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Lord  
Erbian's  
**STELLAR  
BESTIARY**



FADING SUNS™

# Lord Erbian's STELLAR BESTIARY

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# Introduction to the 23rd Edition

Welcome to the newest edition of *Lord Erbian's*, the authoritative reference work on the bestiology of the Known Worlds and beyond. Since Lord Edger Erbian Trusnikron first published his masterwork in 4732, the scholarly society he established to continue his work of updating and compiling new data has endeavored to publish only the most factual legendry concerning the flora, fauna and other strange creatures of the Pancreator's universe. Only the most distinguished scholars across the Known Worlds are invited to join the Sabor Safari Society and act as advisory staff to the *Lord Erbian's* guide. They are admitted into the Grand Meeting Hall on Byzantium Secundus and there partake in vigorous discussions about creatures encountered on many worlds.

The guide's editors have followed Lord Erbian's decree to publish a new edition every 10 years, circumstances allowing. Many times in the publication's history, events conspired to keep editions from seeing print, whether it was the tumultuous decades of the Emperor Wars, during which time few communications were had between Safari Society members, or the dark times of Theocrat Halvor's reign, when publication of the Stellar Bestiary was forbidden by Church decree. Thankfully, the Church later rescinded its decree, recognizing the value such a reference work held to its own missionaries. Indeed, many renowned missionaries have since filled the ranks of the Safari Society and have provided indispensable eyewitness reports for the editors.

We hope this edition of the perennial guide, published in the year 5002 UC (Urthish calendar), will prove as indispensable for you as it has for our scholars. The Pancreator's vast universe hosts many a strange creature, both sacred and profane. May the Emphyrean shine its grace on you in your encounters.

## Fading Suns: d20

Many of the d20 System rules in this book refer to Holistic Design's **Fading Suns: d20** rulebook. That book introduces many d20 System rules for roleplaying in the far-future space-fantasy setting of Fading Suns. It is available in most hobby stores or online from Holistic Design at [www.fadingsuns.com](http://www.fadingsuns.com).

## Victory Point System Size Ratings

The creatures in this bestiary are rated by the following size categories:

T (tiny — an insect), XS (extra small — a mouse), S (small — a rabbit), MS (medium small — a cat), L (large — a fox or dog), ML (medium large — a wolf), XL (extra large — a human; see below), H (huge — a bear or horse), G (gigantic — a brute), I (immense — a tank or triceratops), GA (gargantuan — a building or T-Rex), M (monumental — a large building, starship or brontosaurus)

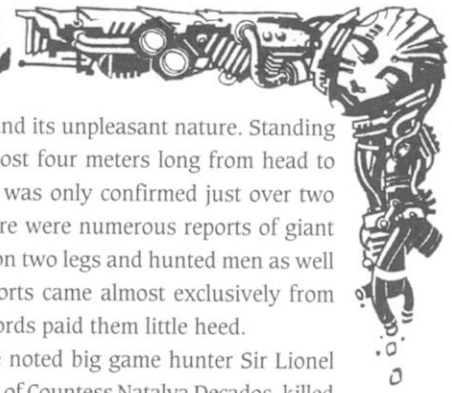
Most humanoids (XL) are also classified as either: dwarf (about 3 feet tall), short (4 feet tall), average (5 – 6 feet tall), tall (7 feet tall), or giant (9-10 feet tall). Vorox are either XL giant-sized or Huge-sized beings.

## Beastfriend Cohorts

Beastfriends have psychic relationships with a specific animal, called a cohort. Certain beasts in this guide may act as cohorts. They are identified by a category labeled "Wild Gift," explaining which abilities the beastfriend may borrow from his cohort.







## d20 System Stats

### Gargantuan Beast

**Hit Dice:** 8d12 + 32 (84 hp)

**Initiative:** 0

**Speed:** swim 50 ft.

**AC:** 14 (-2 from Dex, -4 size, +10 natural)

**Attacks:** Horn +15 melee, bite +15 melee, tail +15 melee

**Damage:** Horn 2d6+9, bite 1d12+9, tail 1d10+9

**Face/Reach:** 20 ft. by 40 ft./10 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Photoluminescence, Pressure Resistant

**Saves:** Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +2

**Abilities:** Str 28, Dex 10, Con 18, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 10

**Skills:** Swim +20

**Challenge Rating:** 4

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Neutral

**Advancement:** None

### COMBAT

Not an aggressive animal, an aarlubeast rarely fights to the death. If attacked, it seeks to render its foe unable to pursue it and then make its own escape.

**Photoluminescence (Ex):** Creates as much light as the illumination theurgy light at DC 20; used for night and abyssal vision

**Pressure Resistant (Ex):** Can withstand water pressure even to the bottom of Malignatius' deepest marine trenches

## Annonne

**Homeworld:** Severus

**Present Distribution:** Cadavus, Cadiz, Malignatius, Pandemonium

**Type:** Animalia (chordata, reptilia)

**Role:** Carnivore

**Size:** 1.8 m (6 ft.)

**Weight:** 270 kg (600 lbs.)

**Habitat:** Temperate forests and grasslands

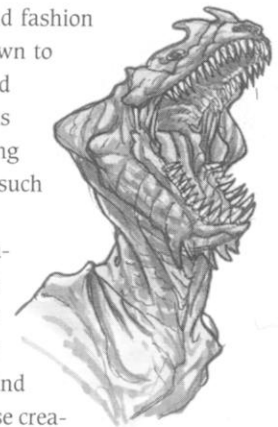
**Social Organization:** Solitary, pair or pack (3-8)

**Description:** The vicious annonne is a large reptilian creature noted



both for its brilliant coloration and its unpleasant nature. Standing almost two meters tall and almost four meters long from head to tail, the existence of this beast was only confirmed just over two centuries ago. Prior to that, there were numerous reports of giant lizards on Severus that walked on two legs and hunted men as well as beasts. Of course, these reports came almost exclusively from peasants, whose Decados overlords paid them little heed.

All that changed when the noted big game hunter Sir Lionel Alexandrovich de Botz, a servant of Countess Natalya Decados, killed an annonne in 4796 and brought its carcass back to the court of his mistress. It didn't take long before other hunters descended on Severus, intent on killing or capturing these reptilian beasts for themselves. The ferocity and cunning of the annonne impressed some of the more jaded members of House Decados, who quickly adopted the creatures as pets. At first, the practice was limited to Severan Decados, but it gained wider currency in 4830, when Duke Gyorgi Decados took his stable of annones with him as he began his tour of the Known Worlds. Many younger scions of the house looked upon Gyorgi as an arbiter of taste and fashion and aped his every move — right down to having a pack of domesticated annones. Since then, the practice has become even more common, extending even to vassal houses of the Decados, such as the Van Gelder.



Of course, "domesticated" is a relative term when one is talking about large, pack-hunting lizards like the annones. Though extraordinarily cunning in their native environment (and quite adaptable to others as well), these creatures lack the intelligence necessary to be more than guard animals or curiosities in a menagerie. With their large heads full of flesh-tearing teeth and quick moving fore claws, annones are hardly the stuff from which lovable companions are made. That's exactly the point as far as the Decados are concerned, who have established breeding facilities on several worlds beyond Severus, including Cadiz and Grail. These nobles point to several noteworthy incidents over the years in which annones have foiled burglary and assassination attempts as proof that the beasts are more than just a perverse affectation.

However, few Decados are willing to discuss rumors of blood sports involving annones. Detractors accuse them of sponsoring everything from pit fights to elaborate hunts in which criminals are placed in a maze filled with annones and promised their freedom if they can escape alive. Whether true or not, these rumors speak to the general impression (held even by other noble houses) that keeping giant carnivorous reptiles has no place among the civilized folk of the Known Worlds. As usual, the Decados keep their own counsel.

**Behavior:** The annonne is a dangerous hunter that uses its potent natural endowments to defeat even opponents much larger (or more intelligent) than itself. One secret of these beasts' success is their ability to work together in packs of three to eight annones. Instinctually, they know how to act in concert to overcome an opponent's advantages and corner him. Once trapped, annones



show no mercy, leaping atop their prey and raking them with their powerful hind legs. Annonnes also possess manipulative forearms, with which they hold on to an opponent. In such cases, the goal is often to use their considerable weight to unbalance their prey before tearing into them with their claws.

Mated annonnes produce clutches of 6-8 eggs, only half of which typically survive the first few months of life. These beasts are indifferent parents at best, which may explain the high mortality rate among their young. Nevertheless, annonnes defend their nests with great vigor. Decados breeders claim that packs composed of sibling creatures hunt better than those composed of unrelated annonnes, although there is little scientific basis for this claim.

**Commodity:** Annonne hide is both tough and colorful, with bright hues such as green, yellow and red being common. Though too garish for the refined sensibilities of most Decados nobles, some younger — and rebellious — aristocrats will be pay exorbitant sums (up to 500 firebirds in some cases) for well-made outfits made from annonne leather. Such fops are the butt of many jokes among the Decados high nobility, who see them as poseurs who “wear the lizard’s skin, but lack the teeth that go with it.”

### Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 9, Dex 7, End 8

**Mind:** Wits 1, Per 6, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Dod 5, Fht 5, Obs 8, Snk 7, Vig 8

**Size:** XL (tall)

**Movement:** 18 m

**Attacks:** (STR bonus: +2)

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Rake	4	13	5
Claw	5	14	3
Bite	5	14	5

**Armor:** Hide (ARM 2d)

**Vitality:** -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0/0/0

### d20 System Stats

#### Large Beast

**Hit Dice:** 4d10+12 (34 hp)

**Initiative:** +2 (Dex)

**Speed:** 60 ft.

**AC:** 16 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +5 natural)

**Attacks:** Rake +6 melee, 2 claws +1 melee, bite +1 melee

**Damage:** Rake 2d6+4, claw 1d4+2, bite 2d4+2

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Scent

**Saves:** Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +2

**Abilities:** Str 19, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10

**Skills:** Hide +7, Jump +13, Listen +11, Spot +11, Wilderness Lore +9

**Challenge Rating:** 3

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always neutral

**Advancement:** 5-8 HD (Large)

**Skills:** The annonne receives a +8 racial bonus to Hide, Jump, Listen, Spot and Wilderness Lore checks.

## Apophis Dragon

**Homeworld:** Cadavus

**Present Distribution:** Equatorial and midlatitudinal Cadavus

**Type:** Animalia (chordata, reptilia), cryptoxenological

**Role:** Secondary carnivore

**Size:** 15 m (50 ft.)

**Weight:** 1500 kg (3300 lbs.)

**Habitat:** Global, except for the polar regions

**Social Organization:** solitary

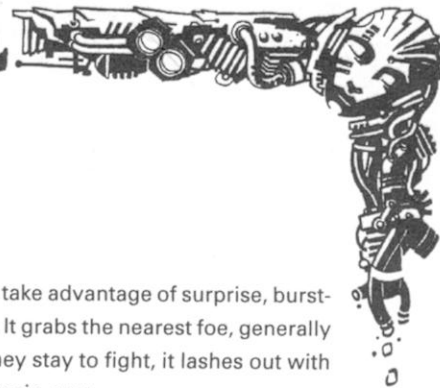
**Description:** The Apophis Dragon is a semi-legendary creature feared by Cadavan peasants across the planet, and thought responsible for hundreds of deaths per year. Authorities debate its actual existence, but both House Decados and the Church declared that the creature is a myth. Sightings are rare, but footprints and feces have been presented and dismissed as hoaxes.

The official position of the League and House Trusnikron is that the Apophis Dragon may well be a rare and undiscovered native life form of Cadavus. Such a life form would only become active during the planet’s storm season, when human’s stay indoors. Due to Cadavus’ ecological damage, the species has adopted a new food source: the abundant human life of Cadavus’ overcrowded slums.

Cadavus’ Avestites have a different explanation. Durargo was a notorious 28th century antinomist on Cadavus, confronted and defeated by the Prophet Zebulon. His power was so great in its day that all of Cadavus was under his sway, and the greatest of his servitors was the Apophis Dragon. This foul creature hid in darkness and emerged to do its master’s bidding while humanity huddled in its shelters. Local legend claims that Zebulon destroyed Durargo but his great servant survived, reduced to a shade of its former power. This creature continues to inflict pain and misery upon Cadavus’ desperate masses. It cannot be killed, forever returning to continue its grim work. Only the most faithful of the Church’s children are safe from its menace.

Few claim to have seen the creature and lived, but their descriptions of it are fairly consistent: it is long and serpentine, with a row of small legs along its flank. Its head is monstrous, fanged and ridged with small bony protrusions. Its complexion varies; descriptions range from midnight black to mottled shades of brown and





gray. It never makes a sound, not hiss nor growl nor roar.

**Behavior:** Most of what is known or suspected about the Apophis Drake comes from the remains of its victims, who hail from Cadavan villages and ghettos across the planet (except for the Ayizan polar region). Attacks almost always occur during the Cadavan storm season (or apophis), and those that occur at other times of the year are usually found to be the work of another creature – often humans. Very little remains of its victims; rarely more than spilt blood or severed extremities, so it is possible that the creature devours its prey whole. The Apophis Dragon is almost certainly subterranean, as collapsed tunnels have been found at some of the sites of attacks. It likely slumbers underground during Cadavus' calm season and emerges to feed once the storms begin.

**Commodity:** The head of the Apophis Dragon would be extremely valuable (perhaps even thousands of firebirds), at least until it returned to ravage another slum.

### Victory Points System Traits

**Body:** Str 11, Dex 10, End 10

**Mind:** Wits 4, Per 9, Tech 0

**Natural Skills:** Dod 7, Fht 9, Imp 10, Obs 8, Snk 10, Vig 7

**Size:** H

**Movement:** 14m above ground, 2m digging

**Special:** Tremorsense (can automatically sense the location of anything that is within 20 meters and in contact with the ground), Blindsight (blind, the dragon "sees" by nonvisual means, including hearing, scent and tremorsense, for a range of 40 meters), Frightful Presence (Anyone the Avenger attacks must succeed at a Calm + Vigor roll or suffer a -4 to engage it in combat; characters with Stoic Mind or Stoic Body make this roll automatically), Long (has five extra points of Vitality).

**Attacks:** (STR bonus: +2)

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Bite	9	18	9
Claw	7	19	5
Grapple*	9	19	13

\* Use rules for a Choke Hold; the Apophis Dragon is a constrictor, and suffocates its prey in its coils.

**Armor:** Leather hide (ARM 4d)

**Vitality:** -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0

### d20 System Stats

**Huge Beast**

**Hit Dice:** 10d8 + 30 (75 hp)

**Initiative:** +4 (Dex)

**Speed:** 50 ft., dig 10 ft.

**AC:** 22 (+4 from Dex, -2 size, +10 natural)

**Attacks:** Bite + 17 melee, claw + 17 melee, grapple + 17 melee

**Damage:** Bite 2d8+7, claw 2d6+7

**Face/Reach:** 10 ft. by 20 ft./10 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Improved grab, constrict 2d10 + 7

**Special Qualities:** Tremorsense, Blindsight, Frightful Presence

**Saves:** Fort +11, Ref +12, Will +10

**Abilities:** Str 24, Dex 18, Con 16, Int 9, Wis 14, Cha 14

**Skills:** Balance +10, Climb +16, Hide +12, Listen +12, Move Silently +12

**Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Dodge

**Challenge Rating:** 6

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Lawful Evil

**Advancement:** None

### COMBAT

The dragon always tries to take advantage of surprise, bursting out during the dark of night. It grabs the nearest foe, generally sending any others fleeing. If they stay to fight, it lashes out with its claws while constricting its main prey.

**Tremorsense (Ex):** Can automatically sense the location of anything that is within 60 feet and in contact with the ground

**Blindsight (Ex):** Blind, the dragon "sees" by nonvisual means, including hearing, scent and tremorsense, for a range of 40 meters

**Frightful Presence (Ex):** The Avenger can unsettle foes with its mere presence whenever it charges. Creatures with nine or fewer hit dice within 30 feet of the Avenger must make a Will Save (DC 20) to avoid this fear effect. On a failure, creatures with six or fewer HD become panicked for 5D6 rounds, and creatures with up to nine HD become shaken for 5D6 rounds.

## Ashtati

**Homeworld:** Severus

**Present Distribution:** Severus, Vera Cruz

**Type:** Animalia (arthropoda, insecta)

**Role:** Secondary carnivore

**Size:** 3.5 m (12 ft.)

**Weight:** 200 kg (450 lbs)

**Habitat:** Rainforest

**Social Organization:** Packs of 4-8

**Description:** Large insectoid creatures, Ashtati are native to Severus but Hazat hunters also introduced them to Vera Cruz, where they now threaten rural areas. Female ashtati have a dark green carapace, while males (which are few and hunt less often) are brightly coloured. Ashtati are not long lived, the oldest reaching the age of six Urthish years. Able to breed as soon as they reach their adult stage, females lay around 200 eggs at a time in large bodies of water. Approximately 10 percent of these survive to reach the adult stage.

Mature ashtati are sextupeds, walking on all sixes, though their small wings enable short glides. Their forward limbs are strong and clawed, designed for climbing and combat, while their middle limbs are much smaller, almost delicate. Each middle limb also boasts tiny, sharp claws coated in a powerful paralytic toxin. Ascorbites who handle tame ashtati develop an immunity to their poison. Their hindmost legs are large and powerful, like a locust, and tipped with large talons for opening up the prey. Ashtati are fully carnivorous, feeding on flesh rather than simply blood; their mandibles secrete a powerful digestive enzyme that softens the hard shell of the prey enough to reach the soft meat within.

Some communities of Ascorbites and a few daring humans have mastered the art of raising ashtati. The process requires a large tub to keep the aquatic larvae and a transparent basin for those undergoing metamorphosis. Ashtati undergoing metamorphosis are helpless while developing their adult instincts. Trainers can imprint them to recognize a caregiver during this phase of life, so





transparent walls to the tank is critical, enabling the ashtati to view their handlers through both their adult and larval eyes. Tame ashtati are rare, as few Ascorbites have the know-how or the resources to attend to their development from the larval stage. In addition, ashtati do not breed in captivity, and their larvae must be captured from the wild while quite young; a difficult and dangerous task. Furthermore, even tame ashtati occasionally lightly claw or bite their handlers, of little consequence to Ascorbites but possibly deadly to humans. Thus, few humans are willing to take the risks for such a dangerous pet.

**Behavior:** Dangerous hunters, ashtati are often seen as similar to terran big cats for their grace, ferocity and predatory skill. Ashtati exist in two stages during their life cycle. Ashtati lay their eggs in lakes and gulfs, favouring underwater caves, where the eggs hatch into the larval stage. This stage is an aquatic predator, mindless, ravenous and often cannibalistic. The larvae grow to a mass of around 45 kg (100 lbs) before burrowing into the underwater floor to undergo metamorphosis to the adult stage. Mature ashtati reach sizes of up to 350 kg (750 lbs), including their light carapace. They often hunt in small packs of 4-8, and tolerate the presence of other packs when bringing down extremely large prey. Their excellent instincts and group tactics make them quite dangerous in numbers, though they seldom attack a force too large or aggressive.

**Commodity:** A young larva can be worth as much as 200 Firebirds, depending on the buyer. Untamed adults are often found in Severus' gladiatorial pits, worth 500 firebirds. A starting character may begin the game with an imprinted adult for 2000 firebirds or 6 Benefice points.

### Victory Points System Traits

**Body:** Str 8, Dex 9, End 7

**Mind:** Wits 3, Per 6, Tech 0

**Natural Skills:** Dod 7, Fht 6, Obs 3, Snk 5, Vig 7

**Learned Skills:** Tracking 6

**Size:** H

**Movement:** 15 m run/28 m glide

**Special:** Gliding leap up to 20 m (65 ft.), half if a wing has been destroyed. -2 Perception for each antenna destroyed (an ashtati has two).

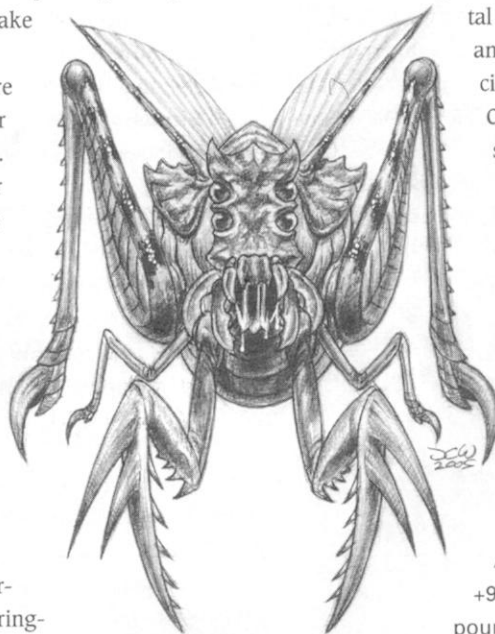
**Attacks:** (STR bonus: +1)

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Front claw	6	15	5
Middle claw	5	15	2*
Rear claw	4	14	8
Bite	5	15	2**
Pounce	5	15	5***
Maul****	5	15	10*

\* If any damage is inflicted, victim suffers paralytic poison.

\*\* If any damage is inflicted, victim suffers corrosive damage.

\*\*\* If any damage is inflicted, victim must win a contested Str +



Vigor rolls or be knocked down.

\*\*\*\* A simultaneous rake with three limbs (one rear and two middle). Can only be attempted when target is prone.

**Special Attacks:** Paralytic poison (The victim must roll Endurance + Vigor at -3, or the appendage clawed immediately goes numb. The numbness spreads to the entire body in five turns, leaving the victim paralysed for the next span. Strikes to the neck or torso are life-threatening as the entire body immediately goes numb and vital functions shut down in five turns unless an antitoxin is administered - very common in most cities on Severus, though it may be expensive.), Corrosive (Any damage means that the corrosive of the ashtati's mandibles has been secreted on the target, eating through clothes and armor and inflicting 1d of damage for the next 3 turns - ignore armor and shields).

**Armor:** Carapace (ARM 7d)  
**Vitality:** -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0/0

### d20 System Stats

**Large Beast**

**Hit Dice:** 5d8+15 (37 hp)

**Initiative:** +4 (Dex)

**Speed:** 50 ft., 90 ft. glide (average)

**AC:** 23 (+4 Dex, -1 size, +10 natural)

**Attacks:** Front claw +9 melee, middle claw +9 melee, rear claw +8 melee, bite +9 melee, pounce +9 melee, maul +9 melee (only against prone opponents)

**Special Attacks:** Paralytic poison, corrosive

**Damage:** Front claw 1d8+4, middle claw 1d3+4 (paralytic poison), rear claw 1d12+4, bite 1d3+4 (corrosive damage), pounce 1d8+4 (chance to trip), maul 2d12+4 melee

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Blindsight

**Saves:** Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +3

**Abilities:** Str 19, Dex 19, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 10

**Skills:** Climb +6, Jump +6, Listen +8, Spot +4

**Feats:** Improved Trip, Multidexterity, Track

**Challenge Rating:** 5

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Neutral

**Advancement:** 6-8 HD (large), 9-10 HD (huge)

### COMBAT

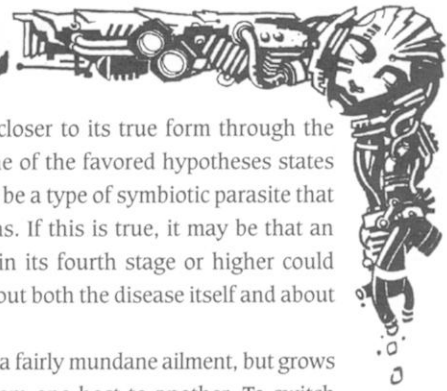
Ashtati often attack by gliding silently over their prey and pouncing on them. They usually paralyze their foes and then slowly kill them. If attacked, they lash out with their middle claws first.

**Blindsight:** 60 ft.

**Corrosive (Ex):** A hit means the ashtati's mandibles secrete a strong corrosive on the target, eating through clothes and armor and inflicting 1d3 of damage for the next 3 turns - ignore armor and shields.

**Paralytic Poison (Ex):** The clawed appendage immediately goes numb (Fort DC 20). The numbness spreads to the entire body in five turns, leaving the victim paralysed for the next hour. Strikes to the neck or torso are life-threatening as the entire body imme-





diately goes numb and vital functions shut down in five turns unless an antitoxin is administered – very common in most cities on Severus, though it may be expensive.

## Avicenna's Curse

**Other Names:** The Wanderer

**Homeworld:** Unknown

**Present Distribution:** Shaprut orbit

**Type:** Demonic (Qlippoth unknown)

**Role:** Unknown

**Size:** Microscopic

**Weight:** Infinitesimal

**Habitat:** Deep space

**Social Organization:** Solitary

**Description:** Avicenna's Curse, also known as the Wanderer, is a malign sentient disease from the Dark Between the Stars. It was first discovered in 4899 when an al-Malik ship in the Shaprut system was damaged by a piece of interstellar rock and drifted past the jumpgate orbit. The crewman, Iffraim Avicenna, performed emergency repairs outside the ship, but had to be hauled in when his space suit ruptured. The ship headed for a fleet outpost in Shaprut's orbit for repairs, but Avicenna grew sick. He experienced fever and occasional delirium, as well as runny eyes and nose. When the ship arrived at the fleet outpost, he was dead.

The ship's crew was examined for contamination, and a security camera captured the ship's medic gripping the quarantine officer with long, ropy fingers, ripping off his biohazard hood, and vomiting a thick, mucus-like secretion into his mouth. The ship's medic died immediately, and the quarantine officer was placed under tight security. Incredibly, the quarantine officer managed to break out of his cell, somehow bypassing security systems and leaving strange welts on the bodies of his guards. He stole a shuttle, but an orbital gun platform destroyed it just before it entered Shaprut's atmosphere. The shuttle's debris spread throughout low orbit, but the quarantine officer was dead. Witnesses to the officer's escape say that his hands had been elongated into masses of tentacles, and his nose and eye sockets were fused shut.

Since then, the alien disease known as Avicenna's Curse has plagued other ships unlucky enough to strike some of the debris of the quarantine officer's shuttle. The disease always starts with symptoms like Avicenna's, but always grows worse as it is passed along. It seems that each time the disease is passed to a new host, it kills the previous host but strengthens the disease itself, and each host becomes less and less human in appearance. A mass of tentacles with a vague parody of a human silhouette, along with vestigial skeletal wings, was glimpsed in what is thought to have been a fourth-stage host in a different outbreak. This monstrosity was thankfully blotted from the face of the Known Worlds by a barrage of plasma grenades, but the disease could create such horrors again if given the chance.

Eskatonics studying the cases have theorized that the disease

is an organism trying to come closer to its true form through the transformations of its hosts. One of the favored hypotheses states that the disease's true form may be a type of symbiotic parasite that lives on, or within, Void Krakens. If this is true, it may be that an intact specimen of the disease in its fourth stage or higher could provide valuable information about both the disease itself and about Void Krakens.

**Behavior:** The disease begins as a fairly mundane ailment, but grows in power each time it moves from one host to another. To switch hosts, the disease makes its previous host vomit onto the mucus membranes of an adult human. The old host dies quickly and the new host suffers the next stage of the disease. The first stage of the disease is a fever characterized by runny eyes and nose, and occasional bouts of delirium, during which the disease is in control of its host's body. After a week in the first stage, the disease is ready to switch hosts.

In the second stage, the disease assumes complete control over its host within a few hours. With the exception of occasional short bursts of lucidity, the personality of the new host is dead. The disease, though, is fully sentient and has access to the victim's memories and skills, as well as those of its previous host. Within two days the new host's fingers become rubbery, cartilaginous, and slightly elongated. The host has runny eyes, a runny nose and a high temperature, but is quite capable of physical activity. After another week, the disease is ready to switch hosts again.

In the third stage, the disease starts to drastically reshape its new host's body, replacing hands with tentacles, and covering the eyes, nose, and much of the body with resinous secretions. It gains incredible strength and the dark occult powers to disrupt technology and command human minds. It pursues strange, sinister goals in this phase, often through human intermediaries. Previous third-stage hosts have been found scouring marketplaces for black-market Vautech, raiding Charioteer jumpweb datastores, and trying to gain control of the think machines governing terraforming engines. Little is known of stages beyond the third.

**Commodity:** Tissue samples of a specimen of the fourth stage or higher would be invaluable to the Kalinithi. Anyone providing specimens would earn the praise of the Church; anyone caught selling them would earn an Inquisitorial inquiry. There are rumors that certain debased Antinomist cults would pay highly for such samples.

### Victory Point System Traits

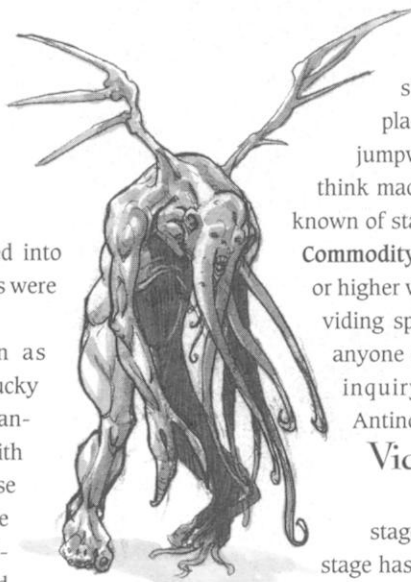
These traits are for a host infected with the third stage of the disease. A person infected with the first stage has his normal traits. One infected with the second stage has all of her abilities plus all of the abilities of the first host, plus Sensitive Touch, the ability to see in perfect darkness, the ability to survive in outer space, and +2 to all physical statistics.

**Body:** Str 9, Dex 8, End 11

**Mind:** Wits 7, Per 8, Tech 6

**Spirit:** Ext 3/Int 6, Pas 5/Calm 5, Fth 0/Ego 8

**Natural skills:**\* Chm 0, Dod 5, Fht 9, Imp 7, Mel 3, Obs 5, Sht 3, Snk 7, Vig 8



**Learned skills:**\* Knavery 6, Lockpicking 6, Science (Astronomy) 5, Stoic Mind 7, Think Machine 6, Torture 6.

\*In addition to these skills, the third-stage disease also has all of the current host's skills, and all of the skills of both previous hosts. In cases where a skill appears multiple times, use the highest of the skill levels.

**Size:** as host

**Movement:** as host

**Special:** Sensitive Touch. Ability to survive in space. Perpetual perfect vision in darkness, as per the Sixth Sense power Darksense but with no Wyrd cost. Can control minds with an Ego + Impress roll for 1 Wyrd pt., as per the Psyche power HeadShackle. Can cause technology to cease functioning with a Passion + Impress roll for 1 Wyrd pt., as per the Temple Avesti theurgy rite Fault of the Soulless.

**Attacks:** (STR bonus: +2d DMG)

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG	RNG	RATE	SHOTS
Tentacle Grapple	8	17	8	-	-	-
Vomit*	7	17	-	1	1	1

\*This attack is performed after the target is grappled. Unless the target makes a Dex + Dodge roll to avoid the stream, he becomes infected. He will fall into a fever after a number of turns equal to End + Stoic Body. Unless he is theurgically cured (using the Amalthean theurgy rite Restoration) before that point, he is as good as dead.

**Wyrd:** as host

**Armor:** Resinous secretions (ARM 8d)

**Vitality:** -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0

## d20 System Stats

**Outsider Possessor**

**Hit Dice:** as host +5 hp (3<sup>rd</sup>-stage host)

**Initiative:** +4 (Dex)

**Speed:** as host

**AC:** 14 (Dex)

**Attacks:** Tentacles (use host's melee bonus)

**Damage:** Tentacles 3d6

**Face/Reach:** as host

**Special Attacks:** Vomit

**Special Qualities:** Discriminating Touch, Void Immunity, Blindsight, Mind Sway, Condemn the Machine.

**Saves:** Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +2 (in addition to host's saves)

**Abilities:** Str 18, Dex 18, Con 20, Int 15, Wis 18, Cha 13

**Skills:** Bluff +7, Intimidate +7 (includes torture synergy bonus), Knowledge (astronomy) +7, Knowledge (torture) +7, Listen +9, Move Silently +11, Open Lock +10, Spot +9, Use Think Machine +8

**Feats:** Iron Will

**Challenge Rating:** as host +3

**Treasure:** as host

**Alignment:** Chaotic evil

**Advancement:** +5 HD (4<sup>th</sup>-stage Outsider)

**Vomit (Su):** This attack is performed after the target is successfully grappled. The target must make a Reflex save or become infected (possessed) by the Avicenna's Curse disease. Type: Contact; DC 14; Incubation: number of rounds equal to victim's Con; Damage: Possession. The Amalthean theurgy rite Rejuve-

nate can cure the disease if cast before actual possession takes place.

**Discriminating Touch (Ex):** The possessed being can discriminate details with his touch nearly as well as he can see with his eyes. He can make Spot rolls using touch.

**Void Immunity (Ex):** The possessed being takes no damage from vacuum and does not need to breathe.

**Mind Sway (Sp):** As the 2<sup>nd</sup>-degree Psyche psychic power. Assume five skill ranks.

**Condemn the Machine (Sp):** As the 1<sup>st</sup>-degree theurgy rite. Assume five skill ranks.

## Bandithen

**Homeworld:** Grail

**Present Distribution:** None

**Type:** Animalia (chordata, mammalia, primata)

**Role:** Herbivore

**Size:** 2.4 m (8 ft.)

**Weight:** 450 kg (1000 lbs.)

**Habitat:** Tropical forests and mountains

**Social Organization:** Solitary or company (6-12)

**Description:** The Bandithen is one of several creatures whose large numbers and extreme territoriality made it difficult for the early colonists of Damascus (now called Grail) to expand into the jungles that dot the planet's equator. Instead, humanity settled the northern and southern regions where the Etyri — and valuable mineral deposits — were more common. Distracted by the rush for Keddite and pygmalium ore, as well as conflicts with the Etyri, the Second Republic paid little heed to the monstrous primates that thrived in more tropical regions.

It wasn't until the late 39th century that House Keddah encouraged Republican xeno-biologists to learn more about the bandithen. What they found was remarkable. First, the bandithen are not quite the monsters early reports had made them out to be. Left undisturbed, these large white pseudo-apes were gentle, even pacific. They subsisted entirely on a diet of leaves, roots and tubers (gherson and beital being particular staples of their diets) and showed signs of rudimentary sentience, although far below that of human beings. Despite this, the bandithen were very protective of their territory and would fight fiercely against any who entered their domains whom they considered a threat. Fortunately for the xeno-biologists, the creatures did not view them as a threat — not so the corporate and noble soldiers who dared enter the jungles.

The second discovery about the bandithen was even more remarkable. Though well adapted to their environment, these great apes bear no resemblance to any other creatures of the jungles. Indeed, DNA scans revealed that they were not even native to Grail! This revelation caused a brief flurry of interest in the dying days of the Second Republic. A wide variety of theories abounded as to the ultimate origins of the bandithen, with the most popular being that the Anunnaki had transplanted them from another world (some even said Urth). In the end, no conclusion was ever reached and the fall of the Republic put an end to all speculation until very recently, when, strangely, the Muster took an unusual interest in the bandithen. Since 4998, they have dispatched a half-dozen different science teams to Grail to ponder the mysteries of these giant pri-





mates, although their reasons for doing so remain a mystery.

In appearance, these ape-like creatures stand almost two and a half meters tall and are covered with thick white fur. Their faces are vaguely humanoid, looking more like the Ur-Obun than human beings (naturally leading some to speculate that the species are related — they are not). Their large mouths hold only flat teeth with which they ground down the plants that make up their diet. Of course, a bandithen's jaw is powerful enough that even these teeth can cause considerable damage should they be turned against another creature. It also possesses powerful claws (used primarily to dig for roots and tubers) that can likewise prove a threat to all but the most well-protected opponents.

**Behavior:** "Gentle giants." That's how many xeno-biologists characterize the bandithen. For the most part, it's even an accurate description. However, it masks the fact that these pseudo-apes are remarkably territorial. Unlike many herbivorous creatures, they will fight — often violently — against any creature that enters their domain and whom they believe to be a genuine threat, as the first colonists on Grail discovered. Researchers often stress that bandithen are "good judges of character," by which they mean that these creatures generally don't attack unarmed scientists and explorers. Of course, that's not always the case and there has been a spate of recent attacks against researchers, as well as several deaths. In addition, bandithen will attack any creature that gets too close to their young, perhaps because there seem to be so few of them. For whatever reason, the bandithen are amazingly infertile and their numbers may well be in decline, although no accurate count has yet been undertaken.

**Commodity:** Traffic in bandithen hides and scalps is strictly forbidden by order of Marquis Haroun Keddah, despite their value. No exceptions are made, even for a small Etyri sect known as the "Servants of the Dead," which reveres the bandithen as a sacred animal of Ouwuo Mountain-Mother, one of their gods. The sect must instead make do with pelts from before the ban was put into place. Needless to say, there are unscrupulous sorts who will trade in bandithen furs for an appropriately high price. Complete hides are worth up to 3000 firebirds to collectors and connoisseurs.

## Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 12, Dex 8, End 7

**Mind:** Wits 2, Per 6, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Dod 5, Fht 7, Mel 3, Obs 7, Snk 6, Vig 7

**Size:** XL (Average)

**Movement:** 12 m

**Attacks:** (STR bonus: +3)

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Claw	5	15	3
Bite	5	15	4

**Special Attacks:** Rend (A bandithen that hits with both claw attacks latches on to its opponent and tears his flesh. This attack automatically deals an additional four points of damage).

**Armor:** Tough Hide (ARM 2d)

**Vitality:** -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0/0

## d20 System Stats

**Large Beast**

**Hit Dice:** 7d10+14 (52 hp)

**Initiative:** +3 (Dex)

**Speed:** 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

**AC:** 16 (-1 size, +3 Dex, +4 natural)

**Attacks:** 2 claws +12 melee, bite +7 melee

**Damage:** Claw 1d4+8, bite 1d8+4

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Rend 2d4+12

**Special Qualities:** Scēt

**Saves:** Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +3

**Abilities:** Str 26, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 7

**Skills:** Climb +16, Move Silently +8, Sense Motive +3, Spot +4

**Challenge Rating:** 4

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always neutral

**Advancement:** 8-10 (Large); 11-21 HD (Huge)

### COMBAT

**Rend (Ex):** A bandithen that hits with both claw attacks latches on to its opponent and tears his flesh. This attack automatically deals an additional 2d4+12 points of damage.

## Big-Eyed Bat

**Homeworld:** Velisimil

**Present Distribution:** Velisimil

**Type:** Animilia (chordata, mammalia, chiroptera, vespertilionidae)

**Role:** Insectivore

**Size:** From 30 to 60 cm wingspan (1 to 2 feet)

**Weight:** 0.5 to 1 kg (1 to 2 pounds)

**Habitat:** Tropical forests

**Social Organization:** Twins (2) or colony (50-100)

All big-eyed bats are born twins, and this is the basis of the deep love that these beasts carry throughout their lives. This bond of love lies so deep that if one of the twin bats dies, the other will willingly follow it to the grave.

They live in colonies that can number up to a hundred — a fantastic sight when the entire colony explodes from its caves at dusk. Big-eyed bats are kind, playful creatures among their colonies, particularly with their twins. Life within the colony is warm and loving, each twin watching out for each other, hunting insects



for each other, with each family following its leaders without discord.

**Description:** An observer may wonder at the designation "big-eyed," as these beautiful creatures have eyes barely larger than any other creature of similar size. Somewhat more distinguishing — yet still obscure to the untrained eye — is the slight distention of the forehead, containing just what these bats are coveted for. The term "big-eyed" refers not to the eyes at all, but rather to a considerably less obvious trait, one which some of the more savage Ur-Obun choose to put to sinister purposes....

**Behavior:** It is only when humanoids begin to invade the bats' lives that they change from their carefree existence to an aggressive stance. They are almost always shy (though they will bite if provoked!) and sleep during the day, hunting mostly at dusk and dawn, when their eyesight is best.

If you see one following you, or behaving aggressively, that is when you must be careful. That is when you should suspect that humanoids are interfering with the natural life of the gentle bat.

**Commodity:** To quote from a Second Republic treatise on the subject:

The bats' circulatory system contains microscopic ampules of various non-reactive gases (typically argon, neon and radon) encased in shells made primarily of calcium and carbon. In utero, the quantum states of the gas atoms are entangled in pairs; then, the gasses are enclosed into ampules, and are divided approximately evenly between the twin embryos.

The calcium-carbon shells protect the entanglement from chemical and radiative interference. During its life, however, a bat breaks the shell with an organ placed in its forebrain (giving the forehead its characteristic distention). The entangled atoms then fall out of quantum state into either positive or negative charge.

When the matching entangled atom in the bat's twin consequently falls out of its quantum state, the twin senses the magnetic charge. This is very similar to mechanisms in quantum computers, and in some high-grade communications devices. Ranged matter replication devices operate on a similar principle; these bats, however, do not perform that function.

Each bat is born with 100 to 200 billion ampules, breaking 1000 per second on average. When these ampules are depleted (generally after 10 years) the bat's physique is still adequate for survival, but the effects of the bereavement — the separation from its twin's quantum attraction — will, without exception (as far as is known), soon kill both twins.

Communication has been verified on an interplanetary scale (see Smith and Mahoud, reference 5) with the communication taking place at light speed. Removal of the bats from the Velisimil system, however, has proven unsuccessful, even with shielding techniques reliable for quantum computers. The quantum entanglement is disrupted by the jumpgate, which causes all gas ampules to fall out of quantum state after transition.

This is why these poor beasts, who should be left to themselves to live natural lives in the jungle, can be so cruelly exploited. "Big-eyed" bats are named such because they can be used to spy! "Quantum entanglement" — this is just a fancy way of saying that each pair of twins has a deep psychic bond that can be exploited by the unscrupulous!



One should endeavor to think of the Ur-Obun as civilized, truly a part of our empire. But of every race there are some more savage and barbaric than others. Their witch doctors will kill a bat and drink its blood! Its poor twin, still flying about, will not live long, but a practiced witch doctor can make the twin do her bidding.

Big-eyed bats try to stay away from humanoids (and for good reason!) but watch out if one of them bites you! With the psychic gas coursing through your veins, you will suddenly become a twin to a bat — seeing what it sees, feeling what it feels.... If you are fortunate, you will come to your senses after a few minutes, while the bat makes its escape. But if you get an extra large dose, you could find yourself

trying to fly off a cliff to chase down those chicanas the bats are so fond of!

**Wild Gift:** Beastfriends can borrow the Blindsight, bite and Disorienting Venom abilities from cohort big-eyed bats.

### Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 1, Dex 7, End 2

**Mind:** Wits 4, Per 7, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Dod 9, Fht 5, Obs 9, Vig 3

**Size:** S

**Movement:** Fly 15 meters

**Special:** Sonar

**Attacks:**

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Bite	8	12	1*

\* If any damage is inflicted, victim must make an End + Stoic Mind roll or be dazed for one round per point of damage suffered.

**Vitality:** -4/-2/0/0

### d20 System Stats

**Tiny Animal**

**Hit Dice:** 1/2d8 (2 hp)

**Initiative:** +2 (Dex)

**Speed:** Fly 50 ft. (good)

**AC:** 14 (+2 size, +2 Dex)

**Attacks:** Bite +4 melee (+2 size, +2 Dex)

**Damage:** Bite 1d4 -4

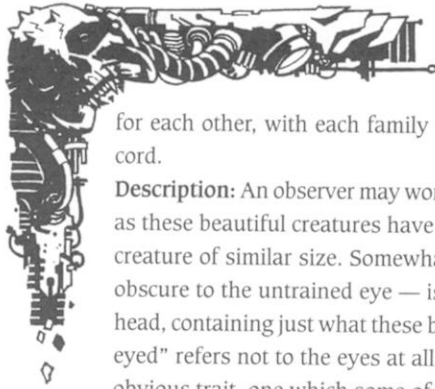
**Face/Reach:** 2 1/2 ft. by 2 1/2 ft./0 ft.

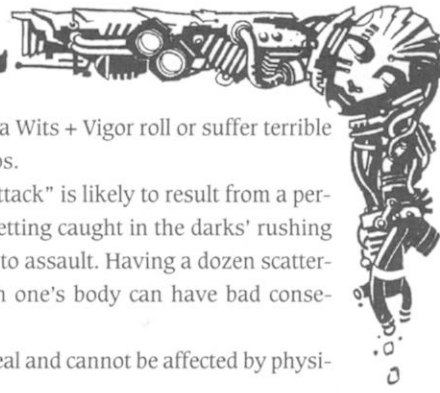
**Special Attacks:** Disorienting Venom

**Special Qualities:** Blindsight

**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2

**Abilities:** Str 2, Dex 14, Con 4, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 5





**Skills:** Listen +9\*, Move Silently +6, Spot +9\*

**Feats:** Weapon Finesse (bite)

**Challenge Rating:** 1/2

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always neutral

**Advancement:** —

**Disorienting Venom (Ex):** Bite, Fort save (DC 11). *Type:* Injury; *Initial Damage:* 1d4 Int; *Secondary Damage:* 1d4 Int and victim is dazed.

**Skills:** \* +4 racial bonus to Spot and Listen checks from Blindsight.

## Bilge Darks

**Homeworld:** Unknown (space?)

**Present Distribution:** Outer edges of solar systems, perhaps deeper into space

**Type:** Unknown

**Role:** Unknown

**Size:** Generally small; some larger bilge darks are up to 1 meter (3 feet wide) (?)

**Weight:** N/A

**Habitat:** Dark, cold corners of spacefaring ships, particularly hull exteriors, and particularly ships that travel to the edges of a solar system. They seem fairly common on jumpgates.

**Social Organization:** Flock (12)

**Description:** Bilge darks are never clearly seen, but are mere shadows flitting about in the bilges or in the nooks and crannies on the outside of a spaceship.

**Behavior:** Bilge darks are very averse to heat and light. They generally avoid human contact, and it is possible that such contact in itself will kill a bilge dark. Still, they can cling to a ship and pass through its hull without hindrance.

They dissipate fairly quickly as a ship moves inward to the system, presumably from the star's light. They do not seem to affect jumpgates, but a ship that stays at the edge of a solar system for an extended period of time may experience material problems in its hull, related to increased brittleness of hull material.

It is a good policy to carry a derelict ship toward a star before boarding it, or else shine a bright light over the hull. Bilge darks like to nest in nooks and crannies on a hull's outer skin, away from any exhaust. Always light up such areas when working on a hull exterior — the darks will go right through a spacesuit.

**Commodity:** None.

### Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 0, Dex 3, End 1

**Mind:** Wits 1, Per 2, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Dod 7, Fht 3, Vig 3

**Size:** S to MS

**Movement:** 3 m

**Attacks:**

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Touch	3	6	1*

\* plus Dark Touch.

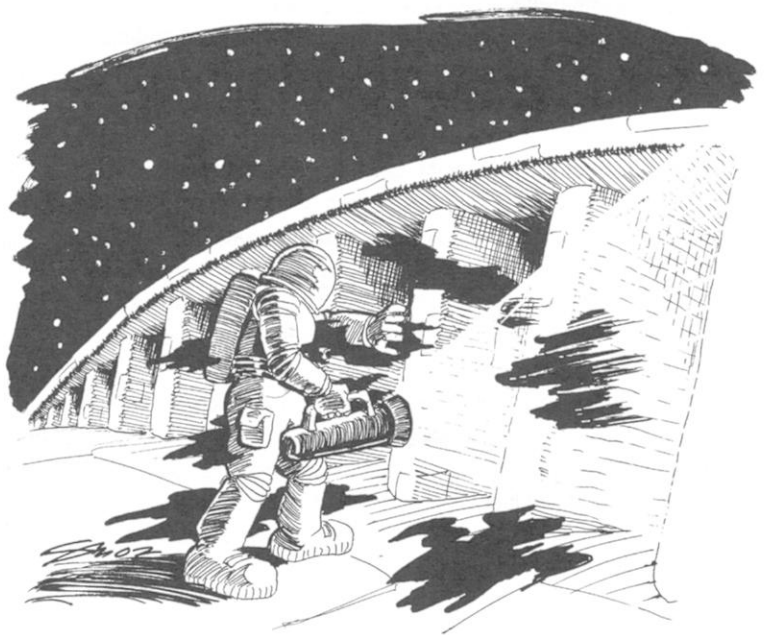
**Special Attacks:** Dark Touch. If any damage on a touch attack is inflicted, the victim must make an End + Vigor roll or suffer a -2 penalty to all rolls for one hour per point of damage taken. If the roll

fails, the victim must also make a Wits + Vigor roll or suffer terrible nightmares when she next sleeps.

Note that any bilge dark "attack" is likely to result from a person stumbling into a nest and getting caught in the darks' rushing to and fro, rather than an intent to assault. Having a dozen scattering bilge darks passing through one's body can have bad consequences.

**Armor:** Bilge darks are incorporeal and cannot be affected by physical attacks.

**Vitality:** Energy attacks that deliver at least one point of damage will completely dissipate a bilge dark.



### d20 System Stats

**Tiny Animal**

**Hit Dice:** 1/4d8 (1 hp)

**Initiative:** 0

**Speed:** 10 ft.

**AC:** 12 (+2 size)

**Attacks:** Touch +0 melee

**Damage:** Touch 1d2-1

**Face/Reach:** 2-1/2 ft. by 2-1/2 ft./2 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Dark Touch

**Special Qualities:** Incorporeal

**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +1

**Abilities:** Str 0, Dex 10, Con 1, Int 1, Wis 4, Cha 0

**Skills:** Hide +9

**Challenge Rating:** 1/4

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always neutral

**Advancement:** —

**Dark Touch (Ex):** If any damage on a touch attack is inflicted, the victim must make a Fort save (DC 15) or suffer a -2 check penalty on all rolls for one hour per point of damage taken. If the roll fails, the victim must also make a Will save (DC 15) or suffer terrible nightmares when next she sleeps.

Note that any bilge dark "attack" is likely to result from a person stumbling into a nest and getting caught in the darks' rush-



ing to and fro, rather than an intent to assault. Having a dozen scattering bilge darks passing through one's body can have bad consequences.

## Blushing Orchid

**Other Names:** Virtuuous Maid

**Homeworld:** Midian

**Present Distribution:** Li Halan space, but spreading

**Type:** Plantae (orchid)

**Role:** Decomposer/reducer

**Size:** The flower has a diameter of about 10 cms (4 inches).

**Weight:** A few grams

**Habitat:** Warm climates, subtropic to tropic. In winter gardens, it can survive in moderate and cold climates.

**Social Organization:** Solitary

**Description:** The virtuous maid is certainly one of the most prized treasures of the garden worlds. Light sparkles on the pale-golden orchid when its fully open, because then its silky surface acts like by a prism. The orchid derives its name from an old folk tale about a peasant girl daughter pursued by one of the most vile pre-conversion Li Halan lords. Threatened with violence, torture and death, the girl fled into the woods. When his hounds caught up with her, she implored the Pancreator not to let her fall prey to the villain. When the Li Halan came to collect his prize, all that remained of the beautiful maid was a pristine, golden orchid. Even as the villain touched the orchid, it blushed under his fingers, which told him of the miracle that had just happened and turned his heart.

**Behavior:** If exposed to the skin of mammals, the golden orchid turns crimson red, "blushing" fiercely within about a minute.

**Commodity:** Some Li Halan have tried to imitate the structure of the petals to make cloth sparkle like it, but most pious Li Halan resent the idea of using the orchid for anything except as a reminder for the Pancreator's grace - that pure virtue cannot be spoiled. Therefore, it is a prized gift to the faithful; some Li Halan sell the orchid off-world (about 20 fb), where it is favoured among lovers, in some cases even surmounting the rose in its symbolic meaning.

## Bolzeng

**Other Names:** Velvet-Backed Jelly Bee

**Homeworld:** Ungavorox

**Present Distribution:** Ungavorox, Icon, Kurga (Hira)

**Type:** Animalia (arthropoda, insecta, hymenoptera)

**Role:** Herbivore

**Size:** 1 m (3 ft)

**Weight:** 7 kg (15 lbs)

**Habitat:** Tropical or temperate.

**Social Organization:** Hive (usually 50-100 members)

**Description:** The jelly bee of Ungavorox resembles its Urthish counterpart, the bumblebee, but is distinguished by a soft red or purple down covering most of its dorsal carapace and its enormous size, comparable to most domestic pigs. In its original habitat, it can be seen pollinating the carnivorous pranata flower with the aid of its paralytic stinger (which, unlike common bees, does not detach and kill the individual when used). At least four distinct types or castes of jelly bee have been identi-

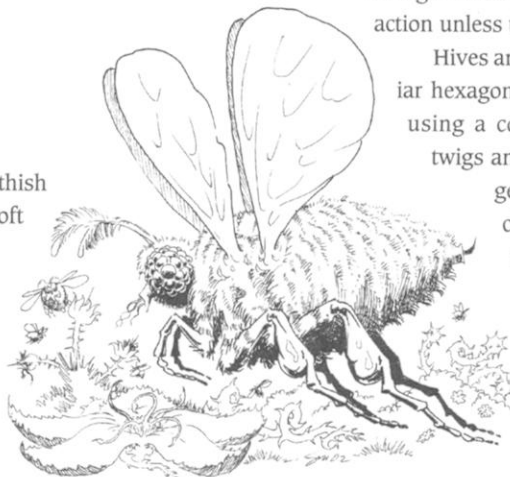
fied: worker, guardian, drone and noble. Workers are the most powerful fliers, able to carry over a kilogram of water, pollen, sap or other necessary substances in their leg sacs. Guardians accompany contingents of workers, protecting them with superior speed and more potent stings. Drones are flightless and stingerless, attending exclusively to the internal duties of their hive, which they never leave. Only nobles may breed, and their sting is designed to kill rather than paralyze.

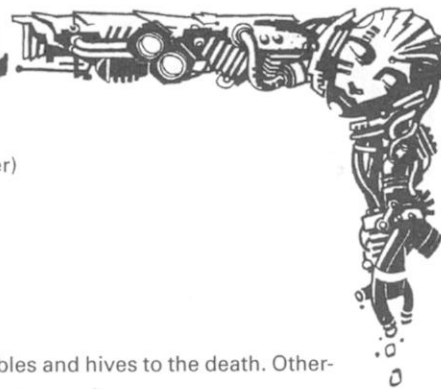
In the first few centuries after its discovery, attempts were made to transplant jelly bee hives to other planets to help pollinate local megafloora, but these huge insects put a severe strain on the ecological balance before eventually starving to death. A small hive can still be found, however, in the ruins of the Garden of Seven Pains on Icon, living amid the surviving pranata and other carnivorous plants. Seldom-recounted Li Halan history tells us that, when the jelly bees were originally imported by Ustirin the Unspeakable, the colony was too large to support itself on the Garden alone and in desperation often mistakenly attacked heavily perfumed, colorfully dressed courtiers, much to the sadistic tyrant's amusement. One unnamed crusader from House Hazat, apparently having heard this story, arranged to ship a large number of jelly bees to the Kurgan front in the hope that they would attack the fragrant and brightly attired Kurgan combatants. It is not known whether this plan bore fruit, but there have been reports that suggest that hives are now thriving in that world's equatorial jungle, where biological variety and abundance approach that of their homeworld.

The G'nesh of Apsai greatly desire to purchase a number of velvet-backed jelly bees for their own gardens, but the Vau have expressly forbidden the introduction of the species into their space, presumably until all potential consequence to the local ecosystem can be determined.

**Behavior:** Jelly bees travel in groups of 5-10, with two or three guardians as escort to help subdue the flowers. Although they are very territorial regarding their hives and pollen routes, jelly bees are not aggressive, avoiding confrontation with other animals and rarely using their stingers on members of the animal kingdom unless directly provoked. Large hives have even been known to tolerate the intrusion of human and Vorox jelly-gatherers, provided the intruder does not damage the hive structure, injure the inhabitants or try to take more than a quarter of the hive's total jelly stores. Guardians form the first line of defense, though workers may join in a fight when necessary. Nobles seldom take action unless the hive itself is in danger.

Hives are constructed along the familiar hexagonal-celled honeycomb pattern, using a combination of mud, stones, twigs and waxy secretions. Hives are generally situated in a safe enclosed area, such as a hollow tree, a cave or, on their homeworld, in the maze-like interiors of land-coral palaces. In their natural habitat or an environment of sufficient diversity, related hives develop colonial





networks in which parties of workers and guardians migrate in a seasonal circuit from one hive to the next, delivering resources from widely varied terrain.

**Commodity:** Bolzeng jelly is a true Ungavoroxian delicacy, one of the few non-toxic native foodstuffs with a flavor genuinely pleasing to nearly all known lifeforms. Some even credit it with healing properties. Depending upon the quality (native Ungavoroxian from the deep jungle being the best), an ounce of pure jelly may cost between one and four firebirds.

### Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 1, Dex 5, End 2

**Mind:** Wits 0, Per 6, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Dod 6, Fht 4 (6 for guardians and nobles), Obs 4, Snk 2, Vig 5, Fly 6

**Learned skills:** Tracking 4

**Size:** L

**Movement:** Fly 8m

**Special:** Sensitive Smell and 360-Degree Vision

**Attacks:**

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG	SHOTS
Stinger (worker)	4	9	3*	1 / day**
Stinger (guardian)	6	11	5*	2 / hour**
Stinger (noble)	6	11	6***	3 / hour**

\* If any damage is inflicted, victim suffers from Paralytic Nerve Toxin.

\*\* Jelly bee stingers contain a limited amount of toxin that takes time to replenish.

\*\*\* If any damage is inflicted, victim suffers from Fatal Nerve Toxin.

**Special Attacks:** Paralytic Nerve Toxin (If any damage is inflicted, the victim is paralyzed for 10 turns minus the victory points from an End + Vigor roll. After this time the toxin wears off with no adverse effects.), Fatal Nerve Toxin (If any damage is inflicted, the victim must succeed on End + Vigor rolls every turn or lose 1 Vitality level and 1 point from Str and Dex until medical help can be applied or death occurs. No other actions may be taken during this time. This toxin must be treated with a TL5 Expedition MedPac or better, or a knowledgeable Vorox healer with access to indigenous herbs and microbes.)

**Armor:** Carapace (ARM 1d)

**Vitality:** —9/-6/-3/-1/0/0

### d20 System Stats

**Small Beast**

**Hit Dice:** 1d8-1 (hp)

**Initiative:** 0

**Speed:** fly 25 ft.

**AC:** 13 (+1 size, +2 natural)

**Attacks:** Stinger (worker) +1 melee, (guardian) +2 melee, (noble) +2 melee

**Damage:** Stinger (worker) 1d6-4, (guardian) 1d8-4, (noble) 1d10-4

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Paralytic Nerve Toxin (workers and guardians), Fatal Nerve Toxin (nobles)

**Special Qualities:** 360-Degree Vision, Scent

**Saves:** Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +1

**Abilities:** Str 3, Dex 10, Con 8, Int 1, Wis 10, Cha 4

**Skills:** Listen +4, Spot +4

**Feats:** Weapon Finesse (stinger)

**Challenge Rating:** 1

**Treasure:** none

**Alignment:** neutral

**Advancement:** none

### COMBAT

Jelly Bees defend their nobles and hives to the death. Otherwise, if threatened they sting and try to fly away.

**Fatal Nerve Toxin (Ex):** A stung foe must make a Fort save (DC 15) or lose another 1d6 hit points and 1 point temporary Str and Dex damage until medical help can be applied or death occurs. No other actions may be taken during this time. This toxin must be treated with a TL5 Expedition MedPac or better, or a knowledgeable Vorox healer with access to indigenous herbs and microbes.

**Paralytic Nerve Toxin (Ex):** A stung foe must make a Fort save (DC 14) or be paralyzed for 10 turns. After this time, the toxin wears off with no adverse effects.

## Candeopluma

**Other Names:** Brilliant Plumes, Feathergems, Dazzlefowl

**Homeworld:** Icon

**Present Distribution:** Kish, Midian, Rampart, Byzantium Secundus, Malignatius, Cadiz, Ungavorox, and Severus

**Type:** Animalia (vertebrate, ave)

**Role:** Omnivore

**Size:** 1 m (3 ft.)

**Weight:** 12 kg. (27 lbs.)

**Habitat:** Tropical to temperate regions.

**Social Organization:** Pair or flock (6-12)

**Description:** One of the most beautiful creatures in the Known Worlds, the candeopluma's name means "brilliant plumes." Until recently, these lordly creatures were found almost exclusively in the private inner gardens and house grounds of House Li Halan. Some monasteries in Li Halan space also have flocks of them brought by members of the house who joined a religious order. Many of the nobles find the creature's great grace and beauty to be an aid to meditation.

Both the male and female candeopluma resemble the Holy Terran peacock (the male of the peafowl) but with a much more brilliant and varied plumage. The male is slightly larger and has a broader display. Some evidence suggests that it is descended from a genetically engineered version of the Holy Terran peafowl. Many dispute this, however. The plumes are reflective and, when displayed in direct light, seem almost to glow. Instead of the "eye" plumes of the peacock, the candeopluma's tail plumes have gemlike reflectors and a system that works like fiber-optic cables to spread light across its entire plumage. Many of the plumes resemble stained glass when viewed from the proper angle. A few varieties even glow in the dark.

There are several ancient variations of the breed with the most common being the Amethyst Prayer. Its plumes resemble the purple and white house colors of Li Halan and its song is soft and harmonious. The Fire Rose is the most ancient variety of the species known and is popular among Li Halan Imperial Questing Knights.





The spread of the candeopluma across Li Halan space is due to the custom of presenting several nesting pairs from a family estate each time a Li Halan lord acquires a new fief. More distant family members would also often add a pair or two for luck. This tradition also serves to keep the bloodlines fresh. There are a few wild flocks in the forest of Icon, but they are rare. The Li Halan palace on Byzantium Secundus also has a large and varied flock. After the fall of Malignatius, the Decados acquired a few flocks, which, while still quite rare, can be found on noble estates across much of Decados space.

The candeopluma has many virtues. The male has a delightful singing voice and will greet the rise of the sun with song. They are commonly trained to sing and put on a display if someone claps loudly in front of them. It is a most impressive sight, which the Li Halan usually reserve for only the closest friends of the family. They also make excellent watch guards. They eat many pests and are popular with the gardeners for this reason. They are often used as the subjects of parables. This has, through long tradition, been passed down to the Li Halan peasants, who believe that the birds are a sign of the favor of heaven.

Legends and rumors abound about the candeopluma. It is known that the first known record of them is during the reign of Leonardo the Magnificent, the Patchwork Prince, which mentions the beautiful, rose-colored creatures in the prince's gardens. It is believed that he and later Li Halan rulers would grant flocks to favored members of the family. Certainly Cardano, the Shield of the Prophet, continued the tradition of using them as gifts. There are also a few faint legends that the candeopluma of that time could repeat back what they had heard with the right command. It is even said that the Ustirian family of Ungavorox, a distant, unrepentant branch of the Li Halan, has developed a variation of the Fire Rose with poisoned claws and a very aggressive nature.

The candeopluma has an excellent sense of smell and good eyesight. It is also resistant to poisons, which may have something to do with its bright plumage. This, of course, only makes them more valued as watch guards. The average candeopluma lives for over 20 years and its plumage only gets brighter with age. Natives of Malignatius have recently discovered that the candeopluma tastes horrible and are slightly poisonous, even if they do make a wonderful presentation during a feast.

**Behavior:** The candeopluma impresses onto humans if raised in captivity. Li Halan tradition calls for family members to feed the birds. They also are very tolerant of known family members and servants and can be safely handled even after separations of several years. Usually, a person unfamiliar to the bird will be accompanied by one who is known; in a few months, the stranger will become tolerated.

The flock can be counted on to stay in the garden area for as long as they have access to adequate food and water. They eat grain, insects, rodents, small lizards and snakes. Individuals rarely stray far from the flock. If a bird were to become totally separated from its flock, it would most likely return to the place where it was born.

The flock is usually made of bonded pairs. The males will woo their mates each spring with song and displays of their plumage. The female will dig a nest (if there is not one already) and lay one egg during the spring. The flock raises the chicks. Usually, the full plumage comes in after the first year. They will shed some of their plumes in late fall and it takes a long time for their plumage to regrow. If a bird is directly attacked, the males of the flock will rush to defend it. The females are not as aggressive unless someone attacks the chicks.

A sentry bird will keep watch from a high perch at all times. During the day intruders will usually cause the males to put on a display and sing. This is not extremely loud, but fairly noticeable if one is familiar with the birds. The flock will roost in trees during the night. If an intruder comes in to the flock's area at night, the sentry bird will fly at the intruder, raising a shrill cry. The rest of the flock will take up this cry. The sentry bird will also sound the alarm if a known human is attacked. There have been examples where the flock has rushed to defend a family member or a servant. For this reason, tradition demands that no violent outbursts be displayed near the flock.

**Commodity:** Plumes and feathers from the candeopluma are currently all the fashion rage with House Decados (particularly the Emerald Fire and the newer variation, the Von Koren Emerald Tiger). The plumes are worth more than their weight in gold, and are also valued because they are immune to most pests and last a very long time.

Several Decados nobles have made a hobby of developing different plumed variations. Variations are usually named for their colors and their breeder. However, local conditions effect the exact color compositions, depending on the mixture of rare earth elements available in the environment. The newest variety is the "Tiger" with striped plumes, created by Baron Ilya Von Koren Decados. New breeding stock is in great demand in Decados space, but the Li Halan refuse to discuss the matter. In fact, there is some minor friction between the houses because there is a belief that the Decados are tampering with an animal sacred to the Pancreator.

**Wild Gift:** Beastfriends can borrow the Scent, Sing or claw abilities from cohort candeoplumae.

### Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 2, Dex 8, End 5

**Mind:** Wits 4, Per 6, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Chm 4, Dod 7, Fht 5, Imp 6, Mel 0, Obs 6, Sht 0, Snk 6, Vig 7 Fly 5

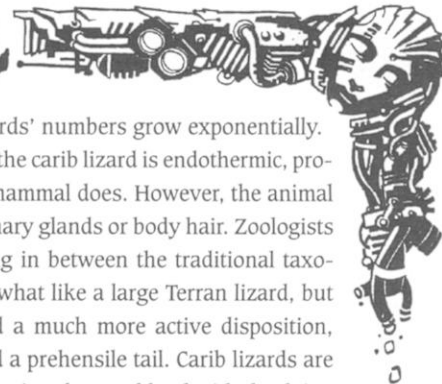
**Size:** M

**Movement:** Run 10 m, fly 30 m

**Special:** Sensitive Smell (can recognize known creatures with a Per + Observe roll, even at night), Sing (beautiful singing voice; roll Wits + Charm to impress listeners)

**Attacks:**





ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Claws	5	13	3
Wing Flap	5	13	1*

\* If any damage is rolled (and not parried — that is, the victim can be blinded even if his normal armor stops all damage), the victim must roll Per + Vigor or be blinded for one round.

**Armor:** Plumes (ARM 1d)

**Vitality:** -6/-3/0/0/0/0/0

## d20 System Stats

### Small Animal

**Hit Dice:** 1d8 (4 hp)

**Initiative:** +3 (Dex)

**Speed:** Run 30 ft., fly 90 ft.

**AC:** 15 (+1 natural, +1 size, +3 Dex)

**Attacks:** Claw +4 melee (+1 size, +3 Dex)

**Damage:** Claw 1d3-2, Wing Flap 1d2-2

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Wing Flap

**Special Qualities:** Scent, Sing

**Saves:** Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +3

**Abilities:** Str 6, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 16

**Skills:** Perform +8, Spot +7

**Feats:** Weapon Finesse (claw, Wing Flap)

**Challenge Rating:** 1/2

**Treasure:** None, although the plumes are valuable (100-500+ fb)

**Alignment:** Always neutral

**Advancement:** —

**Sing (Ex):** The candeopluma, especially the male, can sing beautifully. It has a natural Perform skill of five ranks. They can sometimes be trained to raise their skill (max ranks equal to Wisdom), and to sing specific melodies or even compositions.

Candeopluma cohorts gain a number of skill points each time their Beastfriend gains a level, equal to: 2 + Int modifier. The maximum rank they can have in Perform skill is equal to their Beastfriends level +3 (or Wisdom, whichever is highest).

**Wing Flap (Ex):** Following a candeopluma's successful touch attack, the victim must make a Reflex save or be blinded for one round.

**Skills:** A candeopluma receives a +4 racial bonus to Spot checks.

## Carib Lizard

**Homeworld:** Cadavus

**Present Distribution:** Cadavus (south polar region Locko)

**Type:** Animalia (chordata, therapsidae)

**Role:** Secondary carnivore, reducer

**Size:** 20 cm (8 in.)

**Weight:** 1 kg (2 lbs.)

**Habitat:** Unique (forests of Locko)

**Social Organization:** Colonies can be thousands of individuals, but attacking swarms rarely number more than a hundred (usually 20-50)

**Description:** Cadavus' early settlers discovered Carib lizards in the planet's Locko region, and immediately designated them vermin to eradicate wherever discovered. However, due to Cadavus' chronically unstable politics, humans never mounted an effective long-term effort to wipe out the species. Now the Church protects the

Locko polar region, and the lizards' numbers grow exponentially.

Although dubbed "lizard," the carib lizard is endothermic, producing its own body heat as a mammal does. However, the animal is not a mammal, lacking mammary glands or body hair. Zoologists classified it as a therapsid, lying in between the traditional taxonomic categories. It looks somewhat like a large Terran lizard, but with a distinct head shape and a much more active disposition, with large claws for digging and a prehensile tail. Carib lizards are mottled brown in coloration, allowing them to blend with the dying leaves and the barren ground of their seasonal habitat.

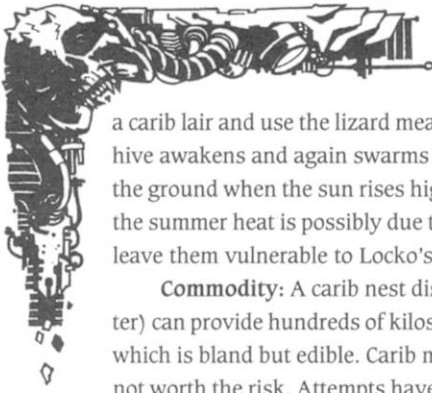
Of special note is the carib lizard's jaw structure, which is particularly versatile and critical to the animal's unusual life-cycle. The carib lizard actually has two lower jawbones, each with a single row of teeth to match the two in its upper jaw. The outer jaw is composed entirely of large, strong canine teeth capable of piercing flesh and allowing the horrible little creature to cling to its flailing prey by its teeth alone. The inner jaw is lined with incisors and molars, allowing for both slicing and mastication. The jaw muscles are strong and flexible, allowing the lizard to manipulate one jaw while the other remains stationary. When used while the outer jaw is clamped around an animal, massive trauma can result. Swarms of carib lizards are capable of completely skeletonizing a human in minutes.



**Behavior:** Field research determined that the carib lizard is in fact a hive animal, quite unlike the semi-random swarms that make up the common perception of them. Carib lizards spent most of their lives underground. A carib lair can house hundreds of individuals lizards but only a single breeding female, a "queen." During the long day of Locko's summer months, the lizards are extremely active underground, breeding and caring for the young and building their networks of tunnels, but they never emerge to the world above. At dusk, almost the entire hive digs to the surface and swarms above ground, devouring any unfortunate creature encountered, dead or alive. During these few weeks of twilight, there are many groggy animals waking for the winter season or taking shelter from the long, cold night.

The lizards have also been known to attack the oshogi and lyocels that arrive during these weeks, as the beasts are fatigued from their migration across the planet. With the onset of Locko's long winter night the lizards return — fattened and barely mobile — to their lairs. They collapse most of their tunnels and gather round the queen to protect her from the cold. At this time, the hive is at its most vulnerable; lyocels and desperate human squatters can dig up





a carib lair and use the lizard meat for food. As the winter ends, the hive awakens and again swarms to the surface to feed, to return to the ground when the sun rises high. The carib lizards' avoidance of the summer heat is possibly due to their delicate eyes, which would leave them vulnerable to Locko's alert diurnal predators.

**Commodity:** A carib nest discovered in Locko's demiset (winter) can provide hundreds of kilos of dormant carib lizards for meat, which is bland but edible. Carib meat is proscribed, and its flavor is not worth the risk. Attempts have been made to use carib lizards as weapons of ecological warfare to destroy enemy meat supplies, but the lizards' life cycle does not adapt to other planets. They have no monetary value.

**Wild Gift:** Beastfriends can borrow the bite, inner bite and burrowing abilities of cohort carib lizards.

### Victory Points System Traits

**Body:** Str 1, Dex 4, End 3

**Mind:** Wits 1, Per 4, Tech 0

**Natural Skills:** Dod 4, Fht 6, Obs 4, Snk 6, Vig 9

**Size:** S

**Movement:** 8 m, burrow 3 m

**Attacks:** (STR bonus: 0)

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Bite	6	10	4*

\* If the lizard achieves three or more victory points on a bite attack, it has latched to its prey. To remove it, the prey must spend an action and make a Strength roll above 4.

**Special Attacks:** Inner bite (If the carib lizard manages to attach itself to its prey, it may use the sharp incisors of its inner jaw to attack. This inflicts 1 DMG per round for up to three rounds. The creature must then release the prey and attempt a new grip.)

