

Hlüss

The insectoid Hlüss are indigenous to Tékumel. They are friendly to the Ssú and sometimes to the Shunned Ones, and neutral to the Hláka when the latter are not accompanied by humans. They love to set gems all over their bodies in intricate and beautiful patterns in a cement-like substance which they secrete. A mighty Hlüss warrior makes for a fearsome and magnificent spectacle indeed.

Though preferring to dwell on their lonely island, the Hlüss are inquisitive and greedy for magical devices and weapons, and occasionally sail forth in their hive-like ships (made of the same bodily secretion) to seek items of interest and food for their young. Each nest-ship and each settlement contain at least one of their huge breeder-females—the ‘Hluss-Mother’. The young are brought forth in sac-like eggs and are inserted into a paralyzed living host (who dies an agonising death), where they remain for about 125 days before emerging. The Hlüss can be detected at sea by their constant buzzing, humming sound, and on land their acidic, sweetish odour may be smelled at a distance of 30-40m. There are three sexes: the male fertilizers (5 percent), the female egg-layers (2 percent), and the neuter worker-fighters (93 percent).

Physical Attributes

The Hlüss possess a long, segmented, scorpion-like body, four high-arched legs, a prehensile tail fitted with a paralysing sting, two smaller forearms ending in three digits and a thumb, and a broad, flattish head with three eyes and a sharp proboscis above a set of razor-sharp mandibles. They are covered with a light, chitinous exoskeleton and are greenish blue to shiny black in colour. They normally remain on all fours, but may rear up and use their central pair of ‘hands’ as tearing weapons in battle, though they do not employ swords or other weapons with these limbs. They range from 1.22 to 1.62m high on four legs, gaining perhaps another metre when they rear up.

Enclaves

The island of Hlüssuyal.

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