving cute monsters realize there is only one card left to play ... their own bodies. They will become cute pets for the visiting heroes. This way they can motivate the Earthlings to seek out and liberate more cute monsters from the forces of evil. It is a dirty job, but some pet monsters have to do it.

## VIVA LA REVOLUTION!

The average monster is well fed, well protected, and brainwashed into believing the life they live is the one for which they are predestined. Every once in a while, however, a few monsters realize that life would be different if they disposed of their trainers and fled into the night ... after all, not every monster is happy being the plaything of its master. Some are downright irate with the state of things. Aren't monsters, like man, created innately free? Shouldn't they have the same rights as trainers? Shouldn't there be one nation, created for cute monsters, by monsters, indivisible, where they can run unfettered, pluck juicy fruit from the trees, and fight who they want when they want? From one monster to another, one word passes between them: Revolt!

There must be a spark that ignites simmering discontent into a burning desire for freedom. Sometimes it is nothing more than mouldy food or poor training equipment; harnesses that are too tight, storage devices that have not been cleaned lately, or the monsters dislike their new colours. They feel pushed into breeding with another monster that is not their type. They despise their rhyming motto. Maybe monsters are just fed up of being forced against their will to battle their lifelong friends for the pleasure of noisy human crowds.

When society pushes a monster too far, what if it just rallied its fellow monsters and led a revolt against its masters? The average monster has as much firepower as a SWAT team. After taking down the guards and any monsters that stand against them, the ringleaders may raid other ranches or stables, gradually gathering together an army of monsters. The trainers and the rest of human society are taken by surprise — no one expects a cute monster army the same way no one expects the Spanish Inquisition! The monster army may even head for the countryside, hoping to convince wild monsters that it is time to support their brethren and go to war. The ranks swell. A few bleeding-heart humans may even join.

A successful revolt requires the monsters to overthrow their trainers, but the trainers have weapons, men, and a few loyal monsters on their side. The newly-crowned general leads its rag-tag military to several, spectacular victories initially. Their small size, cute looks and bizarre abilities may confound its opponents. Freedom appears to triumph over slavery ... at first.

It is an illusion. The monsters do not have the resources of their trainers. They lack the organization, the money, and ultimately, the technology. Humans have hands while monsters have only paws or tentacles. More often than not, monster revolts end in tragedy. The horrors of war take their toll, and weaker



monsters, acclimated to only fighting to the first faint, desert at the first sign of real bloodshed. In the end, there will be one, last, heartfelt battle that destroys the rebel monsters and their cause. The trainers win. Monsters, traitorous and errant, return to their homes. The rebel leaders are sent to the glue factories and turned into pet food. The only survivors are those monsters that did not get carried away and chose to flee into the wilderness rather than stand and fight. The story ends in a short voiceover, explaining how the rebellion was crushed, but, despite orders from their trainers, a few pet monsters continue whispering the names of the rebels in secret, preserving the memory of what was, and what might yet be.

Conversely, what if the impossible happens and the monsters win? Perhaps they establish a cute monster homeland. Maybe the monsters become the dominant species on the planet, and the humans are reduced to the status of pets! Perhaps the monsters go too far, and become a cruel dictatorship that enslaves mankind, forcing them into constant rounds of arena battles....

### TINY TERRORISTS

A safer, if less romantic, method of rebelling against society lies in subtle acts of monster defiance. A chewed glove here, a "present" left in a shoe there, and the monsters, as an organized effort, can display their displeasure and maybe, eventually, achieve freedom. Small acts of terrorism strike fear into the hearts of the trainers. Are the monsters just being bad, or are they acting against the central authority? Are monsters readying to rise up against the trainers?

In some places, monsters have organized their resistance against the trainers. They move in cells, with one cell having knowledge of one other, but no disclosure of the overall movement. It is safer that way. Plans move like ripples through the cells, one cell communicating the secret plots to the next.

They send their messages with the use of careful hand signals and key words. The trainer can never really be sure: are Fluffyon's strange mewling sounds a bone stuck in her throat or a command for others to throw the tournament? Is Muffinoid's constant chanting of the word "peek-a-boo" a signal that now is the time to revolt? Every chewed leash, every puked vitamin, every mess left on the floor is breathed with the phrase, *Pour la resistance*. With those words, the goal of a homeland where every monster is equal and free comes closer to reality.

### CUTE MONSTER ACQUISITION

A person cannot be a real trainer without a cute monster. That is how it works: capture a creature, train it, and fulfil those aspirations to become the greatest trainer in the world. Only, before there can be any plaques on the walls, trophies on the mantelpiece, and an entourage of publicists, managers and generic hangers-on, the trainer needs that one small monster to have, to cuddle, to love, and to turn from a loving pet into a fierce battle machine.

## DESTINY, GIFT OR INHERITANCE

The easiest way to obtain a cute monster is to have one handed out. A mentor may bequeath a small creature onto the young trainer, or a character may belong to a school or academy that gives out small, baby-sized monsters or ready-to-hatch eggs to the students.

Hero teams or magical girls often receive their first cute monster through what seems to be sheer accident — the character simply stumbles upon the critter and bonds with it, thus learning that it is his or her destiny to join forces and fight evil. Alternately, the character might inherit or discover a mysterious item that holds the monster inside, just waiting for that special person.

## CAPTURING IN THE WILD

Monsters are prowling everywhere: in the forests, in the seas, and in the garbage bins behind the local fast food franchise under the mouldy lettuce. It is only a matter of time before it leaves signs of its passing, and can be tracked to its lair. The trainer needs canny tracking skills to hunt the monsters. Some are smart and cunning, or, at very least, pretty sure they do not want to end up as pets. Never fear. The trainer is smarter and far better equipped than the normal monster, and has several options at his or her disposal.

### • OFFERING A BETTER HOME

The carrot approach. It is possible that monsters really do not like living in the black, rancid, sewage below the streets, competing with (and eating) the strange, unspeakable things that swim there. Kids might abandon their pets as soon as they realize that caring for and training a monster is more difficult than they bargained for, thus creating a population of homeless creatures eager to return to a warm bed and three meals a day. Offering the small monster a better home might be just the way to get that first one to come to papa. Succeeding with this method requires a non-threatening, friendly approach. Its main hazard is that cute monsters are tough customers, which means any environment so icky that the monster is eager to leave it for a cushy life of cuddling and tooth-and-claw battle is likely to be a dangerous place to visit. Going into a haunted forest, toxic sewer, nuclear waste dump, the heart of the Gobi desert, or the barren realm of the Dark Lord to rescue monster eggs is no trip to the beach.

### • LAYING A BETTER TRAP

While the monster might be smart, fast, intelligent, and have destructive powers at its disposal, it probably does not have opposable thumbs. Human beings do. Therefore, humans have the ability to build and lay traps for those creatures that would rather not be caught and turned into fighters. These can include traps laden with food, sticky tape on the ground, leg-hold traps, capture-nets, and cleverly disguised holes. It is an epic struggle of man against nature, where the human must deploy all his or her hunting lore and gear to stalk, capture, and bring home the rare monster that, after carefully breaking its will, may become a champion.

- SNACKS!

Much like the common college student or the rare magical girl, few, if any, monsters can resist a large spread of free food. Since they must forage and hunt for their meals, many creatures in the wild have the munchies, with snacks foremost on their minds. Monsters especially enjoy veggie trays with plenty of dip and plates of tiny hot dogs in a blanket. The prospective trainer only has to put out the food in a large clearing where the monster frequents, sit back, and wait. Soon, the monster will come to them, happy in the promise of more little fish crackers with cheese. The danger is that more than one monster might show up, sparking a feeding frenzy while multiple types scabble for the free lunch, shredding any humans caught in the middle. The trainer must use careful observation to put the right food in the right place at the right time.



## BUYING MONSTERS

In some societies, trainers can purchase cute monsters, and one of the most convenient places to do so is the local marketplace.

### • PET MARKETS

Not every monster-using society has monster markets, but when they do, the locations are sometimes secret pet stores open only to those with a pure heart and lots of cash, or central marketplaces advertised in neon with names like "George's Monster Cave," or "Miguel's House of Creatures." There, the young trainer can peruse the stalls and cages, looking at the different beasts, evaluating each one for his or her own needs. Is this one too fat? Is this one too thin? Is this one too covered with strange tentacles made entirely of tapioca pudding?

When the trainer passes by each cage, the monsters will reach out to attract the trainer's attention (or try for fresh meat). After all, the cutest one usually goes home with the girls and the buffest with the boys, so the monsters have to put on their best front. Those that do not and end up past their prime will meet their ancestors after something less than honourable combat.

Of course, the trainer must be careful of the shysters trying to take him or her for a ride. He or she must be on the look out for a monster that is not quite what it is billed to be: a mini-dragon that doesn't breathe fire, a stone golem made of papier-mache, or an ill monster on its last legs. A novice to the business is well advised to bring an experienced trainer along on these shopping expeditions to ensure that the slickest salesperson cannot pull a fast one and unload a defective monster. On the other hand, a highly skilled trainer might be able to negotiate a bargain by picking a monster that seems to be less than perfect, but which has great fixer-up potential. Such ugly ducklings may turn into swans — occasionally quite literally, if the monster evolves or transforms.

Markets might buy monsters from their owners in order to resell them. Sometimes, creatures simply do not work out to the trainer's satisfaction (or were just badly trained) and the owner needs to replace his or her monster with one more suitable to both trainer's and monster's temperament. A few monsters seem savvy enough to understand when their trainers are "trading up for a better model," and act accordingly. The trainer may discover his or her ex-monster looking terrified upon leaving the dealer's tent, but the trainer should not be concerned, because the dealer will certainly find the monster a good home — and offer a good deal on the trade-in, as well.

### • MONSTER AUCTIONS

A market might hold an auction to dispose of high-quality monsters to a discerning set of sophisticated buyers. The market advertises these auctions long beforehand (sometimes open by invitation to high-ranked trainers only) and holds them in auction houses. Auctioneers bring the monsters out on the block, display them to the audience, and sell them to the highest bidder.



There can also be secret auctions, where sellers present monsters, often considered too dangerous or rare, to a select clientele in secret meeting places. Here, elite collectors gather to bid on creatures difficult to find even in the wild. It is rumoured that not all private auctions vend monsters for sport or for pets: some sell creatures for their hides or organs, and others deal exclusively with high-priced gourmet restaurants. Such auctions find themselves targeted by organizations like POEM (see page 43) and the SFMLF (see page 44), which is why they are held in secret.

## RAISING THE MONSTER

A monster requires some degree of care. At a minimum, trainers should offer them regular water, food, exercise, chances to beat things up, and a stern but loving hand.

### MONSTER TRAINING STRATEGIES

Few monsters spring forth fully loaded with a complete set of fighting reflexes and combat abilities. Others require tender loving care or harsh discipline to activate their inherent battle prowess. There are as many training strategies as there are trainers, and each coach has their own special "take" on how to do things. Some claim that individual monsters need their own special handling to fit their personality if they are to blossom into effective fighters. Fortunately, training strategies are generic, and can be neatly bundled into several categories with catchy titles.

- PAMPERING

This means giving the monster all the food, treats, play, and sleep it wants without drilling it exhaustively and without punishing it when it's bad. While this results in monsters that love their masters and are unerringly devoted, it also creates little, round, plump creatures without much motivation to go out there and fight. In other words, pampering a monster will not give it a finely honed killer instinct. A pampered monster, however, is more likely to follow the trainer around on its own, and will not need storage in special devices, in a stable, and so on. Boys often accuse girl trainers of "pampering" their monsters. This is one way to start a monster duel.

- LENIENT

Lenient trainers tend to err on the side of caution when raising their monster, giving in to demands for play and treats. They pretend they are in a normal pet relationship. These masters try not to push their monster past its limits, but will not stint on training. Lenient trainers must keep an eye on their monster's weight, to ensure it does not bloat up from regular treats. New trainers or coaches working with a friendly monster, often employ this tactic, which results in a creature that is generally playful, happy, and reasonably loyal. Such a monster will not usually wander off when allowed to roam free, but sometimes its independent spirit gets the better of its obedience, and it just has to see what's over that hill or around that corner.

- BALANCED

Trainers looking for an optimum monster try to find a balance between friendship and duty, playtime and work time, treats and vitamins. The philosophy behind a balanced training regimen is that it fosters mutual respect between monster and trainer while keeping the monster's weight down and ensuring it is fit to fight. Since each monster, and its ability to train, is different, coaches must experiment and work with each creature individually to find the perfect equilibrium. A monster that has undergone balanced training will usually behave when under its trainer's eye, but will wander off or escape if left to its own devices.

- RIGID

Many trainers take inspiration from Marine boot camp: the monster must learn to fight, not to be a pal, and the training will be tough going. Only durable monsters will survive, and those that do are going to be bulldogs in the end. They will bite their enemies and not let go. There is no playing or treats in this regimen, just a balanced diet, plenty of exercise, and long hours of training. Some rigid coaches even hang pictures of "the enemy" next to their monster's bed, so it can focus on its opponents. Because this achieves results, even with stubborn monsters, a large number of trainers use a rigid coaching style. Creatures that have trained rigidly should always remain in a storage device when not fighting, since they lack self-initiative and tend to run away or become confused when not constantly under their owner's care.



- INHUMANE

Some trainers just don't know when to stop. Believing pain will make their monster strong, they prevent it from sleeping when it's tired or feed it when it's hungry except for vitamins, drugs, and a few scraps. They also beat the monster when it refuses to follow orders, and train it until it falls over from exhaustion. Some of these monsters die, but those who do not become insane combat machines on the battlefield, working out their rage and anger for their trainers on their opponents. Critics might consider this utterly inhumane, but one cannot deny the results — cruelly treated monsters have literally ripped apart their opposition, and must be forcibly removed from what is left of their opposition afterwards. The philosophy at work is, "Whatever doesn't kill it will make it stronger, and stronger is how we win battles." Inhumanely-trained creatures should always remain in a monster storage device or they will escape, attack people or use their skills to create and form their own packs of disciplined monsters, which are sure to cause problems.

### DISCIPLINING MONSTERS

Most of the time, monsters obey their trainers and do what they are told. After all, they are good buddies, going on high adventures, fighting evil, and becoming famous together. Sometimes, however, monsters just say "no." They have minds and personalities of their own, which means occasionally they would rather go left instead of right, or sleep instead of work. When they think they can get away with it, they will be stubborn. They sometimes need "reminding" that the trainer is boss, the monster is not, and it is wrong to go right instead of left.

On the other hand, some monsters are chronic misbehavers. They have bad dispositions, and have better things to do than listen to some annoying human being. They are simply mean, nasty monsters — like pit bulls, only with poisonous fangs and a potential for creating the occasional ball of cyanide fog or storm of flaming darts. Maybe it was a troubled monster childhood, a bad combination when breeding, or even its first trainer's mistakes; regardless, this monster is just a rotten apple.

Luckily, human beings are higher than monsters on the food chain. They might not necessarily be tougher or meaner, but they have access to the tools they need to set a monster straight. Whether it is the occasional transgression against the trainer's will, or the need to mould a bad monster into a prize winner, it may be possible to fix the monster's bad behaviour with the application of the right disciplinary techniques.

- DIET

A popular option for training and disciplining small monsters is using or withholding food. If a monster is good, it earns a treat, and if it is bad, it receives castor oil right down the gullet (unless, of course, the monster happens to like castor oil). This works on the same simple Pavlovian principle behind keeping a cat out of the plants with mothballs or teaching a dog to do the four-step with beefy smelling snacks. After several liberal applications of a tasty treat or a not-so-tasty treat, the monster learns what it is or is not supposed to do loud and clear.

Since some trainers believe that diet is the key to a growing monster's success, the choice of diet is used as a complex reward and punishment system. If the monster has been bad, it is put on the grain without raisins for a week, but if a monster has been good, it gets the chocolate cocoa puffs for one morning.

The trick to disciplining a monster with food is figuring out what the monster likes and does not like in the first place. While this is fairly straightforward for well-known breeds or those based on household pets, this is not so simple when the monster is a razor-backed, fanged cup-cake with insect legs and acid filling. Learning which discipline foods are best for monsters is an exercise left to the trainer. Some experimentation is good, however, including the careful observation of other monsters of its sort in the wild.

### • WHIPS AND CHAINS

To outsiders, smacking around a monster with a whip or zapping it with a cattle prod when it is "bad" might seem a bit excessive. Some trainers, however, must instil obedience in the fiercest or biggest beast, those with the power to rend anyone in their path. Such large creatures need to understand that their human trainers can mete out a little pain and suffering when the monster deserves it, and they will not hold back. This is especially true if the monster starts out small, but soon grows much larger. In the trainer's eyes, it is better to give the monster a few scars while it is small and impressionable than to have it rampaging through town like atomic leviathans a few years down the road.

The biggest problem with this method is that it often produces monsters that are tough and pain-resistant, but who also lack in personality and self-initiative. If a trainer falls off a cliff and knocks himself or herself out while monster hunting, his or her little pal may simply sit on the cliff top, staring and waiting for orders that never come. Other times, extreme discipline can result in an overly aggressive creature. It can be embarrassing when (after winning a major prize tournament) the monster bites off the judge's finger. Worse, occasionally a monster will pretend to be subdued, but a resentful seed remains in its heart, waiting to germinate into full-blown animosity.

### • BAD Music AND FILM

A recent training technique for breaking stubborn monsters of their negative habits is a liberal application of bad film or music. After a firm admonishment of the monster's wrongdoing, the trainer takes the creature and locks it in a room with the multimedia. A minor infraction may entail only listening to a muzak-filled album a single time through — an agony that seems endless at the time, but leaves only minor scars. A major infraction might require listening to the same album on loop for several hours, or worse, a forced watching of endless repeats of the opening or closing songs of English-dubbed video game anime. A monster at the mercy of a master who has little time or patience for the playfulness of his or her creatures may find itself strapped into a chair, eyes cruelly wired open *Clockwork Orange-style*, forced to watch nothing but the *Forbidden Zone*. After the hellish hour and a half, the monster is unlikely to act out against its master's will again.



## MONSTER HEALTH

It is important for a trainer to supervise his or her monster's health. A robust creature should be pleasantly chubby with firm muscle where it counts. It should not be skin and bones, or sluggish and overweight. Its coat of fur should be smooth, its scales shimmering brightly, and its eyes shining with pleasure at the thought of leaping into battle.

### • MONSTER DISEASES

There is always the risk that a monster might suffer a bizarre, unidentifiable disease, or even a much less interesting but more survivable ailment. These can range anywhere from a run of the mill cold to ear mites, to suddenly developing spots, to deciding it doesn't want to be a monster any more, to pining for the fjords, or even becoming pregnant. A monster's illness might interact unpredictably with its Special Attributes. What happens when the trainer's fire-breathing monster has the hiccups? Or worse, it hiccups ice cubes?

When the monster becomes ill, it is best to take it to the nearest hospital where doctors can check it out. Most monster diseases vanish quickly with a shot of penicillin to the hindquarters or a few doses of generic painkiller. Every once in a while, a monster contracts a disease that is immune to this approach. Experts must run tests and perform experimental procedures, the type most major health plans do not cover. Soon, the trainer is nearly broke, forced to enlist other monsters in dangerous winner-take-all tournaments or sending out online spam begging for donations, get well-cards or funeral expenses. There is a bright side: the cute monster is now immortal, for doctors will name the new horrible disease after it. The affliction is probably less happy, however, since it now has the name of a confused breakfast cereal.

### • MONSTER INJURIES

Where there are fights, there will be injuries, and where there are injuries, there are going to be terrified shouts for "Medic!" The vast majority of monster injuries are scrapes, bumps, and bruises. The monster may faint briefly, but it will recover rapidly in a few hours, as good as new and ready for the next battle.

Very occasionally a monster places itself in worse trouble. A pack of wild monsters that did not know the meaning of fair play may have attacked it, or it could have simply been tragically overmatched in battle. It might even be the victim of an abusive trainer. Whatever the cause, it invariably suffered a broken bone, ripped ligament, severed tail, seeping puncture, or worse.