**Armor:** Tough skin (ARM 1d)

**Vitality:** -4/-2/0/0/0

### d20 System Stats

**Tiny Beast**

**Hit Dice:** 2d6 (7hp)

**Initiative:** 0

**Speed:** 25 ft., burrow 10 ft.

**AC:** 13 (+2 size, +1 natural)

**Attacks:** Bite +0 melee

**Special Attacks:** Inner bite

**Damage:** Bite 1d6-2 damage

**Face/Reach:** 2 1/2 ft. by 2 1/2 ft./0 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Blindsight, Burrow

**Saves:** Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +1

**Abilities:** Str 7, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 6

**Skills:** Hide +4, Listen +3, Spot +3

**Challenge Rating:** 1

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Neutral

**Advancement:** None

#### COMBAT

Carib lizards bite and bite and bite until there is nothing left of their prey. They focus on one foe at a time, even if being attacked by multiple enemies.

**Blindsight:** 60 ft.



**Inner Bite (Ex):** Someone bitten by a carib lizard must make a Ref save (DC 15), or the lizard attaches itself to its prey. From then on, it inflicts 1d3 damage per round for up to 3 rounds. The creature must then release the prey and attempt a new attack.

## Charybdocanth

**Other names:** Niddiwagh

**Homeworld:** Madoc

**Present Distribution:** Madoc

**Type:** Cryptoxenological

**Role:** Secondary carnivore

**Size:** 500 m (1500 ft)

**Weight:** 50 metric tons (55 tons)

**Habitat:** Abyssal ocean

**Social Organization:** Solitary

**Description:** A number of puzzling maritime disappearances upon Madoc have been attributed to this purported undersea creature, which is supposed to resemble a colossal starfish with webbing between its arms and a few tentacles interspersed with masses of cilia. A great deal of overseas shipping has often vanished mysteriously when traversing Madoc's deep oceans since the planet's discovery. Undoubtedly, much of it is attributable to the tremendous storms that Madoc brews, but the Sister Maria incident of 4839 suggests an alternate cause for some of the disappearances.

The Sister Maria, an ocean-going Charioteer vessel incorporating the best marine technology available to the guild, disappeared on a routine voyage over the Dwanollin abyssal trenches in 4839. The ship has never been found, but by chance another ship was in radio range of what was apparently the Sister Maria's final broadcast, transcribed here:

SOS, SOS, Sister Maria of Jonathan Stagg's merchant marine, we are sinking fast... We are completely submerged and continuing to sink. The bridge and other fail-safe compartments are all still pressurized. We have no indication of hull breach, say again no indication of hull breach. We began to sink without warning. <sounds of metal groaning> Some crew members abandoned ship in life vests and life rafts — they are sinking as well, repeat life vests and life rafts are sinking as well. We are currently heading down at the rate of — merciful Amalthea. We are currently heading down at the rate of 67 miles per hour <sounds of metal groaning, obscure speech> seem to be accelerating. 73 now. The bulkheads won't be able to... Sensors indicate a contact below, huge, directly below, we're heading right for it. There's something down there <metallic sounds, obscure speech> collapse! Paulus protect <loud metallic sounds, transmission garbled>

In light of this alarming message, Charioteer investigators have revisited Oro'ym legends of the Niddiwagh, the "Greedy Dark Water Father" who apparently draws in all things that swim near him in order to devour them. Piecing together such legendry with an analysis of other shipping disappearances has led League and Church investigators to theorize that a gigantic undersea creature native to the abyssal depths is responsible. The hypothesized creature builds up and then releases some sort of chemical that temporarily alters the seawater so as to decrease the buoyancy of everything upon it. The result is that everything in the water above the charbydocanth and in a fairly wide radius around it plummets down to be devoured. Presumably, the purpose of this behavior is to allow the deep-sea





curse the rediscovery of the Chauki.

Sir Luciano Renaldo Hazat's assassination on Byzantium Secundus shortly after the opening of the gate to Iver was not associated with the Chauki until recently, when Hazat Archons claimed to have proof of the existence of the Chauki Avengers. Needless to say, the Hazat are furious, demanding that the Chauki recall these mysterious infiltrators to Iver and hand them over to the Hazat. The Chauki have yet to respond to these demands except to deny any involvement with such creations.

The Hazat claim that the creatures in question originated on Iver, where Chauki nobles apparently took advantage of the immigrants. Of the people fleeing into Iver from Church prosecution, many were scientists who had used proscribed technology. Chauki nobles quickly reminded these refugees of Chauki hospitality when asking for their scientific assistance. Under the leadership of a yet-unidentified Chauki noble, scientists labored to produce these assassin Grimsons. Hazat Archons say they discovered several secret laboratories outside of the Iver system where they are certain that at least some of the Avenger experiments took place. Mutilated corpses stolen from fresh graves, bizarre surgical tools and chemical equipment fill these unholy halls. Bio-vats, rows of them, still contained the remains of what are obviously attempts at Changing.

Perhaps more dangerous than the Hazat who are infuriated by these Chauki usurpers are the Inquisitors who caught the scent of proscribed technology. If the stories are true, however, then a Chauki Avenger is more than a match for even the Inquisitors.

All reports say that the monstrosities stand fully three meters tall, barrel chested with arms like tree-trunks. Their legs are deformed to resemble those of an animal; the Avengers stand on their toes and have long feet, providing quick and long strides. They have only three large fingers, but these fingers end in tough pads that help them climb steep surfaces, like the walls of Hazat manors. Their bodies are hairless, and the skin is rarely the natural color of flesh, usually being a morbid bluish-black mottle. They lack noses, having only tiny, almost invisible nostrils; heavy jaws in combination with the lack of nasal structure causes a visage not unlike that of a burly Vau.

The Avengers are not only physically stupendous, but they arm themselves with an assortment of weapons and technology, much of which is proscribed. Always carrying an array of knives, dirks or short-swords and projectile weapons, squads that rely on more confrontational tactics often carry energy or plasma weaponry as well as energy shielding. They are often encased in heavy, carbo-ferrous suits of armor, but they are so strong they operate as though they were wearing delicate Kish silks.

Squadron leaders are usually stronger and smarter than the soldiers serving beneath them, and they often sport a variety of cybernetic implants, courtesy of oppressed geniuses foolish enough

to assist the Chauki in their tinkering with damnation.

**Behavior:** Chauki Avenger Grimson squads train extensively in various fields of urban and conventional warfare, but individual squads specialize in specific strategies i.e. assassination, hit-and-run raids, heavy assaults, etc. What a unit train for dictates what tactics the squad uses to achieve its goals. Training also dictates the munitions the squadron uses.

Individual squadrons are zealously dedicated to both their squadron leader and the Chauki House. They let nothing get in the way of utter destruction of any Hazat noble they encounter. They are very intelligent beasts, and quickly form strategies, even during the rage of battle, communicating with the rest of their squadron by micro-transmitters embedded deep within their brains. The transmitters unite the squadron, allowing for near-instantaneous communication. They need not even speak, transmitting their thoughts directly throughout the squadron instead. What horrible persons would willingly condemn something born, if not from a human, than from human flesh, to the hive conscience experienced only by insects and the Symbiots?

### Victory Point System Traits

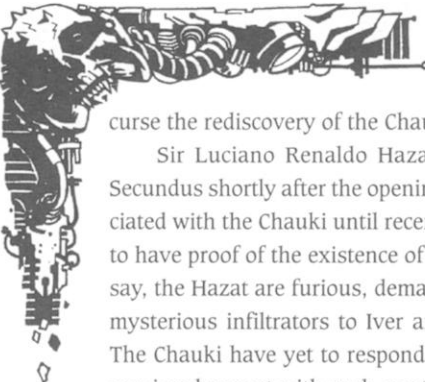
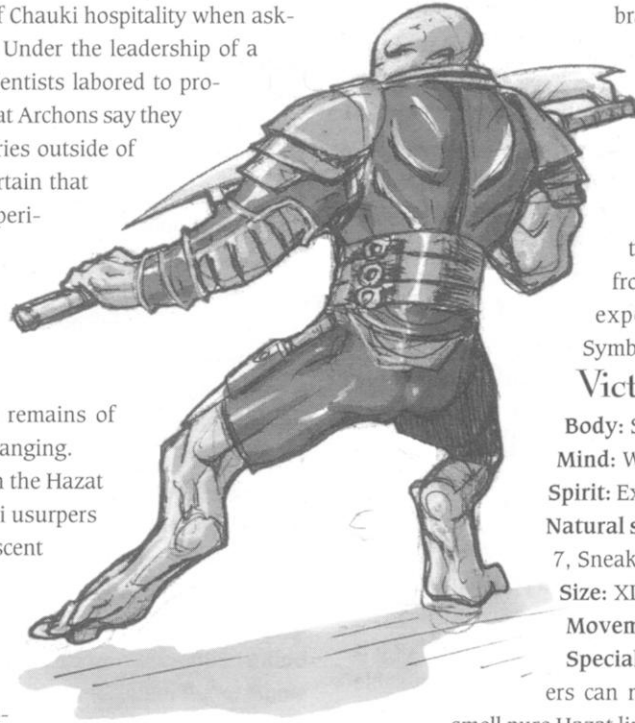
**Body:** Str 9, Dex 8 (7 in armor), End 9  
**Mind:** Wits 5, Per 6, Tech 3  
**Spirit:** Ext 1, Int 1, Pas 1, Calm 3, Faith 1, Ego 1  
**Natural skills:** Dod 7, Fht 7, Mel 7, Obs 7, Shoot 7, Sneak 9, Vig 9  
**Size:** XL (giant)  
**Movement:** Standard  
**Special Qualities:** Specialized scent (Avengers can make an Perception + Observe roll to

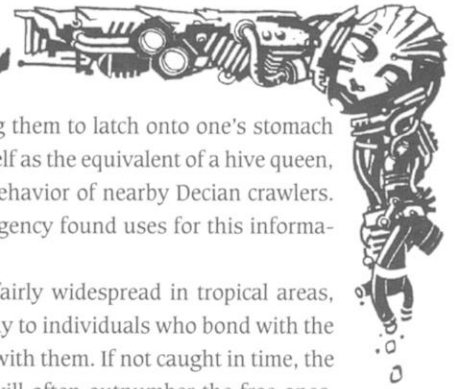
smell pure Hazat lineage if they are within three meters of the source), Neuro-radio transmitter (allows individual to silently communicate with its squadron to a range of 200 meters), Darkvision (Avengers can see with no light at all to a range of 30 meters), Frightful Presence (Anyone the Avenger attacks must succeed at a Calm + Vigor roll or suffer a -2 to engage it in combat. Characters with Stoic Mind or Stoic Body make this roll automatically).

**Attacks:** As per weapon  
**Armor:** Plastic Scale Mail (7D, -1 Dex)  
**Vitality:** -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0

### d20 System Stats

**Large Giant**  
**Hit Dice:** 8d10+8 (52 hp)  
**Initiative:** +2 (Dex)  
**Speed:** Run 40 ft.  
**AC:** 15 (-1 size, +4 Carbo-ferrous armor, +2 Dex)  
**Attacks:** Unarmed Attack +10 melee, by weapon  
**Damage:** Unarmed Attack D4+3, by weapon  
**Face/Reach:** 10 ft by 10 ft/ 10 feet  
**Saves:** Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +2  
**Abilities:** Str 16, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 18  
**Skills:** Climb +3, Spot +1, Listen +2, Hide +1, Move Silently +5





**Feats:** All Armor Proficiencies, Improved Unarmed Combat, Point Blank Shot, Run, Simple and Martial Weapons Proficiency

**Challenge Rating:** 4

**Treasure:** Often valuables stolen from Hazat after they have been killed.

**Alignment:** Always Neutral

**Advancement:** Squadron Leader. 10HD, outfitted with variable cybernetics.

## COMBAT

Tactical geniuses, Avengers seek to attack by surprise and withdraw if outclassed, taking their dead with them.

**Darkvision:** Avengers can see with no light at all to a range of 100 ft

**Frightful Presence (Ex):** The Avenger can unsettle foes with its mere presence whenever it charges. Creatures with seven or fewer hit dice within 30 feet of the Avenger must make a Will Save (DC 18) to avoid this fear effect. On a failure, creatures with four or fewer HD become panicked for 5D6 rounds, and creatures with up to seven HD become shaken for 5D6 rounds.

**Neuro-radio transmitter:** Allows individual to communicate telepathically with its squadron to a range of 500 ft

**Specialized scent (Ex):** Avengers can smell Hazat lineage if they are within 10 ft. of the source.

## Decian Crawler

**Homeworld:** Severus

**Present Distribution:** Severus, Cadavus, Cadiz, Malignatius, Manitou, Criticorum

**Type:** Animalia (arthropoda)

**Role:** Secondary Carnivore

**Size:** 10 cm (3.9 inches)

**Weight:** 28 g (1 oz)

**Habitat:** Tropical rainforest

**Social Organization:** Hives ranging in size from 100 to 1000

**Description:** Decian crawlers were discovered in 4111 by a colony of former criminals who, seeking refuge on Severus, colonized the Decius jungles of northeastern Leshiy. They found large arthropods, resembling wide, overgrown centipedes, which would attach themselves to the skins of other animals and slowly devour them over the course of weeks. Strangely, the animals they attached to made no move to remove these parasites. When one of the settlers awoke to find the creatures on him a few weeks later, he had no inclination to brush them off of him, and became somewhat saddened when his family removed and killed the crawlers that had been roosting on him.

A routine inspection by Jakovian agents in 4137 found the colonists at peace with each other and living together in rather more harmony than one would expect from such former violent offenders. Closer scrutiny revealed that each colonist harbored a number of the crawlers on his skin under his clothes. The precise results of the investigation, which ended with the firebombing of the colony sites, are classified, but from the behavior of other hives of Decian crawlers we can presume that the Jakovian agency learned that the Decian crawlers were able to exert emotional control over their hosts, and that certain of the colonists learned how to exert control over the Decian crawlers in turn. By swallowing whole several young

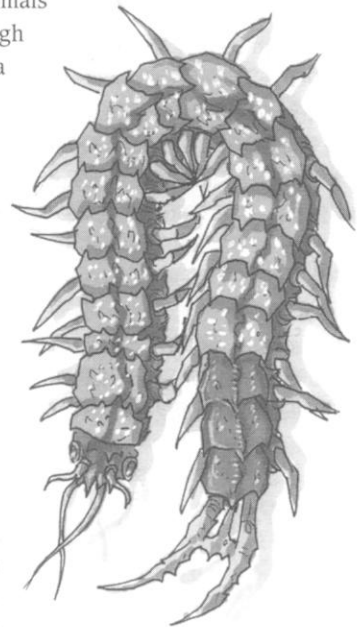
Decian crawler queens, allowing them to latch onto one's stomach lining, a human can assert himself as the equivalent of a hive queen, allowing him control over the behavior of nearby Decian crawlers. Needless to say, the Jakovian Agency found uses for this information.

Now Decian crawlers are fairly widespread in tropical areas, and entire villages often fall sway to individuals who bond with the crawlers and then infest others with them. If not caught in time, the crawler-controlled individuals will often outnumber the free ones, and then they can all be captured and infested with crawlers as well. The emotional control exerted by the crawlers also allows for more precise modulation of their host's adrenaline, meaning that crawler hosts can exhibit bursts of unusual strength and speed. This scheme often fails, however, as the crawlers do not control the minds of their hosts, only their emotions, and thus are often resisted even by those who are covered with them. There are also persistent rumors that the Jakovian Agency uses the crawlers as a torture device by covering a prisoner with them and inducing fear and disgust.

**Behavior:** In the wild, Decian crawlers latch on to their prey and, while slowly devouring it, inject chemicals that keep their non-sentient prey sluggish and content while being devoured. It usually takes weeks to kill the beast and months to finish eating. One Decian crawler will keep most animals sufficiently slothful, though many others will swarm on a sluggish host to share in the feast.

It takes at least three crawlers attached to the skin of humans and other sentients to exert emotional control. Even emotional control doesn't guarantee control over behavior, however, and many humans will calmly brush off wild Decian crawlers. When they are directed by another human, however, the crawlers can control emotions much more precisely, which greatly facilitates the brainwashing and eventual conversion of people who are held captive and unable to remove the creatures.

Humans can assume the role of hive queen, taking advantage of the imprinting process whereby young hive queens learn to use their powers of communication (which are mostly hypersonic, though perceptive human ears can occasionally hear a high-pitched chittering). To do this they must swallow a young hive queen along with a puree of other Decian crawler parts. If the hive queen makes it down alive to hook onto the stomach lining of the human, then it will usually respond to the biochemical cues of its host, allowing the human, with a little practice and with another crawler on his skin to relay the queen's commands, to use it to direct the emotions of anyone that is infested with Decian crawlers from the same hive.



He can also stop the crawlers from slowly devouring their hosts, though they will require some other food source to keep them alive. By sacrificing one or two members or animals every few weeks, an entire village can operate indefinitely under the emotional control of one person..

**Commodity:** Decian crawlers are extremely illegal on most worlds, but a young queen ready to be swallowed can fetch up to 400 fb from a sufficiently megalomaniacal rogue.

### Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 1, Dex 6, End 1

**Mind:** Wits 1, Per 2, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Chm 10, Dod 1, Fht 8, Imp 0, Mel 0, Obs 2, Sht 0, Snk 8, Vig 2

**Size:** XS

**Movement:** 1 m

**Special:** A Decian crawler can control the emotions of a host if it latches onto its skin. For humans, at least three are needed. The Decian crawlers roll Wits + Charm, with a +1 for every three crawlers on the person (the maximum number of Crawlers is 15). Success allows the crawlers to force the target to feel one emotion, as with the Psyche power Heart's Command. The target can resist emotional control with a Calm + Stoic Mind roll, subtracting successes from the crawlers' successes. If the crawlers are under control of a human, that human can substitute his own Wits for that of the crawlers' on the emotional control roll.

Decian crawlers can also give the target adrenaline boosts and render her immune to pain. A target with crawlers on her can ignore wound penalties and stunning, if the crawlers wish. Every three crawlers, up to the maximum of 15, can give the target +1 to one physical attribute for a single span.

**Attacks:**

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Pounce*	8	14	-

\* If successful, the target has a crawler on his skin. Targets in unsealed armor give the crawler a -2 to -6, as it must scuttle into the armor before latching on. Targets in sealed armor are immune to this attack.

**Vitality:** 0

### d20 System Stats

**Diminutive Animal**

**Hit Dice:** 1/2 d8 (2 hp)

**Initiative:** +2 (Dex)

**Speed:** 3 ft.

**AC:** 16 (+4 size, +2 Dex)

**Attacks:** Pounce +3 melee

**Damage:** None

**Face/Reach:** 1 ft. x 1 ft./0 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Attach

**Special Qualities:** Adrenaline Boost, Emote

**Saves:** Fort +0, Ref +4, Will +0

**Abilities:** Str 1, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 6, Cha 4

**Skills:** Hide +9, Jump +5, Move Silently +9

**Feats:** Weapon Finesse (pounce)

**Challenge Rating:** 1/2

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always neutral

**Advancement:** —

**Attach (Ex):** Once a Decian crawler has successfully pounced, it attaches itself to the target's skin. This causes no damage, but does allow the crawler to use its Emote ability.

**Adrenaline Boost (Ex):** An attached crawler can give its host an adrenaline boost, rendering it immune to stunning attacks for 10 minutes. It requires three or more attached crawlers to use this on a human. For every extra three crawlers, one physical attribute can be boosted by +1 for 10 minutes.

**Emote (Ex):** As the Psyche psychic power of Mind Sway, except that crawlers can only perform the Emote ability (assume five skill ranks). They can only Emote to creatures they are attached to, and it requires three or more attached crawlers to use this against a human.

**Skills:** Decian Crawlers gain a +4 racial bonus to Hide and Move Silently rolls.

## Desert Bat

**Other Names:** Stealer of Virtue

**Homeworld:** Pyre

**Present Distribution:** Bred throughout the Known Worlds

**Type:** Animalia (microchiroptera, mammalia)

**Role:** Carnivore

**Size:** 90 cm wingspan (3 ft.) / 15cm length (0.5 ft.)

**Weight:** 15 gr./ 0.33 lbs.

**Habitat:** Desert/caves

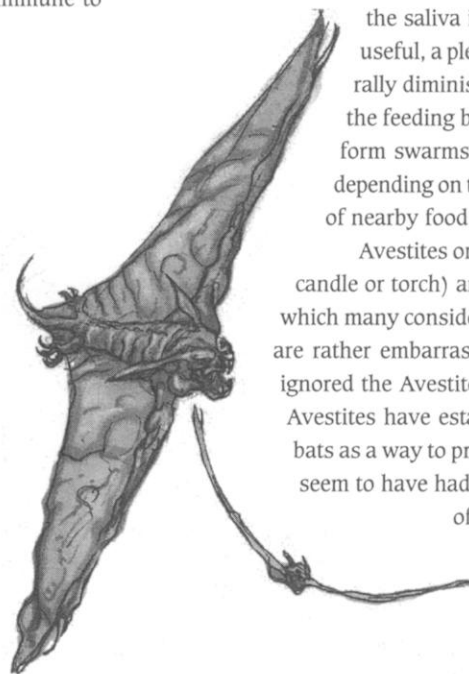
**Social Organization:** Solitary hunter/lives in swarms

**Description:** The desert bat is one of Pyre's more successful native animal species. Active at night, it survives the fierce heat of day by taking refuge in caves. Its short fur ranges from light to dark brown, and its small, black eyes are almost blind.

**Behavior:** As soon as the sun sets, the desert bats become active and hunt for mammals whose blood they can feed upon. They bite

their prey, and their saliva ensures that the blood does not coagulate as fast. Apart from that, the saliva is a potent painkiller and, equally useful, a pleasure center stimulator that naturally diminishes the victim's desire to fend off the feeding bat. The bats hunt individually but form swarms in caves. Up to 500 can coexist, depending on the size of the cave and the amount of nearby food.

Avestites on Pyre keep an open fire (usually a candle or torch) around at night to fend off the bat, which many consider a servant of dark powers. There are rather embarrassing tales of guests to Pyre who ignored the Avestites' warnings. Some high-ranking Avestites have established bounties for dead desert bats as a way to protect people's souls. This does not seem to have had a negative effect on the numbers of the bats. Apart from that, speculators cultivate the bats on several worlds, with pharmacists and witch doctors being their main customers.





**Commodity:** As the source of possibly the most potent aphrodisiac and euphoric, desert bats survive well in captivity. The import, production, use and sale of the substance is prohibited on Byzantium Secundus, but smugglers keep answering the desires of the rich who prefer it to similar substances. One dose costs about 25-50 fb. Some have reported that it is one of the pleasures regularly offered in the Prince Hyram palace.

**Wild Gift:** Beastfriends can borrow the Euphoric Saliva and Blood Drain abilities of cohort desert bats.

### Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 1, Dex 7, End 1

**Mind:** Wits 2, Per 8, Tech 0

**Natural Skills:** Dod 8, Fht 5, Fly 5, Obs 5, Snk 8, Vig 5

**Size:** XS

**Movement:** 20m fly

**Special:** Euphoric Saliva (anyone bitten and damaged by the bat must make a Calm + Vigor roll to do anything but let it drink its fill. Anyone with Stoic Mind or Stoic Body makes the roll automatically.)

**Attacks:**

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Bite	5	12	3*
Blood Drain	5	*	S

\*If the bite inflicts any damage, the victim suffers blood drain

**Special Attacks:** Blood Drain (If the bite inflicts damage, the target suffers -1 to End; the ability loss is cumulative. The bat drains no more than 3 points of End before flying off to digest.)

**Vitality:** -8/-4/0

### d20 System Stats

**Tiny Beast**

**Hit Dice:** 1/2 d8 (2 hp)

**Initiative:** +2 (Dex)

**Speed:** 5 ft., fly 40 ft. (good)

**AC:** 14 (+2 Dex, +2 size)

**Attacks:** Bite + 1 melee

**Damage:** Bite 1d4-2

**Face/Reach:** 2 1/2 ft. by 2 1/2 ft./0 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Blood Drain

**Special Qualities:** Euphoric Saliva

**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +1

**Abilities:** Str 2, Dex 19, Con 10, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 6

**Skills:** Hide + 10

**Feats:** Blind-Fight, Dodge, Weapon Finesse (Touch)

**Challenge Rating:** 1/2

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always Neutral

**Advancement:** —

#### COMBAT

Desert bats usually only attack resting foes. If threatened, they fly away. Sick ones have been known to attack active foes, locking on until killed.

**Blood Drain (Ex):** On the turn after a desert bat makes a bite attack that deals damage, it drains 1d4 points of temporary Constitution damage each round it remains attached. As soon as it drains 4 points, it detaches and flies away to digest.

**Euphoric Saliva (Ex):** Anyone bitten and damaged by the bat must make a Will save (DC 15) to do anything but let it drink its fill.

## Dhiarmada

**Homeworld:** Leminkainen

**Present Distribution:** Worlds with a significant Gjartin presence

**Type:** Legendary

**Role:** Unknown

**Size:** 1.8 m (6 feet)

**Weight:** 90 kg (200 lbs.)

**Habitat:** Deep forests

**Social Organization:** Solitary or group (2-5)

**Description:** The pagan faith of Gjarti cannot compare to the Universal Church of the Celestial Sun in the numbers of its followers. Gjarti remains small and undergoes periodic persecutions at the hands of overzealous clerics. However, its influence is far greater than its limited position would suggest, especially on underdeveloped worlds like Leminkainen. On planets such as these, Gjarti-inspired folklore and tall tales have made their way into popular culture, even among otherwise devoted followers of the Prophet.

One of the more widespread bits of Gjartin folklore is the dhiarmada, a trickster spirit that inhabits the deepest and most untamed forests. Described as leather-clad humanoid creatures with the heads of Urthish badgers and the feet of waterfowl, these spirits love nothing more than to taunt and harass mortal beings in a variety of ways. Their behavior is generally portrayed as playful rather than malicious but there are exceptions. Indeed, the recent upsurge in reputed dhiarmada sightings and encounters has a decidedly darker cast, with tales of vicious beatings and life-threatening tricks being the most common.

Of course, these reports are widespread only in communities where the Church has taken an active interest in the presence of Gjarti adherents and practices. Believers on both sides of the theological divide claim that the dhiarmada have crossed over into the mortal realm to defend their coreligionists, with Churchmen claiming that these creatures are demonic beings inhabiting the Dark. The truth remains unknown at this time, despite efforts by House Hawkwood to look into the matter.

**Behavior:** According to legend, the dhiarmada is a mischievous spirit that assumes a mortal semblance to test men and women in their devotion to Gjarti.

Its trickery takes many forms, but the most common consists of altering its appearance to that of a person known to the individual it is testing. The dhiarmada then sees how long it takes for its subject to realize that it is not in fact the person it appears to be. In other instances, the spirit steals valued objects and hides them or, better yet, taunts their owner with them, daring





them to reclaim them. As noted above, traditional tales emphasize the general playfulness of the dhiarmada and how it is a bringer of goodwill. It's a kind of acknowledgement that one does not completely control one's life and that sometimes, unexpected things happen without cause.

More recent tales suggest that the dhiarmada has been given a new task as well — tormenting Church zealots and missionaries on Leminkainen. Since the accession of Alexius to the Phoenix Throne, there have been dozens of reputed attacks and beatings by a creature that bears a striking resemblance to the dhiarmada. These attacks included elements of deception and trickery, which is why the local peasantry has been quick to attribute them to the Gjartin spirits. In some instances, priests have simply disappeared entirely, a fact that reminds observers of another accepted behavior of the dhiarmada: kidnapping. Again, if legends are to be believed, kidnapped people are sometimes found years after the fact, unaware that time has elapsed while they were held by the dhiarmada. Thus far, there have been no reports of this kind.

**Commodity:** Since the very existence of the dhiarmada is suspect, no one can say for certain how it might enrich any who encounter it. Like many legendary creatures, the dhiarmada attracts some attention from xeno-biologists and eccentric devotees of pan-physics who hope its discovery would prove their pet theories about the nature of the universe. Gjartin tales claim that the dhiarmada will give those who capture but do not harm it "their heart's desire" in return for its freedom.

### Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 4, Dex 7, End 5  
**Mind:** Wits 3, Per 3, Tech 0  
**Spirit:** Ext 3/Int 1, Pas 3/Calm 1, Fth 1/Ego 3  
**Natural skills:** Fht 4, Obs 4, Snk 6, Vig 4  
**Learned skills:** Disguise 4, Lockpicking 3, Sleight of Hand 4  
**Size:** XL  
**Movement:** 10 m  
**Special:** Alter Shape (as the Soma psychic path powers of Sizing and Masking), Quick Reflexes (+4 Init)

#### Attacks:

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Claws	7	11	3
Bite	7	11	2
Quarterstaff	7	10	4

**Armor:** Leather jerkin (ARM 4d), tough skin (ARM 2d)

**Wyrd:** 6

**Vitality:** -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0

### d20 System Stats

**Medium-Size Fey**

**Hit Dice:** 2d8+2 (11 hp)

**Initiative:** +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**AC:** 15 (+2 Dex, +1 natural, +2 leather armor)

**Attacks:** 2 claws +3 melee and bite -2 melee, or quarterstaff +3 melee

**Damage:** Claw 1d4, bite 1d4, or quarterstaff 1d6/1d6

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Alter Shape

**Special Qualities:** Skills

**Saves:** Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +3

**Abilities:** Str 12, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10

**Skills:** Disguise +6, Escape Artist +4, Hide +6, Listen +3, Move Silently +6, Open Lock +4, Pick Pocket +4, Spot +3

**Feats:** Improved Initiative

**Challenge Rating:** 3

**Treasure:** Standard

**Alignment:** Usually chaotic neutral

**Advancement:** By character class

#### COMBAT

Dhiarmada prefer to attack with a weapon, usually a quarterstaff. If unarmed, a dhiarmada attacks with its claws and bite.

**Alter Shape (Sp):** Once per day, a dhiarmada can alter its shape similar to the Soma psychic powers of Sizing and Masking (roll once for both effects) as if it had 10 skill ranks.

**Skills:** Dhiarmada receive a +4 racial bonus to Disguise checks.

## Fleshwing

**Homeworld:** Kordeth

**Present Distribution:** Ravenna (deepcore cities). Fleshwings were first encountered on their homeworld Kordeth in 4532. They have since spread to similar habitats on other worlds, such as the deepcore cities of Ravenna. There is evidence that the first miners of Kordeth unwittingly transported Fleshwing eggs in their mining equipment, thereby spreading them over the Known Worlds. Both Scravers and the Muster refute this rumour.

**Type:** Animalia (amphibia)

**Role:** Decomposer/reducer

**Size:** 0.30 - 1m (1-3 feet)

**Weight:** 2-3 kg (4-7 pounds)

**Habitat:** Subterranean, especially near underground rivers. Sometimes found in swampland.

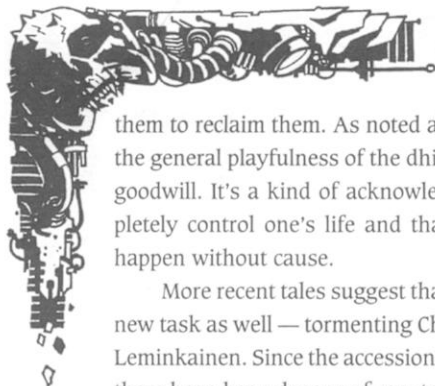
**Social Organization:** Small flocks (gores), rarely more than 4-8.

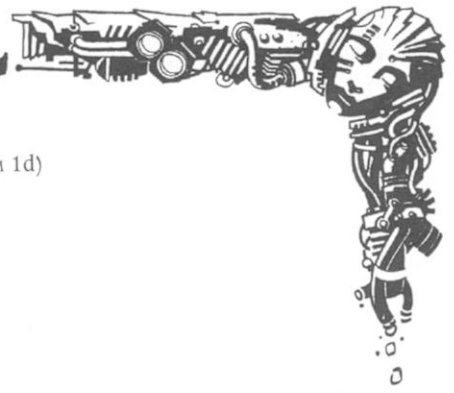
**Description:** Here follows an account taken from the journal of Eskatonic Novitiate Karina Stark, published posthumously after her death in a caving accident:

I find the words to describe these horrors hard to come by. Like a bat, for I have seen one, yet without the soft fur of those warm-blooded creatures. Their wings are more angular, making their bodies almost square, and are covered in mucous that smells of rotting flesh. Seen by light of day these creatures look naked - almost helpless. Their tiny black eyes show no sign of the Grace of the Pancreator.

**Behavior:** These creatures are not intrinsically predatory, preferring dead meat, but as the following extract shows, that is not always the case:

I was accompanying a Scraver named Samuels on an expedition to explore alleged Ur ruins. Darkness and moisture filled the air as we filed through the labyrinthine tunnels toward the goal. We entered into a vastness so extreme that it took our breath away. I barely noticed a soft fluttering from behind and to my right, nor the mewling from our pack-bearer until it was too late. I turned and saw how more and more of the creatures fluttered down as softly as lace handkerchiefs, descending from their niches high above. They landed





on our faithful bearer, and where their naked clammy wing-flesh touched they stuck. They softly enveloped him, almost drowning out his screams.



Their flesh burned his where they made contact. A blade from one of my companions cut through one of the creatures, but wounded our companion, too. We could only watch as they feasted on his flesh, growing bloated with his gore before detaching themselves to crawl back to their ambush point. They stripped him bare, leaving his steaming skull exposed. All we could do was flee that hellish place."

**Commodity:** The Kordeth Ukari sometimes catch fleshwings to use their mucous. Mixed with clay dust and Atcheta root, it becomes a stiff paste which can then be heated and applied to bone weapons. The paste acts as a corrosive when striking opponents (roll End+Vig or suffer an extra die of damage). The Ukari call the paste *Dka velash*, which translates as "metal bane" or "metal poison." Since the paste corrodes metals, it should not be used on metal weapons. It has been heard that Ukari forced to act as scouts on Kordeth applied the paste to the weapons of their human oppressors, or convinced them do it themselves, just before an attack by their fellow Ukari.

**Wild Gift:** Beastfriends can borrow the corrosion and heat sense abilities of cohort fleshwings.

### Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 2, Dex 5, End 4

**Mind:** Wits 1, Per 6, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Dod 4, Fht 3, Fly 5, Obs 5, Snk 4, Vig 3

**Size:** MS-ML

**Movement:** Fly 10 m (although not great flyers, they are good enough to control their ambush drops), Crawl 5 m (although it takes them time to regain their perch, especially when bloated).

**Special:** Heat sense (although their eyesight is poor, the fleshwing can discern with uncanny accuracy the presence of warm flesh).

**Attacks:**

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Ambush Drop	3	10	*
Grapple	3	7	**

\* If the fleshwing manages to drop onto its target, it may attempt to "grapple"

\*\* Once a grapple is made, the victim loses one health level/turn.

**Special Attacks:** Fleshwings normally attack small or dying creatures. Only when they band together do they become truly danger-

ous to the adventurer.

**Armor:** Mucous membrane (ARM 1d)

**Vitality:** -6/-3/-1/0/0/0/0

### d20 System Stats

**Tiny Beast**

**Hit Dice:** 1d6 (3 hp)

**Initiative:** +1 (Dex)

**Speed:** 15 ft., 30 ft. fly (poor)

**AC:** 14 (+1 Dex, +2 size, +1 natural)

**Attacks:** Grapple +1 melee

**Damage:** Special

**Face/Reach:** 2 1/2 ft. by 2 1/2 ft./0 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Corrosive Mucus

**Special Qualities:** Blindsight

**Saves:** Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +1

**Abilities:** Str 3, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 6

**Skills:** Hide +14

**Feats:** Weapon Finesse (grapple)

**Challenge Rating:** 1/2

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Neutral

**Advancement:** None

#### COMBAT

Fleshwings only attack from above their foe, diving on them and using their corrosive juices to make their prey digestible. If attacked, they retreat.

**Blindsight (Ex):** 60 ft.

**Corrosive Mucus (Ex):** Once a fleshwing grapples its foe, it does 1d3 damage per turn until removed.

## Flying Asp

**Other Names:** Herpetopteryx

**Homeworld:** Severus

**Present Distribution:** Severus, Istakhr, many disreputable space stations

**Type:** Animalia (reptilia, squamata, aniliiviperidae)

**Role:** Carnivore

**Size:** 2 m (6 ft.)

**Weight:** 2 kg (4 lbs.)

**Habitat:** Tropical rainforest, space stations large enough to support a substantial hull rat population.

**Social Organization:** Solitary

**Description:** Sometimes confused with the jutzik of Ungavorox, the herpetopteryx of Severus is a true flying reptile unlike the gliding jutzik. The flying asp occupies a place midway along the evolution from reptiles to birds comparable to that of the archaeopteryx of primitive Holy Terra. Pairs of opposed feathers are attached to each vertebra along its spine to form a smooth aerodynamic surface nearly half a meter wide along the full length of its body. Each feather is independently jointed and controlled by spinal muscles that enable it to turn almost any direction and to flap like a bird's wing at high speeds. Besides gliding with such grace and maneuverability that it seems to be swimming through the air, the herpetopteryx is also able to truly hover, its feather-wings vibrating so fast they cannot be seen and sounding like several dozen hummingbirds at once.



**Behavior:** Although well-adapted for the jungles of Severus, the flying asp apparently followed its preferred prey, the hull rat, to the stars, and now can be found in the crawlspaces and least accessible areas of some large starships and space stations. Although their presence may be dangerous for humans, some captains risk leaving the flying asp alone so it can keep the hull rat population in check. Essentially a very delicate creature, the flying asp relies on its speed to evade the hull rat's steel-crushing jaws and seldom attacks any larger animal unless cornered and threatened. The flying asp feeds like other snakes and is especially vulnerable after a large meal, being unable to fly until the prey is digested down to size. Herpetopteryx is an egg-layer, and young are hatched with functioning fangs and venom, but do not gain the ability to fly until sexual maturity. Adults are solitary hunters, but family groups are capable of group tactics when their nest is menaced.

**Commodity:** The flying asp is of little value except in places severely infested with hull rats or to collectors of exotic lifeforms.

(The staff of Lord Erbian's would like to thank Baron Alajandro al-Malik for his assistance in compiling this entry.)

## Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 2, Dex 15, End 2

**Mind:** Wits 2, Per 6, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Dod 7, Fht 8, Imp 2, Obs 4, Snk 6, Vig 7, Fly 9

**Size:** MS

**Movement:** Slither 12 m, fly 20 m

**Special:** Bedazzle (Dex + Imp; by staying in constant motion while flying in elaborate coiling and swirling patterns, the flying asp can use its victory points from this roll as a penalty against attempts to attack or capture it while in flight.)

**Attacks:**

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG	SHOTS
Bite	8	23	2*	5 / day

\* Venomous — see below.

**Special Attacks:** Venomous Bite (Dex + Fht, 2d DMG. The venom of the flying asp is a muscular paralytic; for every point of damage the target takes, a -1 penalty is imposed on all physical actions. Once the target's End has been exceeded, he is paralyzed and may take no physical actions. The gamemaster may also wish to check for disease or other infections, as the flying asp's mouth is not very clean.)

**Armor:** Scales (ARM 1d)

**Vitality:** -6/-3/-1/0/0

## d20 System Stats

**Small Beast**

**Hit Dice:** 1d8 (4hp)

**Initiative:** +5 (Dex)

**Speed:** 40 ft., fly 65 ft. (average)

**AC:** 18 (+1 size, +5 Dex, +2 natural)

**Attacks:** Bite +8 melee

**Damage:** 1d6-3

**Face/Reach:** 2 1/2 ft. by 2 1/2 ft./ 2 1/2 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Venomous Bite

**Special Qualities:** Bedazzle

**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +8, Will +2

**Abilities:** Str 4, Dex 22, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 4

**Skills:** Balance +4, Climb +4, Hide +6, Listen +8, Spot +8

**Feats:** Weapon Finesse (bite)

**Challenge Rating:** 1

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Neutral

**Advancement:** None

### COMBAT

The flying asp circles its foe, searching for an opening. Usually its circling creates this opening as its foe becomes dazzled by its colors and motions. If threatened by something too large to eat, it usually tries to fly off.

**Bedazzle (Ex):** By staying in constant motion while flying in elaborate coiling and swirling patterns, the flying asp is harder to hit (40% miss chance to hit it).

**Venomous Bite (Ex):** The venom of the flying asp is a muscular paralytic; five times a day its bite causes a cumulative -1 to its opponent's attacks, saves, damage and checks unless its victim can make a Fort save (DC 15). If its victim fails this saving throw three times, treat him as paralyzed for 10 turns.

## Fordanian Wraith

**Other Names:** Cold Shiver, Spirit of the Mist

**Homeworld:** Gwynneth

**Present Distribution:** Gwynneth

**Type:** Cryptoxenological

**Role:** Secondary carnivore?

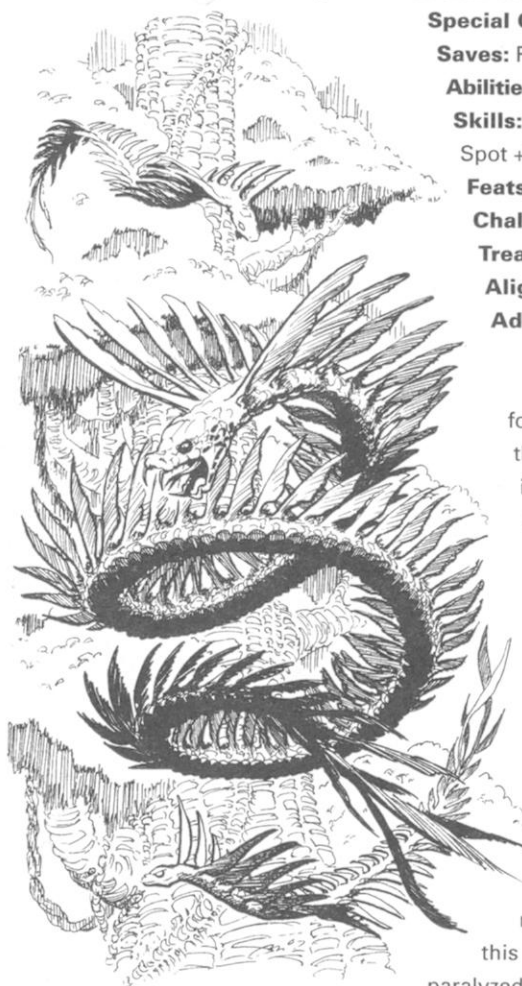
**Size:** 2.5m (7.5ft.) hunched; 3.5m (10.5 ft.) straightened

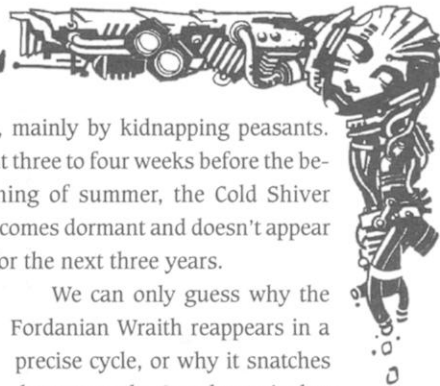
**Weight:** 120kg (275lb.)

**Habitat:** Humid forest

**Social Organization:** Solitary

**Description:** When I first heard about the Fordanian wraith, I insisted that such a creature cannot exist on a Pancreator-blessed world. But after our late, departed friend, Prof. Abey Lochran, found a frozen human body in the woods just outside Llanfyrth, I was determined to look into the matter myself.





As soon as I started asking about the "cold Shiver," the townsfolk of Carfen (the village I lived in during my stay on Fordan) swamped me with tales about this creature. As I had expected, most of them proved nothing more than ghost stories. One, however, sounded plausible enough to be investigated. A young woodsman, Thomas Fir, met the beast and lived to tell the tale. Intrigued, I left for Raven Moor in search of this witness, who told me the following:

The day Fir saw the Fordanian Wraith the sky was clouded, and a thick mist covered the forests. Thomas had tracked a deer for several days, and when the last sunbeams vanished, he managed to kill it. As he prepared the deer for transport, a silhouette emerged from the mist before him.

It was almost twice as big as I am, cloaked in some kind of robe. The only part of it I could make out well were its hands, almost human, but with skin far too hard and crude. I thought I was done for. Petrified with fear, I could not move and the creature came closer, and closer. Then a lonely hoot from an owl, not far away, broke the spell. Cold shiver turned its head and I was free. I took off and ran into the woods.

But the creature chased Thomas, who could not outrun it. Exhausted and scared to death, the lone woodsman finally came across a clearing holding the ruin of a small cottage. Thomas Fir dashed inside, crouched by the window, and drew his knife. But cold shiver stopped its pursuit at the verge of the clearing. It waited there for hours. Exhausted, Thomas eventually fell asleep and awoke in the morning to find nobody outside the cottage. Flabbergasted by the experience, Thomas Fir returned to Carfen.

Fir's story and other legends describe the Fordanian wraith as being as tall as a Vorox, but its hunched posture makes it look shorter. Its skin is marble-like, and its color is a variation of gray. Cold shiver's hands end in some kind of claws, but we are not exactly sure what their role is. The eyes of this creature are supposedly made of pure ice. I strongly doubt that. My theory is that the wraith's eyes are larger than normal, and that the direct eye-to-eye contact with its prey, combined with the all-surrounding coldness, creates an impression of ice eyes.

Another interesting thing is the clothing the creature uses. The peasants seem to believe that the wraith wears the clothes of its victims. I can definitively say that this cannot be true. It is the fear and superstition that clothes the cold shiver.

We do not know anything about its senses, although we can assume it has at least one of them heightened greatly. Our reasoning is based on the fact that the wraith could track its victims for days, even in the most extreme weather circumstances. As for its own tracks, well... no one was able to show me any. We cannot explain this yet, but we are working on it.

How the Spirit of the Mist kills its victims is also a mystery. Stories describe the bodies of the unfortunate ones as ripped open from the inside. The bodies also show signs of having been subjected to very low temperatures. This might be the key to the mystery of the Fordanian wraith, but if so, then we have yet to find the lock.

**Behavior:** The behavior of the Fordanian wraith is still a mystery to us. It seems that it shows up every three years, just after the first day of autumn. Then, for about two months, it makes its presence



known, mainly by kidnapping peasants. About three to four weeks before the beginning of summer, the Cold Shiver becomes dormant and doesn't appear for the next three years.

We can only guess why the Fordanian Wraith reappears in a precise cycle, or why it snatches humans only. One theory is that the Cold Shiver feeds on the human body heat. But the fundamental question remains. Why humans, when there are plenty of warm-blooded animals?

Another question arises. Why does the spirit of the mist strip its victims of their clothes? The

peasants insist that the creature sews the clothes up and wears them afterwards. This is surely nonsense, as I, in my 25 years of work, have never seen a non-sentient being capable of such civilized behavior.

**Commodity:** There are no known commodities, for a simple reason: no one ever had the chance to examine a Cold Shiver. If someone captured and brought back a specimen, he could name his own price for it.

### Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 8, Dex 9, End 8

**Mind:** Wits 5, Per 9, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Dod 6, Fht 5, Obs 5, Snk 10, Vig 7

**Learned skills:** Tracking 7

**Size:** XL (giant)

**Movement:** 10 m

**Special:** Cold Being (Cold causes no damage, but fire attacks do twice the normal number of dice), Traceless (The Fordanian Wraith doesn't leave tracks), Cold Aura (It creates a cold aura in a 30m radius. Anyone staying in that area for more than a minute feels a sharp coldness stinging her heart; the unfortunate victim must roll below End+Vig, or her heart rate slows, making her sleepy and apathetic with a -2 to all goals), Mesmerizing Presence (Anyone in a 3m radius must make a Passion + Vigor roll or be paralyzed for until the wraith attacks him, at which point he can roll again. Some noises are supposed to have the power to break the charm), Weakness (The wraith has some weakness in the form of a place it cannot go or conditions under which it cannot attack its victim.)

#### Attacks:

ATTACK	INT	GOAL	DMG
Cold Touch	7	14	3*
Heat Drain	7	*	S

\*If the cold touch inflicts any damage, the victim suffers heat drain  
**Special Attacks:** Heat Drain (If cold touch inflicts damage, the target suffers -1 to End; the ability loss is cumulative. If Endurance drops to 0, the target's blood freezes, bursting the veins. Cold shiver receives a temporary +1 to End (also cumulative) for every point of End drained from the victim.)

**Armor:** Ice body (5d)

**Vitality:** -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0



## d20 System Stats

**Large Magical Beast****Hit Dice:** 5d10+12 (40 hp)**Initiative:** +5 (Dex)**Speed:** 50 ft., burrowing 25 ft.**AC:** 15 (+2 Dex, +4 natural armor, -1 size)**Attacks:** Cold Touch +9 melee**Damage:** Cold Touch 1d6**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.**Special Attacks:** Constitution Drain**Special Qualities:** Cold Subtype, Traceless, Cold Aura, Mesmerizing Presence**Saves:** Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +3**Abilities:** Str 18, Dex 20, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 16, Cha 10**Skills:** Concentration +2, Hide +10, Intimidate +8, Listen +6, Search +8, Spot +10**Feats:** Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Endurance, Track**Challenge Rating:** 5**Treasure:** None**Alignment:** Always lawful evil**Advancement:** 6-10 HD**COMBAT**

Wraiths seek to freeze their victims both figuratively and literally. They first try to mesmerize their foes and then drain the heat from them.

**Constitution Drain (Ex):** Living creatures hit by the cold shiver's touch attack must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC15) or suffer D3 points of permanent Constitution drain.

**Cold Subtype:** Cold immunity; double damage from fire except on a successful save.

**Traceless (Ex):** Tracking cannot be used to follow a Fordanian Wraith

**Cold Aura (Ex):** The cold shiver creates a cold aura in a 100 ft. radius. Anyone staying in that area for more than a minute feels a sharp coldness stinging her heart. The unfortunate victim must make a Fortitude save (DC15), or her heart rate slows, making her sleepy and apathetic with a -2 to all rolls.

**Mesmerizing Presence (Sp):** Anyone in a 10 ft. radius must make a Will save (DC 15) or be held (as a Hold Person spell cast by a 5th level sorcerer) until the wraith attacks him, at which point he can roll again. Some noises are supposed to have the power to break this.

**Weakness:** The wraith has some weakness in the form of a place it cannot go or conditions under which it cannot attack its victim.

## Fosha g'maud

**Other Names:** Severan Great Red Hydra**Homeworld:** Severus**Present Distribution:** Holy Terra**Type:** Animalia (mollusca)**Role:** Secondary carnivore**Size:** 40 m (130 ft.) including tentacles**Weight:** 100 tons**Habitat:** Ocean; sublittoral to abyssal zones**Social Organization:** Solitary

**Description:** The Severan great red hydra, or *fosha g'maud* to the Ascorbite natives, is arguably the most dangerous marine predator of its violent homeworld. Red hydras have been known to attack Severan merchant sea-vessels and even warships. In 4998, the Decados frigate *Vladivostok* sank with massive loss of life after a hydra attack. Xenanthropologists have theorized that the Ascorbites never developed rudimentary boating techniques because of the danger of this beast.

The hydra's juvenile form is sessile, an anemone scavenging along the ocean floor and reaching out for whatever prey it can grasp. It remains in this stage for 5-20 years, depending on its food supply, but it can take even longer for juveniles in oceanic trenches where food is scarce. These individuals can grow to a monstrous size before emerging as adults. Biologists theorize that the hydra's metamorphosis to its adult form requires a great deal of energy, and if the juvenile never becomes sated, it does not undergo its transformation. It is possible that some truly immense and ancient juveniles live in Severus' deepest oceanic trenches.

The adult stage of the hydra is its more familiar, motile stage; a massive creature with 12 long tentacles, keen underwater senses and a powerful beak. It is well armored, with the bulk of its body protected by an interlocking network of armor plates. Its tentacles are tough but not armored, and can be retracted into its shell. Its mouth is within the shell itself, beneath the body among its tentacles. The hydra specializes in large prey, at least human-sized, using its tentacles to trap the creature and bring it to its beak. Hydras can range from oceanic trenches to coastal areas in search of food, and have even been sighted rising onto beaches in pursuit of prey. They live in this form for approximately another 50 years, mating yearly and laying hundreds of eggs on the ocean floor, most of which do not survive to adulthood. The hydra must molt every few years to accommodate its growth, and during this time it is vulnerable to predation or human whalers.

In 4929, great red hydras were spotted in the seas of Holy Terra, and it was discovered that they had been illegally smuggled and seeded by the notorious Guillermo Decados as a Mercurian prank. The hydras have multiplied and feed on marine mammals and sharks and are in turn hunted by sharks, orcas, and sperm whales during molting.

**Behavior:** Great red hydras are notoriously territorial and aggressive, and Severan sailors have reported witnessing battles between hydras on more than one occasion. Older hydras are sometimes driven onto land by younger individuals who claim their territory. The older hydras do not last long on land, but can cause significant damage before they expire. The territoriality even extends to large





ently destroyed ambassador's body flickered back into existence. He was a hologram. Glimmerwraiths are actually far more advanced than so-called "soft-light" holograms. Using similar techniques to the creation of a blaster shot, the glimmerwraith's projecting unit creates a force field mannequin, into which light is projected to create an image. In effect, the hologram has a physical presence.

**Behavior:** During the Second Republic, opportunity was wherever one found it, and as such the glimmerwraith technology was rapidly obtained and imitated. One of the favorite (best-selling) use of a wraiths was as training partners for the rich and famous. The wraiths could be programmed with any feasible level of melee or hand-to-hand combat, with the added bonus of there being no chance of permanent physical harm to the trainee. They could be easily stored away after the lesson to a projection/AI unit weighing less than a kilogram.

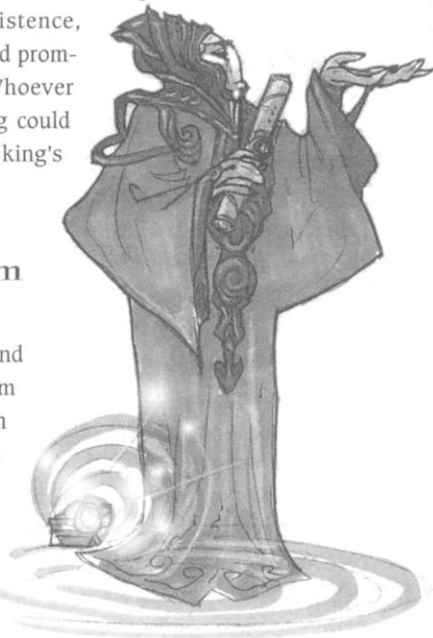
The physical appearance of the projected image could be chosen from a series of preset options — Blade Sister™ being very popular — or even designed via a separately purchased PDA Design Assistant kit. Several other designs other than the personal trainer were available at the height of the Glimmerwraith's popularity including the Glimmer Companion, Glimmer Teacher and the Glimmer Sentry — not to mention the Glimmour Courtesan. The more expensive models had no upper limit to their skills since they had no physical constraints to bind them.

A possibly apocryphal legend tells of Inquisitor Tyler and his technological cleanup crew stumbling upon a long dormant Glimmer Sentry set to "God"-mode persist. The story goes that after seven hours frenzied hand-to-hand combat, the Avesti were only successful when one of them fainted from his exertions and fell upon the projector unit, destroying it.

**Commodity:** Glimmerwraiths are Second Republic technology and as such are beyond the means of the Supreme Order to manufacture today. That being said, they command impressive prices, anywhere between 5,000 and 20,000 FB. The main collectors of these relics are the al-Malik and the Supreme Order of Engineers. Rumors persist of a still active, original Vau Ambassadorial Glimmerwraith in existence, complete with an unread promise (or ultimatum). Whoever possessed such a thing could most likely demand a king's ransom for it.

### Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 1, Dex 6-15, End — (A Wraith's hologram has an effective strength of 1, more expensive models have higher dex, there is no upper limit)  
**Mind:** Wits 1-4, Per 4-8, Tech —



**Natural skills:** Chm 4-8, Dod 4-15, Fht 4-15, Imp, Mel 4-15, Obs, Sht, Snk, Vig

Skills vary by model of wraith, expensive models have variable skill levels; with the addition of "expansion packs," wraiths may be equipped with fencing and melee combat actions.

**Learned skills:** None

**Size:** XL — humanoid, but available in any size.

**Movement:** 0

**Attacks:** By weapon/hand (Wraiths cause no actual damage. However, their strikes can shock the unaware — Calm + Stoic Mind if convinced of death blow, or fall unconscious)

**Armor:** No armor. Given their slight physical presence, it is feasible to equip a Wraith — once solidified — with an energy shield.

**Vitality:** 0/0

The hologramatic presence of the Wraith is not affected by physical damage. Its projection unit has two Vitality levels.

### d20 System Stats

**Medium Construct**

**Hit Dice:** 4 hp

**Initiative:** +2 (Dex)

**Speed:** 0

**AC:** 12 (+2 Dex)

**Attacks:** Rapier +6 melee

**Damage:** None

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Shock

**Special Qualities:** Standard energy shield

**Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +2

**Abilities:** Str 3, Dex 14, Con 0, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 0

**Skills:** Spot +10

**Feats:** Parry, Weapon Finesse (rapier)

**Challenge Rating:** 0

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Neutral

**Advancement:** None

#### COMBAT

As a sentry wraith, this machine is supposed to engage intruders and raise an alarm until help arrives.

**Shock (Ex):** When the wraith critically hits an unwary opponent for the first time, the foe must make a Will save (DC 15) or fall unconscious for 2d4 rounds.

### GLO-OPF / GLE-EPF

**Other Names:** Gloop / gleep

**Homeworld:** Leagueheim, Kurga ("Hira")

**Present Distribution:** Leagueheim, Kurga, Byzantium Secundus, Criticorum, possibly others

**Type:** Technologia (golem)

**Role:** None (powered by fusion cel)

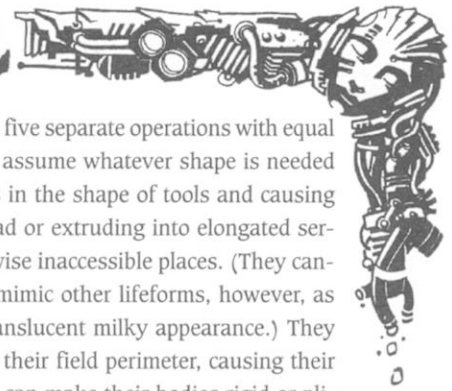
**Size:** GLO-OPF: 2 m (6.5 ft.) / GLE-EPF: 1 m (3.25 ft.)

**Weight:** GLO-OPF: 1 kg (2.2 lbs.) / GLE-EPF: 0.5 kg (1.1 lb.)

**Habitat:** Any ("GLO-OPF: Factories, warehouses, heavy industrial and construction sites. / GLE-EPF: Domiciles and public facilities.")

**Social Organization:** None ("GLO-OPF: As programmed by work staff. / GLE-EPF: As programmed by household staff, modified by context-sensitive dedication to family members, when applicable.")





**Description:** Although their appearance can be unnerving to the unprepared, these strange creatures are actually the relatively harmless products of bizarre Republican technology. Differing in size and ability, both appear as shimmering translucent milky white blobs in which two small dark solid orbs revolve around each other. In their usual "standby" mode, they are roughly pear-shaped with the broader base resting on the floor and the two orbs in the upper "head" like spinning eyes. When moving about, the "head" may lean forward as the base rolls or undulates across the floor. When engaged in tasks, they can extend a variety of limbs and appendages, and shape their bodies in whatever fashion is necessary. While they possess great strength, they have no mass to speak of and must change shape in such a way as to anchor themselves and gain leverage when manipulating heavy objects.

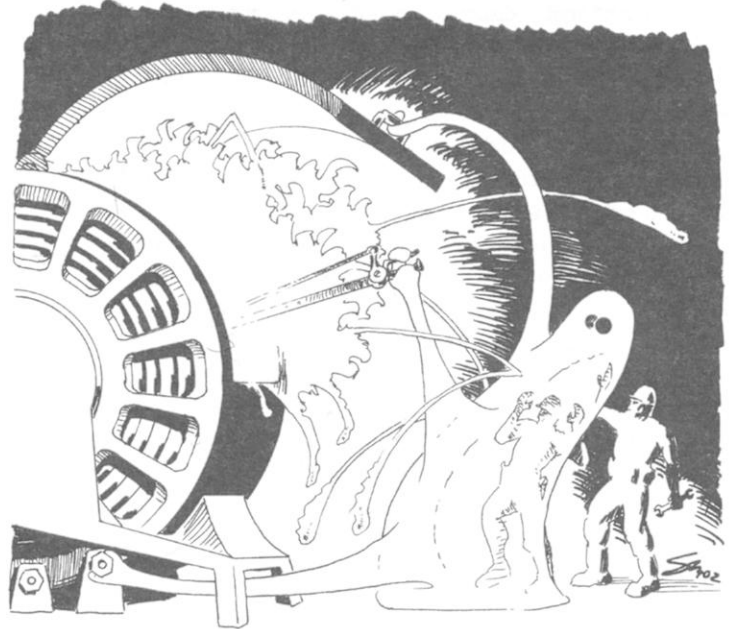
Lord Erbian's staff wishes to express its gratitude to the Supreme Order of Engineers for supplying us with the following information:

**Glioplanar Polyflexor Fields:** Near the end of the Second Republic, close examination of the Vau 'hansth,' or sheath, enabled scientists to generate their own fields with 'hardened' perimeters that resisted the interpenetration of solid objects and which could be shaped with precision. One product of this tech was the Glimmerwraith (see separate listing). Another was the Glioplanar Logonomic Omni-Operational Polyflexor Field, an independent mobile field generator controlled by a nanocrystal think machine. The GLO-OPF was built for strength and durability, and programmed for heavy industrial tasks too difficult or dangerous for humans or other sentients.

The workers who benefited from the power and versatility of this new type of golem nicknamed it 'Gloop,' and all known models still in existence respond to this name. The success of this industrial golem in field-testing prompted the immediate production of a smaller, smarter model designed for household use by the general public, called the GLE-EPF (Glioplanar Logonomic Endo-Environmental Polyflexor Field) or 'Gleep.' Early prototypes were presented as gifts to the heads of major markets, but further development and mass production ended with the Fall of the Second Republic. Their existence was largely forgotten except by golem experts within the Supreme Order, and by House Shelit on the planet Kurga, who kept their prototype models running and retained knowledge of their operations and programming. Other prototypes are believed to have remained in the vicinity of their initial deployment, usually abandoned factories or the disused halls of larger palaces and mansions. There they mindlessly attempt to keep up the tasks they were last ordered to do before the Fall, and are often mistaken for ghosts by those who discover them.

**Behavior:** According to Sir Vaj Shelit, gloops and gleeps are highly intelligent and responsive to human needs, and are programmed to prevent harm to humans and other familiar sentients even at the cost of their own "lives." (They may engage in defensive combat, but are limited to non-lethal tactics.) They can comprehend even vaguely worded commands and learn new skills instantly when properly taught. They cannot speak — plans to install voice-synth abilities had not been implemented in original prototypes — but can vibrate the air around them at frequencies and pitches that effectively imitate human tones of voice. They can extend up to five

arms at a time and perform up to five separate operations with equal attention and facility. They can assume whatever shape is needed for a given task, molding limbs in the shape of tools and causing their bodies to flatten and spread or extruding into elongated serpentine shapes to fit into otherwise inaccessible places. (They cannot use this ability to visually mimic other lifeforms, however, as they always retain the same translucent milky appearance.) They can alter the surface tension of their field perimeter, causing their "skin" to harden or soften, and can make their bodies rigid or pliable, flexible and malleable. They can also carry objects in sealed cavities inside their bodies, or form a protective bubble around endangered humans. (This can only be done for short periods, however, as they do not have air supply or life-support facilities.)



Both types are capable of some degree of independent thought thanks to the logonomic programming of their nanocrystal brains, but, unlike its equally advanced cousins, the gloop (the industrial model) is not programmed for sensitivity to human emotional patterns — as are gleeps and some pygmalium-brained golems. Both have shown creative solutions to imprecise instructions, however. The Supreme Order of Engineers has grudgingly admitted that the nanocrystal brain can be reprogrammed (enabling them to cause harm to humans, for instance) but stresses that such an operation is difficult, expensive, time-consuming, illegal and immoral. Both the nanocrystal brain and field generator are contained in the two twirling orbs suspended in the "head." When ordered into a dormant state (i.e. "Turn off!"), the translucent field disappears completely and the two balls, each about five centimeters in diameter, may be stored in a pouch, pocket, or, as the Shelit prefer, in a decorative box.

**Commodity:** Both gloops and gleeps can be extremely valuable to those who know what they are and how to use them, but are so rare that no set market price exists for them. (The few found in the Known Worlds were presented as gifts to the Imperial Court and certain al-Malik notables.) The Supreme Order of Engineers suggests a starting price of at least 10,000 firebirds.





## Victory Point System Traits

### GLO-OPF (gloop)

**Body:** Str 14, Dex 8, End 12  
**Mind:** Wits 5, Per 7, Tech 7  
**Natural skills:** Chm 1, Dod 7, Fht 4, Imp 6, Mel 6, Obs 7, Sht 0, Snk 4, Vig 10  
**Learned skills:** Drive (any but Beastcraft) 5, Lockpicking 7, Read Urthtech, Remedy 5, Science (Chemistry 6, Engineering 9, Physics 4, Tech Redemption (Craft 6, High-Tech 8, Mech 10, Volt 7), Think Machine 5  
**Size:** XL (tall)  
**Movement:** 12 m  
**Special:** Multiple Multi-Use Limbs (5 total: Limbs can mimic function of all mech tools, scissors, wirecutter, knife, large kite or round shield, and Thieves Keys); Body Morph (Body can stretch up to 10 meters long, flatten to six square meters surface, or form bubble around four large adult humanoid. The gamemaster may find other applications for this variable geometry; use these as general guidelines. Also, the gamemaster may decide to adjust Body ratings or Armor to reflect conditions of leverage, spreading force-field too thin, etc.); Mute (Cannot speak articulately, but can nod, use hand signs and body motions, murmur for attention or alarm, and can read and write fluent Urthtech.); Regeneration (Glioplanar field replenishes itself at a rate of 1 Vitality level per turn.)

**Attacks:** (STR bonus: +3)

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Grapple	2	12	*
Block	4	12	**
Disengage	6	16	**
Rooting	4	12	**
Disarm	4	13	***
Cloak	6	14/13	***

\* Gloop will not inflict damage, just hold target until ordered to release or target clearly submits.

\*\* Effects for these maneuvers can be found in the Martial Arts Actions Chart, **Fading Suns** p.187.

\*\*\* Because it can grasp sharp edges without injury, gloop does not need a weapon or cloak to perform these maneuvers, the effects of which can be found in the Fencing Actions Chart, **Fading Suns** p.188.

**Special Attacks:** Engulf (Once a target is successfully Grappled, the gloop may opt to completely surround him with its field. This is just like forming a protective bubble except that the target may try to resist by struggling — Str + Vigor versus Str + Vigor — or by firing a weapon [the gloop's interior has the same Armor rating as its exterior; the gamemaster is left to her own discretion regarding internal ricochet or backblast...]. The gloop will not intentionally suffocate an engulfed target.)

**Armor:** Glioplanar Field Coherence (optional; up to ARM 12d)  
 (Subtract 1d for each additional cubic meter gained through Body Morphing. E.g., a protective bubble containing four adults would have about ARM 6d.)

**Vitality:** Field Deactivated/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0

### GLE-EPF (gleep)

**Body:** Str 7, Dex 8, End 6  
**Mind:** Wits 6, Per 6, Tech 6

**Spirit:** Ext 8 / Int 1, Pas 4 / Calm 6, Fth 4 / Ego 4  
**Natural skills:** Chm 8, Dod 9, Fht 2, Imp 1, Mel 4, Obs 6, Sht 0, Snk 7, Vig 8

**Learned skills:** Arts (Cooking) 8, Drive Landcraft 5, Empathy 3, Etiquette 10, Lockpicking 6, Physick 5, Read Urthish, Science (Biology 3, Xeno-Biology 2), Tech Redemption (Craft 7, Mech 5, Volt 5), Think Machine 5, Xeno-Empathy 2

**Size:** Extra Large (dwarf)

**Movement:** 8 m

**Special:** Multiple Multi-Use Limbs (5 total: Limbs can mimic function of all household appliances, Mech tools, scissors, wirecutter, knife, large kite or round shield, and Thieves Keys); Body Morph (Body can stretch up to six meters long, flatten to four square meters surface, or form bubble around three small children or one medium-sized adult humanoid. The gamemaster may find other applications for this variable geometry; use these as general guidelines. Also, the gamemaster may decide to adjust Body ratings or Armor to reflect conditions of leverage, spreading force-field too thin, etc.); Mute (Cannot speak articulately, but can nod, use hand signs and body motions, murmur for attention or alarm, and can read and write fluent Urthtech.); Regeneration (Glioplanar field replenishes itself at a rate of 1 Vitality level per turn.)



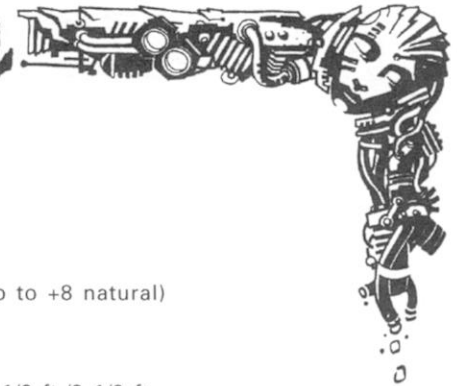
**Attacks:** (STR bonus: +1)

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Grapple	0	10	*
Block	2	10	**
Disengage	8	17	**
Rooting	2	10	**
Disarm	2	11	***
Cloak	4	12/11	***

\* Gleep will not inflict damage, just hold target until ordered to release or target clearly submits.

\*\* Effects for these maneuvers can be found in the Martial Arts Actions Chart, **Fading Suns** p.187.

\*\*\* Because it can grasp sharp edges without injury, gleep does not need a weapon or cloak to perform this action.



**Special Attacks:** Engulf (Once a target is successfully Grappled, the gleep may opt to completely surround him with its field. This is just like forming a protective bubble except that the target may try to resist by struggling — Str + Vigor versus Str + Vigor — or by firing a weapon [the gleep's interior has the same Armor rating as its exterior; the gamemaster is left to her own discretion regarding internal ricochet or backblast...]. The gleep will not intentionally suffocate an engulfed target.)

**Armor:** Glioplanar Field Coherence (optional; up to ARM 8d)  
(Subtract 1d for each additional cubic meter gained through Body Morphing. E.g., a protective bubble containing three children or one adult would have about ARM 5d.)

**Vitality:** Field Deactivated/0/0/0/0/0/0

## d20 System Stats

**GLO-OPF (gloop)**

**Small Construct**

**Hit Dice:** 4d8+4 (hp)

**Initiative:** +4 (Dex)

**Speed:** 35 ft.

**AC:** 27 (+1 size, +4 Dex, up to +12 natural)

**Attacks:** Grapple +8 melee

**Damage:** None

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Engulf

**Special Qualities:** Body Morph, Multiple Multi-Use Limbs, Regeneration

**Saves:** Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +2

**Abilities:** Str 14, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 6

**Skills:** Hide +4, Listen +8, Spot +8

**Feats:** Weapon Finesse (grapple)

**Challenge Rating:** 1/2

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Neutral

**Advancement:** —

### COMBAT

The Gloop only fights to subdue, and then only if required by its programming

**Body Morph (Ex):** Body can stretch up to 30 ft. long, flatten to 20 square ft. surface, or form bubble around four large adult humanoids. The gamemaster may find other applications for this variable geometry; use these as general guidelines. Also, the gamemaster may decide to adjust stats to reflect conditions of leverage, spreading force-field too thin, etc.

**Engulf (Ex):** Once a target is successfully grappled, the gloop may opt to completely surround him with its field. This is just like forming a protective bubble except that the target may try to resist by struggling — Str versus Str — or by firing a weapon (the gloop's interior has the same Armor rating as its exterior; the gamemaster is left to her own discretion regarding internal ricochet or backblast...). The gloop will not intentionally suffocate an engulfed target.

**Multiple Multi-Use Limbs:** five total. Limbs can mimic function of all mech tools, scissors, wirecutter, knife, large kite or round shield, and Thieves Keys.

**Regeneration (Ex):** Glioplanar field replenishes itself at a rate of 1d4 hit points per turn.

**GLE-EPF (gleep)**

**Tiny Construct**

**Hit Dice:** 2d8+2 (hp)

**Initiative:** +4 (Dex)

**Speed:** 25 ft.

**AC:** 24 (+2 size, +4 Dex, up to +8 natural)

**Attacks:** Grapple +6 melee

**Damage:** None

**Face/Reach:** 2 1/2 ft. by 2 1/2 ft./2 1/2 ft

**Special Attacks:** Engulf

**Special Qualities:** Multiple Multi-Use Limbs, Body Morph, Regeneration

**Saves:** Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +1

**Abilities:** Str 12, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8

**Skills:** Hide +4, Listen +8, Spot +8

**Feats:** Weapon Finesse (grapple)

**Challenge Rating:** 1/2

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Neutral

**Advancement:** —

### COMBAT

The Gleep only fights to subdue, and then only if required by its programming

**Body Morph (Ex):** Body can stretch up to 30 ft. long, flatten to 20 square ft. surface, or form bubble around four large adult humanoids. The gamemaster may find other applications for this variable geometry; use these as general guidelines. Also, the gamemaster may decide to adjust stats to reflect conditions of leverage, spreading force-field too thin, etc.

**Engulf (Ex):** Once a target is successfully grappled, the gleep may opt to completely surround him with its field. This is just like forming a protective bubble except that the target may try to resist by struggling — Str versus Str — or by firing a weapon (the gleep's interior has the same Armor rating as its exterior; the gamemaster is left to her own discretion regarding internal ricochet or backblast...). The gleep will not intentionally suffocate an engulfed target.