To take care of these problems there are monster hospitals, designed to accommodate the needs of creatures and completely staffed with monster vets, monster nurses, and even monster psychiatrists to help them work through their childhood traumas. In modern societies, these hospitals, much like veterinary clinics, offer a well-trained staff, an emergency room, an operating theatre, and plenty of drugs. They are relatively common in large towns, and accept most major health insurance plans. In pre-industrial societies monster hospitals are also

known as "glue factories" or "butcher shops" though some wise-women, hermits, mages or holy orders may be skilled healers, with magic, herbs or folk-wisdom ready to work their tender loving care.

### • OLD AGE AND DEATH

Fads may never die, but old monsters have to check out sometime. Cute creatures are occasionally long-lived, especially when related to turtles or dragons, but the vast majority have life spans approximating those of other small mammals. They endure for about as long as it takes for the owner to exhaust their love of monster battles and become interested in the opposite sex, college or a real job. At this point the monster is normally on its last legs, tottering about half blind, no longer cute, and mumbling about its former glories in a language that, as usual, no one understands. With junior away at work or school, even the most devoted parents will eventually tire of senile old monsters wandering about, shedding scales or setting fire to the curtains, not to mention smelling up the place and eating the house plants. Something has to go.

They call it "putting out to pasture" but in reality, nursing homes for old monsters cost far more than most families can afford. Instead, pet monsters may receive a year or so of grace, but after the kids pack off to college or the army, it is off to the glue factory for their pets. The black truck (or cart) comes, the attendant loads up the monster, and off it goes to the great beyond. Of course, only some parts are made into glue. Many consider old monsters too stringy for mealtime, but some gourmands appreciate the aged, flavourful taste of monster meat, and consider it quite the delicacy. In some fancy restaurants, the verified flesh of a past champion monster fetches a high price. More often, though, the aged pet monster's remains are simply mashed up and sold to canning factories, where they become the basis for premium brands of monster pet food.

Trainers deal with the death of their pets individually. Some trainers mourn their lost monster, and the glory it brought, building humble little graves, or even enormous and elaborate tombs (funeral service is, like all things pet related, costly, and the turnover of monsters in the ring has made it into a thriving business). It is as if they have just lost a friend, a member of the family, or even a child. Others purchase another monster, cursing the time that it takes to train a new one up to the level of the old, and complaining they never got their money's worth out of the thing.

## STORING MONSTERS

Once a trainer has a monster, he or she must keep it somewhere. If the trainer does not, the pet is likely to wander off, dig through the garbage, and chew on the neighbour's pant leg. Most universes offer their own particular brand of storage for monsters: gigantic computer systems, deranged egg cartons, collectable card games, or even oversized shoeboxes. Here are a few popular alternatives to storing monsters.

## MONSTER STORAGE DEVICES

Small, convenient and different, funny contraptions are the staples of travelling and adventuring trainers who need portability and quick accessibility. These devices come in a variety of forms. There are small gadgets that suck in and hold monsters in some strange stasis until their trainers release them for a fight. There are special containment globes that can both trap and hold monsters. There are even small, portable cartridges or data units that store the monster's encoded energy patterns in digital format. They all have something in common: the devices are small, portable and unfathomable. No one really knows how the monster is stored in these contraptions, or how they get out again, except for the engineer or wizard who designed it. All the trainer knows is that he must press button A to store or release monster B. Monster storage devices come in several flavours:

- **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Electronic devices are one of the simplest ways to explain away how the trainer transports a monster around. After all, electronic toys are generally mysterious and can do anything. What is not understood can clearly work magic ... or the next best thing, anyway. These devices are indispensable to trainers who run around the wilderness or city with dozens of different kinds of monsters, from the extremely common to the extremely rare. Electronic storage devices generally come in the form of bulbs, spheres, cubes, boxes, or disks. They are normally small and handy, but it is also possible that some unlucky trainer will be stuck with an early version which has to be transported on the back of a flatbed truck. A common add-on device to the electronic monster-containment contraption is a small, hand-held computer that analyzes and classifies the monster for future reference.

- **MAGICAL STORAGE DEVICES**

If magic can whip up a tornado or a fireball, why can't it imprison a small monster? Like electronic devices, magic can do absolutely anything. It can magically summon monsters, hold them in magic containers like boxes, bottles and shimmering Jell-0, and dismiss them with a whim or a magic spell.

- **EXTRA DIMENSIONAL STORAGE DEVICES**

These devices are similar to electronic gadgets, but are much bigger on the inside than on the outside. They access an entire dimension where the pet monster may roam free when not in use. Portals can be anything: from plastic balls to electronic key chain toys and innocent looking collectable cards.

## STABLES and RANCHES

A stable is a specialized housing facility devoted to meeting all the needs of a single monster. While a stable seems like a natural place to keep these creatures, it has two downsides. The first is that the stable cannot travel with the trainer (unless installed in a big mecha, such as a starship or tractor-trailer). Secondly, it is expensive to buy and expensive to maintain. Plenty of money goes into keeping the stable properly stocked, the training gear shipshape, and one does not want the

roof to leak either. Stables, however, are an attractive option for the trainer who sits at home, practicing for the next big meet, or who needs a base to return to. The trainer can outfit the stable for the special needs of his or her monster and focus on special training areas where the monster needs improvement.

A variation on the stable is to keep the monsters "free-range." In a ranch, or a farm, there can be dozens of creatures roaming around and receiving equal care while an expert staff attends them. Monsters in a ranch grow larger over time, but they will not gain the benefits of intense personalized training that a monster living in a stable or travelling with its trainer would. The ranch option is good for anyone who wants to capture, collect, and later sell monsters without actually devoting the time to individually raise them.

## RUNNING Free

Some trainers just let their monsters run free. Either the monsters are so intelligent they understand that running away means encountering certifiably mean people and monster-eating squirrels, or they trust their trainer to the point where they will not wander off on their own.

The trainer has built a bond between himself or herself and the monster. Wherever the trainer goes, the monster is right there at his or her side. When the pet is running free, the trainer may feel obligated to give up all trappings of control including leashes and harnesses. The trainer might go so far as to treat the monster as less a pet and more a travelling companion in his or her adventures.

Normally only monsters trained with Pampering, Lenient (or sometimes Balanced) methods can be trusted to run free without constant supervision. One coached with other methods may obey orders while his or her owner's eye is on them, but will often scamper off at first opportunity.





## THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF MONSTER SPORTS

It is easy enough to integrate pet monsters into a magical girl, hero team or heroic fantasy setting: create ordinary character, add cute battle mascot, attack villain. The most unique setting for pet critter campaigns, however, is the world of sanctioned cute monster competitions, where society recognizes and accepts adorable creature sporting events.

Trainers often organize themselves into groups for support. It is much easier to push ahead as a team against unstoppable odds than it is to go it alone. Some hard-nosed competitors believe they can get to the top by themselves, without any help, but these trainers burn out early and quickly. Successful trainers realize the value of friendship, or at least strength in numbers.

### THE TEAM

A team is a group of pet monster trainers who support one another. Teams vary wildly. At the lower end are small, rag-tag bands of trainers and their monsters, while at the upper end are pro teams sponsored by megacorporations (seeking a tax write off to disguise their ongoing plots to take over the world). Somewhere in the middle are teams sponsored by training dojos, elementary schools, high schools, colleges, or cities. Finally, there are all-star teams sent to compete in prestigious international competitions for their nation's honour.

Teams often train and enter tournaments together, travel the world helping each other catch new monsters and find interesting places to train or fight. A typical team has two to six members. Most members have pet monsters, though a few teams have a member who acts as a manager, cheerleader, reporter, doctor, gopher or junior mascot instead. Few individuals, however, can resist being around cute monsters without trying to possess one — and so even characters who did not start out with pet monsters will almost inevitably become trainers.

Teams give more than simple moral support for individual members. They offer cohesiveness in the face of overwhelming odds, strength of purpose, a place to come in out of the cold, and a chance to gang up on the enemy. Teams enjoying strong leadership also have as many neat toys as their organizational budget allows including jackets with their logo, vans or wagons, and even a pep song. Joining a team may be easy (if it is just starting out and needs members), or require impressing the team somehow (usually through a challenge fight). A famous team that needs new members may host a tournament, with the winner being allowed to join.

All well-established groups have their own sub-culture. Some are regimented to the point of being militaristic, with stern adult coaches who ensure that their young trainers and their charges follow a strict regimen. Others are open, happy, and fun loving, concentrating on what is best for the trainer and monster. Teams might even have sinister purposes with an evil power behind the scenes. The tournament circuit could be a mere cover for recruiting and breeding an army of warriors bent on the subjugation of all human beings and pet monsters alike.

## THE DOJO

A dojo is a building where trainers and teams tutor cute monsters or learn special techniques from other coaches. Dojos are also called schools, clubs, gyms, training halls or monster academies and are usually located in urban areas, or secluded temples in scenic wilderness. Some dojos are small gyms with attached pet monster stables for the master and students, while others are very elaborate affairs with living quarters, specialized training equipment, and even monster ranches. For simplicity, these are distinguished as "small dojos" and "large dojos."

Dojos allow trainers and their cute monsters to receive special training and practice with their peers. They are also good places for wandering coaches to hang their backpacks and rest up between monster collecting expeditions or tournaments.

A master trainer runs a dojo and is usually someone who has attained the advanced age of 14, 15 or even 16 years (or occasionally even older). The school may have a number of younger students (and their monsters) studying under this



master. Sometimes there will also be one or more senior students working part time as instructors. One of them may hope to become the master's successor, should the master pass away, retire, or go back to finish high school. Occasionally, a master will encourage fierce competition between senior students by not naming a successor. There may be jealous rivalries between students — and between their pet monsters as well.

Certain dojos specialize in particular types of adorable monster; they are repositories for all the secret lore relating to these creatures. If a trainer wants to learn more about a particular species or train his or her monster in a particular attack, these are the places to seek out.

A dojo is under no compunction to be fair about whom it accepts as a student. Trainers who believe in fair play and equal chance run some dojos. Others happily deny membership for no other reason than the trainer wore a particularly ugly pair of plaid pants, or the monster has spots. It is quite common for dojos to accept those trainers with pets of a certain type or element such as fire-only monsters. A few dojos go so far as to choose members based on the pedigree of the trainer's companion — indeed, a trainer whose cute monster has even a sixteenth part of the "wrong blood" may never get through the door of these dojos except as a janitor or container caddy.

Dojo masters may be straight forward, but they can also be extremely eccentric characters. He or she might ask would-be students to demonstrate their worthiness. This could involve special tests or exotic quests (like capturing a rare monster or a special herb used to make monster food), or challenges such as defeating three different cute monsters in hand-to-hand combat (all at once, or one after the other without rest). Once a trainer joins, the ordeal has only begun. Teachers may subject trainers and monsters to bizarre training practices, such as requiring the adorable creature to leap through flaming hoops or having them fight while balanced atop rows of narrow poles above pools of water or lava, before they learn the dojo's secrets. Some techniques should perhaps stay secret since they are not worth the reflexes they are imprinted on.

In addition to its full-time students, one or more challengers often visit a dojo. These are wandering trainers who wish to test their monsters, and learn the school's secret techniques. Masters often welcome them since he or she can also observe the challenger's own technique. These visitors stay anywhere between a few hours to a few days before departing. Occasionally a visiting challenger impresses a dojo's master enough that he or she receives an invitation to stay on as a student instructor.

A challenger must normally defeat one or more of the dojo's students in ranking order to be worthy of facing the master and learning any techniques. If the challenger loses, the school may send him or her away, though it is customary to offer some hospitality and healing to a loser who put up a good fight. On the other hand, if he or she is victorious, the challenger usually stays at the dojo, and will later face the master.

## THE LEAGUE

A league is an organization of several dojos and teams. It promotes the organized sport of cute monster fighting in a particular area by hosting competitions between its members and by managing a system of trainer ranks. Each league has its own name. Some take their *nom de plume* from cities or regions where their dojos and teams are based, while others take the names of colours, flowers, attitudes, or anything else. The masters of all the dojos, who meet periodically to discuss league business, control the organization's operations and any changes to its rules or customs. A league's rules often reflect a particular philosophy. For example, some further good sportsmanship in pet monster battles, while others esteem victory at all costs.

A particular country or other large area may have multiple operating leagues. Such factions can be friendly rivals or bitter enemies — the latter is especially likely if two leagues with hostile philosophies occupy the same region. There may be a hierarchy of organizations in a particular area: local school or city leagues, regional, national, or even international leagues. The largest ones may have enough clout to operate in large stadiums where major events can take place. Leagues representing cities or nations can be very fierce competitors. Indeed, cute monster wars have erupted when one country accused another's national team of cheating.

A league's prime purpose is to prevent experienced trainers from walking all over junior wannabes. As such, Trainer Rankings offer some semblance of organization. The various leagues are responsible for hosting tournaments, determining prizes, setting rules and managing the events. Nonetheless, they can be, and often are, a bureaucratic nightmare. Everyone wants to have a say in how things are run, from the team owners to the league managers. They push their agendas, even at the most local level and air their grievances loudly, repeatedly, and often with waving fists and angry curses. Some believe the leagues should disband; everyone should return to fighting in dark basements like the good old days when folks were healthier, apple-cheeked children played in tall grass, and no one screamed that their opponent's fire-proof lightning lizard was made entirely of asbestos products and thus a health hazard.

## TRAINER RANKS AND AWARDS

Many sports have some way of rewarding achievements. Cute monster fighting is no different, with the various leagues (see page 42) recognizing trainer accomplishments through a series of ranks, awards, or titles. Trainers can acquire these through winning a number of challenges or tournaments.

Some leagues follow a simple ranking system similar to the "belts" offered in many martial arts. The trainer begins at the lowest level, and works his or her way up by winning tournaments. Normally these battles only count if fought between monsters of equal or greater power, or trainers of equal or greater rank. Each time the trainer increases in rank, he or she often gains in fame as well, both for himself or herself and for his or her monster.



Another ranking system relies on the trainer collecting a specific award of some kind: a medal, badge, diploma, trophy or some other token from the trainers he or she defeats. The trainer (well, actually the monster) goes one-on-one with the antagonist in a closed, and often private, battle. If the trainer's cute monster wins, he or she may claim an award from the defeated combatant as proof of victory.

The most prestigious tournaments are only open to trainers with certain awards. Qualifying for awards requires trainers to fight opponents in a specific ranked order or to win different types of victories. Certain awards are more prestigious, such as those that demonstrate proficiency over a certain family of cute monsters (master of fire monsters, master of slimes or master of limbo-dancing fiends). Trainers may have to partake of quests to locate the right monster fights for the right awards, and this might involve crossing deserts, oceans, or even continents to lay their hands on the rarer and more important badges. Each award might have its own name, like "The Badge of Overcoming Fiery Destruction" or "The Diploma for Defeating 100 Different Monsters." After much fighting, the decorated chest of a successful trainer will come to resemble a Major General.



## REGULAR COMPETITIONS

Without regular competitions, the entire battling process would fall apart. No one would know where to go, no one could buy tickets, and the promoters would not be able to prepare their marketing materials for drooling consumers on time. Regular competitions are the grease between the wheels of the sport of fuzzy monster fighting. They come in several categories, all of which lead to the ultimate goal of becoming a world-class trainer.

- **CHALLENGE FIGHT**

This is simply a duel between two trainers (or teams) to see who has the best monster or monsters. The trainers designate their combat arena, pick their monsters, and send them into battle. Sometimes it is a friendly fight, other times it is a grudge match to avenge an insult, or to settle who crosses a bridge first. Dojos may also demand a would-be student win a challenge fight against other students, or require their best pet monster to survive a number of rounds in battle against the dojo's master, to prove their worthiness.

- **TROPHY TOURNAMENTS**

These are formal competitions, generally held by a local dojo that invites all the trainers in the area to participate. The tournament is usually announced at least a week in advance, to allow regional trainers to enlist. They also include a referee, and often some sort of prize. There may be little fame or money to be won, but the real purpose is the prestige and the experience it gives the monster and trainer. These meets are held periodically, with mainly die-hard fans in attendance. Trophy meets are also excellent for establishing contacts with other trainers in an atmosphere less emotionally charged than the more serious League Tournaments.

- **LEAGUE TOURNAMENTS**

These are formal competitions hosted by a league to determine who is their best trainer. Only trainers of certain ranks or awards may participate, and those who do are divided into specific categories by trainer age, monster type, or challenge (one-on-one, tag-team, etc.). There are often several levels of tournament: local (sponsored by an area's dojo), regional (sponsored by the league), national (sponsored by all the leagues in a given country) and international. The winners of a lower tournament will advance to the next stage. Often the victors of last year's competitions (the reigning champions) in each category automatically compete as well.

- **SPECIAL COMPETITIONS**

These are unique events. They may be to demonstrate who is the best monster trainer in the world, fight for a particular item, win the hand of a fair princess, gain ownership of the ultimate monster egg, or determine who can join the queen's monster guards. Speciality meets are only held when needed, like during a blue moon, because of the rising of the tide, to celebrate the birth of a celebrity, or because people really, really wanted to have a meet.

In settings where sports are not the be-all-and-end-all of small monster hood, special competitions may predominate. For example, if societies use monsters in war, the monster trainers on opposing sides may decide to settle a particular issue by a battle between champions. Of course, the politicians may not approve of this, but who is going to tell them?

### • TOURNAMENT STRUCTURE

A typical tournament has a number of rounds. For example, suppose there was a small local competition with 12 contestants. The first round would consist of six battles. In the next round, the six winners of the first round fight each other in another three battles. In the third round the three winners of the second round participate in a three-way drag-out championship duel, with the winner receiving the ground prize and winning the tournament. The GM can determine who won NPC vs. NPC bouts by fiat or random die roll, but may wish to describe the battle so that PCs learn the strengths and weaknesses of their foe. Some tournaments hold each round on the same day, which mean cute monsters will not have much time to recover energy or heal (giving an advantage to those trainers with many monsters). Others hold one round each day, allowing individual monsters time to recuperate between fights.

### PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES

A culture really into monster sports might possess larger professional institutions in addition to a network of dojos. Professional Society members reap the benefits of elitism, interesting tidbits of gossip, and free monthly newsletters. Membership in some groups is a badge of excellence in monster training. Others just gather together for a drink of soda pop. Societies can also be clannish, leading to intense competition between rival members.

GMs can restrict starting membership to certain societies if they are villain-only clubs, or if they are goals that characters must aspire toward during the game. Here are three examples of societies:

### • THE ASSOCIATION FOR COMPLICATED MONSTERS

*The Association for Complicated Monsters* dedicates itself to advancing the arts, sciences and applications of monster technology. They like to think it is mandatory for any serious monster trainer to join their ranks. For a reasonable membership fee, they offer introductions to various gyms run by their members, hold quarterly conferences for trainers who want to discuss their particular monster interests, and distribute a slick, glossy periodical once a month. This is packed to the gills with technical missives, editorials, and other articles so filled with jargon that outsiders often think these issues are written in code. Some trainers use ACM to maintain important contacts in their chosen field; others find the organizational structure and emphasis on academics over practicalities too constricting. Worse yet, they don't serve many tasty free snacks at the meetings either.

## • THE GREAT ASTONISHING MONSTER ASSOCIATION

*The Great Astonishing Monster Association* is an international society who draws its membership mostly from the dominant monster-using countries. They dedicate themselves to raising the cutest and fiercest creature possible, and improving the overall image of the monster-battling sport.

GAMA promotes the raising and development of monsters through various initiatives including legal advice, a breeder's reference service, and, yes, distributing their highly useful and incredibly interesting monthly periodical. They also hold a large annual convention, Monster Con or "MonCon" for short, where the members of GAMA gather and vote on the year's best looking, most unique, and best all around monster. Strangely, they do not give awards for the best trainer or breeder, instead only offering the awards to the gym or dojo associated with the monster. They insist, however, that they will add new categories next year.