**Multiple Multi-Use Limbs:** Five total. Limbs can mimic function of all mech tools, scissors, wirecutter, knife, large kite or round shield, and Thieves Keys.

**Regeneration (Ex):** Glioplanar field replenishes itself at a rate of 1d4 hit points per turn.

## Griffin

**Other Names:** Grypheans

**Homeworld:** Holy Terra

**Type:** Legendary (for the "common" specimens) or Emphyrean

**Role:** Engineered griffins are secondary carnivores; Grypheans are Angelic Guardians/Avengers.

**Size:** 3 m. (10 ft.)

**Weight:** 300 to 500 kg (600 to 1000 pounds)

**Habitat:** Griffins prefer temperate (mountainous woodlands) or tropical (deserts) environments; Grypheans dwell in the Dominions, the Fourth Emanation, and/or the Imperitories, the Fifth Emanation.

**Social Organization:** Solitary



**Description:** Several ancient Urth chronicles of pre-reflective religions mention the existence and the threat of the griffins, legendary beasts that supposedly looked like a lion with the wings and head of an eagle. These obscure (and now, for the most part, lost) chronicles state that their homeland was situated near the Urthish Byzantium, in a forested mountainous region. The Caucasus Mountains were purportedly home to fabulous riches the griffins guarded.



The natives of Holy Terra saw griffins in an ambiguous light. Known for their extreme ferocity, griffins snatched up horses (of whose flesh they were particularly fond) with their powerful talons. The bane of horsemen, griffins were the ultimate threat from the skies. Yet, they were also credited with following in the wake of powerful - and successful - conquerors, whose legendary feats fill the pages of the same Urthish chronicles. Indeed, an ancient archaic legend tells the story of a legendary king named Augustus who conquered the riches guarded by griffins and founded an immense and glorious empire.

The appearance of a griffin at the side of Saint Lextius the Knight and Saint Mantius the Soldier in an obscure passage of the Vision of the Gate, one of the books of the Digamma Apocrypha, sparked theological controversies about the nature of griffins. During the late Second Republic, as the Church sought to rejuvenate the flame of faith in the jaded masses, Church-sponsored archaeologists uncovered ancient ruins in Rome on Holy Terra of a temple in which a proud statue of an emperor stood. At its feet were two great griffins. This temple was dedicated to a pre-reflective god named "Ultror."

From this evidence, the Brother Battle and Eskatonic orders have come to several conclusions. The first is that griffins are companions to a divine being. The second is that they can grant victory to a just ruler who respects the divine order. As the Church canon teaches us, the only fitting form of government for sentients is an empire, a temporal mirror of the secular Emyrean of the Pancreator. The emperor is the sun around which the ordered society orbits in harmony, a reflection of the harmonious celestial and heavenly spheres. All these assumptions lead such scholars to advance that ancient Urthish mythologies contained elements of pre-reflective religion.

So, maybe the god Ultror is flawed perception of the Pancreator by pre-reflective people. Better still, Ultror could be identified either with Zakhayelos, ruler of the Fifth Emanation, or perhaps Jachemuyelos, ruler of the Fourth. If so, then the griffins of old Urthish literature were never material beings but a yet-unknown

manifestation of the Sefirah. This is why, to directly express their Emyrean origins, these orders call them grypheans, to honor the Pancreator's servants.

These theological ideas found a relatively modest diffusion among scholars and mystics. The al-Malik mystic Ishram Ibn Radiwan from Istakhr believes that if griffins are the flawed perception of grypheans, then their fabled mountainous habitat may be, in fact, a analogy to the enigmatic Third Mountain found in his house's doctrine.

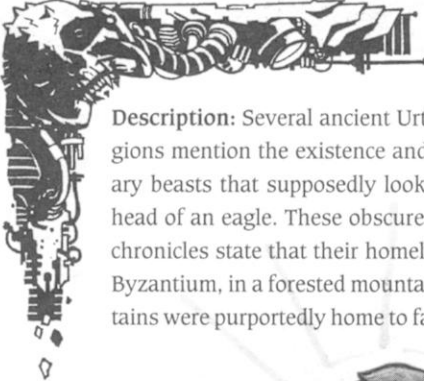
All these discussions would have remained largely theoretical if not for the controversial - and possibly heretical - sightings of grypheans by Master Claudius de Moley in Stigmata's system during the Emperor Wars. As the Symbiots swarmed over the Ruad cathedral of the Brother Battle Order, Master Claudius and his entourage frantically defended the planet. Forced to retreat to the system's jumpgate, they enacted the greatest theurgic rite known to their elite force - the invocation to Zakhayelos, Lord of Hosts - and waited for their end with grim determination.

Then, the jumpgate of the system opened itself and from it sprang two great grypheans (or so Master Claudius reported) who ravaged the Symbiot forces. Soon after, the jumpgate opened itself again and from it Alexius' fleet came, saving the Brother Battle monks who later reclaimed their cathedral. The grypheans had already vanished. The fact that the grypheans heralded the timely arrival of Alexius, the future emperor, convinced many Brother Battle knights that the Emperor was, indeed, chosen by the Pancreator.

Since then, Master Claudius has remained mute on the subject, aware that it could bring the Orthodoxy's censure down upon his order. Rumors of heretical worship of the Emperor in the order are bad enough. Combine those with tales of grypheans with mech-claws ripping through the bio-organic hulls of the Symbiots, their holy aura of golden-blue flame causing the ship's "flesh" to writhe horribly, their technological wings reminiscent of Annunaki designs, and inquisitors would flock to him.

**Behavior:** Aside from the descriptions found in rare tomes, little is known about the grypheans' behavior. Solitary or seen in pairs (in the case of Master Claudius' anecdote), they further the infinite goals of the Pancreator and his servants. According to the scant information possessed, grypheans seem to favor successful leaders - or are the reason behind these conquerors' success. Their appearance is synonymous with the Pancreator's blessing upon an empire, or so some theologians believe. In combat, their sacred can change the tide of battles as they rip open a ship's metallic skin with their powerful beaks and talons.

**Commodity:** It is unlikely that an angelic being can be captured. Only Antinomists would traffic in the body parts of such holy creatures. Such crimes, if ever perpetrated, would lead to rightful death by fire. If Claudius' description is exact, then their cyber-wings could provide clues to Anunnaki "techno-magic." If griffins are just that, magical beings, then their feathers could be useful for mystic rites. Urthish griffins were said to guard fabulous riches, so some treasure-hunters and Scraver reclamation teams dream of one day spotting a griffin without understanding that the "riches" are certainly spiritual. On the other hand, Second Republic zoos or wild circus possibly engineered the beasts. Their survival, however highly unlikely, may explain the occasional sighting rumors (most notably in Hazat space and on Kurga) among terrified serfs or even the rare



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disappearance of Hazat noble riders on hunting parties.

**Note:** The traits given below are not for the ones Claudius claims to have seen. Such creatures, like the Empyrean powers said to be summoned by certain high-level theurgic rites, cannot be measured in human terms. The following traits are for lesser versions.

## Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 18, Dex 10, End 18

**Mind:** Wits 8, Per 10, Tech 10

**Spirit:** Ext 10/Int 8, Pas 10/Calm 5, Fth 10 /Ego 0

**Natural skills:** Dod 8, Fht 10, Imp 10, Obs 9, Snk 5, Vig 10

**Learned skills:** Empathy 5, Flight 10, Survival 9, Tracking 9, Xenos-Empathy 5

**Size:** G to I

**Movement:** run 40 km/h, flight 80 km/h. As angelic beings, grypheans seem able to manifest at opportune moments, traveling the jumproads through unknown means.

**Special:** Grypheans can sense an individual's purity as per the rituals Rending the Veil of Unreason, Second Sight, Knowing the False Heart and Scent of Evil (in fact their perception is quite similar to the combined effects). One will not be likely to aid a character with an Urge or Hubris score higher than 3. Of course, the griffins created by Second Republic zoos don't exhibit any of the special abilities attributed to grypheans.

**Attacks:** (STR bonus: +5)

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Bite	9	20	10
Claws 10	20	8	

**Special Attacks:** As servitors and embodiments of the Fourth or Fifth Emanations, grypheans can appear as living incarnation of the Holy Flame as per the Avestite ritual Body of Fire. When assuming this form, all their attacks do an additional +2 damage. This flame burns out sinners and unreflective souls and, like the Avestite ritual, heals wounds as well as negating Urge or Hubris in their immediate vicinity. It also renders them immune to Symbiot infection or psychic and other occult attacks. For one of the faithful to see a gryphean in its full glory is a boost to morale and faith, giving a +2 Faith as long as it is here. Characters who see grypheans multiple times may justify permanently raising their Faith (at the Gamemaster's discretion).

**Armor:** Cyber-wings (ARM 10d)

**Vitality:** -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0

## d20 System Stats

**Large Beast or Outsider**

**Hit Dice:** 10d10+40 (2 hp)

**Initiative:** +4 (Dex)

**Speed:** 50 ft., fly 100 ft. (good)

**AC:** 23 (+4 from Dex, -1 size, +10 natural)

**Attacks:** Bite +16 melee, Claws +16 melee

**Damage:** Bite 2d8+10, Claw 1d12+10

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 10 ft./10 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Holy Flame

**Special Qualities:** Damage Reduction 10/+5, Immunities, Theurgy

**Saves:** Fort +14, Ref +9, Will +14

**Abilities:** Str 30, Dex 18, Con 18, Int 18, Wis 18, Cha 18

**Skills:** Concentration +12, Knowledge (Religion) +14, Listen +10, Sense Motive +20, Spot +16

**Feats:** Cleave, Combat Casting, Flyby Attack, Holier than Thou, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Sanctify Arms and Armor

**Challenge Rating:** 10

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Lawful Good

**Advancement:** —

### COMBAT

Grypheans fight to protect the faithful, and do all that they can toward this goal. They gladly sacrifice themselves to save others.

**Holy Flame (Su):** As servitors and embodiments of the Fourth or Fifth Emanations, grypheans can appear as living incarnation of the Holy Flame. When assuming this form, all their attacks do an additional +4 damage. This flame burns out sinners and unreflective souls and, can heal wounds as well as negating Urge or Hubris in their immediate vicinity. It also renders them immune to Symbiot infection or psychic and other occult attacks. For one of the faithful to see a gryphean in its full glory is a boost to morale and faith, giving a +2 morale bonus as long as it is here.

**Damage Reduction** 10/+5

**Immunities:** Grypheans are immune to fire and cold, and to charm, sleep and fear effects.

**Theurgy:** Grypheans cast rituals like 10th-level theurgists, usually using the Orthodox path, but having access to any rituals the gamemaster desires.

## Ground Troll

**Other Names:** Groundling, G./H.U.L.

**Homeworld:** Unknown

**Present Distribution:** Known Worlds, especially near mining sites, on moons and asteroids.

**Type:** Changed (Inhuman)

**Role:** Omnivore

**Size:** 2 m (6.5 ft.)

**Weight:** 500 kg (1100 lbs.)

**Habitat:** Underground.

**Social Organization:** Unknown, probably solitary

**Description:** The huge subhuman monster lurking in caves and tunnels has inspired feelings of horror since time immemorial; as Lord Erbian's has recently learned, the truth behind this creature is even more horrific still. Many well-verified sightings of trolls, as well as innumerable unsubstantiated reports, have been recorded since the Fall, usually in the vicinity of abandoned Second Republic mines. Common folk, noting the creatures' stony appearance, seem to believe that they were born from the earth itself, pure rock and soil animated and given half-human shape by some vengeful ghost. Priests swear that they are demons newly emerged from their Infernal pit. Last year, Lord Erbian's acquired some ancient data through contacts within the Scrauers Guild, data which, when decrypted, shed some light on the origin of these creatures, generally known as "trolls" or "groundlings."

In the early days of the Second Republic, some unscrupulous



mining corporations decided that human and alien labor was insufficient for their needs, and sought a workforce that could increase productivity while eliminating such inconvenient maintenance expenditures as food, air and shelter. Using many of the same techniques that were later recovered to create the Grimson troopers during the Emperor Wars, they genetically altered a large number of humanoids for work in enclosed subterranean environments, and even underwater. Dubbed G./H.U.L., or "Geologic/Hydraulic Utility Labor," they were given rock-hard skin, broad chisel-fingered hands that could be used as shovels or pickaxes, and the strength to dig into solid stone. Lungs and viscera were replaced with a biochemical furnace that could render all necessary nutrients from occasional meals of slag and gravel while excreting whatever minerals or precious metals they were mining for. Jaws and teeth were also hardened, enabling the worker to literally chew her way through a vein of ore. Furthermore — and it is uncertain at this point in time whether this was deliberate on the part of their creators — G./H.U.L. workers lost the capacity to age and die in the natural way that all life normally completes its allotted cycle. Only the most severe injury could kill them.



The existence of G./H.U.L. was kept secret from the public to avoid the inevitable moral outrage, but it seems that every major mining concern of the age employed them, particularly in environs hostile to human life — deep sea operations, lunar installations and asteroid mines. One of the largest employers was Egonics Interstellar, which is believed to have owned a significant portion of what is now the Kurga Caliphate; some members of Lord Erbian's staff speculate that the Kurgan word "ghul," denoting a troll-like monster, is derived from G./H.U.L. In time, most of the G./H.U.L. began to resent having to do the most difficult work imaginable without ever being able to enjoy the profit of their effort. (Genetic alterations of this type were apparently irreversible, even for the much-vaunted science of the Second Republic.) Many rebelled openly, while others retreated into the unknown depths of the earth or seas. One might suppose that these refugees banded together to form their own societies, but that does not appear to be the case, as groundlings were seldom grouped together in large numbers. Some individuals were recovered later during the Second Republic, usually after being buried alive for centuries by shaft collapses and seismic disturbances. (Those forgotten in the deep ocean eventually succumbed to erosion.) Now, over a thousand years later, they continue to emerge from beneath the ground to remind us of the hubris that once inflamed our race.

**Behavior:** It is unknown what the G./H.U.L. were like originally; supposedly steps were taken in their creation to reduce a number of natural emotional responses, like the elimination of all reproductive apparatus. All that can be said for certain is that any troll encountered in the present day will have spent the last thousand years

with minimal or no contact with the surface world. In some cases this may be voluntary, as the abandoned laborer probably prefers the solitude of the deep earth to the surface society that created then discarded it. More often, however, it is likely that the groundling has been trapped underground for centuries and only recently made

its way clear to the surface, driven by ancient instinct or even the memory of having once been a normal surface-dwelling person. In either case the creature may be considered insane by human standards, often violently so. Those who encounter it usually react out of fear and loathing, quickly attempting some violent behavior of their own to drive it off, though this generally just provokes rage. We should also remember that the eyes of the G./H.U.L were designed for work in dimly lit and pitch dark environs, so those that emerge in daytime may simply find that light so bright is painful to them.

Some reports, on the other hand, suggest that G./H.U.L. may yet respond to gentler overtures; cases have been recorded of trolls befriending young children, the blind, or those too simple-minded to be afraid of a huge ape-like form apparently sculpted from solid stone. While it would be foolhardy to approach such a creature directly, Lord Erbian's recommends that anyone who sees one keep a cool head about them.

(It should be stressed that there is absolutely no evidence whatever to suggest that the G./H.U.L. have banded together over the centuries to form a large active underground society conspiring to reclaim all the precious metals and gems stolen from their subterranean realm by the surface-dwellers, as depicted in the magic lantern potboiler by Milius Glorosus, "Die, Grundlagen, Die!")

**Commodity:** It is not unreasonable to speculate that some mineral wealth may reside in the latrine-pit of some troll's lair, but Lord Erbian's does not recommend attempting to salvage it.

### Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 14, Dex 4, End 18

**Mind:** Wits 3, Per 5, Tech 0

**Spirit:** Ext 0/Int 4, Pas 6/Calm 2, Fth 0/Ego 2

**Natural skills:** Chm 0, Dod 3, Fht 6, Imp 8, Mel 4, Obs 2, Sht 0, Snk 2, Vig 9

**Learned skills:** Science: Geology 4

**Size:** XL (Tall)

**Movement:** 8 m, burrow 12 m

**Special:** Blindsight (20 m), Omnidigestion (The troll may derive nourishment from inorganic matter, especially mineral); Light Sensitivity (-4 to all sight-related Per rolls in daylight)

**Attacks:** (STR bonus: +3)

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Fist	6	10	5
Kick	5	10	6
Fingertip Strike	6	10	8
Bite	2	6	4

**Special Attacks:** Fingertip Strike (Dex + Fht, 8d DMG; by striking with its hardened chisel-shaped fingers together, the troll can simulate a shovel or, with only one finger, a pick-axe — 5d DMG.)

**Armor:** Stony Hide (ARM 10d)

**Vitality:** -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0



## d20 System Stats

## Large Changed

**Hit Dice:** 8d8+88 (124 hp)**Initiative:** +0**Speed:** 25 ft., burrow 40 ft.**AC:** 24 (-1 size, +15 natural)**Attacks:** Unarmed + 15 melee, fingertip +15 melee, bite +15 melee**Damage:** Unarmed 2d8+9, fingertip 2d12+9, bite 1d6+9**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.**Special Attacks:** none**Special Qualities:** Blindsight, Omnidigestion, Light Sensitivity**Saves:** Fort +19, Ref +4, Will +8**Abilities:** Str 28, Dex 10, Con 33, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 2**Skills:** Listen +6, Spot +6**Feats:** Power Attack**Challenge Rating:** 6**Treasure:** Standard (all precious metals)**Alignment:** Neutral**Advancement:** 9-12 HD

## COMBAT

Not used to fighting, ground trolls begin battles curiously. As soon as they get hurt, however, they either burrow away or become raging combat machines.

**Blindsight (Ex):** 60 ft.

**Omnidigestion (Ex):** The troll may derive nourishment from inorganic matter, especially mineral.

**Light Sensitivity (Ex):** Ground trolls suffer a -2 circumstance penalty to attack rolls, saves and checks in bright sunlight.

## Guernicabeast

**Homeworld:** Istakhr**Present Distribution:** Criticorum**Type:** Changed (Tweaked)**Role:** Carnivore**Size:** 10 ft.**Weight:** 275 kg (600 lbs.)**Habitat:** Plains**Social Organization:** Solitary, pair or pride (3-12)

**Description:** When the Church wishes to point to the dangers of genetic engineering, it frequently uses the guernicabeast as an example. Compared to many other types of Changed, this silver-furred leonine animal hardly seems monstrous. Indeed, inhabitants of Istakhr and Criticorum have probably seen a fair number of guernicabeasts over the course of their lives. They are common as animal companions among the higher nobility of House al-Malik and can even be found in the wilds where they were released during the height of the Second Republic. This is precisely why the Church often singles out these creatures: they are accepted as a "fact of life," an acceptance that belies the danger they actually pose.

Even their defenders will admit that guernicabeasts can be deadly foes when enraged. Created from lion stock as part of an ill-fated "uplift program" by a now-forgotten corporation, the guernicabeast surpassed its creators' hopes. Not only was the creature far more intelligent than its genetic ancestors, but it also showed remarkable loyalty to its trainers. Properly commanded, one of these

animals could perform a wide variety of simple tasks. It's believed the corporation intended to sell the guernicabeast to the Republic military as a kind of infantry unit to be used on worlds whose terrain was an impediment to traditional tactics, although there is scant proof of this belief.

Whatever the truth of its origins, the guernicabeast has become one of the most feared predators in the Known Worlds. Its higher than average intelligence and innate cunning make it a formidable opponent. Every year, several dozen people on Istakhr and Criticorum are injured or die in guernicabeast attacks — not all of them in the wild. Even supposedly tame examples of these creatures have been known to turn on their masters, which could very well explain why the Second Republic military never used them widely, if at all.

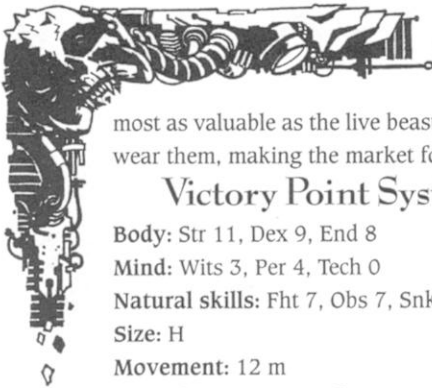
Guernicabeasts nevertheless remain popular pets among the al-Malik's elite. Countess Turka al-Malik keeps six of the beasts in her private menagerie on Criticorum and it is said that Sir Hisham Abdullah al-Malik has hired a Trusnikron trainer to teach his guernicabeast to accept a rider. This is admittedly eccentric behavior even for a devotee of these vicious animals, but it is proof positive that they will likely remain a fixture of the Known Worlds, despite ecclesiastical attempts to ban or destroy them.

**Behavior:** In the wild, guernicabeasts hunt with ruthless efficiency. They use their innate ability to hide and move silently to stalk their prey and then pounce upon it. These creatures use their great strength and weight to push the prey to the ground, where they proceed to maul and rake them until dead. Guernicabeasts rarely relent in savaging their victims until one or the other of them is killed. This behavior makes capturing a live beast extremely difficult, since it requires that the hunter avoid being attacked, lest it ultimately lead to the creature's death.

Domesticated guernicabeasts can obey simple commands and show something close to loyalty toward kind masters. However, as noted above, this loyalty isn't always long-lived. These creatures can turn on their masters without warning, even if well treated. Some researchers argue this behavior is the result of a flaw in the genetic engineering that uplifted the guernicabeast above its leonine ancestors in the first place.

**Commodity:** Guernicabeasts are themselves a commodity, since their capture is difficult and dangerous. Live animals are worth a small fortune, from 500 firebirds for a kitten to as much as 5000 firebirds for a trained adult. The price varies with the size and ferocity of the creature, as well as the coloration of its pelt. Most guernicabeasts are a dull silver color, but some possess more brilliant hues, including a rare strain that sports golden fur. Guernicabeast pelts are al-





most as valuable as the live beasts. However, few nobles choose to wear them, making the market for them quite small indeed.

### Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 11, Dex 9, End 8

**Mind:** Wits 3, Per 4, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Fht 7, Obs 7, Snk 5, Vig 7

**Size:** H

**Movement:** 12 m

**Special:** Sensitive Smell

**Attacks:** (STR bonus: +2)

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Claw	7	16	5
Bite	6	16	6
Charge	4	16	5+

**Special Attacks:** Pounce (on a successful charge, the guernicabeast can also make a bite attack with no multiple-action penalty), Maul (on a successful bite attack, the guernicabeast can also make a claw attack with no multiple-action penalty — or at -4 if the attack is part of a pouncing maul).

**Armor:** Tough hide (ARM 4d)

**Vitality:** -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0

### d20 System Stats

**Large Animal**

**Hit Dice:** 8d8+24 (60 hp)

**Initiative:** +4 (Dex)

**Speed:** 40 ft.

**AC:** 17 (-1 size, +3 Dex, +5 natural)

**Attacks:** 2 claws +7 melee, bite +2 melee

**Damage:** Claw 1d8+5, bite 1d10+3

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 10 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Pounce, improved grab, rake

**Special Qualities:** Scent

**Saves:** Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +2

**Abilities:** Str 21, Dex 18, Con 16, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 6

**Skills:** Balance +9, Hide +6, Jump +6, Listen +6, Move Silently +9, Spot +6, Wilderness Lore +4

**Challenge Rating:** 4

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always neutral

**Advancement:** 9-20 HD (Large)

**Pounce (Ex):** If a guernicabeast leaps upon an opponent, it can make a full attack, even if it has already taken a move action.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, the guernicabeast must hit with its bite attack. If it gets hold, it can rake.

**Rake (Ex):** A guernicabeast that gets hold can make two rake attacks (+7 melee) with its hind legs for 1d6+2 damage each. If the guernicabeast pounces on its opponent, it can also rake.

**Skills:** Guernicabeasts receive a +4 racial bonus to Balance, Hide and Move Silently checks. In areas of heavy undergrowth, the Hide bonus improves to +12.

## H'haraniss

**Homeworld:** Grail

**Present Distribution:** None

**Type:** Cryptoxenological

**Role:** Decomposer/Reducer

**Size:** 6 m across (20 ft.)

**Weight:** 450 kg (1000 lbs.)

**Habitat:** Subterranean (Keddite mines)

**Social Organization:** Solitary

**Description:** The h'haraniss is believed by many offworlders — and many native to Grail — to be nothing more than a legend, a tale told by more experienced miners to frighten new recruits and instruct them in the dangers of mining Keddite. According to these tales, the h'haraniss are huge puddles of inky blackness that slither and pour across cavern floors like some unholy shadow spewed out of Gehenne itself. Worse still, these creatures can adhere to any surface — walls, ceilings — and enjoy nothing more than dropping down on their unfortunate prey, whom they quickly envelope and dissolve in an acid powerful enough to eat through stone itself.

However, House Keddah supports the view that the h'haraniss is in fact a real creature and cite a rash of mysterious deaths and the destruction of Keddite mining facilities as proof. In this assertion, they are joined by the Muster, many of whose personnel are engaged in mining operations on Grail. The Keddah also point to numerous strange passageways carved through the hardest rock beneath the planet as proof that something unusual is at work. Geologists have confirmed that these passageways, which are usually tube-like in general shape, are not naturally occurring but rather the result of some kind of powerful acid. Beyond this, the Etyri tell stories of creatures very much like the h'haraniss whom they call servants of their ancestral enemies, the equally enigmatic Zhuil'hishtu.

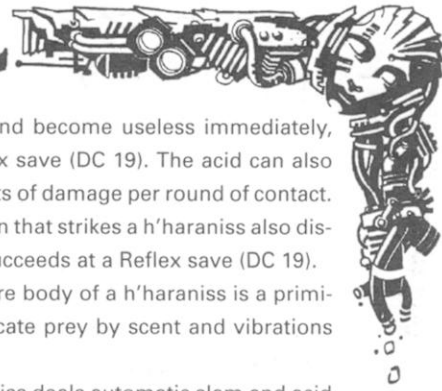
Evidence is mounting that the h'haraniss is more than a figment of miners' imaginations. House Keddah and researchers alike believe it's only a matter of time before a confirmed sighting — or perhaps even a captured creature — puts all skepticism to rest. Until that time, the h'haraniss remains one of the greatest enigmas on Grail, a planet renowned for the mysteries it holds.

**Behavior:** According to reports, the h'haraniss is a stealthy fighter, who hides in dark corners and unexpected places to ambush its prey. In battle, it is supposedly a formidable foe with a remarkable resistance to damage and most forms of weaponry. Its preferred form of attack is constriction, whereby it uses its considerable bulk to wrap itself around its opponent and slowly crush its bones, all the while secreting a powerful acid. Once killed, the h'haraniss consumes the soupy remains of its prey.

Interestingly, there are no reports of h'haraniss attacks, or even sightings, in any of the other mines that dot the landscape of Grail. The only locations where such attacks are reputed to have occurred are the lucrative Keddite mines. This has led to some speculation that the h'haraniss is somehow linked to Keddite. Others argue instead that the creature is a genetic monstrosity unleashed by enemies of House Keddah or the Muster or by a group that would profit from the destruction of Keddite mining operations. Like so many things relating to this creature, there is still too little evidence to provide a definitive answer — at least for the time being.

**Commodity:** The h'haraniss has little inherent value as a commodity, except to scientific groups and institutions that want to learn more about this reputed creature and its origins. In most cases, these groups have little to offer any would-be assistants except the





knowledge that they have "helped the cause of science." Not surprisingly, few have taken them up on this offer, instead preferring the bounty offered jointly by House Keddah and the Muster. In a rare example of cooperation between these usually hostile parties, they have placed a bounty of 100 firebirds on each h'haraniss verifiably destroyed, because of the damage these creatures have wrought on mining operations on Grail. To date, there have been no such payments, lending support to the position that the h'haraniss does not exist, despite the claims of both the Keddah and the Muster to the contrary.

### Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 8, Dex 1, End 10

**Mind:** Wits 0, Per 1, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Dod 1, Fht 8, Obs 2, Snk 3, Vig 5

**Size:** H

**Movement:** 6 m

**Special:** Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis and stunning. Slow (-6 Init). Darksense (entire body senses prey through scent and vibration; no penalties for darkness).

**Attacks:** (STR bonus: +1)

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Slam	2	9	4*
Grapple	0	9	2**

\*plus Acid.

\*\* plus Constrict.

**Special Attacks:** Acid (10d damage to all materials: flesh, clothing and metal. [This damage subtracts from a weapon's damage dice or armor's defense dice; when no dice are left, the object is destroyed.]

Victims may make a Dexterity + Dodge roll to avoid some of the acid; each victory points prevents one point of acid damage against him or his accoutrements), Constrict (On a successful grapple, a h'haraniss deals automatic slam and acid damage)

**Vitality:** -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0

### d20 System Stats

**Huge Ooze**

**Hit Dice:** 10d10+60 (115 hp)

**Initiative:** -5 (Dex)

**Speed:** 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

**AC:** 3 (-5 Dex, -2 size)

**Attacks:** Slam +8 melee

**Damage:** Slam 2d6+4 and 2d6 acid

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 20 ft./10 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Improved grab, acid, constrict 2d6+4 and 2d6 acid

**Special Qualities:** Blindsight, ooze

**Saves:** Fort +7, Ref -2, Will -2

**Abilities:** Str 17, Dex 1, Con 19, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1

**Challenge Rating:** 7

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always neutral

**Advancement:** 11-15 HD (Huge); 16-30 HD (Gargantuan)

**Acid (Ex):** The h'haraniss secretes a powerful acid that dissolves organic material and metal quickly. Any melee hit deals acid damage. The creature's acidic touch deals 30 points of damage per round to wound or corrode metal objects. The opponent's

armor and clothing dissolve and become useless immediately, unless they succeed at a Reflex save (DC 19). The acid can also dissolve stone, dealing 20 points of damage per round of contact.

A metal or wooden weapon that strikes a h'haraniss also dissolves immediately unless it succeeds at a Reflex save (DC 19).

**Blindsight (Ex):** The entire body of a h'haraniss is a primitive sensory organ that can locate prey by scent and vibrations within 10 m (30 ft.).

**Constrict (Ex):** A h'haraniss deals automatic slam and acid damage with a successful grapple check. The opponent's clothing and armor suffer a -4 penalty to Reflex saves against the acid.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, the h'haraniss must hit with its slam attack. If it gets a hold, it can constrict.

**Ooze:** Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis and stunning. Not subject to critical hits.

## Huntsman

**Other Names:** Cursed One

**Homeworld:** Kish (first recorded encounter)

**Present Distribution:** Sightings on all of the Garden Worlds, Holy Terra, Malignatius and others

**Type:** Demonic/Legendary

**Role:** Omnivore

**Size:** Human-sized (up to 2m, 6 ft 6 in.)

**Weight:** 70-100 kg (140-200 pounds)

**Habitat:** Wherever humans

can be found in the wilderness or less-populated areas. Huntsmen have been rumored to inhabit places as varied as the tundra of Malignatius or desolate mining moons.

**Social Organization:** Pack.

Huntsmen usually

roam in groups of 4-8

**Description:** The legend of the first encounter with the huntsmen has survived for hundreds of years. In the words of Sir Keisuke Reas Li-Halan of Kish:

"Twas a bloodlit moon when I encountered these Gehennespawns. A howl like that of a wolf, yet not a wolf, sent our guide — a man of little fiber — running for safety. If only I had followed him. The howl was answered by another, then another, then yet another. We were surrounded and realized we were being hunted by something. We finally ran, my companions and I, but to no avail. For though they moved on foot, without the aid of horse or carriage, they knew the ground as those born to it. In our flight, they caught us, and then I saw them. Into the clearing where we made our stand they came, moonlight giving faces to the nameless shades. Like men, yet less, and horribly more.

The one that came first wore neither arms nor armor. He appeared dressed as a woodsman, in loose furs and work-worn treads.





He carried a work knife stuffed in his belt, and his sinews bristled beneath his furs. Upon his face was the mark of evil — the brand of excommunication. The mark of damnation ran red and sore between his eyes, and beneath that his eyes burned with poisonous fire. Within them Gehenne laughed at me.

Although Sir Keisuke was known to exaggerate the accounts of his hunts and romantic accomplishments, tales from later survivors of Huntsmen attacks have been strikingly similar both in structure and details. We must assume that the Huntsmen are not the mind-creatures of a bored Li Halan hunter but a very serious threat for anybody who strays from populated areas.

**Behavior:** Again from Sir Keisuke Reas Li-Halan of Kish:

He sprang at me in an eyeblink, faster and stronger than I, a seasoned knight, would have believed possible for one of such low birth. He bore me to the ground and tried to tear out my throat with his very teeth. Terror held me as helpless as did his inhuman strength. Once again to my rescue came Gallain, my squire, who skewered my ungodly assailant with his spear and activated the shocker. Then the true horror assailed us. They stopped, quiet for a moment, as if the forest was drawing breath. A shiver ran through them as their comrade slide from Gallain's spear. An unearthly keening sounded from low within them, as if communing with the fallen, rising to a banshee shriek and a furious vengeance. They fell upon us once more, stronger than ever, lessened in number but doubled in fury. They tore at us without fear of damnation, as ones already damned.

Had the Lord Shing's rangers not come to our rescue, we would have been sorely pressed indeed. The two we killed both carried precious bounties on their heads. Lord Shing later told us that both of them were notorious oathbreakers and murderers. They had thrown in their lot with a fallen priest, Hadrak Khan the Undying, formerly of the Holy Inquisition. These damned men pledged their souls to him and he banded them together. Some things are better for a pious man not to speculate on.

Little else is known about Hadrak Khan or the exact nature of the curse. Legend has it that only the most tarnished of souls - those who have willfully stepped out of the light - can survive the ritual of dark binding. We can only guess as to whether they retain a will of their own or what their goal is.

**Commodity:** Huntsmen tend to carry bounties and/or death marks because of their professions before the bonding. This can make up for their lack of material wealth. Local nobles and/or Church authorities establish ample rewards for the destruction of these monstrosities.

### Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str, Dex, End (as per human, +1 to all physical traits as each member of the band is slain)

**Mind:** Wits, Per, Tech (as per normal human, +1 Per as each member of the band is slain)

**Spirit:** Ext/Int 5/1, Pas/Calm 6/1, Fth/Ego 0/10 (+1 Pas as each member of the band is slain)

**Natural skills:** Chm 0, Dod 6, Fht 6, Imp 6, Mel 5, Obs 5, Sht 3, Snk 6, Vig 8 (typical)

**Learned skills:** Tracking, or any possessed in life

**Size:** XL

**Movement:** Standard, +1 m per member of the band slain

**Special:** Huntsmen are bound together with the blackest of Anti-

nomy rites. Only the darkest of beings survive the mangling of souls that joins these loathsome creatures. Their power is unity, strike one down and the others grow only stronger.

**Attacks:** As human, by weapon or hand, peasant/hunter weapons preferred, hand to hand preferred over range ^ no firearms/high-tech weaponry.

**Special Attacks:** None.

**Armor:** Fur or leather clothes (ARM 1d). Most Huntsmen incite passion to overcome the pain of their wounds

**Vitality:** -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0 typical, +1 (from End) per member of the band slain.

### d20 System Stats

Treat Huntsmen as humans (often extremely strong and vicious) who act in parties of four to eight members. Anytime a member dies, the others gain +2 Str, Dex, Con, and Wis, as well as an extra 5 ft. of movement.

### Keffa

**Homeworld:** Cadiz

**Present Distribution:** Only Cadiz

**Type:** Animalia (chordata, reptilia)

**Role:** Secondary carnivore

**Size:** 10 m (35 ft.)

**Weight:** 3000 kg. (6600 lbs.)

**Habitat:** Tropical savannah

**Social Organization:** Solitary

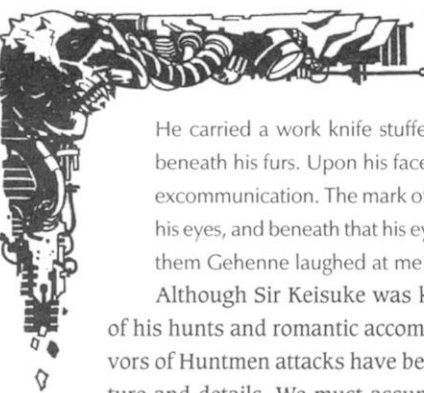
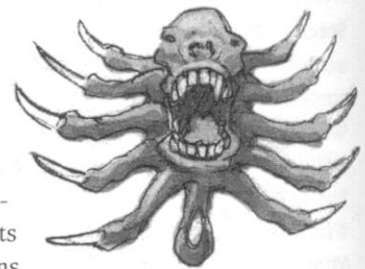
**Description:** The titanic bipedal reptiles of Cadiz were held to be mere legends told by the Hironem traders traveling between distant outposts began telling their own versions.