## • THE FREEMONSTERS

People speak of this secret underground society with hushed voices. No one is quite sure what happens at the *Freemonsters'* meetings, but they are certain it is dire. Some say they hide a very powerful monster-enhancing artifact. Others claim that it is a cult based on worshipping an ancient and evil monster god. Some even believe that it is an underground society that holds exclusive battles, one monster-on-monster fights, with no referees, no rules, and no mercy. No one speaks of the Freemonsters, though one thing is certain — there is a legacy of great and famous monster trainers who have belonged to the Freemonsters society, and they have changed the history of monster training in subtle ways. It is a great and sought-after honour to be asked into the Freemonster society, but no one is sure how to join, and those who know ... are not talking.

## PROTESTATIONS AND OTHER HOBBIES

Any free-willed society condoning the use of small, fiercely adorable monsters for entertainment purposes will have its share of protest groups concerned that utilization has become exploitation. To put it another way, there are always those sour grapes who cannot get in on the action, and have to ruin everyone else's fun. The following examples of special interest groups can be found picketing arenas, burning tournament score cards, writing outraged letters to the editor, or (if they are riled enough) blowing up the occasional training gym.

## PEOPLE OPPOSED TO THE EXPLOITATION of MONSTERS

*People Opposed to the Exploitation of Monsters* is a politically oriented group dedicated to preserving and promoting the rights of small, fuzzy pet monsters. POEM works under the principle that cute monsters are not for humans to eat, wear, or use for entertainment — most especially not entertainment. They do not condone cute monster arena battles, and consider it unmitigated cruelty that must be stopped at any cost.

POEM works through public education, exploitation investigations, legislation, and direct action. They stand on street corners or roam campuses, handing out pamphlets against cute monster cruelty to anyone they can accost. They also picket the homes of famous monster trainers or breeders, publish their addresses, or arrange for them to be bullied at school. Their ninja-like photographers sneak into stadiums and dojos, and take graphic close-up photos of what cute monsters look like after a fight or a tough training session. Then they print them into posters, which they display at university campuses and other public areas. They compile statistics showing that repeated monster fights cause brain damage and loss of intelligence that eventually result in monsters that cannot do anything but lay around making cute noises.

POEM does not believe that monsters are rational, thinking beings. If a fighting monster wants to stay with its owner, it has obviously been brainwashed, probably as a result of too many blows to the head. POEM thinks of monsters as innocent, mistreated animals that must be rescued from cruel exploitative environments and returned to the wild. Their motto is "trainers are the real monsters." POEM radicals often migrate to the SFMLF.

## PEOPLE FOR THE PROOF of EXTRA-MONSTER life

*People for the Proof of the Extra-Monster Life* is a loose collection of scientists and other intellectuals who dedicate their lives and research to proving small, fuzzy monsters are actually intelligent beings with needs, emotions and feelings. They believe that if they can conclusively prove this, then society will no longer use cute monsters in the messy and expensive business of hand-to-hand or tentacle-to-tentacle combat.

Trainers have often helped circumvent the expensive research process by simply explaining that cute monsters have their own personalities, but no where near that of human intellect. PPEML have no truck with such anecdotal evidence from biased sources. They prefer to continue their scientific experiments, which often involve capturing wild monsters (or acquiring abandoned pet monsters) and subjecting them to numerous "intelligence and empathy tests." Some examinations are rather unpleasant or debilitating and a few are fatal. This attrition leads to PPEML sponsoring expeditions to capture more cute monsters for testing.

## THE SMALL FUZZY MONSTER LIBERATION FRONT

*The Small Fuzzy Monster Liberation Front* equates the ownership and training of monsters with slavery, and they feel it is their moral duty to free every small creature in the world. They have gone as far as breaking into the homes of monster trainers, throwing open the gates of the ranches, and yelling: "Be free! Be free little monsters!" The fact that many such monsters stubbornly sit in their comfortable beds, looking at their would-be emancipators with a bleary combination of curiosity and fear does not deter the members of SFMLF from trying.

The SFMLF have forcibly kidnapping monsters and set them free in the wild. In some cases this works and the monsters immediately race off at top speed.



Other times the newly freed monsters wander dazedly about, blinking and confused. Without the protection or guidance of their trainers or the expected orders to fight back, these listless creatures fall victim to deadly beasts of the wild such as foxes, owls or even the dreaded squirrels.

## TOTALITY FOR THE REPRESENTATION of EXOTERIC SKELETONIANS

The *Totality for the Representation of Exoteric sKeletonians* not only believes that undead monsters are underrepresented in the fighting tournaments, but also holds that only these creatures should be allowed to fight. They feel undead monsters cannot really be hurt since they are already dead. While no longer as cute, and certainly no longer as fuzzy, as other cute monsters, TREK believes one can look beyond that to the undead's inner qualities. Once one gets past the stinking smell of rotting decaying flesh, people will learn to "love the zombie inside" while at the same time respecting how its natural harmony with death makes it the perfect arena fighter.

While the major motivations of TREK seem to be an honest need to protect monsters from harm, there is a faint whiff of decay in their sanctimony.... It is true that there have been no formal investigation into TREK's connection with the notorious "butchery farms" or "human monster killing grounds" rumoured to exist on the outskirts of civilization. Nor have there been formal charges levied against TREK for conspiracy to kidnap monsters from owners and transform them into undead things so that they "can realize their true warrior destinies, eternally free of pain and fear." So far, authorities have only pinned these charges on ex-TREK members who have been denounced by the mainstream group. Nevertheless, it is clear that something does not smell quite right, and it may not just be the undead monsters that TREK trainers like to keep.



## CAMPAIGN STYLES

The following are different ways of using *BESM* with this supplement. It is up to the GM which version works best in his or her game.

### WHO PLAYS THE MONSTERS?

Are the characters going to be monster trainers or running the monsters themselves?

#### • SHARED CONTROL

A pet monster is an NPC, but very loyal to the character. It is suggested that the trainer's player, during battle situations, run a pet monster under the close supervision of its trainer; otherwise treat it as a GM-run NPC in normal circumstances.

This method allows each pet monster to exhibit an independent personality, while making the importance of the trainer in directing the creature central to any pet battles.

#### • THE MONSTERS ARE NPCs

The monsters are actual characters instead of extensions of the player character's will. The GM controls the monsters just like any other NPC. The monsters are normally loyal to their trainers — at least to start with -- but ultimately, their reactions depend on how well their owners treat them. The GM should give each monster a different personality and set of needs. An adventure becomes an exercise in manipulating the monsters to do what the characters want, while still winning the tournament or fighting off the bad guys and saving the day. This works best for small groups of players, since the GM is not burdened with playing too many NPCs at once. One variation on this is to assume that the player characters have recently captured their monsters, and are unaware of all their abilities or quirks. In this case, the GM creates the monsters for the characters; the players know the monster's point total, but that is all. Thus, the early part of the game becomes one of discovering the monster's abilities so the trainer can learn how to best utilize them.

#### • PLAYERS CONTROL THE MONSTERS

Since the characters acquired the monsters from their Character Points, they become extensions of the PCs themselves. The players take direct control of their monsters at all times. They are free to give the monsters personalities, or let their pets go off on their own mini-adventures. The GM may intervene occasionally if he or she feels a player is playing a monster out of character, but mostly it is the player's show. This approach works well when there are several trainers in the campaign, all with monsters, or if the GM does not feel that he or she can control both the monsters and the regular NPCs at the same time.

## PLAYER CHARACTERS ARE THE MONSTERS

The focus of this campaign is not the trainers, but the monsters themselves. The monsters are all "owned" by trainers, the NPCs. The relationship here is similar to soldiers in the military — the trainers are, effectively, superior officers; possibly loved, possibly hated, but nevertheless obeyed.

The GM may create a different trainer character for each monster, but it is just as reasonable (and perhaps more manageable) to assume that all the monsters are pets of a single trainer. This allows for interesting rivalries between each monster who might scheme for their owner's favour.

### • TROUPE PLAY

In troupe play, everyone builds a trainer character and an accompanying monster. The player, as the trainer, can continue to go on adventures and own cars and worry about important trainer things, but everyone plays a monster as well — and in particular, everyone plays someone else's monster. If the GM and players are sitting around a table, everyone plays the monster of the person on his or her left. In this way, everyone earns full GM attention, and everyone has the chance to torment another player by being his or her pet. Players playing monsters are free to craft their personalities. For even more interesting play, the GM can randomly assign who controls which player's monsters.

This type of gaming works in nearly any game setting or game size, as long as there are at least two participants in the GM's campaign. The GM does not need to concentrate on creating individual personalities for the pets, and players receive the benefit of unique monsters under their command that may or may not play nice. It also makes for some extremely interesting situations.

## ALTERNATE CUTE MONSTER WORLDS

The majority of campaign settings for the Pet Monster genre take place in a fantasy world filled with a mixture of contemporary conveniences, neo-modern cities, wondrous creatures, and futuristic devices. The GM can mix in elements of the fantastic and the mundane as he or she sees fit: next to magic-wielding monsters can be sports supply stores, while anti-steroid endorsements hang outside the glittering, white stadiums. If the GM is in need of a setting, he or she can easily use any of the many TV series available.

The GM, however, is not limited only to the fantasy genre. The little suckers have this habit of turning up everywhere, after all. Here are a few examples:

## TRAINER-KNIGHTS OF THE REALM

How about a world where pet monsters are actually integrated into a medieval setting? Heroic fantasy worlds can even revolve around economies based entirely on raising, trading, training, and fighting monsters. Sorceresses summon small dragons to fight at their side; warrior lords use them as scouts and messengers in the wars (and appoint young squires to sweep up after them) and bold adventurers

use monsters as shock troops while rampaging through dungeons. The eggs of cute monsters, gathered and traded like trading cards to capitalize on their rarity, are more valuable than gold. Cities rise up around major creature trading posts, with universities and monster research centres. The cute beasts themselves are fantastic in nature, strange in body and prone to firing bizarre weapons at each other. Trainers must enter the haunted, horror-filled countryside to find, capture, and defeat pet monsters that stand in their way and bother the local peasants. Heck, maybe the entire feudal system is based around pet monsters rather than armoured cavalry as the arm of decision. Fair ladies preside over tournaments while teenage knight-trainers and their bratty squires do battle for their favour. Actual bloodshed is rare, however, with the cute monsters instead showing off their prowess in tournaments, or in duels fought between each army's champions.

## DON'T BRING PETS To Class!

Monsters can spring up in the strangest of places, even at school in an otherwise mundane world. They might come out of cards, from books, or even wait on the other side of a portal through which the players fall. There is ample opportunity to build up schoolyard rivals, fight monsters over the love of a boy or a girl, or have pet monsters run rampant through the hallways.

The cute monsters must have secret identities to blend in. They may pretend to be stuffed pets or other toys, hide inside video game disks (emerging when needed), or even transform into ordinary mundane pets. Since running around with pet monsters and battling evil is (for some strange reason) not something of which average parents or school principals approve, being caught would be embarrassing. As such, the undercover sailor-suited trainers must also have identities: a costume or armour they either put on or magically transform into.

## PET CEMETERIES

There are 66 cute monsters loose in the city. Each of them is adorable, fuzzy, and evil. Yes, evil, for these are not ordinary cute monsters — they arrived from Hell, complete with little writhing tentacles and red glowing eyes. Each hellion was once an ordinary cute monster, but each committed some terrible sin. One of them is a notorious terrorist. Another ate its trainer. A third was heavily involved with the goth-punk scene, had its nose and eyebrow pierced and its fur dyed black, making it no longer cute. Now it stalks the night, drinking pet monster blood and turning its victims into Gothemon. Yes, each of them committed one of the most deadly sins of monster-hood before dying, and as a result were eternally damned. The characters are a team of powerful trainers and monsters. An angel or devil (decide which) has recruited the team to return these troublemakers to the abyss. To do that requires defeating each of the 66 from Hell in single combat. Unfortunately, these monsters can easily pass for ordinary pet monsters, and so, might be masquerading anywhere. Only through vigilance, careful patrols, and occasional clues from the Powers Above (or Below) will the characters succeed in their task.





## Fuzzy CHROME

The future is now, and now means tons of computers and biochips that can do some pretty strange things. Merge electronics with the monsters, and bizarre worlds unfold. Monsters could be cyborged into computer machinery, monitor networks for failure, or be modified into soldiers or vat-ninjas. Basic biochips implanted into monsters might keep track of them, but where will it end? If human and monster DNA are combined, does the resulting half-human, half-fuzzy hybrid have rights? Should society force it to fight in the arena, or will it escape, and be hunted down by the *young* cops and their cyborged pets? Do android monsters dream of chrome sheep? Man, machine and monster merge, in a twisted future just around the corner where "digital pet" has a whole new meaning.



## A BOY AND HIS ... WHATEVER

In the far future, after a final war and civilization's end, man and monster might again live as one in nature. Man supports cute monster, and cute monster defends man. If anything threatens nature's balance, man must band with monster and fight the oncoming threat before it destroys the world. More likely, man and monster roam the savage wastes, helping innocent villages against gangs of bandits (and their monsters) in exchange for all the villagers can afford -- probably a few cans of monster pet food and a spare bicycle tire for the trainer.

## NEW MONSTER GENESIS SPACE GOSPEL: Do you Remember Love?

Monsters might live on spaceships with their trainers, going from world to world, facing competitions or collecting bizarre creatures from the far corners of the universe. The monsters might even fight in super-deformed mecha, designed to interface with and augment the cute monster's own powers! The critters, like other mechapilots, must deal with the usual angst concerning their lot in life. Do the generals and trainers know what they are doing? Where did they get the mysterious alien monster egg, and can we trust the blur-furred albino monster that hatched from it? Who is the real enemy, the invaders or the monster's own trainers? Perhaps it's time to form a union.

# CHAPTER 3: CREATING TRAINERS & MONSTERS



There are battles to win and evil to fight, and the player characters and their intrepid monsters are just the ones to do it. This chapter presents guidelines for creating characters who aspire to become great trainers, as well as the pet monsters themselves. Additionally, it assumes the players are familiar with the character creation rules in *Big Eyes, Small Mouth*.

All normal rules for character creation presented herein also apply to the pet monster genre. The first section, Creating Monster Trainers (see below), provides guidelines for designing characters who train or own cute monsters. The second section, Creating Cute Monsters (see page 66) offers suggestions on how to design creatures, either as pets of trainers or as player characters. The final section, Trainer and Monster Advancement (see page 84) deals with coaching monsters during the game, as well as detailing how pet beasts can evolve into more powerful forms.

A starting total of 25, 30 or 35 Character Points is appropriate for most pet monster games, whether the players create trainers or pet monsters.

## CREATING MONSTER TRAINERS

Pet monsters cannot go on adventures without their loyal coaches. Who will feed them? Breed them? Take care of them? Whip them into a fighting frenzy? Put them out to pasture when they grow too old to make money any more? That's right: the monster trainer.

Players generate monster trainers using the standard *BESM* character creation rules. This section powers them up with a few specialized and modified Attributes that reflect the quirks of the pet monster genre.

### CHARACTER OUTLINE: TYPE of MONSTER TRAINER

Most pet monster trainers are fairly young, even by anime standards. The average age runs between 10 and 15 years old, while trainers older than 17 to 18 are quite rare. Some genre archetypes are described below, though it is common for a person to be a combination of these models.

- **ADVENTURER**

The Adventurer sees pet monsters as companions on his or her quest, just like his or her trusty steed, broadsword and fellow adventurers. The intricacies of monster evolution or biology do not really interest the Adventurer. His or her focus is using them to help fulfil another goal, such as looting dungeons, exterminating evil monsters or serving as a soldier or cop.

- **COMPETITOR**

The Competitor's focus is on becoming Greatest Monster Trainer in the World. This means acquiring a strategic set of monsters, and training them to fight and win challenges, battles, and tournaments. The Competitor hopes to catch or breed monsters, but as a means to an end: winning battles and advancing in rank.

### • CRUSADER

This character may have once been an ordinary kid who found his or her monster by what seemed like accident. Nevertheless, he or she is now aware of a higher purpose: a recognition that evil, ugly monsters should be stamped out, and cute, innocent ones protected. The character is like King Arthur or Guinevere, sending his or her beloved knights into harm's way, where they fight for love and justice. Idealistic, energetic, and a shining inspiration to others, the crusader is ready to use his or her cute monsters to valiantly combat evil and ugliness wherever it may lurk. Crusader characters sometimes rely only on their monsters, but in cross-genre settings they might depend on wizards, magical girls or other exotic characters with Special Attributes of their own.

### • DOMINATOR

This character is a harsh and unforgiving trainer, and raises harsh and unforgiving monsters. While some of his or her creatures might break down under the strain and trauma, others develop so mean and nasty, they have been known to maim or even kill other monsters, rather than fighting to the faint (see page 100). This trainer lives for battle, and more importantly, victory. He or she prefers disciplining and modifying a cute monster rather than winning its affection or instilling pride and fighting spirit. If the setting permits, he or she may even augment the pet creature with metal spurs or claws, implanted armour, or other cybernetic enhancements. The trainer may use magic, strange potions, or even steroids to make the monster less cute and nastier. The Dominator just does not understand the "cute" in cute monster.

### • ENERGIZER

This trainer is a bundle of energy. He or she is like a bunny rabbit, always on the go, eager for the next duel or the next new monster. Friends will wake up at the crack of dawn to see that the trainer has already caught a new monster or been challenged to another fight. He or she is always cheerful and happy. Very occasionally, something may depress him or her (like a beloved pet monster getting badly mangled), but this trainer always bounces back and tries again. Cute monsters are fun, friends are fun, and having both is fun squared! If the energetic trainer could manage it, he or she would have an adventure and a pet monster battle every single day.

### • FRIEND OF MONSTERS

This character sees cute monsters as man's best friend. He or she treasures adorable creatures and is very concerned for their welfare. This character will reluctantly send pet monsters into battle, and only for a cause that also benefits the monsters, such as fighting a great evil. Most other monster trainer types would love to stick this character into a monster storage device, figuring he or she is just too saccharine to be human. To ensure this does not happen, most Friends of Monsters are cute little boys or pretty girls.

- **MASTER TRAINER**

This character is a guru of cute monsterdom. He or she has caught and trained many monsters and is a practical expert in creature fighting tactics and cute critters in general. The character often runs a dojo of his or her own, and may be an authority on a particular type of monster.

- **MONSTER HUNTER**

The Hunter lives for the joy of catching cute monsters. His or her goal may be to use them in the arena, sell them, study their biology, or even just snap photos of them. It is the chase and (in many cases) the capture, however, that provides this character the greatest satisfaction. Some Monster Hunters work as guides for other characters who need to find monsters. Others may even patrol the wilderness, acting as game wardens or rangers.

- **MONSTER VET**

The character is a doctor or nurse who specializes in treating pets. Most Monster Vets are nice people and often fit the "Friend of Monsters" or "Professor" archetypes as well. The exceptions include those amoral individuals who help Dominators perform their "augmentations" or whose practice is a cover for their sinister scientific researches into cute monster physiology.

- **PROFESSOR**

This character may be a real academic, a mad scientist or just a bright young trainer with glasses or short blue hair. Either way, he or she is devoted to the arts and sciences of cute monsterdom. This includes using magic or technology to make Items of Power or Personal Gear (like monster detectors or storage devices), breeding monsters through scientific means (such as cloning) and studying their biology. He or she usually has a particular expertise, such as cute monster ecology, genetics, reproduction or behaviour, and may specialize in a particular type of creature.

- **PRO TRAINER**

The Professional Trainer has turned training cute monsters into a career. These characters take a practical approach to monster raising and combat. Training creatures and sending them into battle is not just fun, it puts bread on the table, gas in the car, and games in the console.

The Pro is careful of his or her monsters' welfare to ensure they are ready for the big tournament. He or she devises intricate tactics for matching just the right monster to the right opponent. This character spends hours poring over carefully designed training regimens to maximize his or her monster's potential, analyzing the pros and cons of various vitamin supplements, and occasionally writing articles for professional training journals. Monsters are not creatures to be trifled with; they are a livelihood, and the professional trainer is not about to let anyone forget that, including the monster.



## • RANCHER

This character's main interest is in breeding pet monsters. He or she may take a natural low-tech approach using selective breeding, or make use of advanced technology such as genetic engineering. The Rancher may go on adventures to find monster eggs, capture creatures as breeding stock, or participate in tournaments to see how well the latest pets turned out.

## • STAR

The Star loves the fame of being a monster trainer more than anything else. He or she appears at monster tournaments, dressed in a tailored team uniform and spouting an obnoxious rhyming motto. He or she cannot bear to see other trainers grab the limelight, and will constantly seek to outdo rivals, real or imagined. The Star's prima-donna attitude may be a reflection of his or her actual stardom or a manifestation of over-confidence and vanity.

## STATS

All three Stats are equally useful for monster trainers. Since the average trainer is a spunky kid or teenager, a modest to average Body, average Mind and high Soul Stat is fairly typical. Adventurers often have a higher Body, while Professors and Monster Vets have a higher Mind.

## Attributes

In an ordinary pet monster game, trainer characters should have a mix of Normal Attributes along with the Special Attributes Servant (Pet Monster) and Train a Cute Monster (see page 58).

Normal Attributes especially appropriate for a trainer are Animal Friendship (Cute Monsters) (see page 57), Appearance, Aura of Command, Divine Relationship, Energy Bonus, Organizational Ties and Personal Gear.

Characters should not take Special Attributes other than Servant and Train a Cute Monster without GM permission. For example, if the heroes are interstellar monster trainers who travel through space catching new creatures, Own a Big Mecha (to acquire a spaceship) would be appropriate. Conversely, a fantasy setting may have various magical Items of Power related to monster training or breeding.

The next section details how some existing Attributes work in the pet-monster genre, as well as covering the new Special Attribute Train a Cute Monster.

## • SERVANT (PET MONSTER)

A character with this Attribute has every child's dream: one or more pet-monster companions. A pet monster could be a loving friend, a loyal bodyguard, or a highly-trained killing machine held in check only by the character's force of will. They range widely in form, from a scrappy little vampire bat that peeks out from the trainer's pocket to a giant cheese golem made from a mound of old cheddar the size of an elephant. The main things they have in common are a cute appearance (though not always), primarily small to average size, combat capability and fighting spirit.

Refer to the Servant Attribute (see *BESM*, page 134) for rules on how this Attribute works in game terms. Trainers who specialize in one or two monsters should take the 1 point/Level version of Servant, limiting them to a particular pet monster that characters cannot change on a session-by-session basis. A trainer with a constantly evolving monster, or who is always catching, breeding or summoning a different monster each session might take the 2 points/Level version.

Four, five or six Levels of Servant are suggested for a starting trainer character. If the GM permits, player characters may also acquire more than six Levels. In many pet monster settings, however, it may be more appropriate for trainers to acquire several different monsters than one ultra-powerful pet. If so, they should simply take this Attribute multiple times.

Creating Cute Monsters section (see page 66) covers additional guidelines on adorable creature design. Refer to them when creating a cute monster using the Servant rules.



### • ANIMAL FRIENDSHIP (CUTE MONSTERS)

A character with this Attribute has unusual empathy with small, cute, and homicidal monsters. This is a version of the Animal Friendship Attribute (see *BESM*, page 26) with the exception that it works on fuzzy seizure monsters instead of normal animals. It is not vital for the average trainer, who can forcibly capture monsters, find their eggs, or even to buy them in a market place. It is very suitable for Friend of Monster or Monster Vet characters.

Animal Friendship (Cute Monsters) can help acquire a new creature encountered in the wild, or even to confuse, befriend, or subvert other trainer's monsters. The character may use the various standard monster-luring techniques (see *Capturing in the Wild*, page 25) to draw the creature in close, and then try to befriend it as described in *BESM*, page 22. The GM may apply modifiers based on what the character knows of the monster's species and situation.

If a trainer successfully befriends a wild monster, this can justify spending earned Character Points on an additional Servant (Pet Monster) Attribute. If not, the monster simply reacts in a friendly fashion, but soon wanders off. Of course! the character could capture it to sell (or eat).

### ORGANIZATIONAL TIES (dojo)

If the character is a member or student of a dojo (see page 37) or similar training association, this functions as Organizational Ties (see *BESM*, page 36) at a cost of 2 points/Level. A character with enough Levels in Organizational Ties to be master of a Dojo may assumedly possess one. To start with loyal students, the character *should also take the Flunkies Attribute* (see *BESM*, page 29).

The GM may wish to restrict access to Organizational Ties if he or she prefers a game where the characters are wanderers rather than tied to any dojo. Dojo student characters should have Servant (Pet Monster) and Train a Cute Monster, both at Level 1 or more. Characters who are dojo masters or higher should have Servant (Pet Monster) at Level 5+ and Train a Cute Monster at Level 3+. The guidelines of what each Level entails are listed below.

LEVEL 1	The character is a senior student (instructor) at a small dojo.
LEVEL 2	The character is a master of a small dojo, or instructor at a large dojo.
LEVEL 3	The character is the master of a large dojo.

## ORGANIZATIONAL TIES (PROTEST GROUP OR TRAINING SOCIETY)

If the character is a member of any Professional (see page 42), Protestations and other Hobbies Societies (see page 43), or similar special interest groups, this usually counts as Organizational Ties (see *BESM*, page 36) at a cost of 1 point/Level. The cost may increase to 2 or 3 points/Level for groups who wield exceptional influence or power — the Freemonsters (see page 43) might qualify.

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LEVEL 1	The character is a member.
LEVEL 2	The character is a veteran member.
LEVEL 3	The character heads a local chapter or cell.
LEVEL 4	The character heads a regional chapter or cell.
LEVEL 5	The character heads a national chapter or cell.
LEVEL 6	The character runs the entire organization.

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## TRAIN A CUTE MONSTER

COST: 1 point/Level

RELEVANT STAT: Soul

TYPE: Universal

This is a new Special Attribute. A character with Train a Cute Monster is experienced in the arts and sciences of pet monster instruction and fighting. Through painful experience, mostly on the part of the pets, the trainer learned to effectively control the creatures in battle and to properly care for their needs in daily life. Only characters with Servant (Pet Monster) may take this Attribute. It is also appropriate for characters who work with pets but might not have them, such as Monster Vets.

Each Level of Train a Cute Monster gives the character one Trainer ability, such as Battle Motto or Inspire Ferocity. The character may take these in any order.

### • ANALYZE MONSTER

The character can identify all commonly known species of cute monster. He or she also receives a -3 bonus to any Mind Stat roll required to identify rare types or newly evolved versions of existing species. He or she can judge another monster's Combat Value, Health Points and elemental association (see page 70) from its size, species, attitude, apparent health and even posture without seeing it actually fight.

### • BATTLE MOTTO

The character has mastered the hideous rhyming battle motto. If chanted within listening range of an opposing trainer just prior to a duel, it fills the motto-using character with pride while simultaneously revolting, boring and/or irritating his or her enemy. The opposing trainer loses five Energy Points, which are immediately transferred to the motto-using character for the duration of the encounter. Note that if two trainers have mottoes, the effects cancel each other out; a motto can only be used once in a particular encounter.

- BREED MONSTER

This is the ability to breed two monsters together that do not normally mate, and have them produce viable offspring. The GM may require a Mind/Soul Stat check, with bonuses or penalties according to the strangeness of the combination. On a successful roll, the union of the two monsters is a positive, viable hybrid. On a very bad roll something goes hideously wrong — they start fighting each other, or they mate, but the resulting offspring is a horrifying menace.

- FEED MONSTER

The character knows exactly what to feed his or her monsters to ensure they have a properly balanced diet. As long as the character can supervise his or her monster's nutrition (which takes a half-hour per creature per day) the monsters will be healthier and happier. They will not catch diseases and will recover lost Health Points and Energy Points twice as fast as normal. The GM can require characters to devote time to finding special food, vitamins or ingredients.

- INSPIRE MONSTER

The trainer is especially good at inspiring his or her monster in combat through shouts of encouragement, cheerleading, yelling *banzai!* and other energetic techniques. At the start of any Combat Round the trainer can spend five of his or her own Energy Points. This either adds a temporary +1 to the monster's Combat Value (raising both Attack and Defense Combat Values) which lasts for one round or restores one monster's lost Health Points. The character can repeat the expenditure every round, to continue giving the monster a bonus.

- INSTIL DISCIPLINE

The character is especially good at making his or her monsters obey orders and resist their natural urges. Instilling discipline takes a one-hour training session and costs the trainer and monster five Energy Points each. The effects last for 13 hours, minus one hour times the Soul Stat of the disciplined monster ( $13 - [\text{1hr} \times \text{Soul Stat}] = \text{hours}$ ). A disciplined pet will be cautious during fighting, and will not lose control or expose itself recklessly. It receives a +1 Defense Combat Value bonus.

- INSTIL FEROCITY

The trainer can instil the fighting spirit in his or her monster and teach it to go for the jugular. This ability takes a one-hour training session and costs the trainer and monster five Energy Points each. The effects last for 13 hours, minus one hour times the Soul Stat of the trained monster ( $13 - [\text{1hr} \times \text{Soul Stat}] = \text{hours}$ ). A ferocious monster receives a +1 bonus to its Attack Combat Value. They are also likely to be bad tempered, and may snap at or otherwise harass anyone nearby. It is possible to Instil Ferocity against a specific opponent (such as type of monster) — this requires appropriate training aids (such as a picture or look-alike doll). This doubles the normal bonus, but only against that target. It is useful if the trainer has a good idea who his or her monster will face.



### • MONSTER TACTICS

The character has carefully studied cute monsters in battle. He or she understands which attack to use for the greatest effect, when to order a finishing blow at the right moment, and when to sound the retreat. The trouble is, it is the monster fighting, not the character. If the character is supervising the duel, however, and is in a position to shout orders, then his or her monsters receives a +2 bonus on their Initiative rolls through the battle. This can be used in conjunction with Inspire Monster.

### • NURSE MONSTER

The character is a natural monster physician. As long as the monster is under his or her tender care, it heals Health Points three times faster then it would otherwise. If the character also has Feed Monster, the monster heals five times as quickly as it would otherwise.

### • STAT MASTER

The character possesses an encyclopaedic knowledge of other trainers, as well as teams and dojos (if they exist). The character keeps track of who they are, how they rank in any league or organization, and what pet monsters they possess. The GM may require a Mind Stat roll to see if the trainer knows anything about someone specifically, applying bonuses or penalties based on the other trainer's fame and fortune and how well their information is detailed publically.

- 
- LEVEL 1 The character has one Trainer ability.
  - LEVEL 2 The character has two Trainer abilities.
  - LEVEL 3 The character has three Trainer abilities.
  - LEVEL 4 The character has four Trainer abilities.
  - LEVEL 5 The character has five Trainer abilities.
  - LEVEL 6 The character has six Trainer abilities.
- 



## SUITABLE CHARACTER DEFECTS

All Normal Defects are appropriate for the character (though No Arms is rather unlikely).

Special Defects are usually inappropriate, unless the GM feels they fit the campaign setting. Here are a few suggestions for Normal Defects:

Ageism, Awkward and Easily Distracted are common since many trainers are kids.

Girl/Guy Magnet can represent a star trainer with obsessive fans.

Not So Strong and Not So Fast are good for kids who are athletic but not very big.

Nemesis is extremely common in the Pet Monster genre, and is treated at greater length below.

One Hand is appropriate for a trainer with an especially fierce pet monster.

Recurring Nightmares could plague a trainer whose pet died in battle.

Significant Other might represent a monster that the character treats as a real friend and not just a battle comrade. It also works for kid brothers, sisters and other hangers-on.

Skeleton in the Closet can portray a trainer with dark secrets, like having cheated in a major tournament.

## NEMESIS (ARCH RIVAL)

This is an interpretation of the existing Nemesis Defect (see *BESM*, page 49). The Arch Rival can be a professional adversary, like a member of a team from another country who competes against the character regularly, or someone who vies with the character for better monsters. The Arch Rival can also be more personal, like the childhood friend who has sworn to defeat the character in competition to restore family honour. He or she should make the character's life difficult, and not be easily dispatched, but he or she does not need to be a mortal enemy.

- 
- 1 BP The character has a single Arch Rival that tries to stop him or her at every turn.
  - 2 BP The character has an entire team of Arch Rivals who appear at the most inconvenient times.
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### SKILLS FOR TRAINERS

At the heart of the pet monster genre, Skills are not especially important — it comes down to the trainer's ability with monsters (the Monster Trainer Attribute) and the prowess of his or her cute pets. As a result, Skills are not necessary for most pet monster campaigns, though GMs can ignore this advice, or create cross-genre settings where Skills are more important. If so, here is a suggested Skill Cost Chart for a typical game in the hybrid modern-fantasy world of pet monster competitions. For mixed settings (for example, pet monsters in the world of heroic fantasy) use the higher of these costs and the other genre's Skill Costs.

Table 3-1: Skill Costs for Monster Trainers

General Skill	Cost	General Skill	Cost	Combat Skill	Cost
Acrobatics	3	Mechanics	3	Archery	3
Animal Training	5	Medical	3	Gun Combat	—
Architecture	2	Military Sciences	2	Heavy Weapons	—
Artisan	2	Navigation	1	Melee Attack	4
Biological Sciences	3	Performing Arts	2	Melee Defense	4
Boating	2	Physical Sciences	1	Ranged Defense	3
Burglary	2	Piloting	1	Thrown Weapons	3
Business Management	4	Poisons	4	Unarmed Attack	3
Computers	2	Police Sciences	2	Unarmed Defense	3
Controlled Breathing	1	Riding	1		
Cooking	2	Seduction	1		
Cultural Arts	2	Sleight of Hand	2		
Demolitions	1	Social Sciences	2		
Disguise	2	Sports	1		
Driving	1	Stealth	4		
Electronics	3	Swimming	2		
Forgery	3	Urban Tracking	3		
Gaming	4	Visual Arts	1		
Interrogation	2	Wilderness Survival	3		
Intimidation	3	Wilderness Tracking	5		
Law	2	Writing	1		
Linguistics	1				

TABLE 3-1: SKILL COSTS FOR MONSTER TRAINERS

The most useful skills are likely to be Animal Training (for training monsters), Biological Sciences (for serious study or genetic engineering of cute monsters), Business Management (for running monster ranches, signing team contracts, and so forth), Electronics or Mechanics (for building monster storage devices or traps), Gaming (for betting on fights or knowing statistics), Forgery (for entering fights without qualifications), Medical (for treating monsters), Navigation (to avoid getting lost in the wild), Poisons (for treachery), Stealth (for sneaking up on monsters prior to capturing them), Urban or Wilderness Tracking (for tracking down monsters in the wild) and Wilderness Survival (for finding food and shelter during safari expeditions).

## PERSONAL GEAR FOR TRAINERS

Here are some examples of Personal Gear appropriate to the pet monster genre. The GM can modify this if necessary; for example, technological items may not be available in some fantasy worlds:

- **DIGITAL CAMERA**

For filming monsters in the wild. A minor item.

- **DISCIPLINE GEAR**

The necessary collars, whips, chains, prods, eye clamps, and bad TV episodes required to use the Instil Discipline ability described in Train a Cute Monster. Without this item, the process of disciplining takes twice as long. A minor item.

- **GOTHIC MONSTER ARMOUR**

Specially made for the combat monster, but banned in many tournaments. Provides 4 points of protection, but has an unprotected spot (partial armour). While worn, reduces the monster's Appearance by one. This is a major item.

- **HEALING POTION**

Instantly restores five lost Health Points to a pet monster. Usable only once in a game session, but characters can restock the item between sessions if they find a supplier. A minor item.

- **IRON CAGE**

For secure monster transport. A Body Stat check at -5 is needed to break the bars. A minor item, but heavy and difficult to transport.

- **MONSTER LEASH AND CHAIN COLLAR**

This requires a Body Stat check at +4 to break. A remote-controlled shock-collar version allows trainers to zap the monster (Damage 15, Incapacitating, Stun Only) at a distance of up to 50 metres. A major item.

- **MONSTER PDA**

A personal digital assistant (pocket computer) loaded with data on cute monster species and habits. Gives a -1 bonus on any Mind Stat roll to analyze a monster, locate natural habitats where they might frequent, or other similar tasks. A minor item.

- MONSTER STEROIDS

Adds +1 to monster's Body Stat for an hour (adding +5 Health Points and Energy Points, and possibly increasing Combat Value). After it wears off, these bonuses vanish and, additionally, the monster loses 10 Health Points (which it can heal normally). Usable only once per game session, but trainer can restock item between sessions if he or she finds a supplier. A minor item.





- **MONSTER STORAGE DEVICE**

A special magical or electronic transport container that holds one small monster. While inside the device the monster is asleep and does not need food or drink. A minor item.

- **MONSTER STORAGE-CAPTURE DEVICE**

A monster storage device that can also suck an unwary monster into it and capture it inside. The device requires a successful Attack Roll and operates at melee range. It has no effect on anything other than cute monsters. A major item.

- **PET FOOD, GOURMET**

A week's supply; it raises monster morale. A minor item.

- **RANCH**

A facility for breeding cute monsters. Counts as two major items.

- **STABLE**

A fully-equipped cute monster home with running water, little monster bed, feeding area, and so on. Not portable, not necessary, but makes the monster happy. A minor item.

- **SUPER VITAMINS**

Instantly restores five Energy Points to a pet monster. Usable only once per game session, but trainer can restock item between sessions if he or she finds a supplier. A minor item.

### **OTHER EXAMPLES OF PERSONAL GEAR**

- **MUNDANE**

Clothing, a flashlight, a low-end game console system, a television, candy bars, a backpack, a plastic monster carrier, a supply of monster pet food.

- **MINOR**

Tailored team uniform, sports bicycle, monster medical kit, copy of *Manos the Hands of Fate*, black leather collars, thick rubber gloves, personal computer, a high-end game console, and voting stock in low-end video-game company.

- **MAJOR**

These could also include highly illegal super drugs, advanced monster-capturing equipment, voting stock in a high-end video-game company, or a prototype of "the next big game console." The GM can rule that an occasional and very expensive item, such as a mad science laboratory capable of doing genetic engineering, a university computing facility or a secret underground lair counts as two or more items.

The GM always has final say on whether or not an item is available to the characters.

## CREATING CUTE MONSTERS

Cute monsters are the soul of any small creature campaign. If there were no cute monsters, trainers would just be ordinary kids, their options for displaying their true grit and fighting prowess limited to playing video games and shaking down other kids for ultra-rare collectable cards. Once a boy or girl has found a fierce, cute and fuzzy monster, however, he or she can transcend such petty-ante activities. The character need no longer fear the rules and regulations of outrageous bullies, parents and teachers. A pet monster is like a six-gun: the ultimate equalizer.

### STEP 1: GM DISCUSSION

Players should talk to the GM about the upcoming game, to understand the rules that the GM will use, the limitations on the cute monsters, and anything else that may pertain to the campaign such as genre, duration of game, and time commitment. See page 67.

### STEP 2: MONSTER OUTLINE

Players should use the game boundaries established through their talk with the GM to sketch out a rough monster outline. See page 67.

### STEP 3: ASSIGN STATS

Using the Character Points purchased from the character's Monster Attribute, players should give their monsters Mind, Body and Soul Stats while making sure that each Stat is no lower than 1 and no higher than 12. See page 74.

### STEP 4: Monster Attributes

Players can use any remaining points left over from assigning Stats to acquire Monster Attributes, rated from Levels 1 to 6. See page 74.

### STEP 5: Monster DEFECTS

GMs should encourage players to take Monster Defects appropriate to the monster outline. These defects provide greater role-playing opportunities and offer Bonus Points in raising the monster's Stats or acquiring additional Monster Attributes. See page 79.

### STEP 6: MONSTER SKILLS (OPTIONAL)

If GMs wish to use Skills, players use Skill Points to purchase them. See page 81.

### STEP 7: DERIVED VALUES

After having modified the monster's Stats through Attributes and Defects, players can calculate the monster's derived values. See page 81.

### STEP 8: MONSTER BACKGROUND

You can earn 1-3 extra Character Points by providing the GM with a background of your monster and his or her trainer. See page 81.