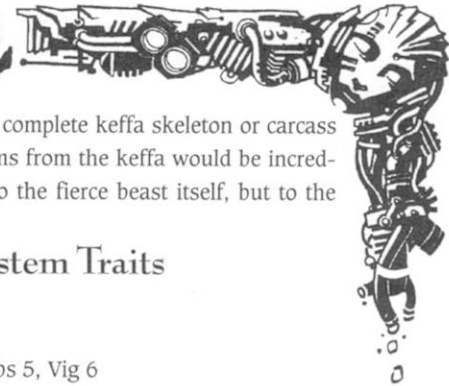
Tales of fierce dragon-like monsters roaming the grasslands and consuming entire caravans sprang up, and hunters nearly drove the keffa to extinction until the Hironem pleaded that the culling stop. Keffas have since rebounded in numbers and once again fill the night with thunderous roars.

Standing almost six meters high at the hips, the keffa is one of the largest surviving land reptiles in the Known Worlds. It is certainly one of the fiercest, preying entirely on large animals of the grasslands.

Keffas sport bony claws that jut from the sides of their heads like fingers. These end in serrated hooks that Keffas use to pull food into their mouths. Their jaws snap shut on prey like a vice, and the serrated teeth can pierce light body armors. The jaws produce enough force to break the spine of a brute, and keffas developed a particular fondness for hunting these beasts. Unfortunately, this brings them close to settlements where they can devastate livestock, and few communities could afford a tank as a shepherd.

Keffas have no upper arms and rely solely on their jaws for holding prey. Their huge tails help counterbalance the keffa whenever it leans forward to bite. The enormous, thickly muscled legs propel the creature across the open plains, but the colossus has difficulty navigating between trees. The thick spine that keeps it balanced prevents much dexterity, and it relies on speed to capture





prey instead.

The keffas are brightly colored, with a rosette pattern of colored blotches varying in size and frequency depending on breed, climate and the overall health of the animal. Keffas have no use for camouflage. As large as they are, they have nowhere to hide while stalking prey. Their evolution ignored camouflage and instead focused on endurance. Keffas run their prey to exhaustion, wearing the poor victim down until the jaws clamp shut on its back, ending its life. Keffa don't give prey any avenue for escape. As soon as they have it in their grasp, they fiercely savage it, swallowing it whole if it is small enough.

The Hironem worship these beasts as forces of nature, often leaving food far from their villages to appease what they consider gods. The Church has been trying to stomp out these remaining Keffa cults, insisting that the keffas are mere animals. No matter how the Church tries, pockets of the old Hironem beliefs hold out.

The Hironem, who are occasionally hunted by the beast, also hunt it in turn. They arm themselves for the ceremonial hunt by dressing in camouflage armor and bringing spears tipped with a single Keffa tooth. They slowly circle the beast, and rush upon it as one, confusing it by attacking from many sides at once. They either hurl their spears and duck back into the grass, or stab feverishly, dodging the lumbering beast's attacks. When they bring the beast down, the triumphant warriors drag the carcass back to the settlement for a religious feast.

The Hironem have been increasingly aggravated with their Decados rulers, who often encourage big-game hunting nobles to try the Keffa. Armed Hironem resistance fighters sometimes patrol the grasslands, surprising and attacking unwary hunting parties. Increasingly exasperated by the blame other houses are laying upon them, the Decados react badly when told that they cannot control the natives. This has caused the Decados to increase their grip on Cadiz to control the Hironem. All this trouble over the keffa who, despite all the tension rising about them, continue their normal routine, filling the night air with tumultuous bellows

**Behavior:** Keffas generally hunt alone, though during mating season pairs often travel together, cooperating to feed the chicks which remain in a huge nest the parents dig into a mound of collected debris. The female lays between two and six eggs in the nest, and the parents take turns guarding the nest while the other finds food. When the chicks hatch, both parents can hunt to feed the quickly growing brood, since the chicks are born large enough to deal with most predators.

**Commodity:** The growing tensions around keffas have aroused interest in the creatures. The massive claws and teeth can be sold as jewelry or even as weapons. Universities and other educational



facilities pay a good price for a complete keffa skeleton or carcass (1000 firebirds). Obtaining items from the keffa would be incredibly dangerous, not only due to the fierce beast itself, but to the angry Hironem as well.

### Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 19, Dex 5, End 12

**Mind:** Wits 2, Per 4, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Dod 3, Fht 6, Obs 5, Vig 6

**Size:** GA

**Movement:** Standard

**Special Qualities:** Swallow Whole (deals 8d DMG. After that, stomach acids cause 4d DMG per round of exposure)

#### Attacks:

	ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Bite	5	11	9	
Gore	6	11	8	
Kick	6	11	8	

**Special Attacks:** Kick tosses man-sized or smaller sized targets 2d meters, causing an additional point of damage per three meters punted.

**Armor:** Hide (ARM 6d)

**Vitality:** -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0

### d20 System Stats

**Gargantuan Beast**

**Hit Dice:** 8d10 + 32 (76hp)

**Initiative:** +1 (Dex)

**Speed:** Run 50 ft.

**AC:** 19 (-4 size, +12 natural, +1 Dex)

**Attacks:** Bite +12 melee, Gore +8 melee

**Damage:** Bite 2d8 + 10, Gore 2d6+10

**Face/Reach:** 15 ft. by 15 ft./15 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Kick, Swallow Whole

**Special Qualities:** Improved Grab

**Saves:** Fort +10, Ref +4, Will +4

**Abilities:** Str 30, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10

**Skills:** Spot +5, Endurance +2, Intimidate +12

**Feats:** Trample

**Challenge Rating:** 4

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always Neutral

**Advancement:** 6-8HD (Gargantuan), 8-12HD (Colossal)

#### COMBAT

Keffas are not used to foes who can threaten them. If something makes them angry, they try to kill it, and rarely realize when they are in danger.

**Kick (Ex):** 1d8 + 10 damage, tosses medium or smaller sized targets 1d4 x 5ft, causing an additional 1d4 damage per 10 ft.

**Swallow Whole (Ex):** 2d6 subdual damage. After that, stomach acids cause 1d6 damage per round of exposure.

## Kelet-i-Kurga: Kurgan Spirits

Saint Horace the Learned, in his *Confessiones* and his *Epistulae*, uses the Latin word "genius" to indicate a disembodied intelligence whose origin and alignment — whether Emyprean or Infernal —



were undetermined. A related word, from the Old Low Urthish dialects that would eventually combine to form the Kurgan language, is "djinn," which denotes a spiritual entity neither angel nor demon, believed to have inhabited Holy Terra before the creation of humankind. Belief in these entities persists in modern Kurga, undoubtedly encouraging paganism and even Antinomy to flourish in rural regions. Spies relate that the Caliph keeps an entire school for the study of these spirits and their doings, while a whole caste of Kurgan society is apparently sacrificed and given up for possession by local spooks. Reports from the front lines of the Kurga Crusade tell of fanatics who voluntarily let spirits claiming great power possess their bodies in combat.

Magus Moore of the Eskatonic Order attempts to describe the denizens of Kurga's spirit-world in his *Commentary on the Kelet-i-Kurga*:

Kurgan cosmology appears to posit the existence of an order of being, or several orders of being, between those realms that we of the Universal Church designate as Empyrean and Infernal. Inhabiting this order are several classes of sentient being which exist as pure mind, have the capacity of free will and exhibit personality characteristics that distinguish one individual from another. (This is consistent with the notion of logos-space, a plane of form without substance, and of entities that might occupy such a plane, that I have expounded upon numerous times elsewhere.) While these intelligences partake of neither angelic nor demonic essence, they, like the sentients of the physical world, can develop the facility to recognize one from the other, and to deliberately ally themselves with one or the other. Or so the Kurgans believe.

The oldest and most powerful of this bodiless phylum are the kelet (singular 'kele'), and that name is generally used to refer to all the various species as a whole. The kelet are identified with planetary intelligences and with the grander forces of nature: wind, rain, tide, quake and all the permutive activities of land, sky and sea. Kelet of this type are unique among their kind in that they are capable of taking on a physical form at will, creating a solid body for themselves from such elements as are at hand and as fall within their purview. A more populous and less powerful order of kelet is the silaah, who are most closely associated with the vegetable and animal kingdoms. Silaah may possess the bodies of animals and plants, and have a level of intelligence at least equal to human, although they tend to avoid the company of humans and seem to know little of human ways. Collectively, the higher kelet and the silaah might be considered cognate with the 'Lords' of the pagan Gjartin. They conduct themselves without reference to human affairs, although some tales tell of how one might consent to aid a human with a pure heart; other stories suggest that they even respect the spiritual authority — if not always the temporal authority — of the Caliph.

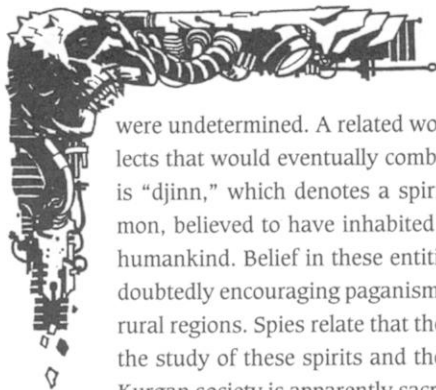
Apart from the higher kelet and silaah are those collectively called the djinn; believed to have pre-existed humankind, they occupy much the same niche in the ecology of logos-space as humanoid sentients do in the physical world. Their intelligence is equal to human and they may even share many of the same personality traits and quirks. Most acknowledge the authority of the Caliph just as bodied Kurgans do, due to the 'imaginal pilgrimage' of an early Caliph named Solomondrumo who seems to have appointed himself chief missionary to the plane of pure thought. Apparently not all ac-

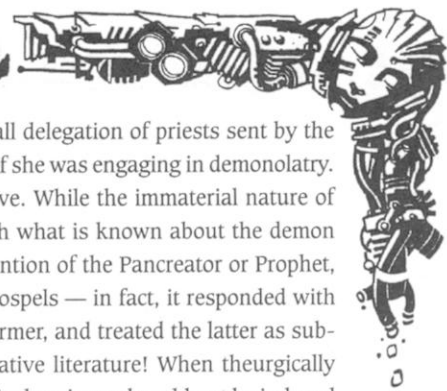
cepted this Caliph's preachings, however, and there has been covert rivalry and open warfare between the two camps ever since. The djinn who received the Caliph's mission were allowed to mix and interact with humans as equals, were taught the Kurgan language and lore in exchange for teaching humans their own arts and sciences, and were even granted many of the same rights under law. Those who rejected Caliph Solomondrumo's message were banished to the wildernesses and uninhabited places, and branded with the name afrit. Resentful of the good relationship developing between djinn and humans, the afrit rage and storm in their wastes, or else seek some way to insinuate themselves into society and cause strife and suffering. (It is not known whether the djinn, on their plane of idea, have anything like food, or processes analogous to digestion; some speculate, though, that the good djinn seem to draw nourishment from friendship, love and pleasant social intercourse, while the afrit seem to feed on anger, fear and hatred.)

It is not known if the djinn are immortal, but they are definitely very long-lived (although they do not seem to reckon time and space as we do.) They grow by increasing the variety, complexity, intensity and range of the thought that comprises their being; hence the dictum 'knowledge is power' has a very specific, one might say concrete, meaning for them. Djinn who have lived long, acquired much lore and engaged most fully the life of the intellect and the emotions, eventually come to be known as a 'marid.' Marids are the most powerful Kurgan spirits save for the higher kelet themselves, and have no overt connections with the world of nature and the elements. Marids are known to exist among both djinn and afrit, and some believe that silaah can grow to become marids as well.

Only the greatest kele can fashion a body for itself; all lesser spirits are severely restricted in the means whereby they can interact with the physical world. The weakest of all are gifted with a rudimentary telepathy by which they can communicate with each other and with sentients of the physical realm. This ability is very tenuous, however, as their telepathic transmissions are faint and often garbled; humans whom such a djinn is trying to contact may not be aware that an external mind is touching their own, and usually interpret the transmission as a stray thought or daydream of their own creation, or else may simply feel they are going mad. As djinn grow they become more articulate and forceful in projecting their thoughts, and they can become adept at the mental projection of visual and other sensory illusions. Increasing familiarity with the world of solid matter may also enable them to learn telekinesis, allowing them to interact directly with the physical realm by moving objects and substances around in small ways. Using all these abilities in combination, the djinn may simulate the appearance of physical form, casting an illusory image and psychically manipulating objects. These psychic abilities seem to be limited in the same ways as with humanoid psychics; they must be learned through experience and practice, and draw upon a store of mental energy which is finite but may be increased over time in a like manner.

One would think that these spirits, unhampered by bodies bound in time and space, would far exceed us in power, but this is seldom the case. It is more true to say that creatures possessing both bodies and minds are more powerful than creatures of mind alone. Because the 'substance' of logos-space is pure thought, even the lowliest human can exert some control over the djinn if he but knows





how. Djinn are directly affected by articulate speech, legible writing and carefully delineated images, as these are the physical extensions of pure thought. Anyone who knows the name of a djinn can summon it by intoning invocative syllables or inscribing calligraphic or pictographic emblems. The summoner may simply converse with the djinn, request or command the djinn to do her bidding, bind it to a talisman or even invite the spirit to take possession of her own body. Caliph Solomondrumo was said to have imprisoned rebellious marids in special containers, which were then hidden in various places throughout the caliphate. Anecdotal evidence suggests that djinn are incapable of passing through a jumpgate unless they possess a living creature or are bound in a talisman.

Of course, the djinn have free will, as previously stated, and may try to resist any action they do not like; in such instances a contest of wills occurs upon the psychic plane. The majority, however, can easily be commanded by calling upon the name of the Prophet, Caliph Solomondrumo, the current Caliph or the office of the Caliph in general. Afrit are more difficult to deal with, and must usually be enticed or threatened into service. Silaah are very rarely summoned, as few know or can pronounce their names; the high kelet seldom recognize the actions of humans and never do their bidding save when it is pleasing to the kelet.

## Djinn: "Eslemiel Pasha"

**Homeworld:** "Remza Telamut" (?)

**Present Location:** Retinue of Zulaykha Turakina, usually on Byzantium Secundus

**Type:** Unknown (possibly demonic)

**Role:** N/A (possibly a servitor of the 10<sup>th</sup> Qlippoth)

**Size (of illusory body):** 1.3 m (4 ft.)

**Weight:** N/A

**Habitat:** Unknown (seems to prefer human company).

**Social Organization:** Unknown (believed to be intellectual meritocracy).

**Description:** The spirit-creature which calls itself Eslemiel Pasha is bound in servitude to the expatriate Kurgan courtesan Zulaykha Turakina, under terms which have never been fully divulged. It seems to reside in a wrought-iron brazier (not, as one Town Crier reported, in La Turakina's brassiere), appearing whenever the brazier is lit and its name called. When commanded to take visible form, a portion of the varicolored smoke emitted from the brazier assumes the shape of a small humanoid, gradually resolving itself into a slender figure clad in turban, vest and baggy pantaloons, androgynous except for thin, carefully curled eyebrows and mustachios. Although vaporous and transparent, this figure is not entirely insubstantial, and may grasp and handle physical objects with great facility.

**Behavior:** This creature lives to serve its mistress, Zulaykha, and invariably leaps to do her bidding with alacrity; she, in turn, takes no end of delight in demonstrating its devotion and skill. It seems to concern itself exclusively with domestic duties, especially cooking and health matters, and exhibits very little knowledge of any other subjects beyond a kind of general academic interest. It is possible, however, that, beyond the situations and activities encompassed by the precise wording of her commands, Eslemiel Pasha retains motivations and volition of its own. Turakina has consented, on very few occasions, to allow interested parties to interview her

pet spirit-slave, including a small delegation of priests sent by the Inquisitor's Synod to determine if she was engaging in demonolatri. (Their findings were inconclusive. While the immaterial nature of the creature was consistent with what is known about the demon hordes, it was not cowed by mention of the Pancreator or Prophet, or by recitation of the Omega Gospels — in fact, it responded with appropriate reverence for the former, and treated the latter as subject for a discussion of comparative literature! When theurgically exorcised, it merely returned to its brazier and could not be induced to reappear.) In the course of one such interview, Eslemiel Pasha, after evincing strong curiosity concerning the peoples and culture of the Empire, went on to describe its own place of origin, called "Remza Telamut," while its mistress's attention was diverted. Before it could be determined whether this name represented an actual planet of the Kurga Caliphate or some vaporous realm of insubstantial djinn-land, Turakina returned and cut the conversation short on some flimsy pretext. Some have speculated that Eslemiel's loyalty is not to Zulaykha Turakina personally, but to whoever is in physical possession of the wrought-iron brazier wherein it resides. **Commodity:** While we may note the value of one who can act as chef, nurse, butler and scullion, the danger of trafficking with unknown barbarian intelligences, not to mention the dark suspicion this would arouse in the church, severely outweighs all other considerations. The only safe market for Eslemiel Pasha or any other such entity lies in the 1000 fb bounty discreetly offered by the Inquisitorial Synod, who wish to examine it more closely and rigorously.

## Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 4, Dex 7, End 5

(Note: When acting through an illusory physique, the djinn's Body traits are determined as follows: Str = Pas or Calm, whichever is higher; Dex = Wits; End = Fth or Ego, whichever is higher. Size and condition of illusory bodies need not reflect Body traits. When possessing the body of a physical creature, Str and End remain those of the possessed body, while Dex equals the possessing djinn's Wits.)

**Mind:** Wits 7, Per 6, Tech 5

**Spirit:** Ext 7/Int 3, Pas 2/Calm 4, Fth 5/Ego 1

(Note: Like demons, djinn have no upper limit to their Spirit trait ratings, as sentients of the physical plane do.)

**Natural skills:** Chm 7, Dod 3, Fht 3, Imp 2, Mel 4, Obs 8, Sht 2, Snk 6, Vig 5

**Learned skills:** Academia 6, Artisan (Cook) 8, Artisan (Tailor) 7, Arts (Embroidery) 5, Empathy 7, Etiquette 8, Focus 5, Knavery 4, Lore (Kurgan) 5, Physick 6, Read Kurgan, Sleight of Hand 4, Social (Acting) 3, Speak Kurgan, Speak Urthish, Stoic Mind 2

**Size:** XL (short)

**Movement:** 8 m

**Special:** Psi 6; FarHand (Dueling Hand), Visioning (False Creature) (Note: The Psi trait and most psychic powers are described in *Fading Suns* 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition; Visioning is found in the *FS Players Companion*. Eslemiel is only capable of using the False Creature power to generate its illusory body, and must activate FarHand to manipulate physical objects. Eslemiel must spend two hours in its iron brazier to replenish one point of Wyrd. Djinn do not have psychic stigma.)

**Wyrd:** 4



**Attacks:** As normal human  
**Vitality:** Dispelled/0/0/0/0/0  
 (Note: A djinn's illusory body can be physically dispelled but this does not destroy the djinn. A dispelled djinn cannot reappear for at least one full act.)

### d20 System Stats

**Medium-Sized Outsider**

**Hit Dice:** 2d8+2 (11 hp)

**Initiative:** +3 (Dex)

**Speed:** 25 ft.

**AC:** 12 (+2 Dex)

**Attacks:** As per human

**Damage:** As per human

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** None

**Special Qualities:** False Body, Lifting Hand, Wyrd

**Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +6

**Abilities:** Str 10, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 15

**Skills:** Academia +6, Alchemy +6, Arts (Cook) +12, Arts (Embroidery) +8, Bluff +6, Diplomacy +6, Lifting Hand +12, Listen +8, Pick Pocket +6, Spot +8, Visioning +12

**Feats:** Alertness, Etiquette, Savoir-Faire

**Challenge Rating:** 1

**Treasure:** none

**Alignment:** Lawful Neutral

**Advancement:** none

#### COMBAT

Eslemiel avoids combat unless ordered into it by his mistress. He will attempt to use any weapons handy, or use far hand to steal his enemy's.

**False Body:** Eslemiel has an illusory body that cannot be fully destroyed.

**Lifting Hand:** As per the **Fading Suns: d20** rulebook; 10 skill ranks.

**Wyrd:** 6. Eslemiel must spend two hours in its iron brazier to replenish one point of Wyrd

## Afrit: "Yar Ghilzai, the Scourge of the Wastes"

**Homeworld:** "Blayugh" (?)

**Present Location:** Fort Omala Garrison, Hira

**Type:** Unknown (considered demonic)

**Role:** N/A (possibly a warrior of the 5<sup>th</sup> Qlippoth)

**Size (of illusory body):** 3 m (10 ft.)

**Weight:** N/A

**Habitat:** Unknown (despises human company, seems to prefer deserts and wastelands).

**Social Organization:** Unknown (believed to be incessantly warring tribes).

**Description:** The creature that calls itself "Yar Ghilzai" hails from some planet or realm it calls "Blayugh" and claims to have been bound into an exquisitely crafted scimitar after losing a battle with one Caliph "Zina-Tamina" some 150 years ago. This scimitar was brought to Hira in 4988 by Tarkhan Mangu Firazid, a.k.a. "Mangu the Merciless," who waged bloody and bitter war against the Hazat

of Andalus for the next 10 years. Mangu was finally defeated by a combined group of Hazat and Brother Battle forces, and the scimitar was kept on display at Fort Omala as a prized war-trophy. Over the next three years, however, a number of misfortunes befell those who spent any great amount of time in the haunted sword's presence. Ultimately the source of the bad luck was determined, and a team of Kalinthei theurges exorcised the weapon and banished the afrit to a cave in Hira's southern polar region, where it rages impotently to this day.

When "materialized," Yar Ghilzai presents a somewhat ape-like aspect — bowlegged, barrel-chested, partially covered by matted fur, with arms that hang nearly to the ground. Despite its hunched posture Yar Ghilzai stands nearly twice as tall as most humans. Its face is also bestial — tiny reptilian eyes and a mouth bristling with broken fangs and curved tusks, beneath a comically tiny shaved pate surmounted by a stringy top-knot. Dirty broken nails grow from its gnarled fingers and toes, a vestigial tail twitches at the base of its spine, and a loincloth fashioned from a scrap of lizard-skin barely conceals its misshapen mockery of a male gender. Scorched brands criss-cross its body, reminders of its ordeal with the Kalinthei, and beneath these can be seen faded tattoos of calligraphic Kurgan script, remnants of the ritual that originally bound it into the scimitar.

**Behavior:** Yar Ghilzai knows little other than violence and destruction, and especially delights in causing harm to any sentient that crosses its path, be it human, alien or fellow djinn. Even in the solitude of wilderness, its illusory body discarded, Yar Ghilzai takes the form of a whirlwind or small storm, pounding land and sea to vent its unending rage.

**Commodity:** None.

### Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 9, Dex 7, End 5

(Note: When acting through an illusory physique, the djinn's Body traits are determined as follows: Str = Pas or Calm, whichever is higher; Dex = Wits; End = Fth or Ego, whichever is higher. Size and condition of illusory bodies need not reflect Body traits. When possessing the body of a physical creature, Str and End remain those of the possessed body, while Dex equals the possessing djinn's Wits.)

**Mind:** Wits 7, Per 4, Tech 2

**Spirit:** Ext 5/Int 1, Pas 9/Calm 1, Fth 1/Ego 5

(Note: Like demons, djinn have no upper limit to their Spirit trait ratings, as sentients of the physical plane do.)

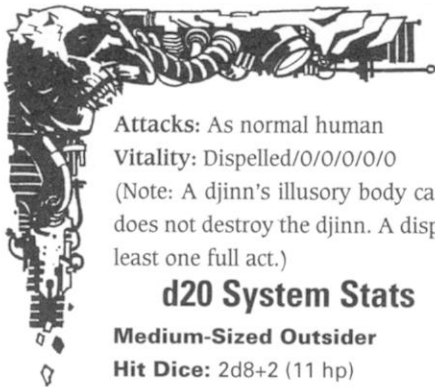
**Natural skills:** Chm 0, Dod 3, Fht 10, Imp 9, Mel 8, Obs 3, Sht 5, Snk 2, Vig 9

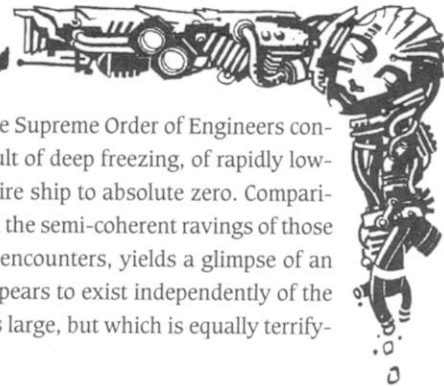
**Learned skills:** Knavery 7, Lore (Kurgan) 2, Speak Kurgan, Speak Urthish, Stoic Body 8, Stoic Mind 5

**Size:** XL (large)

**Movement:** 8 m

**Special:** Psi 6; FarHand (Dueling Hand), Visioning (False Creature)  
 (Note: The Psi trait and most psychic powers are described in **Fading Suns 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition**; Visioning is found in the **FS Players Companion**. Yar Ghilzai is only capable of using the False Creature power to generate its illusory body, and must activate FarHand to manipulate physical objects. Yar Ghilzai must spend two hours in its cave to replenish one point of Wyrd. Djinn do not have psychic stigma.)





Wyrd: 3

Attacks: As normal human

Vitality: Dispelled/0/0/0/0/0

(Note: A djinn's illusory body can be physically dispelled but this does not destroy the djinn. A dispelled djinn cannot reappear for at least one full act.)

### d20 System Stats

**Medium-Sized Outsider**

**Hit Dice:** 3d8+6 (18 hp)

**Initiative:** +3 (Dex)

**Speed:** 25 ft.

**AC:** 12 (-1 size, +3 Dex)

**Attacks:** Normal

**Damage:** Normal

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Whirlwind

**Special Qualities:** False Body, Lifting Hand, Wyrd

**Saves:** Fort +10, Ref +6, Will +8

**Abilities:** Str 20, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 15

**Skills:** Bluff +8, Diplomacy +4, Lifting Hand +16, Listen +8, Spot +8, Visioning +16

**Feats:** Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Power Attack

**Challenge Rating:** 4

**Treasure:** none

**Alignment:** Chaotic Evil

**Advancement:** None

#### COMBAT

Yar Ghilzai prefers to soften up foes in his whirlwind form before finishing them off after manifesting his illusory body.

**False Body:** Yar Ghilzai has an illusory body that cannot be fully destroyed.

**Lifting Hand:** As per the **Fading Suns: d20** rulebook; 10 skill ranks.

**Whirlwind (Ex):** As per the Tornado rules.

**Wyrd:** 4. Yar Ghilzai must spend two hours in its cave to replenish one point of Wyrd

## Kraken Spawn

**Other Names:** Self-Sustaining Hyperentropic Field-Entity

**Homeworld:** Interstellar space

**Present Distribution:** Unknown

**Type:** Unknown

**Role:** Ergivore (energy eater)

**Size:** Constantly expanding, generally about 5 m in rough diameter when first detected.

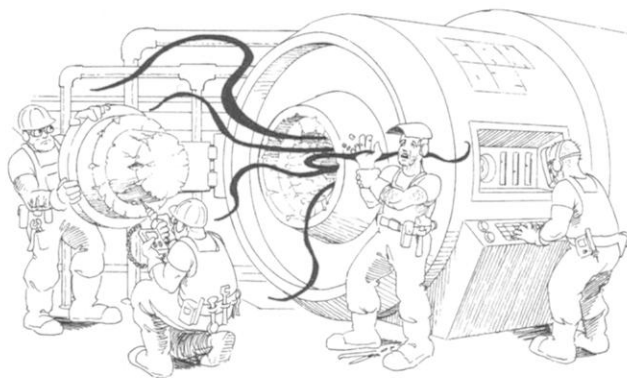
**Weight:** Immeasurable, estimated at several tons when first detected.

**Habitat:** High-energy environments full of light and heat.

**Social Organization:** None known

**Description:** No one has yet produced any sort of study concerning the horrifying and mysterious void kraken, but, through a careful examination of evidence and historical record, Lord Erbian's has defined the existence of at least one aspect of the void kraken attack phenomenon. Certain derelict starships, bearing the infamous marks of enormous claws, fangs and suckers, also show signs of an especially pernicious form of metal fatigue marked by extreme

brittleness. Consultation with the Supreme Order of Engineers confirms that the condition is a result of deep freezing, of rapidly lowering the temperature of the entire ship to absolute zero. Comparison of the ships' logs, along with the semi-coherent ravings of those few who have survived kraken encounters, yields a glimpse of an entity or phenomenon which appears to exist independently of the kraken itself and is not nearly as large, but which is equally terrifying.



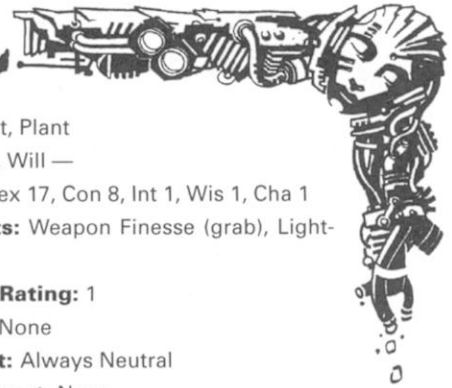
Lord Erbian's deduces that this entity, which he calls the kraken spawn (and which the Supreme Order designates with a typically prolonged string of technical nomenclature), is somehow transferred to the starship during a kraken attack, probably through the main exhaust nozzle of the ship's drive engine. Presumably the spawn's physical form is such that it can withstand the tremendous heat and pressure at the core of a starship engine, but there is some speculation that, at this stage, the spawn exists in some non-material state. The ship then begins to suffer from a gradual but escalating loss of thrust until the drive dies completely; after this, secondary engines and other power systems decline in a similar manner. System diagnostics will show nothing physically wrong with the mechanisms, only a decrease in energy from the power source. If the main chamber of the stardrive can be observed directly, it will be seen to be occupied by a pulsating cloud of deep lightless black, with appendages stretching away to connect with the nearest energy sources — secondary drives, internal power, life support, etc.

Theoretically, it may be possible to halt the growth of the kraken spawn if the engines are shut down and allowed to cool during the earliest stages. Once the spawn grows large enough to reach other power sources, it continues to spread its tentacles until it has engulfed the entire vessel and reduced everything in it to ice, a process which can take up to a week for large ships. During the Second Republic, intelligence smuggled out of Apschai told of a Vau starship infected with what Lord Erbian's now believes to have been a kraken spawn. Because Vau ships are constructed around a plasma orb that neither touches, nor is completely enclosed by, the hull, the effects of the kraken spawn's presence within the orb were noted and the drive shut down in time to leave the crew alive and the ship salvageable. (Interestingly, the dim blotchy appearance attributed to the infected plasma orb resembles that of those suns which have faded the most in the last thousand years, prompting Lord Erbian's to speculate upon a possible connection between the void kraken's life cycle and the fading suns effect.)

**Behavior:** The kraken spawn does not appear, judging from available evidence, to possess any sort of intelligence or recognizable







other kelp, however, strangleweed developed an unusual means of gaining nutrients from the sea. When exposed to the scent of certain fish, it contracts like a whip, wrapping around the fish and ensnaring it. Once held, it stays that way with a tensile strength equivalent to steel. When the fish dies, its body drops to the ocean floor and the decaying corpse provides a fertile soil for the strangleweed.

On more than one occasion, it became a hazard for divers when the strangleweed reacted to a fish but snared a diver instead. Locals discovered that a very mild electric shock releases the strangleweed's hold, allowing the diver to escape safely.

**Commodity:** Originally, strangleweed was used solely for fishing but in these times it is more often used

as a restraint alternative to the higher-tech Muster Chains. They are commonly employed by wrapping a piece of the strangleweed around a recalcitrant slave's neck. A spray composed of the *pisceli* pheromones causes the collar to constrict, slowly strangling the slave to administer punishment. A shock releases the collar. In order to preserve the kelp for this use, the strangleweed is soaked in a nutrient rich broth and then sprayed with a special type of gas-permeable plastic. Prepared in this manner, each collar will last up to three months, depending on the climate.

### Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 12, Dex 6, End 2

**Mind:** Wits 0, Per 6, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Fht 4

**Size:** G

**Movement:** 0

**Attacks:** (STR bonus: +3)

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Grapple	4	10	2*

\* Damage will continue to be inflicted until the victim wins a successful Str + Vigor contest.

**Armor:** 2 (while loose)/6 (while constricted)

**Vitality:** -4/-2/0/0/

### d20 System Stats

**Huge (Long) Plant**

**Hit Dice:** 1d8-1 (per strand)

**Initiative:** -5

**Speed:** 0

**AC:** 12 (loose) 20 (constricted)

**Attacks:** Grab +4 melee

**Damage:** Grapple 1d3

**Face/Reach:** 10 ft. by 20 ft. / 20 ft.

**Special Attacks:** None



**Special Qualities:** Scent, Plant

**Saves:** Fort -1, Ref +3, Will —

**Abilities:** Str 12, Dex 17, Con 8, Int 1, Wis 1, Cha 1

**Skills and Feats:** Weapon Finesse (grab), Lightning Reflexes

**Challenge Rating:** 1

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always Neutral

**Advancement:** None

#### COMBAT

When the strangleweed picks up the right scent, it lashes out at its prey. Otherwise, it does not fight even if attacked.

## Lawgiver

**Homeworld:** Unknown. Possibly Vau Hegemony.

**Present Distribution:** Border Worlds of the Vau Hegemony, Malignatius, Stigmata.

**Type:** Unknown.

**Role:** Psychic predator.

**Size:** Varies. In natural (?) form, the lawgiver is 3.1 m (10 ft. wide).

**Weight:** Varies. In natural form, it appears to weigh 42 kg (92.61 lbs.).

**Habitat:** Unique

**Social Organization:** Solitary

**Description:** Ordinarily, I would consider such a thing as I am about to describe a mere legend, were not my sources so insistent that it exists. Rumors of it began on the border of Vau space, beginning with tales of a phantom ship piloted by husks that meted out justice to whomever it met. Then, a similar story appeared on Manitou, this time of husks holding court on a rather isolated island. All of these rumors had two things in common: first, that the husks had a master controlling them and, second, that this master came from a "watchworld." Watchworld is a term used on the Vau border that I believe refers to Vau planets bordering our own space.

For a time, that's all the story appeared to be — a rumor — until my pilot found a similar story on Malignatius. Following up on this rumor, he managed to acquire a Jakovian report of an attack by this creature on an Eskatonic abbey in a Decados-held county.

Excerpted from the File of Baronet Ilya Petrov Decados:

Initial study led us to believe the creature was an alien artifact. Appearing as a marbled, rune-covered stone orb, it was found aboard an abandoned smuggling ship and brought back to the planet for study. When we had no luck unlocking its secrets, we turned it over to Eskatonic allies for further examination. We know this now to have been a mistake. Soon after exposure to Eskatonic rituals (whether this was a coincidence or not, I do not know), the artifact hatched, revealing a rapidly growing, floating, jellyfish-like creature that immediately set forth looking for a host.

It seized the first sentient it came across, invading his body and remolding it for its own purposes. That's when the horror truly began. It began kidnaping local townspeople to aid it in its cause. After cocooning the townspeople within its nest, exact duplicates of them began laying the seeds for the final step of the creature's evolution -





its breeding. Thankfully, this step was never completed. The abbey burned to the ground and the monster, including all of the evidence of its existence, was destroyed.

**Behavior:** Following up on the Jakovian report, my pilot found an Eskatonic who witnessed the event. Unfortunately, she had been confined to an oubliette where mind-physicks labored to work on the "delusion" that she had been cocooned by this creature. Thus, her story may be suspect, though it does fit in with the facts supplied by the Jakovian above.

Brother Deimos was the first to be taken by the thing. There was a certain coldness to him and a marked lack of faith, but little else to signal the horror to come. When I was taken to the nest, the cocoon sang to me in images of its life. However, before it could fully duplicate my form, a peasant found the nest and cut me from its bowels, freeing me to tell this tale.

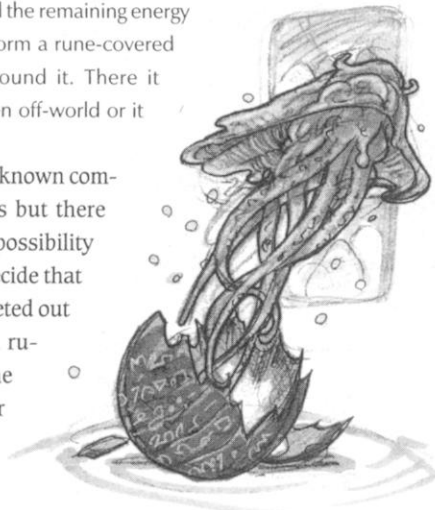
The creature is called a lawgiver. Not truly sentient, it only attains full awareness when it bonds with a sentient member of another race. It was originally created to administer a code of justice to different worlds, as defined by each race's ethical system. This code would be the first thing extracted from its host and, once extracted, the lawgiver would then prepare to strike out on its own.