It should be emphasized, however, that one pet monster is never enough. Just as a gun owner knows that one needs a wide variety of weapons for different situations (from hunting to shooting down the black helicopters of the UN's New World Order), so is a proper arsenal of pet monsters also required. A growing boy or girl faces many challenges on a day-to-day basis. He or she can meet some with a friendly smile and good sportsmanship, but a fair number require opening a can of fuzzy whoop-ass with just the right combatant, targeted like a smart bomb on the enemy's exact point of weakness. For this reason, players may find it expedient for their trainer characters to create more than one monster, taking multiple versions of Servant (Pet Monster) or even dividing their available points among their menagerie of critters.

In order to create a pet monster the trainer character must have the Servant (Pet Monster) Attribute (see page 55). The player should work out the details of the creature with the GM, working through the multi-step monster generation sequence, based on the character creation process in *BESM*.

## STEP 1: GM DISCUSSION

Once the GM decides to run a Pet Monster game, the players should conceptualize the kind of monster they want as their companion. The GM can prohibit any concept deemed inappropriate, out of genre, or just plain sick.

If the player is creating a monster for a trainer character, the creature's Character Points are based on its trainer's Level in the Servant Attribute (see page 55 and *BESM*, page 134). If the player is creating the monster as a player character, its Character Points are that of the starting total for the game.

## STEP 2: MONSTER OUTLINE

The monster outline is a broad sketch of the pet type the player wants to create. Cute monsters are a combination of two qualities: a species, or creature-type (see below), and an element, or what kind of weapon the beast uses to trash its enemies (see page 70). In addition, most monsters possess these three qualities:

- They are cute. They are big-eyed, brightly coloured, and make cute noises, though some monsters fell far from this tree while still hitting every branch on the way down as well.
- They are small, usually ranging from rat size to the size of a large dog.
- They can be fierce, and have at least one dangerous attack form.

Most important of all, the player should give the monster a cute name.

### SPECIES TYPE

A monster can be of any species the player imagines: a bat, a snake, a fairy, or even a mobile vegetable. Some look like ancient Japanese spirits, and some are large piles of slime with eyes. The following are some suggestions of possible species types.

### • AQUATIC

The ocean is a natural place to collect fearsome and awful monsters. As seemingly harmless as a goldfish or as terrifying as a loch monster, aquatics come in a huge assortment of shapes, sizes and foreign accents. Some trainers prefer the rapacious shark, the slippery electric eel or the stinging jellyfish, while others ... the guppy. Most water creatures have only one weakness: they cannot breathe air, and tend to flop about a lot on dry land, without really getting anywhere. Some monsters have transcended this, becoming amphibious. Even so, fish fight best in water.

### • BEAST

Grrr! Fttt! Pounce! Beasts include dogs, cats, wolves, lions, tigers, bears, and (oh my!) other critters. They are fuzzy but too mundane to be good cute monsters on their own; with a minor modification however, they can become a two-headed wolf, a fanged teddy bear or a cat with electric blue fur.

### • BIRD

Death from above! Birds are often amazing foes because their wings allow them a wide range of attacking manoeuvres, and a fast way to escape. Birds also are smaller than other monsters, controllable with the use of hoods and harnesses, and simple to transport. While some trainers are lucky enough to train awe-inspiring mutant falcons and monster eagles, far more use variations of pigeons, sparrows, parrots, and the occasional killer penguin.

### • BUG

Giant beetles, spiders, dragonflies, ants, worms, butterflies, mantises and other bugs can all make a good base for a pet monster's species. The main trouble with bugs is they look icky unless they are beetles or butterflies with lots of pretty colours, which is often the case.

### • DRAGON AND OTHER REPTILES

From cute, tiny-winged lizards perched on their trainer's head to enormous scaled beasts heaving smoke with every breath, dragons come in a vast menagerie of colours, types, temperaments and trademarks. Their habits range from the small, purple dinosaur-like creatures singing silly songs to wizened oriental dragons that are fond of flinging *mah-jongg* tiles at their enemy. Their menacing visage and mythological importance make them natural favourites for trainers, though they generally have huge appetites and tend to eat smaller creatures. Some of them also have very good financial sense, and will demand, if not gold, at least a retirement fund.

Related to dragons are reptiles of other sorts: snakes, lizards and of course miniature dinosaurs. These rarely fly, but often breath fire, spit poison, or have big teeth.

### • EYEBALL

The first reaction of this monster's opponent is, "Oh my God, it's looking at me! It keeps looking at me!" These floating eyes like to simply ... watch. Often used

by trainers with a twisted sense of humour, these creatures are bred for a combination of their effective optic beam weapons, their shock value, and the bizarre sight of watching them eat.

- GERBIL OR OTHER SMALL RODENT

It's cute! It's small! It's a gerbil! No one expects a gerbil on the arena battlefield, and certainly not one that breathes fire and tears apart its enemy with its huge razor-sharp fangs. At the same time, they make fine pets for trainers, often running through entertaining plastic mazes and on cute wheels. Just as long as there are not two in a cage....

Pretty much the same goes for mice, rats, squirrels, ferrets and bunny rabbits. There is nothing like seeming small and inoffensive to draw the enemy into throat-biting distance.

- GOLEM

Golems are huge, slow, and strong. Often made of earth or rock, but sometimes formed from other substances, these magical creatures come to life thanks to the mystic mark on their foreheads; they loyally fight on the side of their trainer until they are either destroyed or melt after being left outside in the rain. They are slow, ponderous creatures who take orders very literally. Trainers need to carefully phrase their commands, or the golem may suddenly stuff its face with a pastry while grabbing one of its legs when the trainer really meant for it to attack.

They are the main exception to monsters being small and cute, since golems are often neither.

- METAMORPH

One minute the monster is a cute, little fuzz ball sitting on the character's shoulder, and the next moment, it is a three-metre tall horror with acid dripping from its fangs! (See Gerbil.) A metamorph is a critter that lacks the good grace to wait to evolve; instead it can transform itself into a different creature altogether instantly by shifting around its parts, or developing new ones. It can morph from having claws to wings, or suddenly sprout an extra set of arms at the cost of some of its fighting ability.

- SLIME

While the normal reaction to these creatures is "yuck," slimes can be an effective force on the arena floor. Their ability to reshape their bodies into multiple forms and occasional pseudopodia allow them great flexibility and variety of attacks. They can secrete juices, eating right through the enemy's defenses. They can even ooze through cracks or be transported in handy carrying containers. Indeed, slimes are often so popular that in some genre settings they are the only kind of pet monsters available. Slimes come in a wide variety of designer colours and often have very big eyes, which makes them far cuter than they might otherwise sound.



- SPIRIT

Ranging from awe-inspiring angels to terrifying devils or the angry spirits of deceased ancestors, these monsters are often as beautiful as they are unpredictable, fickle, stubborn, and difficult to train. Spirits, for example, might leave their trainers in favour of seeking vengeance on their enemies, while pet demons will try to tempt owners with winning matches in exchange for his or her trainer's soul. Like golems they are rarely cute, and often appear in more serious anime.

- VEGGIE

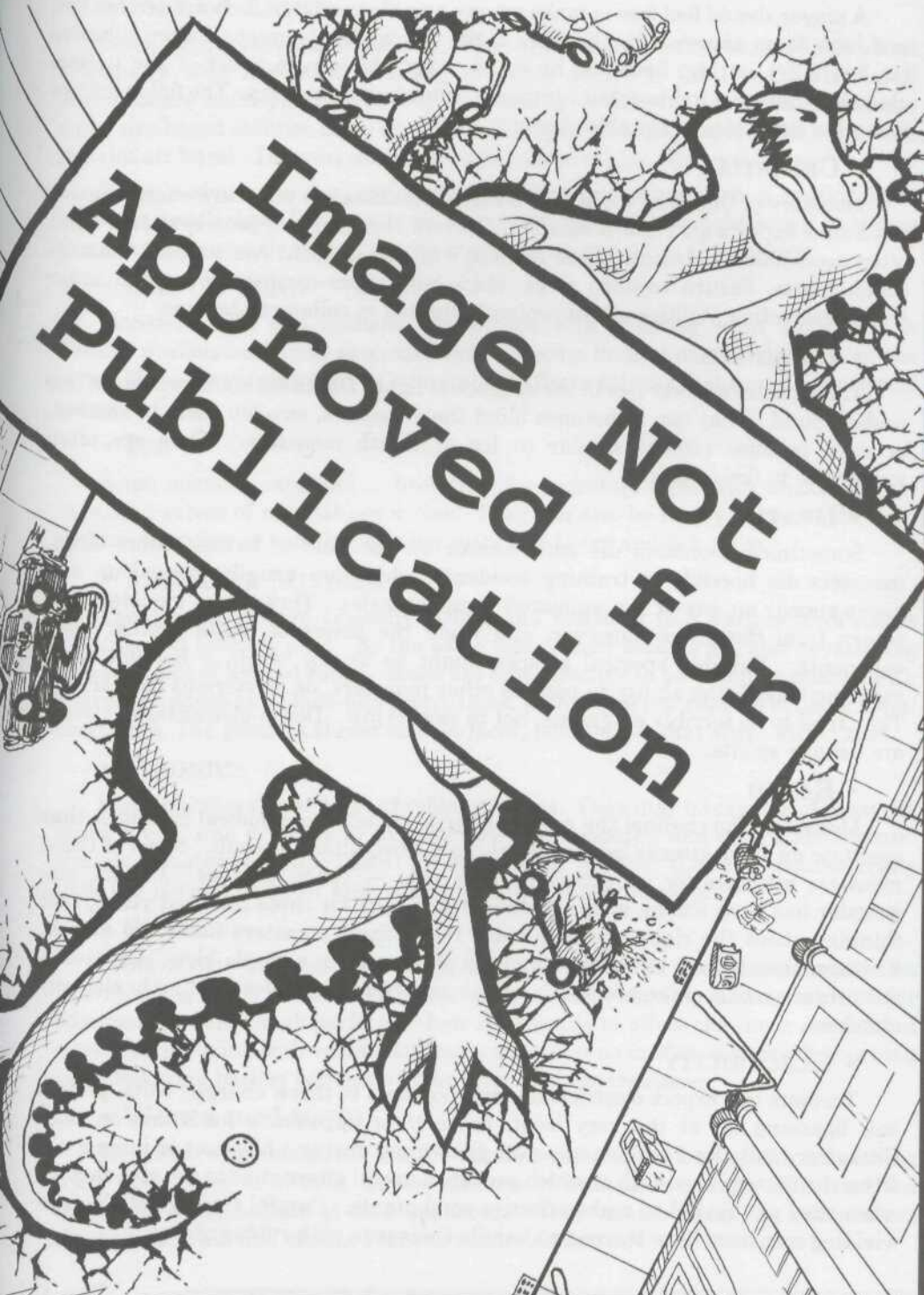
Some plants have learned how to be predators, like Venus flytraps, only cuter and often somewhat more mobile. These monsters can possess a potentially destructive arsenal of vine whips, thorn attacks, dissolving toxins, allergy-inducing pollens and fresh floral scents. Vegetable monsters may wilt if not given a sufficient dose of sunlight and water, however.

## ELEMENTAL TYPE

When speaking of an element, one usually means something written on a chemistry student's periodic table ... not so with most cute monsters. In rock-paper-scissors, rock defeats scissors by crushing the scissors, paper defeats rock by enveloping the rock, and scissors defeat paper by cutting the paper. Monster attacks are not too different from this basic principle: fire melts ice, water douses fire, and wood withstands gusts of wind. Elemental monsters embody certain characteristics — dragons breathe fire, mutant birds create tornadoes with their mighty wings, basilisks transform their opponents to stone, and sea creatures spray water geysers from whatever orifice sea monsters spray from.

"Elements" are rarely literal elements from the periodic table. There are few monsters made from xenon, lanthanum, pure nickel or radioactive plutonium, though the GM is free to prohibit these. No one said monsters could not also be walking nuclear disasters. This, after all, has a long tradition in Japan, though unfortunately one owned by different license holders. Elements in this case describe an entire family of attacks a monster might wield: electricity, paper, glass, plush animals, and even food products. Monsters can express elements as part of their bodies, such as giant cupcake creatures, or they can only express them during combat, in the form of a weapon, like rapid-fire cream filling.

It is rare for monsters to lack an elemental affiliation, even if it is rather tenuous. Players should avoid completely vanilla pets (as opposed to monsters made of ice cream, which obviously belong to the element of ice) because they are generally not interesting. At the same time, while every monster has an element, not every attack is elemental in nature. A common punch will not qualify, unless the punch is a flaming fist. For it to become an elemental attack, the character design must specify that the monster is using a "flaming fist punch" or "black hole vacuum slash" or some other blow that resonates with the monster's elemental properties.



A player should feel free to make up any new elements not included on this list, and have them approved by the GM. If the GM wishes to create a more cohesive (or less silly) setting, however, he or she may also create a list of the unique elements that exist in his or her campaign before beginning play. The following are just a few examples of suitable elements.

- CELESTIAL

Monsters of this type wield star power. Scientists say stars are energy-based, but anime experts all know it means the mystical energies of pseudo-science most often accessible to Magical Girls. Monsters of this element can unleash blazing-comet blasts, Saturn capture rings, black-hole super-crusher waves and other mass-destruction abilities all conveniently limited in collateral damage.

- DARKNESS

The monster's power lies in the absence of light. Darkness monsters might live underground. They can sometimes blind their enemies, envelop them in shadow, or even produce attacks similar to Ice or Death monsters. They are often vulnerable to fire or light.

- DEATH

Sometimes, monsters die with honour on the field of battle. More often, monsters die horribly in training accidents, which are usually hushed up and never appear on any of the animated documentaries. These dead monsters can return from the grave, however, and wield the power of unlife against their opponents. Suitable spectral attacks might be an icy touch, a horrible fear-inducing visage, the ability to possess other monsters, or mysterious card tricks. They tend to be terribly enigmatic, not to say cryptic. Death-elemental monsters are usually spirits.

- EARTH

Monsters who channel the power of earth are often methodical creatures that meditate on their attacks before launching a slow, all-out assault. Some of these monsters meditate for an extremely long time — years, decades. In fact, one monster has been sitting in the middle of an arena for three hundred years, still thinking about the right punch to use. When these monsters finally do attack, however, they deliver enormous amounts of damage in a single blow. Creatures that throw rocks or create earthquakes are good examples of Earth element monsters.

- ELECTRICITY

Trainers can expect electric-wielding monsters to throw charged bolts, project ball lightning or, at the very least, make their opponent's fur stand on end. Characters can also use them to power generators during a blackout or jump a car when the battery dies, both of which provide a useful alternative to the glue factory when they get too old to make effective combatants. Careful trainers of electric-wielding monsters have learned to handle their pets with rubber gloves.

- FIRE OR LIGHT

Some trainers are traditionalists. They know there is something reliable about a monster with fire-based attacks, and they prefer it that way. Fire-based monsters are multi-purpose: barbecues, welding, setting off fireworks. Creatures using fire-based abilities often breathe flame, spit fireballs, and toss the occasional napalm air burst. Dragons and reptiles are often of this elemental type.

Light is similar to fire, and could represent a blinding flash, a searing laser beam, or headlights. Some trainers have even taught their light-based monsters to respond to their claps, turning their powers on and off in this fashion.

- GAS OR WIND

Monsters with this element may attack with a strong wind, toxic gas, or possess noxious intestinal processes that generate both at once. Of course, of the latter, these creatures might be vulnerable to flame attacks that spark their putrid gases.

- ICE

Some monsters are cool ... literally! Ice monsters fight with blizzards, cold rays, and salvos of razor-sharp icicles. They can also be handy on warm days for making ice cubes or convincing other monsters to try and lick them.

- METAL OR MINERALS

These monsters are typically strong and resistant to a variety of offensive abilities, but horribly slow. By the same token, their attacks are also devastating in power, but of limited range. Some are only effective in paw-to-paw combat with sharpened edges and blade-like protrusions, with a rare few capable of firing metal fragments. The greatest threat this lot faces, however, is that silent killer: rust.

- PSIONICS

Some monsters have huge, throbbing brains. They may be capable of illusions, mind blasts, soul draining or hypnotic powers, telepathy and even a sixth sense. Psionic monsters are also useful for finding out whether that cute trainer really likes the player character and picking winning lottery numbers.

- SONIC

Some monsters are just screaming to be heard. This lot uses deafening shrieks, fear-inducing howls, solid-sound battering rams and Yoko Ono albums to hurt their adversaries. Some have perfected their caterwauls to affect the inner-ear fluid of monsters, inducing both vertigo and nausea; the arena is often a stomach-churning sight following battles between two or more of these creatures.

- WATER OR LIQUID

Monsters with this power can be fiendish foes on the battlefield, unleashing wave upon wave of ... well, waves, streams of acid, gobs of toxic slime and the occasional water balloon at their opponents. They can also clear the intermittent stopped-up drain and ensure Plant monsters do not wilt.

### MERGING ELEMENTS AND SPECIES — THE COMPLETE MONSTER

To create the complete monster, the player needs to fuse an element with the species. The player is welcome to be as imaginative with this as possible, including creating new elements or fusing two or more different species or multiple elements together to create a completely unique creature.

### STEP 3: ASSIGN STATS

Monster Stats are the same as any other characters (see *BESM*, page 18). Emphasis on Stats makes the monster tougher in battle at the cost of life-saving shticks. Most monsters should have a relatively low Mind Stat (1-3), but the occasional one that is as smart or even smarter than his or her trainer can be interesting. This is often appropriate for spirits or psionic monsters.

### STEP 4: MONSTER ATTRIBUTES

Monsters will always have both Normal and Special Attributes. Players should choose Attributes to reflect the monster's species and element. If the GM wants to impart a particular feel to a setting, he or she may also require everyone take an Attribute or two to reinforce the campaign's environs. For example, if the game's primary focus is on teenage occultists/witches summoning and training things from beyond, the GM might require all monsters to have Natural Weapons (Tentacle).

#### • NORMAL ATTRIBUTES FOR CUTE MONSTERS

Cute monsters generally lack culture, society, technology and sometimes, even language, so only a few Normal Attributes are appropriate. Table 3-2 lists Normal Attributes usually available for pet monsters.

TABLE 3-2: NORMAL ATTRIBUTES

Normal Attribute	Point Cost	Relevant Stat
Appearance	1 point/Level	Body
Aggressive	1 point/Level	Body
Combat Mastery	2 points/Level	None (Combat Value)
Damn Healthy!	1 point/Level	None
Divine Relationship	1 point/Level	Soul
Energy Bonus	1 point/Level	None
Extra Attacks	4 points/Level	None
Focused Damage	1 point/Level	None
Heightened Awareness	1 point/Level	Body or Mind
Massive Damage	2 points/Level	None

TABLE 3-2: NORMAL ATTRIBUTES



Appearance (cute) is something that almost every cute monster should have.

Aggressive (see below), Combat Mastery, Damn Healthy!, Divine Relationship, Energy Bonus, Focused Damage, and Massive Damage are all appropriate for fierce, tough or lucky critters.

Extra Attacks is appropriate for monsters with lots of arms, multiple natural weapons or fast reflexes.

Heightened Awareness can simulate the enhanced senses of many wild creatures.

The GM may allow for other Normal Attributes providing the player offers a good rationale. For example, Aura of Command might be appropriate for a freedom-loving pet monster that leads a monster revolt, or Art of Distraction for a cute monster that (with his or her trainer) becomes a TV star.

### AGGRESSIVE

**COST:** 1 point/Level  
**RELEVANT STAT:** Body  
**TYPE:** Racial

The monster lives to fight. The trainer can barely hold its fury in check, and when unleashed on the battlefield, it becomes a screaming ball of destruction. Faster than the eye, the monster becomes a blur during its attack and strikes like a viper or an ill-tempered bunny rabbit. The higher the Level, the faster the monster moves in combat. This Attribute only affects Initiative for attacks — a monster that uses this Attribute must take an Offensive Action or move toward its foe. A monster can choose not to use this Attribute if it does not attack that round.



LEVEL 1	Adds +1 to the Monster's Initiative, but only when attacking.
LEVEL 2	Adds +2 to the Monster's Initiative, but only when attacking.
LEVEL 3	Adds +3 to the Monster's Initiative, but only when attacking.
LEVEL 4	Adds +4 to the Monster's Initiative, but only when attacking.
LEVEL 5	Adds +5 to the Monster's Initiative, but only when attacking.
LEVEL 6	Adds +6 to the Monster's Initiative, but only when attacking.

## SPECIAL ATTRIBUTES FOR CUTE MONSTERS

Special Attributes are what makes a cute monster unique and different from other adorable critters. All cute monsters should take the Weapon Attack Attribute, representing the monster's special elemental attack. Other appropriate Special Attributes are:

Displacement is a new Attribute that some monsters possess; see page 77.

Elasticity is appropriate for slime or reptile (snake) monsters.

Environmental Control may be appropriate as a form of elemental manipulation.

Extra Arms is appropriate for bug, octopus, squid or jellyfish monsters, as well as some slimes.

Features cover various minor abilities like warm fur, an Eyeball's multiple eyes or a cat-thing's night vision.

Flight is appropriate for birds, dragons and some bugs and spirits.

Heightened Senses is common for many.

Insubstantial may represent a slime's Liquid body, while spirits could be Incorporeal.

Jumping is good for bugs and some beasts.

Life Support is common for golems, spirits and slimes, and sometimes wind/gas monsters.

Light Armour is a good Attribute for almost any monster with scales, rocks or a tough hide.

Metamorphosis (self-only) is obviously essential for Metamorphs.

Meld is appropriate for spirits, or for any monsters that can merge with their element.

Mind Control is rare but may be appropriate for psionic monsters and spirits.

Mind Shield is good for psionic monsters. Golems often have well-shielded minds.

Natural Weapons is very appropriate for all types of monster. Slimes may have Tentacles, beasts will have Fangs and Claws, and so on.

Regeneration is very common for all kinds of monsters.

Sensors or Sixth Sense may be appropriate for some monsters, such as giant eyeballs, or creatures like bats that possess unusual senses.

Size Change is not uncommon for small rodents.

Speed is common for beasts, birds, rodents and other fast creatures.

Special Movement is appropriate for several types, such as bugs who can walk on walls.

Super Strength is good for golems and any large monster.

Telekinesis over the monster's chosen element may be appropriate.

Trainable is a new Attribute (see below) that any monster may possess.

Tunnelling is good for creatures like mutant gophers, worms or rock golems.

Water Speed is appropriate for aquatic and maybe water element monsters.

Weapon Attack is covered in detail on page 78.

Other Special Attributes are not recommended. In high-powered campaigns the GM may consider Magic but should not generally allow Dynamic Sorcery, Servant or Own a Big Mecha.

## DISPLACEMENT

**COST:** 4 or 8 points/Level

**RELEVANT STAT:** Mind

**TYPE:** Paranormal

Displacement is exactly like Teleport (see *BESM*, page 154) except better suited to the scale of pet monsters, and with only two Levels. The monster can teleport around a small battlefield, or right through walls or doors, occasionally surprising the unsuspecting trainer who did not teach the monster about personal spaces and bathrooms. As with Teleport, exceeding a "safe" distance requires a Mind Stat roll, which can be tricky for the average small monster. The effect of a failed roll is up to the GM, but typical failures include power burn out and the pet appearing in the wrong place, like right in the zoo or the jaws of the other monster.

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**LEVEL 1** The maximum teleportation distance is 10 metres, while the safe distance is one metre.

**LEVEL 2** The maximum teleportation distance is 100 metres, while the safe distance is five metres.

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## TRAINABLE

**COST:** 1 point/Level

**RELEVANT STAT:** None

**TYPE:** Racial

The monster enjoys to be trained. It really, really, *really* enjoys being trained. It wakes up every morning eager for another fun-filled day of rigorous drills and gruelling practice routines. It loves vitamin-enriched diets, flavourless treats, and the occasional taste of the lash. This provides a bonus to any rolls to train the monster in physical fitness, existing attacks or alternate attacks.

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**LEVEL 1** The trainer receives a -2 bonus when making Stat checks to train the monster.

**LEVEL 2** The trainer receives a -4 bonus when making Stat checks to train the monster.

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## WEAPON ATTACKS for CUTE MONSTERS

Cute monsters can wield exotic attacks to overcome their rivals, shocking, blasting, rending, burning, poisoning, folding, spindling, or mangling them into submission. The attacks have names like "Vapulash," "Double Thunder-Shock," "Hyper-Deadly Tentacle Poke," and "Alien Probe Surprise." Freezing breath, streams of caustic acid, storms of poison-tipped leaves and fur-frying lightning bolts can all smite the foe ... except, like the monsters themselves, they are all bit on the dinky side.

Players should create a pet monster's special attacks using the Weapon Attack Attribute (see *BESM*, page 157), but no monster should have more than two Levels of Weapon Attack, nor attacks whose damage exceeds 45 points. Instead, players should pile up various special abilities to make these attacks more interesting. The GM can make exceptions for powerful NPC monsters intended as major villains, and may allow a gradual powering-up as the campaign continues in the spirit of game sequels and second seasons.

Weapon Abilities are all generally appropriate for pet monsters, with these exceptions: Auto-Fire, Contagious, Long Range, and any of the mecha-only Abilities.

Weapon Disabilities are also all generally appropriate for pet monsters, except for any of the mecha-only Disabilities.

The Weapon Attack should be based on the monster's particular Element, and its description and choice of Weapon Abilities and Disabilities should reflect this. For example, a monster created with the water element might have a Weapon Attack described as "Tsunami Wave Strike" with the Ability of Spreading x 2 and the Disability of Short Range.



## STEP 5: MONSTER DEFECTS

Monsters are rarely flawless. In the spirit of keeping things interesting, the GM should encourage players to take a minimum of two defects for his or her monster. Heck, take lots! Most monsters have the Marked Defect (at 2 BP) while Vulnerability Defect is strongly recommended and the No Hands and Cannot Talk Defects are common. Other Defects are strictly optional.

Recommended Defects are listed below. Other Defects should not be taken without GM permission, since they are often inappropriate for the pet monster genre. The GM may make exceptions if the players take pet monsters as playable characters rather than as servants.

### RECOMMENDED NORMAL DEFECTS FOR CUTE MONSTERS

Attack Restriction may represent a monster who has reservations about fighting, or who will not attack members of his or her own species.

Awkward is a good way to depict a newly hatched monster's initial clumsiness.

Easily Distracted (food, other monsters) is very appropriate for monsters, and a good way to establish their personalities. If a monster collector can discover what distracts a creature, he or she may be able to use that trigger to his or her advantage when trying to capture or befriend it.

Inept Combat is a good way to indicate a monster that is lazy, overweight, or poorly trained. Monsters with inept trainers often have this Defect; they lack the stomach for fighting and just want to lie around all day in front of the television, watching anime. Getting this monster to budge takes effort on the part of the trainer, and sometimes that does not even help.





Marked at the 2 BP level is a necessity for most monsters. It represents the fact that the monster does not look human, and as a result is treated either as an animal or a monster.

Nemesis might be another monster that is the pet monster's rival. More often it means there are "Sinister Forces" conspiring to kidnap the monster for themselves.

Not So Fast is good for golems or other slow-moving-but-big-and-strong monsters.

Not So Strong and Not So Tough are for monsters with decent Body Stats but that are tiny in stature, such as a swift but small gerbil or kitten monster.

One Arm/No Arms is good for monsters that (like most animals) lack hands. A monster with only paws or hooves (like most dogs, cats or horses) counts as No Arms, while one with a trunk like an elephant, or an eyeball with a tentacle coming from its mouth, has One Arm.

Owned By a Megacorp could represent the monster pet of a character, but which is actually the legal property of someone else. This could lead to significant conflicts.

Physically Unappealing might be rare for monsters, which are supposed to be cute. It is appropriate for villainous monsters, however, or those who just look different like slimes, golems, dragons and undead. It could also represent a very old, battle-scarred veteran of many fights.

Sensory Impairment is possibly appropriate for veggie monsters, bats, and so on.

Special Requirement can represent monsters with certain needs, such as a veggie monster that wilts if not watered regularly.

### RECOMMENDED SPECIAL DEFECTS FOR CUTE MONSTERS

Special Defects are an excellent way to show the differences between monsters of particular species or elements. Specifically, every monster should have the Vulnerability Defect (see below) to reflect its elemental nature.

Awkward Size is appropriate in some settings, where pet monsters can eventually evolve or grow to be even larger than their trainers. Even so, more than 3 BP is inappropriate.

Bane can depict unusual elemental weaknesses, such as a fire elemental being put out by water, a spirit vulnerable to holy symbols or a plant or bug that is vulnerable to weed or bug spray.

Cannot Talk is very common for monsters. Most will have this at the 1 BP level, allowing them to speak in various evocative sounds, but not actually make much sense to humans. The few rare pet monsters that have learned to talk will not have this Defect.

Involuntary Physical Change is appropriate for any monster that has Metamorphosis but cannot fully control it.

One-Way Transformation is suitable for monsters with Metamorphosis, but which find it difficult to turn back to their original form quickly, such as a were-gerbil.

Restricted Ground Movement may simulate aquatic or veggie monsters.

Volatile is appropriate for fiery, gaseous or acidic monsters, who might blow up.

Vulnerability is a Defect for just about every monster, and should reflect its element or species (for example, a fire-breathing phoenix beast may not like water attacks). The Vulnerability Defect is against a particular existing Element (and the GM should feel free to create species whose attacks are based on the elements that the players choose). Occasionally other vulnerabilities, such as a veggie monster's vulnerable to being eaten, are also possible. Whether Vulnerability is worth 1 BP or 2 is up to the GM. It should be based on his or her ideas of the rival monsters that the characters will encounter.

## STEP 6: MONSTER SKILLS (OPTIONAL)

Let's face it, most monsters don't have skills. They aren't much good at anything other than fighting. They're small fuzzy animals, after all. When was the last time anyone saw a hamster performing an interrogation? Or a stone golem baking a pie? It just isn't done in most genres that require pitting two cute creatures against one another in gladiatorial combat.

As with trainers, Skills are not appropriate for monsters, which means that the Attribute Highly Skilled and the Unskilled Defect are not available. If the GM wishes to do otherwise, the Skill Point Costs should not be the same as those suggested for trainers. Instead, use the Skill Costs for a Martial Arts genre game (see *BESM*, page 60-61).

## STEP 7: MONSTER DERIVED VALUES

The player should now calculate the monster's Derived Values, exactly as described in the *BESM* rules. It is up to the GM whether or not to use Shock Value. If the campaign does use the Shock rules (see *BESM*, page 229), he or she should not allow the Critical Injury rules to come into play. This allows powerful blows to temporarily stun the monsters without seriously hurting them.

## STEP 8: MONSTER BACKGROUND

Once the player completes the monster, he or she is free to flesh out its background. The GM may give the character Background Points for providing a story about the creature. This could describe how monster met trainer, how it was raised, and the trainer's overall attitude towards the monster (see *Monster Training Strategies*, page 28). Does the monster love, respect or even fear the trainer? This is also the time to flesh out the monster in greater detail, like specifics on its natural habitat, what it likes to eat, and what sounds it makes. This can be helpful to the GM if the monster is part of a species with similar characteristics.

## EXAMPLE OF MONSTER CREATION

Carmen, the GM, sits down with one of her players, Bob, to discuss the new game she is going to run. It will be a Pet Monsters campaign where the players and their monster companions are recruited by a Time Patrol to travel through the eons to stop evil monster trainers from changing history. Along the way, the players will encounter strange monsters, wacky foes, and heart-stopping battles. Carmen decides that characters are to be made on 25 points.

Bob uses BESM to create a young trainer, Eric (see Sample Trainers, page 91). Eric is raising a monster he hopes will make him the greatest Time Cop ever. He is well on his way by taking Servant (Pet Monster) Level 6 (6 points), thus giving him 30 Character Points to create his monster.

Carmen asks Bob what kind of monster Eric would like to train. Bob thinks about it, and envisions a blob-like creature that eats through defenses, oozes under doors, and attacks with poisonous toxins. He decides that his species type is "Slime" and his element is "Liquid." Bob names Eric's new monster "Eddie." Eric swears to love it forever or at least until it eats through his parent's Persian carpet, exiling Eddie and he to live in the garage. Then it is time for some harsh training.

Carmen decides that Eddie is an acceptable monster for her time travelling pet monster campaign. Bob goes to work building Eric's new pal.

First up is Eddie's Stats. Bob decides on Body 9, Mind 3, Soul 4, making it fast and tough, but not very bright. This requires 16 out of Eddie's 30 Character Points.

The next step is assigning Normal Attributes. Bob decides Eddie really enjoys fighting, so he gives him Aggressive Level 2 (2 points) and Combat Mastery Level 1 (2 points). Carmen reminds Eric that monsters are supposed to be adorable, so Bob takes Appearance (cute) Level 1 (1 point), describing Eddie as a happy little jelly that bubbles away cheerfully and is a pretty emerald green in colour. There are lots of other interesting Normal Attributes, but Bob wants plenty of points left for Special Attributes, so he stops there. Eddie has spent 21 of his 30 Character Points.

Keeping in mind Eddie's slimy nature, Bob chooses to give his monster Insubstantial (liquid form) Level 2 (8 points), because his monster is basically a large pile of sticky goo, and he wants Eddie to enjoy all the advantages of having the consistency of a lunch spread. A slime should be able to extrude combat tentacles, so Bob adds Natural Weapon (tentacles) Level 1 (1 point), Bob thinks wounded slimes do not need bandaging very often, so Eric also gives Eddie one Level of Regeneration (not against fire, 2 points). Eric also wants to ensure Eddie is properly toxic, so he selects Weapon Attack Level 1 (4 points). This adds up to 15 Character Points. Eddie has now spent 36 Character Points, six more than Eddie had available. Now Eddie is a mean, green sliming machine, but the monster is also going to need some Defects. Before that happens, however, Bob must define Eddie's Weapon Attack.

Weapon Attack at Level 1 allows Eddie to inflict 15 points of damage, but that does not seem quite right for a poisonous green slime. Bob examines the list of Abilities and Disabilities. He gives Eddie's Weapon Attack the Irritant Ability, because it is poisonous. Bob also decides the attack is a jelly whip made out of Eddie's body, so the Melee Disability (which counts as two Disabilities) applies. The one Ability subtracts 15 from Damage and each Disability adds 15, so now Eddie's weapon does  $15 - 15 (\text{Irritant}) + 30 (\text{Melee}) = 30$  points damage: a poisonous whip. Bob calls this weapon the "Dripping Green Death Whip." The final weapon is Weapon Attack Level 1: Dripping Green Death Whip (Damage: 30, Irritant, Melee, 4 Points).

Eddie the Slime is six points over budget, and so needs at least six BP of Defects. Every pet monster should have Marked (2 BP). Bob adds Cannot Talk (2 BP) since Eddie, being a slime, does not have a mouth. All it can do is make bubbling noises when it wants something. Eric is going to have a hard time understanding Eddie, but he figures he can guess what Eddie wants when it makes a mess on the floor. Bob also chooses Vulnerability (cold, 1 BP) figuring Eddie, being partly liquid, is likely to get frozen more easily than most monsters. Finally, he decides that Eddie is nervous around fire-using monsters since it cannot regenerate damage, so he takes Phobia (flames, 1 BP). Eddie will not be a good choice for fighting someone's pet dragon.

Now Bob calculates Eddie's Derived Values. Eddie's Stats of Body 9, Mind 3, Soul 4 results in an Attack Combat Value equal to  $[(9 + 3 + 4) / 3] = 5$ , which Combat Mastery Level 1 boosts to 6. Its Defense Combat Value is two less, or 4. With a Body Stat of 9 and a Soul Stat of 4, Eddie's Health Points are  $[(9+4) \times 5] = 65$  Health Points. With a Mind Stat of 3 and a Soul Stat of 4, Eddie has  $[(3+4) \times 5] = 35$  Energy Points.

Eddie is now complete in terms of Stats, Attributes, Defects and Derived Values, but he lacks history or personality. To remedy this, the player decides to flesh out Eric's relationship with Eddie. The player writes a background describing how Eric, one day, found Eddie the slime monster in his refrigerator, growing in a fermenting jar of spoiled mayonnaise. Bob describes how Eric formed a relationship with Eddie, even though the monster could not talk to him and burned holes through Eric's linoleum kitchen counter top. This turned into a fast friendship when Eric learned the Time Patrol had sent him Eddie after they had chosen him as a guardian of reality. Eric still keeps Eddie in a jar, and only lets him out when it is time to do combat against evil trainers. Eddie is now complete, ready to begin battling across space and time!

For Eric and Eddie the Slime Monster's statistics, see page 91.

## TRAINER AND MONSTER ADVANCEMENT

In a pet monster campaign, the GM awards normal bonus Character Points to the player characters (typically one character point every five sessions). In addition, the GM might offer each trainer character an additional Monster Character Point after every session. Players can save or use these points towards training (see below). Characters may not use them towards the trainer's own Stats, Attributes or Defects, however.

The trainer only receives one Monster Character Point, no matter how many monsters he or she possesses (GMs should only award them for sessions in which the trainer was actively adventuring with his or her monsters.)

### MONSTER TRAINING

Monster Character Points represent the trainer's growing knowledge of pet monsterdom. A coach may use points during a game session to train his or her menagerie.

There are three types of training: Alternative Attacks, Existing Attacks, and Physical Fitness.

In order to train a pet, the character must have at least one accumulated Monster Character Point. He or she then spends a week's time (more or less) training one monster, with the help of the dojo's instructors. Training need not take up an entire gaming period, but should be role-played as part of a session. The character then makes a Stat Check to determine if he or she properly trained the monster. If successful, the trainer may then expend any of the accumulated Monster Character Points to increase the monster's Stats or Attributes as indicated. Failure means the time is wasted, though the trainer can try again later. Since pet monsters are easily bored, however, the coach should go on another adventure before trying any more training.

#### • TRAINING A MONSTER IN AN ALTERNATE ATTACK

Trainers can teach cute monsters new ways to use their elemental powers. A monster that previously could only breathe a chilling fog might later learn to spit razor-sharp icicles or create a deadly rain of hail. In game terms, a new attack is an Alternate Attack (see *BESM*, page 159). It requires one Monster Character Point if acquired at one Level lower than an existing Weapon Attack or two Points if acquired at the same Level.

The Stat check uses the average of the trainer's Soul and the monster's Mind Stat. Modifiers are -2 bonus if training in a dojo (see page 37), -2 or -4 bonus if monster has Trainable Attribute (see page 77), and an additional -1 bonus if the dojo specializes in that particular attack element.



- TRAINING A MONSTER IN AN EXISTING ATTACK

A monster can also practice an existing attack to make it more dangerous. This means acquiring Levels of Focused Damage in that Weapon Attack (or Alternate Attack). The procedure is identical to training it in an Alternative Attack, except that one Monster Character Point acquires one Level of Focused Damage rather than gaining a new Alternative Attack.

- TRAINING A MONSTER IN PHYSICAL FITNESS

This involves special diets and exercise, such as the trainer jogging with the pet monster around a scenic mountain dojo to the score for *Chariots of Fire*, or the pet monster lifting weights and clawing and biting at cute little monster punching bags to the theme from *Rocky*. The trainer may use Monster Character Points to increase a monster's Body Stat or to add or improve Combat Mastery, Damn Healthy! or Speed Attributes.

It requires a Stat check made against the average of the trainer's Body and the monster's Soul Stat, since the monster needs the willpower to endure the training, and the coach must be able to keep up with the creature. The trainer receives a -2 bonus if coaching the monster at a small dojo (see page 37) or -4 if at a large dojo (since larger dojos generally own better physical fitness equipment). The bonuses for having a Trainable monster (see page 77) also apply.





## TRAINER ADVANCEMENT

A trainer character improves his or her own Stats and Attributes using bonus Character Points as described in *BESM*, see page 263. These optional rules add extra spice to a pet monster game.

### • IMPROVING THE TRAIN A CUTE MONSTER ATTRIBUTE

In order to expend the Character Points necessary to gain or increase the Train a Cute Monster Attribute, the character must first find another trainer with both the Train a Cute Monster Attribute and the specific ability he or she wants. The character must study under that trainer for a period of time (usually about a week, or whatever is dramatically appropriate like the duration of one scene through the song "Eye of the Tiger").