The lawgiver would build a nest of several stone-like organic monoliths extruded from a new organ grown within its host's body. It would then take in people from the surrounding countryside, preserving their life force in webbed cocoons. This life-force would be used to create exact duplicates of the people, which I called geneates. Geneates only last for a certain amount of time, no more than a few hours, after which they decay rapidly into a husk-like appearance that glows inside with an unearthly light. Once they are beyond usefulness, their shell is abandoned and the energy returns to the lawgiver to be recycled into a new geneate. There is no limit as to how many times a person can be duplicated by this process.

These body-doubles would be used as spies and as soldiers to bring wrongdoers to the lawgiver. The lawgiver would then feed off of the psychic energy of these wrongdoers. The complete process would greatly alter the criminal, preventing him from ever leading a normal life again.

Once it gathered enough energy, the lawgiver would then replicate itself. The new lawgiver would move to another territory and the cycle would start all over again. Once it exhausted all "food," the lawgiver would release the people in the cocoons and then go into hibernation. This used the remaining energy of the host body to form a rune-covered orb-like covering around it. There it would wait until taken off-world or it activated once again.

**Commodity:** There is no known commodity for the lawgivers but there remains the frightening possibility that some fanatic may decide that such justice should be meted out to a world. I have heard rumors to that effect by the confined Eskatonic sister and such an idea horrifies me.



## Victory Point System Traits

### Natural Form

**Body:** Str 8, Dex 11, End 3

**Mind:** Wits 2, Per 8, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Dod 6, Fht 6, Obs 3, Snk 2, Vig 4

### Host Form

**Body:** All characteristics raised to racial maximum.

**Mind:** Wits and Tech remained unchanged, Perception raised to racial maximum.

**Spirit:** Ext 0, Int = Host (if any), Pas 0, Calm = Host (if any), Faith 0, Ego 0

**Natural skills:** Fht +4, Obs +3, Vig +4 (these may go above racial maximums)

### Geneates

All geneates last a matter of an hour before they dissolve and must be regrown. There is no limit to how often they may be regrown.

**Body:** Str 8, Dex 6, End 6

**Mind:** Wits 2, Per 2, Tech 2

**Spirit:** Ego 2

**Natural skills:** Fht 5, Mel 3, Obs 6, Snk 4, Vig 7

**Size:** H

**Movement:** 20 m (natural form), normal for host and geneate

**Special:** Psychic senses. All Lawgivers and lawgiver creations hunt through sensing the presence of thinking minds. Only minds that are sentient and active are of interest to them. Therefore, a sleeping, non-dreaming individual or an unconscious person would not interest a Lawgiver.

### Attacks:

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Grapple	4	14	2*

\* This attack is a precursor to possession. Damage will continue to be inflicted until a successful contested Str + Vigor roll is won.

Geneates and host forms use their standard attack but are unaffected by wound penalties.

### Special Attacks:

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Possession	4	10	1*

\*The damage listed is to the person's Wyrd and then to their Faith or Ego score. Once these stats have been reduced to zero, the person is possessed by the Lawgiver.

**Vitality:** -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/ 0/ 0/ 0/ 0/ 0/ 0

## d20 System Stats

### Outsider Shapechanger

**Hit Dice:** Lawgiver: 4d12+16 (42 hp); Host: hp raised to max for class and level; Geneate: 1d12 + hp of previous host.

**Initiative:** Lawgiver: +5; Host: as per racial maximum; Geneate -1

**Speed:** Lawgiver: 50ft; Host: 30 ft; Geneate: 30 ft.

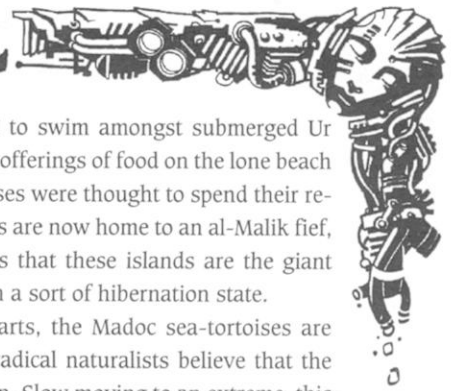
**AC:** Lawgiver: 20 (+5 for Dex, +5 for gelatinous covering); Host: Dex modifiers to AC raised to racial maximum, otherwise variable; Geneate: variable.

**Attacks:** Lawgiver: Grapple +6 melee; Host & Geneate, variable.

**Damage:** Lawgiver: Grapple 1d3+3; Host & Geneate, by weapon.

**Face/Reach:** Lawgiver: 5 ft. by 5 ft. / 10 ft.; Host & Geneate: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.





**Special Attacks:** Lawgiver: Possession; Host & Geneate: None.  
**Special Qualities:** Psychic Scent, Effects (including wounds) that cause pain or disorientation on the target do not work on Lawgivers, hosts or Geneates.

**Saves:** Lawgiver: Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +2; Host: varies; Geneate: Fort —, Ref -1, Will +0

**Abilities:** Lawgiver: Str 17, Dex 19, Con 18, Int 3, Wis 15, Cha 2  
 Host: All physical characteristics raised to race maximum.

Geneate: Str 18, Dex 8, Con B, Int B, Wis 10, Cha 1

**Skills and Feats:** Toughness, Improved Grapple

**Challenge Rating:** 5

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Lawful neutral

**Advancement:** —

**COMBAT**

In a fight, the lawgiver seeks to possess its toughest foe and use her abilities to its own advantage.

**Possession (Ex):** Requires a successful grapple. 1d6 Intelligence and 1d6 Wisdom are drained per turn until both stats are reduced to zero. The lawgiver then possesses the victim's body, turning it into a host. This can be combated with a successful Will save (DC 20) but the grapple must be broken for the process to be completely stopped. Lost Int and Wis are recovered at a rate of 1d4 per night of uninterrupted rest.

## Madoc Giant Sea-Tortoise

**Other Names:** Wisemen/women; Grandfathers/mothers

**Homeworld:** Madoc

**Present Distribution:** Holy Terra, formerly in Pentateuch and Vera Cruz

**Type:** Animalia (reptilia)

**Role:** Omnivore (with a preference for plants)

**Size:** 1.2 - 1.8 m (4 - 6 ft.) to 15 m (50 ft.)

**Weight:** 800 kg. (1,770 lbs.) to 14 - 35 tons

**Habitat:** Littoral to abyssal.

**Social Organization:** Colony of roughly 15 members; the giant tortoises are solitaries.

**Description:** Known as "agen token" by the Oro'ym, who also call them "wino kigam," Grandfathers/mothers, or literally "Kind Ancestors," the Madoc wisemen and women are much like the giant tortoises of Urth. These sea-reptiles share the same characteristics as their Urthish counterparts: carapace, head dotted with a beak, slowness. Unlike the specimen found on Urth, the Madoc Wisemen have six limbs and their scales sport fantastic patterns of colors from deep brown red to iridescent shades of blue in various geometric designs, as if designed by a mad painter. These patterns are slightly hypnotic and serve as the species' most efficacious method of defense, repelling the large predators that lurk in the Madoc oceans.

The giant tortoises range in size from one meter to 15 meters, or so Oro'ym witnesses attest. Indeed, Oro'ym legends speak of titanic tortoises prowling the unknown depths of Madoc, surfacing only once a century. The people of Madoc have many stories about

these legendary creatures, said to swim amongst submerged Ur ruins. The Oro'ym used to leave offerings of food on the lone beach islands where these giant tortoises were thought to spend their reproductive season. These islands are now home to an al-Malik fief, though some folklore maintains that these islands are the giant tortoises themselves, sleeping in a sort of hibernation state.

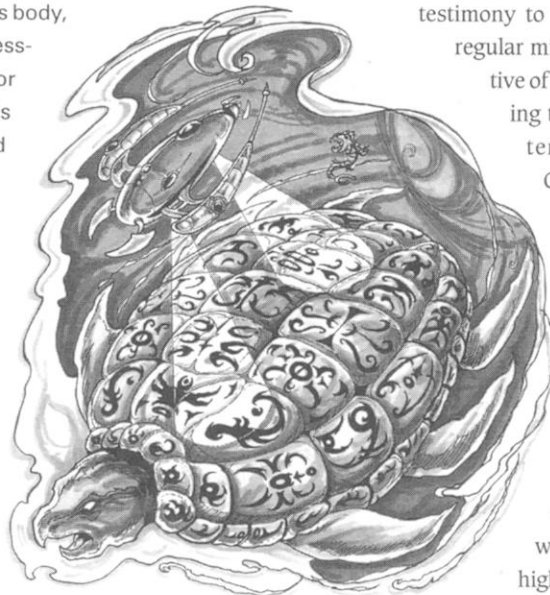
As their Urthish counterparts, the Madoc sea-tortoises are peaceful beasts. Indeed, more radical naturalists believe that the two species share a similar origin. Slow moving to an extreme, this trait is used to explain their famous longevity. An Oro-ym proverb says, "Slow is the majesty of the Madoc tortoises, long is their lifespan in contemplation of the mysteries." The Oro'ym believe that the giant sea-tortoises share a higher connection with the universe than other beings, and that their long periods of inactivity (especially during the mating season, see below) are really a deep trance during which they would enter in contact with "higher realms of existence."

Though not believed sentient, many people project anthropomorphic traits on these creatures. Their slowness is often seen as testimony to their serenity and their regular migration patterns, indicative of mysterious senses allowing them to follow underwater leylines/currents.

Oro'ym customs venerate the creatures, and Eskatonic priests have a deep fascination for them. Gjarti mystics and psychics have tried to commune with the tortoises during their "trance states." They speak of them as spirit guides who pull them along to higher planes in their psychic wakes.

This maybe the reason the terraforming architect Doramos imported several specimens to Pentateuch and Vera Cruz. There they died out after the Fall, due to nobles who hunted them for sport, guilds that wished to experiment on them or even strange psychic parasites that drove them to extinction. Nonetheless, occasional sightings of giant, brightly colored, six-legged tortoises continue to occur even to this day. Superstitious serfs have even spoken of "ghost-tortoises."

**Behavior:** The Madoc giant sea-tortoises follow precise migratory patterns. Each year, the female tortoises come to the shores of the numerous tropical atolls of Madoc to lay their eggs (from 6 to 12) in the sand. The males circle the females, who stay unmoving on their nesting places for about two weeks. Once this time is over, the colony returns to the waters to begin the annual migration anew. Eggs hatch and the tiny newborns instinctively seek the protective embrace of the sea. The majority perish in the few hours after their birth. Indeed, the species is considered threatened, even on Madoc, for their reproduction rhythm is slow. Human deprecations have



modified the natural environment, and the shy animals now shun traditional egg-laying beaches.

Some of the peaceful beasts live in captivity, though no specimen has ever reproduced in such a state. They are favorite mounts of children who spend hours of delight riding them under the tender eye of their rich vacationing parents. Yet, behind this face of dignity and serenity lies perhaps a mystic creature that could provide deeper insights on the universe. Some hesychast and Voavenlohjun monks use the creature as their emblem.

**Commodity:** While strictly forbidden by League and Oro'ym laws, some unscrupulous gourmands savor the delicacies of the giant sea-tortoises' eggs. A single egg is worth 10 firebirds on the black market and larger eggs run as high as 50 firebirds. Some al-Malik nobles on the Feshsham isles of Madoc believe that the eggs provide psychic insight. Also, necklaces, bracelets and even lampshades made out of Madoc tortoise scales are prized due to their bright hues.

Today, as even the Madoc species is threatened with extinction, the Eskatonic Order has petitioned the League to forbid tortoise hunting, to no avail. Some militant priests have asked the Patriarch to lay censure on these activities. Others have taken the fight to the field and now try to prevent hunting by navigating around hunting boats, praying the whole time.

### Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 5-10, Dex 2, End 7-20

**Mind:** Wits 8, Per 1 (smell is 8), Tech 0

**Spirit:** Ext 2/Int 8, Pas 2/Calm 8, Fth 10/Ego 0

**Natural Skills:** Chm 3, Imp 5-10, Snk 3, Vig 9-12

**Size:** XL to GA

**Movement:** 2-5 km/h land; 10-20 km/h sea

**Special:** The giant (GA) specimens have achieved sentience. Though no humans know the truth, they did so while swimming in unknown depths, where Anunnaki ruins lied. However, they do not exhibit an Ego trait common to other sentients. They have a nigh supernatural knowledge of the surrounding oceans and follow the same migratory pattern each year, which makes them easier to hunt, though mystics believe they follow ley-lines. The 20 or so gigantic sentient tortoises are solitaries, swimming the oceans of Madoc, where those same mystics think they serve a balancing role in the ecosystem. They say the tortoises commune with the Madoc world spirit and, as they travel the world's oceans, bring its messages to other species/beasts.

Indeed, their smaller cousins, while in their strange trance, somehow "petition" their elders to reproduce. In this way, the "common" tortoises act as vessels to the greater truth held by the gigantic ones. (The trance is similar, in game terms, to the Coven Bond power of Sympathy.) Mystics who somehow manage to enter this bond during trances (with the Beast Kelanti theurgic ritual, for example) have visions of the planet's spirit and perceive it as a living, mother-like, divine figure. They also sense the harm human depredation does to the ecosystem.

**Armor:** Hide (ARM 4d/20d for gigantic specimen)

**Vitality:** -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0



## d20 System Stats

### Large to Gargantuan Beast

**Hit Dice:** 3d8+6 (18 hp) to 9d8 + 27 (63 hp)

**Initiative:** -2 (Dex)

**Speed:** 30 ft., swim 40 ft.

**AC:** 17 (-2 from Dex, -1 size, +10 natural) to 24 (-2 from Dex, -4 size, +20 natural)

**Attacks:** None

**Damage:** None

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Pressure Resistant

**Saves:** Fort +14, Ref +9, Will +14

**Abilities:** Str 12-20, Dex 7, Con 16, Int 2 (9), Wis 10 (18), Cha 10 (18)

**Skills:** Swim + 20

**Challenge Rating:** 0

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Neutral (Lawful Good)

**Advancement:** —

### COMBAT

The tortoises do not fight. They have no natural predators, and only swim away if attacked.

**Pressure Resistant (Ex):** The largest tortoises can survive extreme water pressure, swimming down mile after mile to reach the deepest part of Madoc's seas.

## Malignatian Husk

**Other Names:** Icecrackers

**Homeworld:** Malignatius

**Present Distribution:** Malignatius, Byzantium Secundus

**Type:** Demonic (Undead)

**Role:** N/A

**Size:** 1.8 m (6 ft.)

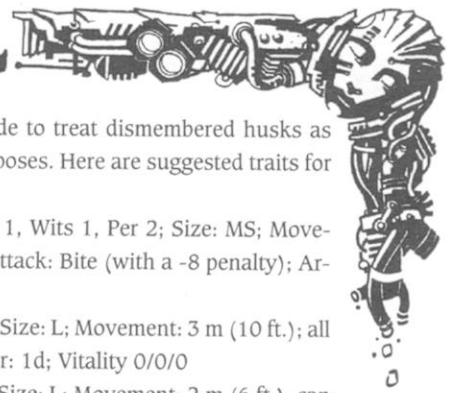
**Weight:** 100 kg (220 lbs.)

**Habitat:** Arctic (and any freezing temperature).

**Social Organization:** Controlled by necromantic thaumaturgy; usually based on military pattern.

**Description:** Reanimated cadavers have been recorded on all worlds throughout history; the most virulent plague of shambling husks is presently occurring on the Decados planet Malignatius, where Church legions have been attempting to besiege the stronghold of a known necromancer. This sorcerer has been calling up local corpses to serve in the ranks of his defending forces, deploying them on the vast blizzard-swept arctic plains that surround his fortress. The husks created in this freezing environment can be especially tough, one Kalinhti officer reports, because even heavily deteriorated tissue is highly resistant to damage when it is frozen hard as ice. These frozen husks of Malignatius, called "icecrackers" by those who fight them, thrive in the very climate that slowly kills all living troops, being hardened by the cold they do not feel. Being frozen likewise enables them to resist the effects of fire, unless it can be applied directly for prolonged periods.

Scattered reports suggest that practitioners of foul necromantic sorcery have begun to try deploying "icecrackers" in their own domains where climate permits. Tales reach us from the northern Ghast region of Byzantium Secundus, of ill-clad man-like shapes



staggering through the arctic wastes. Close study of these reports reveals that whatever coven is calling the dead from their rest on the capitol world, they do not possess

either the knowledge of military strategy or the powers of mental control used by the villain of Malignatius to make his shambling army into an unholy terror.

**Behavior:** These particular husks show even less mental capacity than others, but are controlled by the Antinomian sorcerer who called them up. Thus, while they individually display little thought other than the drive to fight, in large groups they are capable of executing devilishly sophisticated tactics and strategies. Despite their unnatural strength, they are not especially skilled fighters, being slow and awkward. In the long run they compensate by not feeling pain, hunger or fatigue; a company of Malignatian husks can sustain a forced march indefinitely, in any weather, without any need of provisions.

**Commodity:** Frozen husks produce nothing, and serve only those whose souls are already lost.

### Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 11, Dex 5, End 10

**Mind:** Wits 1, Per 2, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Fht 6, Imp 6, Mel 8, Obs 5, Sht 5, Snk 8, Vig 6

**Learned skills:** Warfare (Military Tactics) 3

**Size:** XL (average)

**Movement:** 8 m

**Special:** Immune to cold, mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning and disease. Not subjects to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain or death from massive damage.

**Attacks:** (STR bonus: +2)

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Fist	6	11	4
Broadsword	8	13	8
Spear	9	13	7
Axe	8	13	9

**Special Attacks:** Bite (Dex + Fht, 1d DMG; if target takes any damage, target is then infected with the husk plague and will become a husk if she dies or is near death.)

**Armor:** Ice (ARM 3d)

**Vitality:** 0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0



The gamemaster may decide to treat dismembered husks as separate entities for combat purposes. Here are suggested traits for severed limbs:

**Head** — Str 1, Dex 1, End 1, Wits 1, Per 2; Size: MS; Movement: 0.25 m (10 in.); Special Attack: Bite (with a -8 penalty); Armor 1d; Vitality: 0/0

**Arm** — Str 4, Dex 3, End 3; Size: L; Movement: 3 m (10 ft.); all attacks have a -6 penalty; Armor: 1d; Vitality 0/0/0

**Leg** — Str 5, Dex 2, End 4; Size: L; Movement: 2 m (6 ft.); can only Kick (Dex + Fht, 4d DMG, with a -6 penalty); Armor: 1d; Vitality 0/0/0/0

### d20 System Stats

**Normal Undead (Cold)**

**Hit Dice:** 4d12+20 (46 hp)

**Initiative:** +1 (Dex)

**Speed:** 25 ft.

**AC:** 16 (+1 Dex, +5 natural)

**Attacks:** Longspear +10 melee, bite +10 melee

**Damage:** Longspear 1d8+9, bite 1d4+6

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft. (10 ft.)

**Special Attacks:** Bite

**Special Qualities:** Immunities

**Saves:** Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +4

**Abilities:** Str 23, Dex 12, Con 21, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1

**Skills:** None

**Challenge Rating:** 1

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Neutral

**Advancement:** —

#### COMBAT

Icecrackers do only as their masters instruct.

**Bite (Ex):** If target fails a Fort save (DC 14), target is then infected with the husk plague and will become a husk if she dies or is near death.

**Immunities (Ex):** Immune to cold, mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning and disease. Not subjects to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain or death from massive damage.

## Midian Vixen

**Homeworld:** Midian

**Present Distribution:** Transported and bred throughout the Garden Worlds.

**Type:** animalia, canis

**Role:** Omnivore

**Size:** 2.2m (7 feet)

**Weight:** 150-170 kg (300 pounds)

**Habitat:** Temperate forest, woodlands or plains

**Social Organization:** Midian vixens mate for life and guard their young fiercely. Outside the immediate family, they form loose relationships with other pairs of vixens, looking after each other's young.

**Description:** The Midian vixen looks like a cross between an Urthish badger and a wolf-hound. They can reach seven feet in length. Their dense fur ranges in color from musky green to tan, depending on the sub-species. They possess powerful digging claws, elongated snout and black facial stripes. Vixens are heavily muscled and, al-



though not built for speed, they can cover ground surprisingly quickly.

**Behavior:** These animals are friendly, approachable and form strong bonds with humans, showing remarkable loyalty to them. As Sir Escar Trusnikron once said,

Appen one day, young Freddy 'ere got caught down t' pit. Flossy here, [the Vixen in question - Ed.] ran full 20 miles, at night, t' bring 'elp. Fair saved 'is life, she did.

All in all a most virtuous beast, apart from one instability - female vixens prove susceptible to "moon madness." Their mating cycle comes to a head under the full moon, at which point these placid and loyal creatures become ravening monstrosities. From Sir Escar, again:

Aye, one night young Freddy here, 'e went down t' Flossy's pen. T' moon was on her, thrashing about she were. Freddy should 'ave let 'er out afore that. She 'ad enough. Fair ploughed though t' pen, brick wall it were, an' all. Took our Freddy 'ere six week t' fix t' hole." From this comes the phrase, "mad like a Midian vixen in heat."

Mated vixens do not seem effected by moon madness.

**Commodity:** Landowners value the vixen for their strength and loyalty. Many Li Halan nobles class them as a status symbol and use them as guard and hunting dogs. A young, unmated male would fetch a price of 5-10 fb; females less because of their madness. Mated pairs are highly prized; Prince Flavius bought one pair of flawless pedigree (out of Pious Desire by Chrysanthemum Dreams) as a gift for his children for 1000 fb.

The low-born use vixen claw charms to ward off the debilitating curse of madness. An solution made from ground Vixen tooth is supposed to grant its drinker the berserk strength of a rabid vixen. Their fur can make excellent weatherproof garments, although this is frowned rather heavily upon by the Li Halan nobility. Indeed, the last Vixen rustler caught and brought to justice met the Pancreator only after six day's public torture.

### Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 6, Dex 6, End 9

(Add +4 to all physical stats for a "madness" stricken Vixen.)

**Mind:** Wits 4, Per 6, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Dod 4, Fht 4, Obs 4, Snk 4, Vig 6

**Learned skills:** Tracking 5

**Size:** L

**Movement:** Run 14 m

**Special:** Moon Madness (add four to all the physical traits of a vixen going through this phase)

**Attacks:** (STR bonus: +1/+2)

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Claw	4	10/14	3/4
Bite	4	10/14	4/5

**Armor:** Heavy Fur and Muscle (ARM 2d)

**Vitality:** -9/-6/-3/-1/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0 (+4 when in "madness")

### d20 System Stats

**Medium Beast**

**Hit Dice:** 4d8+20 (38 hp)

**Initiative:** +2 (Dex)

**Speed:** 50 ft.

**AC:** 16 (+3 Dex, +3 natural)

**Attacks:** 2 claws +6 melee, bite +6 melee

**Damage:** Claw 1d4+2, bite 1d6+2

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** None

**Special Qualities:** Moon madness

**Saves:** Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +2

**Abilities:** Str 14, Dex 15, Con 21, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 4

**Skills:** Listen +8, Spot +8

**Challenge Rating:** 2 (3 in moon madness)

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Neutral

**Advancement:** —

#### COMBAT

Midian vixens prefer flight to combat, but battle savagely when their mates or bonded humans are threatened. Vixens in moon madness fight anything that moves, and somethings that don't.

**Moon Madness (Ex):** When in heat, unmated female vixens gain +8 Str, Dex and Con.

## Mikhorana

**Other Names:** Grail Land Eagle

**Homeworld:** Grail

**Present Distribution:** Iver, Rampart

**Type:** Animalia (chordata, mammalia)

**Role:** Carnivore

**Size:** 4.6 m (15 ft.)

**Weight:** 225 kg (500 lbs.)

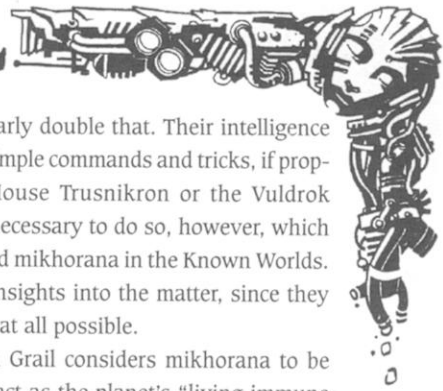
**Habitat:** Temperate forest

**Social Organization:** Solitary, pair or pack (6-10)

**Description:** Aside from the Etyri themselves, the mikhorana is one of the most well-known creatures native to Grail. That's because the "land eagle," as it is sometimes known, was a fixture of zoos and animal preserves throughout the worlds of the Second Republic. Many a big game hunter made a name for himself by bringing a mikhorana back alive from Grail and its image became widely associated with the qualities of strength and determination — as well as ferocity. This association continued even after the Divestiture and to this day the marquis-designate of Grail uses a mikhorana rampart as part of his official insignia.

The mikhorana gets its nickname from the fact that it looks very much like a four-legged flightless eagle. Its "wings" are actually large flaps of skin used for heat diffusion, but they are, like the rest of its body, covered by bristly "feathers" that provide the creature with remarkably strong natural armor. Its four limbs





are all powerfully muscled and end in razor sharp claws, with which it rakes its opponents when enraged. Perhaps the most famous portion of the mikhorana's anatomy is its bird-like head, including a large horny beak strong enough to break bone and cut through even plasteel.

Interestingly, the mikhorana possesses no tail of any sort. In fact, its hindquarters possess a small bare spot devoid of even feathers. Etyri legend claims that this is where Mihanoom the Witch-Mother grabbed the mikhorana, when she cast it down into the lands of the dead — that is, the ground — for a transgression that no one can remember. Consequently, mikhorana



are objects of mystery and fear among the Etyri, who do not understand the human fascination with capturing these creatures, never mind holding them up as objects of admiration. To the Etyri, the Witch-Mother has cursed them and that is enough reason to avoid these strange beasts.

**Behavior:** Though fierce when cornered, the mikhorana generally have little interest in the lands occupied by human beings or Etyri. Instead, the land eagles remain within their forest enclaves, where they are an important part of the local ecosystem. Mikhorana prey on several types of herbivores in the forest and keep their numbers in check. Indeed, early settlers to Grail made the mistake of over-hunting the mikhorana to such an extent that they adversely affected the environment. The wise counsel of House Keddah (and military force to back it up) restored the balance and land eagle hunting is now more tightly controlled.

Though avian in appearance, the mikhorana are actual a type of mammal. Mated pairs of land eagles produce a litter of three to six young after a gestation period of seven months. Mikhorana show a remarkable parental instinct and care for their offspring for up to a year after birth, at which point they are considered full-grown. The land eagle will defend its young against all predators, including human beings or Etyri, sometimes sacrificing its own life in order to protect its offspring.

Every five to seven years, land eagles across Grail engage in anomalous behavior that brings them into conflict with the planet's inhabitants. The mikhorana leave their forest homes in large numbers and move into settled areas, even ones as developed as New Lahore City, for example. There, they attack without warning or cause. No one has yet offered an explanation of this bizarre behavior, which puts strain on the strictures against killing the mikhorana. The last such occurrence was in 4996, which means that another one is probably due soon.

**Commodity:** Mikhorana have few uses, except as pets and curiosities. Young land eagles can be sold for as much as 1500 firebirds

each, while adults command nearly double that. Their intelligence is sufficient that they can learn simple commands and tricks, if properly trained. Few outside of House Trusnikron or the Vuldrok beastfriends possess the skills necessary to do so, however, which is why there are so few trained mikhorana in the Known Worlds.

Even the Etyri have few insights into the matter, since they avoid the land eagles if at all possible.

A Gjartin sect on Grail considers mikhorana to be sacred animals that act as the planet's "living immune system." They claim that their periodic forays into more civilized areas are the judgment of their goddess on the evils of over-development and dependence on technology. Consequently, they will sometimes pay handsomely to free land eagles held in captivity.

## Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 12, Dex 6, End 9

**Mind:** Wits 2, Per 5, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Dod 4, Fht 6, Obs 3, Snk 4, Vig 7

**Size:** H

**Movement:** 23 m

**Attacks:** (STR bonus: +3)

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Claw	5	12	5
Bite	5	12	6
Pounce	2	12	4+

**Special Attacks:** Pounce (If a mikhorana leaps upon a foe during the first round of combat, it can make a full attack with no multiple-action penalty, even if it has already made its full movement that round), Grab (To use this ability, the mikhorana must hit with its bite attack. If it gets a hold, it can also rake), Rake (A mikhorana that gets a hold can make two rake attacks (same initiative and goal as a claw attack, with no multiple-action penalty) with its hind legs for 5d damage each. If the mikhorana pounces on an opponent, it can also rake)

**Armor:** Bristly Feathers (ARM 2d)

**Vitality:** -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0

## d20 System Stats

**Huge Beast**

**Hit Dice:** 8d10+40 (84 hp)

**Initiative:** +1 (+1 Dex)

**Speed:** 75 ft.

**AC:** 17 (-2 size, +1 Dex, +8 natural)

**Attacks:** 2 Claws +14 melee, 1 bite +9 melee

**Damage:** Claws 2d6+8, bite 2d6+14

**Face/Reach:** 10 ft. by 20 ft./10 ft. (3 m by 6 m/3 m)

**Special Attacks:** Pounce, improved grab, rake 2d6+8

**Special Qualities:** Scent

**Saves:** Fort +11, Ref +7, Will +2

**Abilities:** Str 27, Dex 13, Con 21, Int 4, Wis 10, Cha 10

**Skills:** Listen +5, Spot +5, Wilderness Lore +5

**Feats:** Dodge, Track

**Challenge Rating:** 8

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always neutral

**Advancement:** 9-16 HD (Huge), 17-24 HD (Gargantuan)



**Pounce (Ex):** If a mikhorana leaps upon a foe during the first round of combat, it can make a full attack, even if it has already taken a move action.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, the mikhorana must hit with its bite attack. If it gets a hold, it can rake.

**Rake (Ex):** A mikhorana that gets a hold can make two rake attacks (+14 melee) with its hind legs for 2d6+8 damage each. If the mikhorana pounces on an opponent, it can also rake.

## Molad Bhenz

**Other Names:** Dirkfist, Ol' Ben

**Homeworld:** Khayyam

**Present Distribution:** Beliah, Kurga

**Type:** Animalia (chordata, reptilia, ornithiscia)

**Role:** Herbivore

**Size:** 3m tall (10ft)

**Weight:** 400kg (880 lbs)

**Habitat:** Tropical scrubland

**Social Organization:** Herd between 10 and 20 individuals

**Description:** When civilization flowed into the Kurgan Caliphate, the Phoenix Knights met a new and peculiar creature, the Molad Bhenz. A huge reptile from the Caliphate world of Khayyam, the Molad Bhenz is a zoological blunder. How any creature could evolve so ungainly is proof that all worlds need the guidance of the Pancreator to keep their beings normal.

Molad Bhenzi (their plural name) roamed the plains and scrub of Khayyam until the first settlers domesticated them. Little else is known about them except for some of their history with the Kurgan Caliphate. The Kurgans have always had Molad Bhenzi as dray-beasts and war-mounts, and because of the reptiles' natural brutish strength and endurance, they are very effective as both. Peaceful herbivores, they passively accept their masters' guidance, willingly doing anything that will not injure them. They are rarely stubborn, another useful attribute in a dray-beast. Molad Bhenzi are seen in most large cities of Beliah, Kurga and Khayyam, usually hauling goods or carrying local authorities.

Molad Bhenzi physical structure are especially unusual for a reptile. Herbivorous bipeds, they stride gracefully across their flat habitat. Legs make up half of a Molad Bhenz's height, and most of the leg is devoted to the shins and ankles. A massive upper body counters the lithe legs. The creature's torso broadens outwards from the narrow hips into a massive barrel chest. Its arms are thick and wrapped by multiple layers of knotted muscles. These arms terminate in three massive claws. Fixed and immobile, each claw is three-foot long and as sharp as a sword. Composed of ivory-coated bone, Kurgan nobles prize these claws for use as carvings and jewelry.

The blood of the Molad Bhenz is highly acidic, corroding clothes and armor in seconds. It is quite strong and can be very painful to those unfortunate enough to have Molad Bhenz blood on their hands. Blood vessels closest to the skin contain a great deal of blood pressure, and this corrosive fluid can spurt out if the skin is broken. The acidic blood is what gives the creature its impassive and calm nature. Kurgan scientists discovered this and developed the chemical "llhowdry" to counteract the effect. When injected into the beast before battle, it neutralizes the acidic blood and puts the creature into a ravenous frenzy.

Kurgan cavalry who ride Molad Bhenzi tend to bond to their mounts for life, and close friendships develop between mount and rider. Molad Bhenzi are actually affectionate creatures, surprising many because of their reptilian nature. The bond between Molad Bhenz and rider begins when a child is chosen to be a warrior. If he is to be a Rider, he is given a Molad Bhenz egg and assigned to raise and care for the creature like it was his child. Warriors grow up with their Molad Bhenz, and often just barely outlive their mounts, whose lifespans range from 50 to 60 years. The awesome might of these beasts in battle is reported in this excerpt from an authoritative encyclopedia on the Kurgan Caliphate (troop report by Captain Gerard Esfanzo of the Hazat during the crusade against the Kurgan Caliphate.):

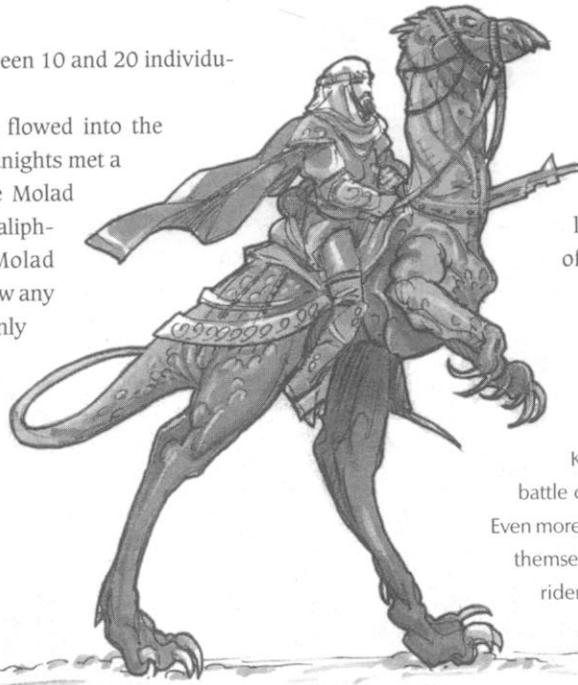
They ride these beasts into battle from over the hills of the steppes and deluge us in a solid cloud of reptilian hide, decorated with expensive cloth marked with figures undecipherable.

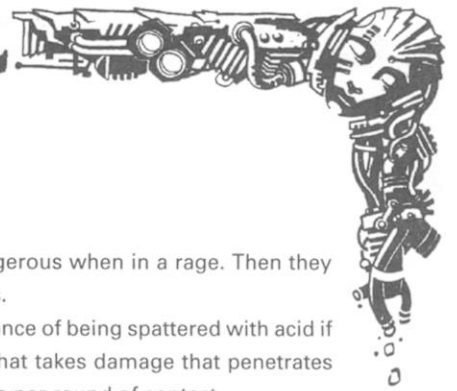
Kurgan warriors wave their weapons and holler their battle cries before overtaking our troops and engaging us. Even more fearsome than their riders are these horrible molochs themselves, the "Molad Benz" in the cursed tongue of their riders. My soldiers have come to call them bens for simplicity and to avoid speaking filth.

By the Saints they are fast!

They stride across the grass unhampered by any amount of armor mounted on their back. Often they sport a small turret, armored to protect the heathen atop, and even the cannon and ammunition does nothing to break its stride. I know not how any man can aim with the beast moving, for those unfortunate to see one up close cannot help but note its peculiar bipedal gait. The long, gangly legs of the bens are surprisingly strong, but the beasts are surprisingly easy to topple. Just make sure none of your troops are underneath when it falls.

In close combat, their horrendously enlarged claws hew down soldiers like a peasant reaps hay. No doubt the foul Kurgan train them to do this, for peasants say that in the wild they do this only in self defense. One ben, its rider dead and hanging limp from the saddle, ran crazed around the battlefield and attacked one of my scout cars. The beast's strength was fathomless! Its claws pierced clean through the car's armor, and the beast ravaged the side of the vehicle, stabbing madly at the giant, iron intruder. Before we gunned it down, it nearly peeled off the entire side of the car. These brutes are fearsome, and I would advise not that any commander lead troops into





close combat with these beasts. After my first battle with Molad Bhenz riders, I changed tactics and strafed any open field with artillery at the first sign of Kurgan Cavalry.

**Behavior:** Molad Bhenzi are usually peaceful herd beasts. They live in family herds and diligently protect hatched young, even though they lay their eggs in the sand and leave them to fend for themselves. They add any youngsters they find in their travels to their herd.