### • ADDING A NEW SERVANT (PET MONSTER) ATTRIBUTE

If the character can find or capture a cute monster, he or she may decide to keep it as a pet. To do this the trainer should expend bonus Character Points to acquire a new version of the Servant (Pet Monster) Attribute sufficient to take that creature. For example, a player building his or her monster on 15 Character Points would buy Servant (Pet Monster) Level 3.

A trainer may have multiple versions of the Servant (Pet Monster) Attribute, one per pet. It may be that the character does not have a sufficient Level of Servant to acquire a cute monster. If so, the character can keep it captive until he or she reaches that Level. If the character adroitly role-plays periodic training attempts with the reluctant monster, the GM can provide bonus Character Points towards the Attribute's acquisition.

### • IMPROVING THE SERVANT (PET MONSTER) ATTRIBUTE

A trainer can put bonus Character Points into an existing Servant (Pet Monster) Attribute to increase its Level and thus the power of the monster. See Monster Evolution, below.

## MONSTER EVOLUTION

In many settings, cute monsters are not simply static expressions of their parent's DNA, but are capable of evolving to a higher state of being. This may occur after a specific period of time, a certain number of battles or, more likely, after the player has dumped the prerequisite Character Points into his or her Servant (Pet Monster) Attribute.

Monster evolution is not the same as training. In training, the monster improves its physical abilities and gains a few new attacks. Evolution is very different. It is a sudden metamorphosis of the monster, producing a larger, faster, and more menacing creature.

When a monster evolves, it is unlikely that profound changes will affect the monster's species or elemental affinity (see page 67). It is simply bigger, tougher, or possessed of more special powers ... and it may also have a new, cooler name.

For example, instead of being a "vanilla-pudding monster," the creature might now be a "megachocolate vanilla-pudding monster with extra topping." If monsters have nonsense names, the new name may or may not relate to the old one: a Peekaboo might develop into a Winkalot, which may mean absolutely nothing except to the monster trainers and the legions of devoted fans who memorize these facts.

It may be possible for either the trainer or the monster to delay the evolution process, or even stop it entirely. When a monster starts evolving to a higher state, it can make a conscious decision to halt the process. Reasons for this include the coach ordering the monster to halt its natural evolution or the monster simply deciding that it wants to be small, cute and cuddly forever.

There is an occasional drawback to evolution: the monster, besotted by its trainer for so long, might find itself bigger, stronger, and even smarter than its master. More than one coach, proud of having carefully evolved its monster, has realized that the creature's respect was based on fear, not love. It is embarrassing to discover this a little too late, like when the timid little vampire frog evolves into something that stands ten feet tall, weighs a tonne and is no longer afraid.

In game terms, a monster effectively "evolves" when its trainer spends one bonus Character Point to increase his or her Level of Servant (Pet Monster) by one. Each Level of Servant translates into a whopping five Character Point increase for the cute monster, which can significantly change its capabilities. In short, it evolves.

The GM should make the evolution of a monster an important part of the story. Evolution is normally triggered by a specific event. It may be deliberate, with the characters searching for a special potion, artifact or machine known to spark change in their monster's particular species. It may also be dramatic, occurring when the trainer or monster's life is in extreme danger, after defeating a special foe, or upon visiting a specific place.

To facilitate the drama of development, the GM may prohibit characters from increasing the Servant (Pet Monster) Attribute's Level until after they acquire whatever special means is necessary to deliberately trigger evolution. This should ideally take about five game sessions, thus neatly dovetailing with the GM's award of Character Points. Alternatively, if evolution occurs spontaneously, the GM does not have to evolve the monster the very second the player spends the Character Point. Instead, the GM should tell the player that evolution is coming soon ... and then wait until a natural point in the next game session for it to take place.

The form into which the monster evolves may surprise the trainer, and possibly even the pet itself. It is up to the GM whether players can design their monster's evolved forms, or whether it is GM's prerogative. A bit of both is possible, with the player suggesting a few ideas and the GM making the final decision on the monster's shape and abilities.

## PET MONSTERS AS PLAYER CHARACTERS

Pet monsters do not normally earn bonus Character Points by themselves since they act at their trainer's whim and depend on evolution or coaching to improve.

If the players are actually running pet monsters as their own player characters, however, they gain experience normally as described in *BESM*, see page 263. Players can simulate evolution by simply hoarding a bunch of bonus Character Points and then spending them all at once, or handle more gradual gains by expending character points in normal fashion. It is up to the GM whether they improve more rapidly through the Monster Training rules. This can be used as a reward for good behavior, since a trainer will only train one monster at a time.

## MONSTER BREEDING

Trainers favour this time-honed method of improving monsters. In theory, breeding pet monsters works much like breeding dogs, cats or horses. The trainer raises two monsters, using techniques of his or her choice. He or she tries to turn them into champions, but cannot seem to train a winner. The trainer, undaunted, figures that the creature's species simply did not "have it in them," and puts the monsters out to stud.

A would-be breeder should have the Train a Cute Monster ability of Breed Monster or, optionally, the Biological Sciences Skill (if the GM uses Skills). For the most part, monster breeding works in a three-step process. First, the breeder needs specimens to breed. Usually, this requires more than one monster. It helps if the "participants" are of different sexes, but one can never quite tell with this sort of thing.

Next, the coach must entice the monsters to breed. Because the monsters may be unappealing to each other, the trainer should pull out all the stops. The monsters might want to date a little first and get to know each other. Soft music, a little Chablis, exciting New Orleans lighting, and the right ambience should steer Cupid on his path. The trainer may provide flowers, boxes of candies, and shiny trinkets to help along the process. Many a trainer has discovered that his or her monsters decided that they are "mutually incompatible" or worse, would rather just be friends. They might refuse to mate on moral grounds. With luck, however, the monsters couple.

Finally, the trainer must wait until the new monster is born. The monsters will usually only mate once. They are, after all, different species. The trainer can only push this kind of thing so far. This is where the GM requires a Stat or Skill check — see Train a Cute Monster, see page 58.

The new monster will have an element of one parent and the species of the other, although it can also produce a combination of the two. For example, a fire-breathing dragon mated with a poison-spitting fairy might end up with a small transparent-winged dragon that breathes poison, a fairy that breathes fire, a small fairy-dragon, or even a fairy covered in scales.



In game terms, this means rebuilding a new monster using the rules set forth in this chapter and combining elements of one pet with another to create something unique and wild. Subsequently, like most children, it will carry the emotional baggage of the progenitors and the angst of its ancestors. The character will still require appropriate Levels of Servant (Pet Monster) to "own" his or her new monster (unless he or she has the Attribute at the more expensive 2 point/Level version, where switching between different newly-bred monsters every adventure is quite appropriate).

### SAMPLE TRAINERS AND MONSTERS

These are examples of pet monster trainers and their favourite pals.





## ERIC AND EDDIE, THE MAYONNAISE SLIME

Eric was a normal teenager with a normal part-time job in his uncle's auto shop; he never dreamed of becoming a monster trainer. One day, while Eric was cleaning out the refrigerator, he found Eddie the Slime Monster in a jar of old mayonnaise. After a few humorous mishaps, Eddie and Eric became friends, and Eric is now certain that the pair is destined for great things.

### ERIC (25 CHARACTER POINTS)

**Body:** 4

**Mind:** 4

**Soul:** 6

• DERIVED VALUES

**Health Points:** 50

**Energy Points:** 50

**Attack Combat Value:** 4

**Defense Combat Value:** 2

• ATTRIBUTES

Appearance Level 1 (1 point), Divine Relationship Level 2 (2 points), Personal Gear Level 1 (1 point), Servant (Pet Monster) Level 6 (6 points), Train a Cute Monster (Instil Discipline, Inspire Monster) Level 2 (2 points)

• DEFECTS

Easily Distracted (hot rods, 1 BP)

### EDDIE (30 CHARACTER POINTS)

**Species:** Slime

**Element:** Liquid

**Body:** 9

**Mind:** 3

**Soul:** 4

• DERIVED VALUES

**Health Points:** 65

**Energy Points:** 35

**Attack Combat Value:** 6

**Defense Combat Value:** 4

• ATTRIBUTES

Appearance (cute) Level 1 (1 point), Aggressive Level 2 (2 points), Combat Mastery Level 1 (2 points), Insubstantial (switch between solid and liquid forms) Level 2 (8 points), Natural Weapons (tentacles) Level 1 (1 point), Regeneration (not against fire) Level 1 (2 points), Weapon Attack Level 1: Dripping Green Death Whip (Damage: 30, Irritant, Melee, 4 Points)

• DEFECTS

Cannot Talk (2 BP), Phobia (fire, 1 BP), Marked (slime, 2 BP), Vulnerability (cold, 1 BP)

## MATILDA KAWAI AND SPUD BOY, DARK POTATO OF THE BLACK CAVES

Matilda, a young girl with perky pigtails, is a novice on the tournament circuit. She is very *petite*, very cute, and very distracted by small monsters, which she just loves to death. She thinks they are adorable and cuddly, and wants to squeeze every one of them and add them to her collection (preferably after Spud Boy beats them into submission so they cannot resist her advances). For her Personal Gear, Matilda has a stable for her monster, a plastic monster carrier, a monster leash, a bag of fertilizer and a can of monster treats.

Matilda has her loyal monster her grandfather gave her to raise. It is a large potato with a thousand eyes and a ravenous appetite. Spud Boy does not have arms, but it does have horrible mandibles to give the opposition a good biting. When it wants to dish out major pain, it channels the soul of its tuber brothers, blinds the enemy with its shadow flare attack, and then leaps into the fray in the name of all plant life. It is, however, a potato, and vulnerable to being munched on by other creatures with sharp teeth.



**MATILDA KAWAI (25 CHARACTER POINTS)****Body: 5****Mind: 4****Soul: 9**

## • DERIVED VALUES

**Health Points: 70****Energy Points: 65****Attack Combat Value: 6****Defense Combat Value: 4**

## • ATTRIBUTES

Appearance (cute) Level 2 (2 points), Art of Distraction Level 2 (2 points), Personal Gear Level 1 (1 point), Servant (Pet Monster) Level 5 (5 points), Train a Cute Monster (Instil Ferocity) Level 1(1 point)

## • DEFECTS

Ageism (1 BP), Easily Distracted (cute monsters, 2 BP), Not So Strong (1 BP)

**SPUD BOY (25 CHARACTER POINTS)****Species:** Eyeball-Veggie**Element:** Darkness**Body: 5****Mind: 5****Soul: 6**

## • DERIVED VALUES

**Health Points: 85****Energy Points: 55****Attack Combat Value: 5****Defense Combat Value: 3**

## • ATTRIBUTES

Damn Healthy! Level 3 (3 points), Features (all-round vision, 1 point), Focused Damage (fangs) Level 1 (1 point), Natural Weapons (fangs) Level 1 (1 point), Regeneration Level 1 (4 points), Sensors Level 1(1 point), Weapon Attack Level 1: Shadow Flare (Damage 45, Flare, No Damage, Short Range, Uses Energy, 4 points)

## • DEFECTS

Marked (killer potato, 2 BP), No Hands (2 BP), Vulnerability (to teeth or fire, 2 BP)

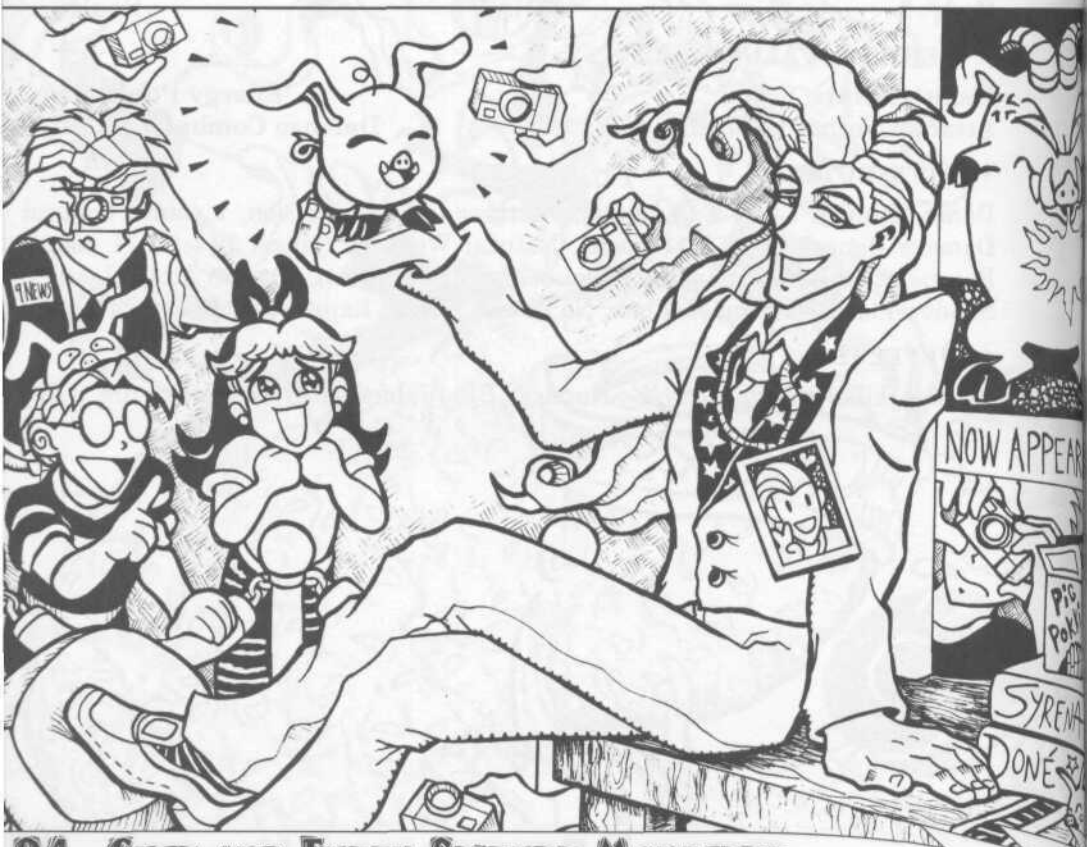
## STEVE WONDROUS AND APORKALYPSE NOW

Steve is a 17-year old professional trainer with absolutely amazing hair. He and his pet monster are media idols, chased by paparazzi and legions of adoring fans. He is charming, handsome, and surrounded by handlers. His monster is cute, cuddly, and perfect for the television camera. It even rides around on his head. Between the two of them, they define "monster trainer" for the masses.

Inside, Steve is hollow. See, Steve sold out for money. He was once a legitimate trainer, but now he has corporate sponsors that market all of his battles and supply all his material. There are Steve and Aporkalypse television shows, anime, posters, record albums, tee shirts, key chains and flavoured rice cakes. The corporation even sells cute, little plush animals of the battling monster.

Steve could afford to sell out. Where Aporkalypse looks cute and cuddly in person, in the arena it transforms into a terrifying fire-breathing wild boar. Undefeated in six dozen head-to-head arena battles, Aporkalypse Now may be growing older and fatter, but he is not any less mean, and has long evolved past crippling vulnerabilities or sentimental weaknesses.

**Note:** Since Aporkalypse Now's changed form is more powerful than its original form, the change only lasts a few minutes. It can change only once per day.



**STEVE WONDROUS (35 CHARACTER POINTS)****Body: 7****Mind: 6****Soul: 5**

## • DERIVED VALUES

**Health Points: 60****Energy Points: 55****Attack Combat Value: 6****Defense Combat Value: 4**

## • ATTRIBUTES

Appearance Level 2 (2 points), Flunkies (manager) Level 1 (1 point), Organizational Ties (Dojo) Level 3 (6 points), Servant (Pet Monster) Level 6 (6 points), Train a Cute Monster (Battle Motto, Instil Ferocity, Inspire Monster, Nurse Monster, Stat Master) Level 5 (5 points)

## • DEFECTS

Girl Magnet (1 BP), Nemesis (rival trainer, 1 BP), Owned By A Megacorp (1 BP)

**APORKALYPSE NOW****Species:** Beast/Metamorph**Elements:** Fire and Earth.

As CUTE PIGGY-WIGGY

**Body: 4****Mind: 3****Soul: 5**

## • DERIVED VALUES

**Health Points: 45****Energy Points: 40****Attack Combat Value: 4****Defense Combat Value: 2**

## • ATTRIBUTES

Appearance (cute) Level 3 (3 points), Art of Distraction Level 4 (4 Points), Heightened Awareness Level 2 (2 points), Metamorphosis (self) Level 3 (15 points)

## • DEFECTS

Cannot Talk (1 BP), Marked (pig, 2 BP), No Hands (2 BP), Not So Strong (1 BP)

As APORKALYPSE Now

**Body: 10****Mind: 3****Soul: 5**

## • DERIVED VALUES

**Health Points: 105****Energy Points: 50****Attack Combat Value: 6****Defense Combat Value: 4**

## • ATTRIBUTES

Aggressive Level 1 (1 points), Energy Bonus Level 1 (1 points), Light Armour Level 3 (3 points), Natural Weapons (horns, hooves) Level 2 (2 points), Damn Healthy! Level 3 (3 points), Massive Damage Level 3 (6 points), Speed Level 1 (1 point), Tunnelling Level 1 (2 points), Weapon Attack Level 1: Fire Breath (Damage 15, 4 Points), Weapon Attack Level 1: Tusk Charge! (Damage 45, melee, 2 Points), Weapon Attack Level 1: Earth Shaker Stomp (Damage 15, quake, short range, uses energy, 2 points)

## • DEFECTS

Cannot Talk (1 BP), Marked (2 BP), No Hands (2 BP)



# CHAPTER 4: MONSTER COMBAT



The heart and soul of a Pet Monster game is the one-on-one combat between two monsters close enough to each other to see the whites of their eyes (if they have eyes). They face off across the dusty floor of the arena, hot breath (if they breathe) issuing from their mouths, muscles tensing for the moment the metaphorical bell rings and the fight begins. Two monsters enter, one monster leaves. There can be no mercy. There can be no sudden change of heart. There can only be one unquestioned winner. Two cute little monsters will beat the tar out of each other for the greater glory of their trainers. There can be no cute monsters without cute monster combat. Let the games begin!

## CUTE MONSTER COMBAT IDEOLOGY

They are cute fuzzy monsters with really big eyes and really small mouths. Cute. Really cute. Far too cute to die. Unlike most other genres, monster combat is to the faint, instead of the death. A defeated monster will simply collapse, exhausted from the exertion. It is ready to be scooped up by its trainer and returned to the ranch or monster container for another round of gruelling training instead of an instant trip to the glue factory. If monsters died every time someone defeated them, there would be few monsters to fight.

It is up to the GM to craft the ambience of combat. Is it taking place in a peaceful wooded glade while the trainer tries capturing a new monster? Is it facing an arch-rival's strongest and most powerful monster, *mano-a-mano*, before a roaring audience of thousands while honour is at stake? Is it an encounter battle between two master trainers whose pet monsters meet on a rickety bridge overlooking a waterfall hundreds of metres below?

*BESM* emphasizes simple, clean, and quick combat. The GM and players must bring battles to life through their own vivid descriptions of their monster's actions. Does the monster feint right? Feint left? Mount an all-out assault? Stand there with a dazed deer-in-the-headlights look? The focus on combat should be tension, pumping adrenaline, and flashy attacks.

## DRAMATIC ACTION

You're an electric bunny rabbit. He's a mini-triceratops twice your size. You're trapped at a dead end, a 30-metre drop behind you. What to do? Well, you could just fight it out, but this is anime. Think like a cartoon! Make funny faces at the enemy, and when he charges, leap up so he runs past you and goes over the cliff! Wasn't that more fun?

In game terms, a player describes his or her monster's special trick and the GM requests a roll of the right Stat (or Skill) with the appropriate penalty. On a failure, the GM decides on a horrible fate, like the monster misjudging its timing and getting booted off the cliff itself, losing its cool when the enemy makes silly faces back, or accidentally mooning the audience while going head over heels. In some cases the GM may allow the other monster to respond with a dramatic manoeuvre of its own.

A GM may also allow a dramatic manoeuvre when a much slower monster wants to close range on a faster monster, or a faster monster wants to best a slower monster by slipping behind the stronger foe. Either monster in this instance may be able to gain the upper hand in the middle of combat with a well-made Stat roll. If the swift attack gerbil can sneak behind the huge cheese golem, it might be able to take it down with a flurry of trick manoeuvres before the larger monster turns around or stuns it with its Limburger attack. The GM can add penalties for repetitious manoeuvres since the same trick will rarely work more than once in a single fight.

### MOVEMENT IN COMBAT

Most cute monsters are dinky. They normally move about as fast as humans do. Although they are often slightly smaller, they generally have more legs, or at least, more energy. A large monster moves slowly but with huge strides while a small monster can scamper along quickly. Movement is five metres times the monster's Body Stat (unless the monster uses a Special Attribute like Flight or Tunnelling), increased if the monster has the Speed Attribute (see *BESM*, page 144).

### TRAINER INVOLVEMENT

While the monster is in the centre of the battlefield, quivering before a much larger, slightly bored opponent who is figuring how it will pick the little monster out of its teeth, the trainer is left standing on the sideline, wringing his or her hands. Who will win? Will his or her pet monster get hurt? What about the 10,000 yen bet riding on the outcome? What coach wouldn't want to yell encouragement



and help the little monster out?

A trainer can attempt to intervene with strong coaching, helpful tactical hints, shouts of *banzail* and the occasional dire threat. After all, the monster and the trainer are partners, and if the monster loses, the trainer loses as well.

In game terms, the trainer (who controls the pet monster as if it were a character and not an NPC) normally handles trainer intervention. This, however, only lasts as long as the coach properly supervises the monster: the GM is free to take over the pet if its owner becomes distracted (or is somehow incapacitated). If the trainer has the Train A Cute Monster Attribute (see page 58), he or she may have abilities such as Inspire Monster or Monster Tactics, which give the creature a bonus if the coach is actively involved. If the trainer is an NPC and the monster is a player character, the GM can intervene as the trainer with (sometimes) helpful advice. It will be up to the player to decide whether or not to follow this.

An owner may be tempted to intervene physically by joining in the fight. This is obviously not something that a proper trainer would do in a competition match, since it means immediate disqualification. If the trainers are in a desperate battle against evil or being mugged during a safari expedition by a dozen wild veggimon, however, he or she may have to intervene. If so, the trainer has two choices. Either continue shouting orders to his or her monster (taking only Defense actions on his or her own part) which means the player can continue running the monster, or, engaging in Offensive actions in which case the monster passes into GM control and the trainer cannot apply the Monster Tactics or Inspire Monster Abilities.

### • CHEATING

No trainer wants his or her monster beaten, and worse, no one wants to be humiliated before his or her friends, peers, and bookies. The player might feel tempted to even the odds by helping the little guy along. In other words, cheat. Cheating could involve just about anything, from preparing the arena beforehand with scattered thumb tacks or drugged treats, to making funny faces at the enemy trainer to confuse him or her at crucial moments.

Monsters are usually trusting, straightforward souls, and not too bright, so if the plot requires their co-operation it is important the monster understand what it is supposed to do. If a character is playing the monster, this simply requires role-playing. Otherwise, the GM should roll against the average of the creature's Mind and the trainer's Soul to see if the monster comprehends. If the roll fails, the monster misinterprets the advice, and does something mind-numbingly stupid when the time comes, like eating the drugged hamburger itself. The GM is free to make this roll as difficult or easy as possible.

The GM can allow the opposing monster's trainer to roll his or her Mind Stat to spot the shenanigans. If the trainer is caught pulling dirty tricks, he or she may soon develop a bad reputation, with unpleasant consequences or revenge attacks by other trainers.

Example: Angela knows that her pet monster Bubbletox will likely lose to Mei Long and her monster Normal, the Ferocious, Super-Transforming Bunny.

Unwilling to lose again, Angela cheats. The big showdown is scheduled for a clearing in the woods. The night before the battle, Angela sneaks to the site and spends a few hours digging a small pit, placing a wasp nest in it, and covering it with branches and leaves. Angela huddles with Bubbletox, explaining the plan — Bubbletox is to lure Normal into bouncing into the pit, where the wasps will do the rest. She must now convey this to trusting little Bubbletox. The GM secretly makes a Mind Stat Check for Angela and Bubbletox, and rolls a 9, a failure. Bubbletox is confused. When the fight begins, Bubbletox successfully lures Normal into the pit, but the GM then interrupts the action, and says Bubbletox sees its enemy vanish, and jumps in after it. Whoops.

### FAINING, INJURY, AND DEATH

A normal character is incapacitated at 0 Health and dies at -20 Health Points. This is not the case for monsters. When a monster hits 0 Health Points, the monster faints and falls over. It will not recover until it regains at least one Health Point, either from spending Energy Points, healing, or using an Attribute like Regeneration. It does not require medical attention to heal.

A monster can only be mortally injured if reduced to the negative of its original Health Point total or -20 Health Points (whichever is less). If, for example, a monster has Health 40, it would be mortally injured at -40 Health Points. If it had Health 15, it would be mortally injured at -20 Health Points. A trainer must rush a mortally injured pet to the monster hospital. There, the GM can either rule that the monster languishes in the hospital, slowly recovering from its terrible wounds, is quickly nursed back to health by a skilled doctor, or dies in the emergency room. If a pet monster dies, the character can acquire a new monster in any way befitting the GM's campaign. The monster should be equal in points to his or her old monster.

#### • PET MONSTERS AND THE EXPANDED COMBAT RULES

The expanded game mechanics rules in *BESM* Chapter 5 are appropriate for a not very serious pet monster game, with fanged gerbils making Called Shots to opponent's throats and monsters using wrestling Throws or Pins on one another. Shock (see *BESM*, page 229) is appropriate for any pet monster game, but the Critical Injury rules (see *BESM*, page 229) and Medical Treatment rules (see *BESM*, page 230) are inappropriate to the genre, and should usually be avoided.

### COMPETITION RULES

These are the "rules of fair play" that characters and their monsters are expected to follow when engaging in duels or arena battles. Evil dark lords and their corrupt monster hordes are, of course, exempt from this. Otherwise, these rules may simply have the force of custom or are formally codified by an organization, such as a league.

Trainers who break these rules regularly gain a bad reputation as treacherous, and may be barred from formal competitions for a set period of time (like the remainder of sixth grade), or even (gasp!) for life. The rules of fair play may and



usually will vary from world to world, but here is a typical set:

- CHOICE OF MONSTERS

The GM may arrange this deliberately. Otherwise, roll initiative between the trainers; the one who wins initiative chooses his or her monster in response to the other trainer.

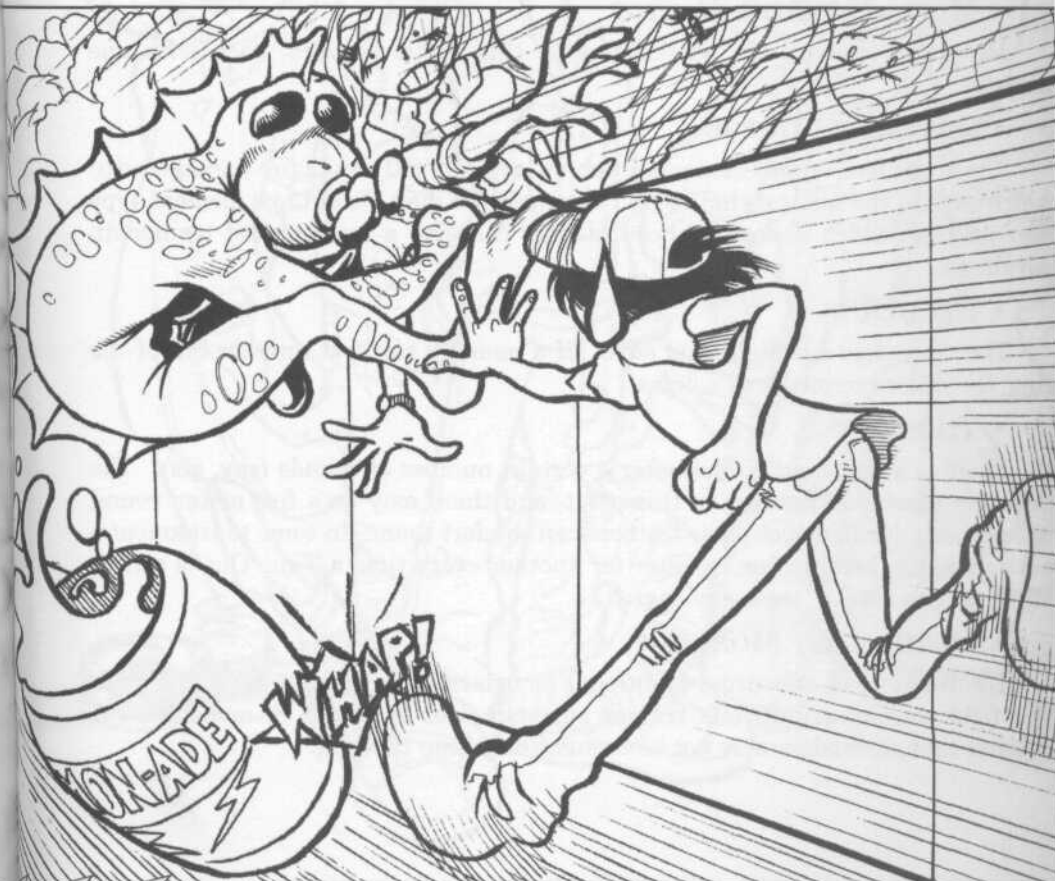
- FIGHTS ARE ONE-ON-ONE

It is not fair to have multiple monsters attack a single opponent unless this has been agreed to before the fight. ("My Skunkasaur can take on all three of you! Come on, what are you waiting for?") Likewise, a trainer or bystander is not permitted to intervene.

- BOUNDED AREAS

Fights take place in an area no more than 25 metres in radius; monsters may not leave this area (or fly above its ceiling). This rule prevents monsters with long-range attacks from becoming too dominant. Leaving the area means forfeiting the match.

- TRAINERS AND BYSTANDERS ARE OUT OF BOUNDS



No attacking the audience!

- **SURRENDER**

A monster can surrender a fight before the point of fainting or at any time for that matter. If the fight is a refereed battle in an arena, it automatically ends. If it is a challenge fight, it is up to the other trainer and his or her monster whether to be a cad and continue fighting, or accept surrender. If the fight is against a wild monster with no trainer, or a monster trained by a sinister evil power, there is no guarantee that the attacking monster will pull back; this may require the trainer's intervention to stop the fight. If neither monster has a trainer, than there is no guarantee that surrendering will succeed.

- **ENDING THE MATCH**

After the enemy surrenders or faints, the match ends — no beating up fallen enemies.

## **SPECIAL RULES**

Individual tournaments may add extra rules to increase the challenge.

- **MULTI-MONSTER BATTLE**

More than one trainer participates in this battle at once, each with one monster.

- **OBSTACLE COURSE**

The arena has various obstacles such as lava pits (30 points fire damage/turn) which adds to the tactical challenge. The obstacles may benefit one element type over another, which if known ahead of time can give a well-stocked trainer an advantage.

- **RING OUT**

The arena has a well-defined edge. If a monster can toss another out of the ring, the referee counts it as a defeat.

- **TIME OUT**

There is a "time out" called after a certain number of rounds (say, six). The monsters must stop fighting at this point, and there may be a five or ten round intermission during which their trainers can comfort them. In some tournaments, a coach may substitute one monster for another every time a Time Out is called, allowing for a sort of "tag team" match.

- **TO THE LAST MONSTER**

The trainer can substitute additional monsters after one has been defeated. The fight continues until one trainer surrenders or runs out of monsters. A monster that surrenders may not be brought back into the ring.



# RANDOM NAME SELECTION

Face it, a cute monster without a cool name is nothing more than a rabid Chia Pet. Without them, millions of boys and girls would wander the world listlessly, with little to memorize and categorize but homework. A cruel fate indeed! The following name-generation chart should help those legions of devoted monster fans out there find the best name combination for their pets. Conversely, players can create their core monster concept through this same process (as can harried GMs whose only tools for generating new adversaries eventually devolves into late-night sugar binges and watching ... the *Teletubbies*.)

To use this process, the player or GM should have two six-sided dice ready along with paper and pen. There are three main charts (Prefixes, Creature Types and Suffixes) with associated Japanese translations for most individual listings. This allows GMs and players to create Japanese variant pets for those authentic-sounding **Seizure Monsters**. **Follow these steps to determine your monster's identity.**

## Step 1

Use Table 5-1: Name Prefixes and roll one die to determine which chart to use. The player or GM determines then rolls another die to determine the monster's exact prefix. These are by no means a complete selection of charts. For expanded tables, GMs can create replacement charts for things such as astrological signs (e.g., Cancer, Libra, etc.), colours (black, red, green, etc.) and Planets (e.g., Jupiter, Mars, etc.).

## STEP 2

Use Table 5-2: Creature Types and roll a die. On a roll of 1-2, use Table 5-2-1: Creature Types 1. On a roll of 3-4, use Table 5-2-2: Creature Types 2. On a roll of 5-6, use Table 5-2-3: Creature Types 3. On the applicable table, the player or GM rolls a die to determine which chart to use and then rolls another die to determine the creature's name and type. Text in italics is the Japanese translation of the English word. Players and GM's can use either the English or Japanese word, whichever is most appropriate and cool-sounding. Again, GMs may also expand tables to include more animals or even household appliances.

## STEP 3

Use Table 5-3: Name Suffixes and roll a die to determine which chart to refer to. The player or GM then rolls another die for the name's suffix. Should the player or GM dislike the suffix, he or she can drop it (or any component of the name that sounds too jarring). Conversely, some campaigns have a standard suffix such as -mon or -hot, depending on the background of the particular game. If this is the case, players and GMs should simply add the campaign-specific suffix to the monster's name rather than rolling on Table 5-3: Name Suffixes.

## Example

Roxanne decides to throw a new critter at the PCs, but with the session a half-hour away, she is fresh out of ideas for new monsters. She goes to the random name generator to help spark her creativity. Roxanne consults Table 5-1: Name Prefixes and rolls a die. She rolls a 3 meaning she will use Chart 3 to determine the prefix for her monster's name. She then rolls a die again and rolls another 3. Consulting Table 5-1 under Chart 3, she sees that the prefix for her monster is "Devi-." Roxanne then goes to Table 5-2: Creature Types and rolls. This time she rolls a 1 meaning she will use Table 5-2-1. She then rolls a die to determine which chart she will use and rolls a 4. She then rolls a 5 and sees that on Chart 4 of Table 5-2-1, this gives her Firefly/flotara. She isn't quite sure which one she prefers so she keeps them both in mind and decides to wait and see what the monster's suffix will be. Finally, Roxanne reaches Table 5-3: Name Suffixes and rolls a 4. She then rolls again on Chart 3 to determine the monster's suffix, giving and rolls a 6. Checking Chart 4 of Table 5-3, a 6 is the suffix "-roth" Thus, her monster's name could either be Devi-Fireflyroth or Devi-Hotaruroth. She prefers the Japanese sound of Devi-Hotaruroth and decides to go with that name. Also, the firefly concept has given her some ideas as to her monster's abilities and powers. Now she moves on to character creation to create her pet monster.

TABLE 5-1: NAME PREFIX

Dice Roll	Chart 1	Chart 2	Chart 3	Chart 4	Chart 5	Chart 6
1	Giga-	Mini-	Anti-	Terri-	Arcana-/Magi-/Mysti-	Electro-/Jolt-/Watt-/Volta-
2	Hyper-	Omni-	Demi-	Ultra-	Aqua-/Sea-	Flor-/Toxi-
3	Kilo-	Poly-	Devi-	Vil-	Celest-/Star-/Meteor-	Illuma-/Flare-
4	Macro-	Proto-	Ebon-	Were-	Char-/Scor-/Magma-	Psi-/Hypno-/Psycho-
5	Mega-	Terra-	Nega-	Wrath-	Chilli-/Frigi-/Freeza-	Terra-/Magna-
6	Micro-	Uni-	Null-	Vex-	Cyber-/Digi-	Sol-/Luna-

TABLE 5-2: CREATURE TYPES

Roll 1d6. On a roll of 1-2, use Table 5-2-1: Creature Types 1. On a roll of 3-4, use Table 5-2-2: Creature Types 2. On a roll of 5-6, use Table 5-2-3: Creature Types 3.

TABLE 5-2-1: CREATURE TYPES 1

Dice Roll	Chart 1	Chart 2	Chart 3	Chart 4	Chart 5	Chart 6
1	Dolphin/Iruku	Lobster/Iseebi	Crow/Karasu	Mockingbird	Ant/Ari	Roach/Gokiburi
2	Eel/Unagi	Goldfish/Kingyo	Eagle/Washi	Owl/Fukuro	Butterfly/Chocho	Scorpion/Sasori
3	Clam/Kai	Octopus/Tako	Falcon/Taka	Baven/KorasM	Moth/Ga	Spider/Kumo
4	<i>Crab/Heikegani</i>	Shark/Same	Hawk/Taka	Swan/Hakucho	Fly/Hae	Locust/Inago
5	<i>Fish/Sakana</i>	Whale/Kujira	Hummingbird	Vulture/Hagetaka	Firefly/Hotaru	Bee/Hachi
6	Jellyfish/Kurage	Squid/Ika	Kestrel	Bat/Komori	Grasshopper/Botta	Wasp/Suzumebuchi

TABLE 5-2-2: CREATURE TYPES 2

Dice Roll	Chart 1	Chart 2	Chart 3	Chart 4	Chart 5	Chart 6
1	Alligators/Wani	Salamander/Sanshouo	Bear/Kuma	<b>Cat/Neko</b>	Rat/Onezumi	Toad/Kaeru
2	Crocodiles/Wani	Tortoise/Kame	Fox/Kitsune	Lion/Raion	Porcupine/Yamn/Araski	Frog/Kaeru
3	Chameleon/Kamereon	<i>Viper/Dokuhebi</i>	Wolf/Okami	Panther/Pansa	Ape/Monkey/Saru	<b>Leech/Hiru</b>
4	Lizard/Tokagi	Anaconda/Boa/Hebi	Dog/Inu	Cheetah	Gorilla/Gorira	Ooze/Nijimu
5	Rattler/Gara-Gara <i>Hebi</i>	Komodo	Elephant/Zo	<b>Mouse/Nezumi</b>	Deer/Shika	Snail/Katsumuri
6	Reptile/Hachurui	Asp	Horse/Uma	Squirrel/Risu	Boar	Spores/Hoshi

TABLE 5-2-3: CREATURE TYPES 3

Dice Roll	Chart 1	Chart 2	Chart 3	Chart 4	Chart 5	Chart 6
1	Centaur	Pixie	Basilisk	Kraken	Cat Monster/Bakeneko	Turtle Monster/Kappa
2	Golem	Siren/On-na-yuwakusha	Cerberus	Phoenix/Fushicho	Monster/Baku	Dragon <i>Dog/Ki-Rin</i>
3	Medusa	Sphinx	Chimera	Scarab	Fairy/Tenno	Japanese Raccoon/Tanuki
4	Mermaid/Ningyo	Titan	Dragon/Ryu	Sea-Horse	Spirit/Kami	Mountain Spirit/Tengu
5	Merman	Werewolf/Okamiotoko	Gryphon	Unicorn	Ghost/Yurei	Willo/Wisps/Hitodama
6	Minotaur	Yeti	Hydra	Demon/Oni	Goblin/YoKai	

TABLE 5-3: NAME SUFFIX

Dice Roll	Chart 1	Chart 2	Chart 3	Chart 4	Chart 5	Chart 6
1	•a	-eon	-ode	-hexa	-izer	•vor
2	-e	-saur	-dra	-ow	-ite	-bot
3	-i	-taur	-dry	-ing	-iddy	-mon
4	-o	-bore	-duo	-pod	-ment	-mate
5	-u	-ee	-trio	-pan	•born	-gly
6	-y	-ly	-penta	-roth	-less	-ation



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