The herds are nomadic, and migrate into and out of the desert. During the dry season, they migrate out of the desert with any adopted young and live on the dry grasses of the scrubland. With the rains, they travel back into the drier regions to lay their eggs in the sand.

**Commodity:** The only value of a Molad Bhenz is to collect the ivory claws and barter them to artisans for items. Firebirds are useless in the Caliphate, but the approximate firebird price would be 300 fb.

### Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 10, Dex 7, End 7

**Mind:** Wits 2, Per 5, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Dod 6, Fht 6, Obs 6, Vig 6

**Movement:** Standard

**Special Qualities:** Easy to Handle (+2 to the target number on associated Beast Lore rolls), Hard to Ride (-2 to the target number on associated Ride rolls)

**Attacks:**

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Claw	6	13	7
Thrash	6	13	6
Bite	6	13	5

**Special Attacks:** Acid Blood, 50 percent chance of being spattered with acid if within 2 meters of a Molad Bhenz that takes damage that penetrates its hide. Acid deals 2d DMG per round of contact.

**Armor:** Hide (ARM 6d)

**Vitality:** -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0/0

**Psychoactive Rage:** A bhenz injected with one dose of the drug lllhowdry enters a psychoactive rage the very next turn. The Molad Bhenz gains +2 Str (and +1d DMG), +1 End, and -1 Dex. The drug wears off after one hour. More than one dose of the drug per hour will kill the Molad Bhenz.

### d20 System Stats

**Large Beast**

**Hit Dice:** 4d10 + 4 (26 hp)

**Initiative:** +2 (Dex)

**Speed:** Run 50 ft.

**AC:** 14 (+2 Dex, +3 natural armor, -1 size)

**Attacks:** 2 Claws +6 melee, Thrash +6 melee, Bite +6 melee

**Damage:** Claws d8+4, Thrash 2d6+4, Bite d4+4

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Acid Blood.

**Special Qualities:** Easy to Handle, Hard to Ride

**Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +2

**Abilities:** Str 18, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 10

**Skills:** Spot +2, Psychoactive Rage\*

**Feats:** Cleave, Endurance, Power Attack, Run

**Challenge Rating:** 3

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always Neutral

**Advancement:** —

#### COMBAT

Bhenz are really own dangerous when in a rage. Then they stop at nothing to kill their foes.

**Acid Blood (Ex):** 50% chance of being spattered with acid if within 5 ft. of a Molad Bhenz that takes damage that penetrates its hide. Acid deals 1d6 damage per round of contact.

**Easy to Handle:** DC on Handle Animal skill check is lowered by 5.

**Hard to Ride:** DC on all skills involving riding are increased by 5.

**Skills:** A bhenz is injected with one dose of the drug lllhowdry enter a psychoactive rage the turn after they were injected. The Molad Bhenz gains +8 Str, +4 Con, and -4 AC. The drug will wear off after one hour. More than one dose of the drug per hour will kill the Molad Bhenz.

## Naked Snake

**Homeworld:** Istakhr

**Present Distribution:** Common in many large deserts in the Known Worlds.

**Type:** Animalia (chordata, reptilia, squamata)

**Role:** Herbivore

**Size:** 6 feet (2 meters)

**Weight:** 50 kg (100 lbs)

**Habitat:** Dry, warm deserts

**Social Organization:** Often solitary or in small nuclear clans (??).

**Description:** Naked snakes are long, very thin (usually smaller than two inches in diameter) and pale of color. They have very soft skins and no scales.

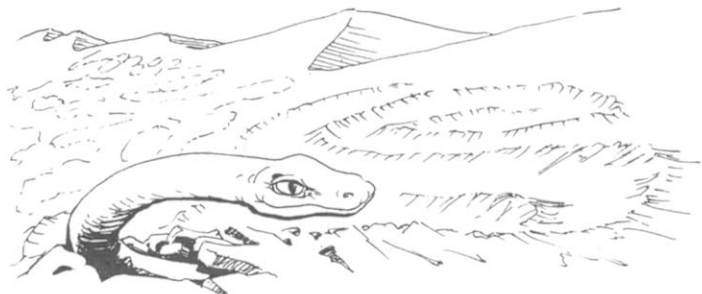
**Behavior:** Naked snakes live alone in deserts. They move just under the soil, keeping cool below ground. Their movements stir the soil, and they absorb nutrients through their skin.

This movement through the soil usually leaves a discernable trail, as the darker soil under the topsoil is pushed to the surface.

**Commodity:** Prior to the Second Republic, naked snakes were little known offworld of Istakhr. However, during the Republic terraformers found them to be useful environmental indicators, and so were distributed to many worlds.

Eating a naked snake is possible, but not common. They are fairly scarce and generally not meaty enough to serve as a consistent food source. Hunting a naked snake is a time-consuming operation. While following its trail from above is possible, the twistings and turnings can be tedious, particularly when one comes upon the trail in its middle and is not sure which direction is which.

In the early days of Istakhr's settlement, fortunetellers studied





aerial and satellite photographs and interpreted the naked snake's trails as glyphs and runes. This reached a small craze during the Second Republic, with native shamans guiding tourists in fliers to "read the future" in the snakes' patterns.

Early on, however, terraformers studied the snakes' patterns for the more prosaic purpose of discerning nutrient distribution in the deserts. Surveyors dropped a few snakes into a desert, and then studied satellite photos a few weeks later. This often proved less expensive in arid areas than the cost of sending in crews with heavy equipment.

Today, the terraformers are gone, and the tourist industry is in decline. But desert-dwellers on many worlds still rely on pattern reading and pattern-walking rituals, and many shops of low status sell charms engraved with some of the common naked snake patterns.

**Wild Gift:** Beastfriends can borrow the bite and poison abilities from cohort naked snakes.

### Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 2, Dex 7, End 3

**Mind:** Wits 1, Per 4, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Chm 0, Dod 3, Fht 3, Imp 0, Mel 0, Obs 5, Sht 0, Snk 5, Vig 6

**Size:** S (naked snakes are fairly long, but very thin)

**Movement:** 2 m aboveground, 0.6 m belowground. Naked snakes move in a sidewinder fashion, both above and belowground. The belowground winding creates a trail approximately one foot (0.3 m) wide.

**Attacks:**

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Bite	5	8	1*

\* plus poison.

**Special Attacks:** Poison. If any bite damage is inflicted, victim must make an End + Vigor roll or fall unconscious for one hour per point of damage taken.

**Vitality:** -4/0/0/0

### d20 System Stats

**Small Animal**

**Hit Dice:** 1d8 (4 hp)

**Initiative:** +3 (Dex)

**Speed:** Aboveground 6 ft., belowground 2 ft.

**AC:** 14 (+1 size, +3 Dex)

**Attacks:** Bite +4 melee (+1 size, +3 Dex)

**Damage:** Bite 1d4 -2

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft. (coiled)/5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Disorienting Venom

**Special Qualities:** Scent

**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +1

**Abilities:** Str 6, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2

**Skills:** Balance +11, Climb +9, Hide +15, Listen +9, Move Silently +6, Spot +9

**Feats:** Weapon Finesse (bite)

**Challenge Rating:** 1/4

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always neutral

**Advancement:** —

**Poison (Ex):** Bite, Fortitude save. *Type:* Injury DC 11; *Initial Damage:* 0; *Secondary Damage:* Unconsciousness.

## Nakuut

**Homeworld:** Grail

**Present Distribution:** Aragorn, Cadiz, Criticorum, Delphi, Istakhr, Kish, Rampart, Sutek, Vera Cruz

**Type:** Animalia (chordata, aves)

**Role:** Secondary Predator

**Size:** Height 3 m (10 ft.), wingspan 9 m (30 ft.)

**Weight:** 122 kg. (270 lbs.)

**Habitat:** Temperate grassland

**Social Organization:** Flocks of about 20 individuals during migration season. Usually found in pairs during other times of the year.

**Description:** Upon my arrival on Grail on behalf of Lord Erbian and my initial inquiries about notable wildlife in the area, the first word out of most people's mouths was "Nakuut." I followed directions to "Go see the Detrops about that." Hiking through the hills to their manor revealed the large barns and other structures strewn about. Through an open door to a workshop, I could see a tanner mending a number of straps on an enormous saddle. I reached the villa and was welcomed warmly by none other than Lady Detrop, most famed breeder of nakuut in the Known Worlds. Servants took my coat and scarf and I set up my quills in her study. On the walls were innumerable sketches, studies, diagrams and paintings of nakuut. I sat in a large, comfortable chair with a table set in front of me for writing. She sat in another of the large plush chairs opposite and explicated all she knew about the nakuut.

Nakuut originated on Grail and remain at the top of the food chain around here. They have no natural predators where they live, and as far as I know, have no natural predators anywhere they've gone feral. The only creature I've ever seen kill a healthy adult was a Frisian wrym on Delphi.

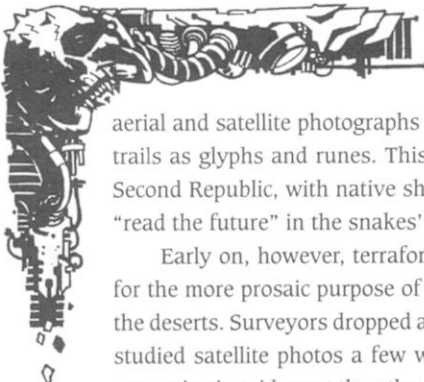
Natural, wild nakuut around here can vary greatly from the breeds you'd encounter on other planets. Criticorum's nakuuts, for example, have much shorter wings for maneuvering between those buildings." She said the last word with a hint of scorn in her voice.

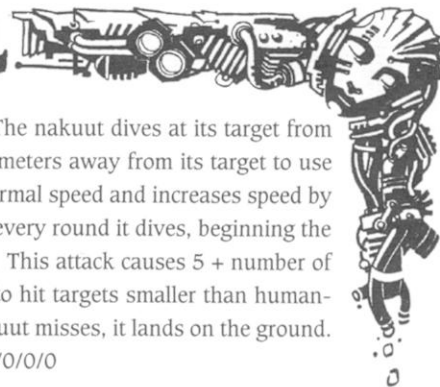
But the natural nakuut is probably what you're most interested in. The wild nakuut is bigger than most breeds, but proportionally weaker. People breed nakuut to ride them and carry heavy loads, you see. So, in spite of its greater size, a normal nakuut would probably lose a fight with most breeds.

Around here, they eat anything smaller than themselves that they can catch and kill. They swoop down either from behind or with the sun to their backs and catch their prey by surprise. They crash into the creature and drive the creature into the ground, crushing it and usually killing it on impact. The nakuut's limbs are designed for this, so the creature rarely gets hurt.

It tears its victim apart and devours chunks, swallowing them whole. Serrated edges for shredding line its beak, and the force behind them can punch a hole through weak armor. Nakuuts have very good eyesight and can spot large prey several miles away in open country. Their senses of smell and hearing are pathetic, however. They are all, in fact, completely deaf.

They walk about on their forelimbs, which is an evolutionary advantage since that is where the strongest muscles already are.





Walking is awkward, however, and they can't do it very quickly. What the limbs are really good for is leaping, and that's how they'll usually travel on the ground. They can jump at a fair clip, fast enough to run down a slow person, but they'll usually take to the air when seeking prey. This leaves the hind limbs free to manipulate objects and its "feet" are now used as hands.

How the creatures stay aloft is a mystery to most. It just doesn't look like it can fly. Its wings are thin skin stretched over several fingers, more like bats than birds. I don't know why you zoologists don't reclassify it. Anyways, the wing membrane does not attach to the ankle or legs or any such. Long, thin, light immobile bones jut from the shoulders backwards. When the creature is in flight, the bones lie flat against the body, horizontal to the ground. When the nakuut is walking, the bones jut straight back and require room because they are delicate. Without them, a nakuut can't fly.

Lady Detrop motioned to a sheet of paper on the wall saying, "This might be useful to you. It lists all the breeds of nakuut and which worlds they're on."

I have included a copy with the descriptions used to differentiate between breeds.

Name	Planets
Wild	Grail
	<b>Description:</b> Thick jaws, slender limbs, long talons
Gizdern	Cadiz, Istakhr, Kish, Sutek, Vera Cruz
	<b>Description:</b> Most common, similar to wild, thicker limbs, shorter talons, slenderer face, brighter plumage
Sablos	Istakhr, Kish, Rampart
	<b>Description:</b> Small body with much larger wings (18 meters), very slender build (100 kg), dull plumage
Destes	Aragorn, Sutek, Vera Cruz
	<b>Description:</b> Heavy build (130 kg), thick jaws, shorter hooked bill, largest breed
Delphin	Delphi
	<b>Description:</b> Short and stocky (2 m tall), thick blue plumage. Short wings (10 m)
Malikuut	Criticorum
	<b>Description:</b> Very slender build (90 kg), smallest breed, little serration of bill, very short wings (8 m)

**Behavior:** Wild nakuuts are migratory and travel north or south with the seasons. Bred nakuuts have the tendency to become disgruntled and agitated during autumn and spring, when they feel that they should be migrating.

**Commodity:** Nakuuts are prized mounts and can fetch several thousand firebirds (+3000) depending on breed and buyer.

## Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 8, Dex 6, End 6

**Mind:** Wits 2, Per 6, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Dod 6, Fht 6, Fly 5, Obs 7, Vig 6

**Movement:** Standard

**Attacks:**

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Claw	6	12	5
Bite	6	12	7

**Special Attacks:** Dive Attack, The nakuut dives at its target from above. It must start at least 30 meters away from its target to use this attack. The bird starts at normal speed and increases speed by half its normal flying speed for every round it dives, beginning the round after it started the attack. This attack causes 5 + number of turns it dives damage. Its goal to hit targets smaller than human-sized is reduced by 4. If the nakuut misses, it lands on the ground.

**Vitality:** -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0

## d20 System Stats

**Large Beast**

**Hit Dice:** 3d8 + 3 (17 hp)

**Initiative:** +1 (Dex)

**Speed:** Fly 60 ft. (good), leap 25 ft.

**AC:** 10 (-1 size, +1 Dex)

**Attacks:** Bite +3 melee, Claws (hind feet) +3 melee

**Damage:** Bite 2d6+3, Claws 2d4+3

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 10 ft./10 ft.



**Special Attacks:** Dive Attack.

**Special Qualities:** None

**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +0

**Abilities:** Str 16, Dex 12 (in the air; 8 on the ground), Con 12, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 10

**Skills:** Spot +20

**Feats:** None

**Challenge Rating:** 3

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always neutral

**Advancement:** Gizdern 4 HD

Sablos 3 HD

Destes 5-7 HD

Delphin 4 HD

Malikuut 2 HD Fly (good)

## COMBAT

Nakuuts use their dive attack and try to fly off if it fails.

**Dive Attack (Ex):** The nakuut dive-bombs its target from above. It must start at least 100 ft. away from its target to use this attack. It starts at normal speed and increases speed by half normal flying speed for every round it is diving after the round it started the attack. This attack causes d12+3+ the number of turns it dives. It has a -4 to hit targets smaller than medium size. If the nakuut misses, it lands on the ground.





## Needletongue Zipstrider

**Homeworld:** Pyre

**Present Distribution:** Pyre, Byzantium Secundus, Criticorum, Grail, Pentateuch, Shaprut, Stigmata, Nowhere

**Type:** Animalia (arthropoda, insecta, siphonaptera)

**Role:** Carnivore

**Size:** 0.8 m (2.5 ft.)

**Weight:** 0.4 kg (1 lb.)

**Habitat:** Desert.

**Social Organization:** Solitary

**Description:** Indigenous to the planet Pyre, the needletongue zipstrider has, in the thousand years since the Fall, spread to nearby worlds in the livestock and produce carried to and from its homeworld by pilgrims and other travelers. This flightless blood-drinking insect has a hard-shelled streamlined body about the size of a humanoid forearm suspended on three pairs of long springy legs with splayed toe-pads that enable it achieve bursts of incredible speed on such difficult terrain as sand, snow and water. Its sharp hardened proboscis is designed to draw the moisture from its prey's carcass by suction.

**Behavior:** Originally evolved to feed upon certain reptiles and insects as they lay dormant beneath the sands of Pyre's Deserta Flamada, the zipstrider appears to have become more aggressive with the coming of man. With the Avestite monastery providing a regular traffic of larger animals across its desert home, the zipstrider now specializes in lightning-fast attacks on horses, brutes and even unwary humans, and has been encroaching upon civilized areas. Of those that have been accidentally exported to other worlds, large breeding populations are known to thrive in the deserts of Pentateuch and Nowhere, while reports of zipstrider attacks are received regularly from the poorer neighborhoods of adjacent worlds.

**Commodity:** The needletongue zipstrider has no redeeming value and presents a serious threat to livestock and small children.

### Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 2, Dex 11, End 1

**Mind:** Wits 2, Per 5, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Dod 8, Fht 5, Obs 6, Snk 7, Vig 8

**Learned skills:** Tracking 6

**Size:** ML

**Movement:** 20 m

### Attacks:

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Needletongue Strike	5	16	2*
Kick	5	16	1

\* The needletongue sucks out one Vitality level for every two turns it remains stuck in the target.

**Special Attacks:** Needletongue (Dex + Fht, 2d DMG; the zipstrider's proboscis darts from its mouth with considerable speed and force, and functions like a hypodermic needle to suck moisture from its prey. If damage from a tongue strike penetrates the target's armor, one Vitality level will be drained from the target until the tongue is forcibly removed.)

**Armor:** Carapace (ARM 3d)

**Vitality:** -8/-4/-2/-1/0

### d20 System Stats

#### Tiny Beast

**Hit Dice:** 1/4d8-4 (hp)

**Initiative:** +6 (Dex)

**Speed:** 65 ft.

**AC:** 20 (+2 size, +6 Dex, +2 natural)

**Attacks:** Needletongue +6 melee, unarmed +6 melee

**Damage:** Needletongue 1d6-3, unarmed 1d3-3

**Face/Reach:** 2 1/2 ft. by 2 1/2 ft./2 1/2 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Needletongue Drain

**Special Qualities:** None

**Saves:** Fort -3, Ref +6, Will -2

**Abilities:** Str 4, Dex 22, Con 2, Int 1, Wis 6, Cha 2

**Skills:** Hide +8, Listen +4, Spot +5

**Feats:** Tracking, Weapon Finesse (needletongue, unarmed)

**Challenge Rating:** 1/4

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Neutral

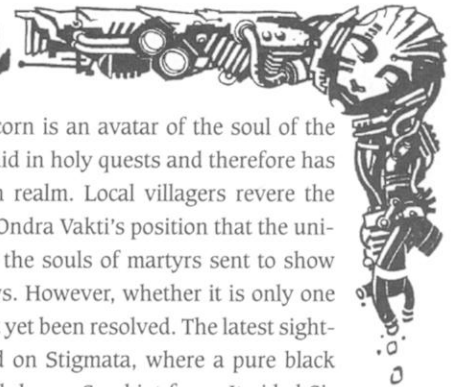
**Advancement:** —

#### COMBAT

Needletongues always try to attack from surprise, shooting out their tongue when least expected. Failing that, they kick and claw until they can finally escape.

**Needletongue Drain (Ex):** The lizard can suck out 1d6 hit points until something removes its tongue from its victim.





## New Unicorn

**Other Names:** Pentateuch Unicorn, Park Unicorn  
**Homeworld:** Midian/Pentateuch  
**Present Distribution:** Palaces of rich nobles (mostly Li Halan/al-Malik); last sighting on Stigmata in 4999  
**Type:** Mutation/Cryptoxenological, maybe Empyrean  
**Role:** Herbivore/unknown  
**Size:** 1.5 m (5 ft.)/2.5 m (8 ft.)  
**Weight:** 140 kg (280 lbs.)/unknown  
**Habitat:** Palaces/unique

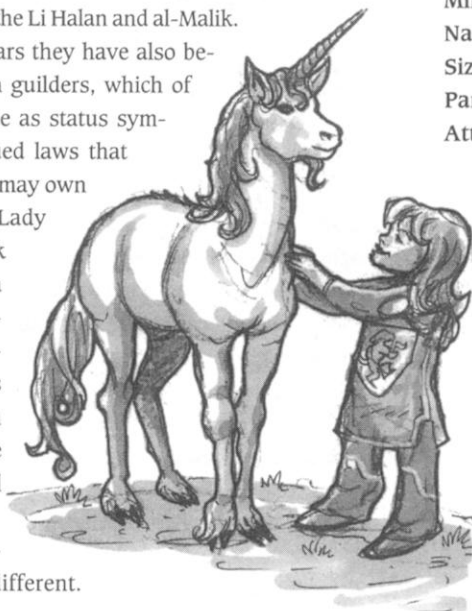
**Social Organization:** Herd of 2-100/solitary  
**Description:** In its hubris, the Second Republic not only changed humans, but animals, too. Wildlife resorts and theme parks had creatures genetically designed to fit mood of the visitors. The unicorn was created and shown in parks claiming to show mythic Urth. Designed to appeal to children, unicorns sport cloven hooves, long, flowing manes and the most unusual colored coats, such as brilliant white, blue-black and red. There are still genetic strains of blue and green unicorns. Also, the eye color ranges from albino red to black; blue- or green-eyed unicorns are popular. The unicorn resembles a pony in height, their horns only a hand's length and blunt, to pose no threat to children. Those genetically engineered freak horses are often mistaken for real unicorns.

But there is another kind, first sighted on Pentateuch and once on Stigmata, though unverifiable rumors place them throughout the Known Worlds. Those unicorns are substantially larger and of the purest white or darkest black. Their long, straight horns exude a pale light said to be all-revealing. Although efforts have been made to catch the unicorn, it has so far outrun any vehicle used for pursuit. It is dangerous to approach the unicorn. Several people have been impaled or trampled by the creature.

**Behavior:** The park unicorn has been designed mostly from pony genes, so it behaves like one. It is friendly, curious and very cute, making children's favorite mounts and draft animals for small carriages. They endure the fancies of their playmates with a saintly stoicism and can be trained not to soil the carpet. They are usually kept by noble houses as pets for the children, and are especially popular among the Li Halan and al-Malik.

Over the last few years they have also become popular among rich guilders, which of course reduces their value as status symbols. Various nobles issued laws that only those of noble blood may own or breed unicorns, and Lady Baranje Rashman al-Malik of Criticorum even had a Reeve's unicorns confiscated. This resulted in severely strained relations between the Rashman branch and the local Reeve chapter. The matter is still to be resolved.

The Pentateuch unicorn, however, is very different.



Local Eskatonics claim the unicorn is an avatar of the soul of the planet. In fact, it is rumored to aid in holy quests and therefore has been ascribed to the Empyrean realm. Local villagers revere the white unicorn, following Priest Ondra Vakti's position that the unicorns of Pentateuch are indeed the souls of martyrs sent to show humanity the error of their ways. However, whether it is only one unicorn or indeed many, has not yet been resolved. The latest sighting of a black unicorn occurred on Stigmata, where a pure black one joined battle against a much larger Symbiot force. It aided Sir Anrak Trusnikron and his auxiliaries, "in answer to our prayers," as Sir Anrak attests.

**Commodity:** The park unicorn is the most popular pet of noble children, and they do everything to have one (or several). Often the very first test of will between noble parents and their offspring, the park unicorn is simply the pet to have. Once purchased, most parents find the unicorns irresistibly cute and start to collect or breed them. The price per animal ranges from 300-3000 fb.

The commodities of the Pentateuch unicorn are too numerous to compile a complete list. According to folk belief, the horn can neutralize any sort of poison if it touches the food or sick. Its blood heals any illness or wound. A lock of its mane preserves beauty and youth far beyond the natural lifespan. The unicorn's eyes reveal any lie or intrigue.

An anonymous noble has set out a reward of 10,000 fb for a dead unicorn, and 25,000 fb for a living one. Rumor has it that the anonymous noble is either a certain Decados countess, recently struck down by a mysterious disease, or a certain Hazat marquis who sustained critical injuries during a campaign on the Kurgan front.

In answer to this, the best hunters of the Known Worlds have set out to hunt it despite protests of local priests and populace. Several militant priests have likewise traveled to Pentateuch to protect the unicorns. There have already been fierce clashes between hunters and defenders.

### Victory Point System Traits

#### Park Unicorn

**Body:** Str 7, Dex 6, End 4  
**Mind:** Wits 3, Per 4, Tech 0  
**Natural skills:** Chm 9, Dod 3, Fht 3, Obs 3, Snk 3, Vig 5  
**Size:** ML  
**Park unicorn:** 13 m  
**Attacks:** (Str +1)

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Hooves	3	7	4

**Armor:** Fur (ARM 1d)  
**Vitality:** -10/8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0

### d20 System Stats

**Medium Animal**  
**Hit Dice:** 2d8 (9 hp)  
**Initiative:** +1 (Dex)  
**Speed:** 40 ft.  
**AC:** 13 (+1 Dex, +2 natural)  
**Attacks:** 2 hooves +1 melee  
**Damage:** 1d3+1  
**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.



**Special Attacks:** None  
**Special Qualities:** None  
**Saves:** Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +0  
**Abilities:** Str 12, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 2, Wis11, Cha 12  
**Skills:** Listen +2, Spot +2  
**Challenge Rating:** 1/4  
**Treasure:** None  
**Alignment:** Neutral  
**Advancement:** —

#### COMBAT

The park unicorn only fights under the most extreme duress. Even attacking one usually only leads it to whimper and run. The Pentateuch (and Stigmata) unicorn, on the other hand, has combat abilities of mythical proportions.

## Psi-Crows

**Other Names:** Psi-Ravens

**Homeworld:** Malignatius

**Present Distribution:** All worlds with appropriate climate in their natural environment; as pets of psychics of all the Known Worlds.

**Type:** Changed (mutation)

**Role:** Decomposer/reducer (omnivore)

**Size:** 50-80 cm (20-26 inches) from beak to tail; wingspan up to 2.5 m

**Weight:** 3-7 kg (6-14 lbs.)

**Habitat:** Temperate (moors, craggy hills), sub-arctic (taigas), arctic (tundra)

**Social Organization:** Murders.

**Description:** The large psi-ravens and smaller psi-crows are similar in appearance to their Urthish cousins: charcoal black feathers and gray-black beaks. The biggest are, however, much larger than their Urthish counterparts. Their most unique feature is the large eye they sport just above the beak in lieu of the usual two tiny black eyes common to Urthish specimens. Sometimes blood-shot, this orb gives the chills to any who crosses glance with the beasts. Other, rarer specimens develop three tiny red eyes, two above the beak and the last appearing in the center.

Nobody (not even their psychic trainers) know the exact origins of the psi-ravens. Nonetheless, rumors of Second Republic research facilities hidden on Malignatius for use by the Jakovian Agency still circulate. Avestite priests swear that the creatures originate from the first plane of demonic existence and must surely be minor servitors demons. Whatever the truth of these rumors, flocks of psi-ravens and crows have spread to many worlds, especially those possessing Ur-artifacts. Indeed, large numbers of these creatures have been seen covering gargoyles or other Ur-ruins, taking flight when a trespasser disturbs their secretive activities.

Noticing their strange behavior, the Jakovian Agency conducted research that lead to some startling conclusions. While not psychic themselves, the crow and ravens can act as vessels for psychic powers. While rare even within House Decados, many houses used them during the Emperor Wars. Though the Li-Halan Hidden Martyrs refused to compromise their souls with such activities, other factions employed the psi-ravens, if only to stay ahead of current psychic progress.

Since the end of the war, use of psi-ravens is frowned upon. Some liberal nobles among the Decados (and other houses) have no quandary about this, however, and publicly sport them. While the Church still debates on the true nature of the creatures, having one as a pet makes even psychic nobles targets for the Inquisition. **Behavior:** Psi-crows and ravens are psychic scavengers, deriving their sustenance from recently deceased beings, whether animals or sentients. Their flocks grew during the Emperor Wars, feeding on the battlefield carnage. When scavenging physically, they seem to derive more nourishment from the eyes of sentients, as if they could absorb what the dead saw in her life.

The birds are most attracted to those who were psychics in life. The Church sees this as evidence of the damning nature of unrepentant psychics, for only unreflective souls attract the scavengers. Because eyes are the "vista of the soul," some Avestites claim the psi-birds actually get their nourishment from sentience.

These corvids have demonstrated highly social aptitudes and are believed quite adaptable. Many can not help but to assign them a sort of malevolent intelligence, though the League claims they are not sentient. Nonetheless, rumors abound that some priests who tried to view their soul mirror spotted a faint dark mirror filled with darting shadows.

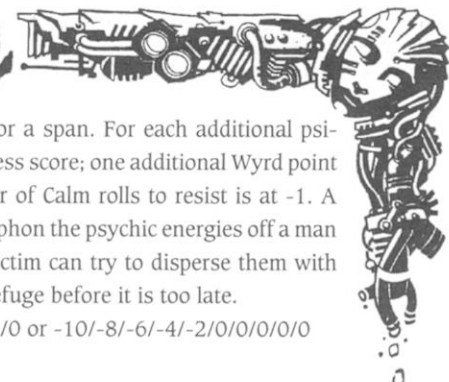
**Commodity:** Despite the dangers (political or otherwise), psychic operatives value these birds. After a period of training together, a psychic and a psi-raven can bond. Once established, the psychic can use the bird to extend her psychic abilities. Each time she does so, the raven's eye glows with an unnatural red light.

Also, some non-psychic archaeologists have trained psi-ravens as "bloodhounds" of sorts, using their

talent for locating Ur-artifacts. Several intelligence agencies have used trained psi-ravens as security apparatus instead of, or coupled with, security devices. Flocks of these sinister birds circle around Decados gulags on the ice-world of Malignatius, preventing any chance of escape, even during power cuts.

Psi-crows and psi-ravens are available on a number of worlds. The training process is difficult, and the Jakovian Agency boasts the most advanced training techniques. A wild psi-raven costs roughly 200 firebirds (100 for a crow), while a trained one costs 1000 to 2000, depending upon whether or not it has already bonded with someone (700-1000 for a crow). Psi-birds are illegal on Li-Halan and Church worlds. Of course, Church psychics don't use the birds. Most noble houses require agents who use the birds to spiritually purify themselves with regular prayers and confessions.





**Wild Gift:** Beastfriends can borrow the Ur-artifact detection and Psi-Drain abilities of cohort psi-birds.

### Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 3, Dex 7, End 4

**Mind:** Wits 7, Per 10, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Dod 4, Fht 3, Flight 8, Imp 5, Obs 8, Snk 5, Vig 6

**Size:** MS

**Movement:** run 3 km/h, flight 20 km/h

**Special:** Occult powers (notably psychics and Ur-artifacts) attract psi-ravens and crows, which are able to sense their presence kilometers away (5 km for each Victory Points they gain on a Per + Obs roll, with penalties from Hard to Tough depending upon the distance). An additional roll allows them to sense if their prey is sick or dying, in which case they will harass her to feed upon (a well-trained psychic in good health does not fit these criteria), using their Special Attack. They can also survive by feeding upon the essence of animals, even if they have less "nutritious" value, i.e., they don't gain Wyrd points. Psi-birds feed by sucking dry the eyes of their preys. They can act as living Wyrd pools, storing the energies and feeding from them. Ravens can store up to 5 Wyrd points while crows don't exceed 3.

An adept of the paths of Omen, Psyche, Sixth Sense, Sympathy, Sathra and other paths based on "sense" can extend their range limitation, substituting the bonded bird's sight for their own. However, each use burns a Wyrd point of the bird, unless the psychic feeds it by giving her own Wyrd. Hungry psi-birds are not the most affable of companions and may turn against their masters. A bonded psychic is vulnerable to the bird's Special Attack (though she can resist as usual, with a -4 penalty modifier). Also, any fumble while using the bird's senses result in the psychic having horrific visions of dark entities and planes of existence, requiring that she make an Urge roll. Repeated experiences can lead to an increase in her Urge as the birds act as vessels for mysterious beings who try to awaken the Urge and commune with it. In fact, some believe psi-birds are pre-conversion Li-Halan creations, used to commune with their dark masters. The Decados inherited from them with their seizing of Malignatius.

To bond with a psi-bird, one must accumulate 20 Victory Points on an extended Psi + Focus roll or use the power of Totem upon the bird.

Psi score is 5 for ravens; 3 for crows.

**Attacks:**

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Beak	3	10	2
Talons 3	10	1	

**Special Attacks:** Psi-scavengers are just that — eaters of dead souls' energies. With a successful Psi + Impress roll, a single psi-bird can feed upon a victim's Wyrd points at a rate of one point per turn if the victim is either sick, dying or morally weak (unreflective or cybernetically soul-dead people qualify) or under the control of her Urge. In order to resist, one may roll Calm or Faith + Stoic Mind. If successful, the bird cannot suck her energies for a turn. Five

victory points repels the bird for a span. For each additional psi-bird, add one to their Psi + Impress score; one additional Wyrd point is sucked; and the goal number of Calm rolls to resist is at -1. A murder of ravens can literally siphon the psychic energies off a man in mere seconds. A resisting victim can try to disperse them with fire, wild gestures or seeking refuge before it is too late.

**Vitality:** -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0 or -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0

### d20 System Stats

**Small Beast**

**Hit Dice:** 1d8+1 (5 hp)

**Initiative:** +3 (Dex)

**Speed:** 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (good)

**AC:** 13 (+3 Dex)

**Attacks:** Beak +1 melee, Talons +1 melee

**Damage:** Beak 1d3-1, Talons 1d3-2

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Pestilent Cloud

**Special Qualities:**

**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +1, Will -1

**Abilities:** Str 9, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 8, Cha 12

**Skills:** Listen +4

**Challenge Rating:** 1

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Neutral

**Advancement:** —

#### COMBAT

These carrion birds rarely fight, preferring to drain the sick and the dying. They fly off if threatened.

**Psi Drain (Ex):** After the bird makes a successful touch attack against a psychic, the victim must make a Will save (DC 15) or lose a point of Wyrd. A single psi-bird can feed upon a victim's Wyrd points at a rate of one point per turn if the victim is either sick, dying or morally weak (unreflective or cybernetically soul-dead people qualify) or under the control of her Urge.

## Rados

**Other Names:** Desert Scourge, Sanddweller

**Homeworld:** Istakhr

**Present Distribution:** Istakhr, Kish, Pandemonium

**Type:** Animalia (peasants swear it's a demonic fiend)

**Role:** Secondary carnivore (or soul-eater)

**Size:** 4 m (12 ft.)

**Weight:** 210 kg (465 lb.)

**Habitat:** Tropical desert

**Social Organization:** solitary (female) or pack (two males)

**Description:** The Gamid Desert is full of tales about brave men setting off to hunt for the rados, never to return. They leave their families in search of glory, fortune or vengeance. But, as they don't know how to deal with a rados, they will probably die, one



by one. There's even an old saying: "a rados hunt," which you can translate as: a very foolish thing to make.

There's also the story of Prof. Merhann Colliesen. He wanted to observe the rados society at close quarters. Merhann tried to achieve this by wearing a costume made of the scourges' scales, thus smelling like the rest of species. He was eaten in the first encounter with a rados. He also made it to the local lore: "trusting as Colliesen." Do I need to explain?

Because of their extraordinary skills, such as the famed "ghost talk", their scales and their mating rituals, the Desert Scourge are thought to be hellish spawn by the simple folk. They also think that a symbol of Hombor the Beggar will protect you from any harm from the rados – the demons don't harm the humble.

A rados stands four meters tall, its muscular body covered with huge scales varying in color from light to dark brown. Its physique clearly indicates that the creature is used to live under the earth's surface. The paws are very similar to those of a Holy Terra "mole." The interesting part is that out of its three fingers, one can be used as a "normal" finger (when the creature uses it to move beneath earth) or as a thumb (when the rados wants to hold something-like the boneblade).

The sanddweller's posture is similar to a human's. The scourge needs its massive tail to counterweight the rest of the body. If the tail is severed, the rados couldn't even stand straight, not to mention walking.

The head contains an organ I named the noisebox. Thanks to the noisebox, the creature can imitate different voices and noise. The rados throat, larynx and noisebox allow it to mimic a wide array of sounds, including bird calls, animal howls, and even human speech. The peasants call the modulated voice the Ghost Voice. After all, if the rados was close enough to "steal" your voice, the chances are slim you'll get away alive.

**Behavior:** Male rados usually live in pairs, and females usually live alone. Our studies indicate that Sanddwellers feed primarily upon small desert vermins, but they will most kinds of meat ... including human. Rados even occasionally eat their own bretheren, usually following their horrific mating rituals.

The ritual begins in the late July and ends in the middle of September. During that time, males fight with each other to show who is stronger. This is not the interesting phase. The interesting part comes when they try to lure the best prey they can for their intended mate. During this time, the Istakhr deserts fill with bird calls, boryena snorts and even human voices ... all emanating from rados! The more attractive and tasty the victim, the better.

Finally, the rados are also tool users, though this is limited to their "boneblades." Rados males who kill their brethren during their mating battles keep their tailbones after eating off the flesh. They use these sharp bones in their future hunting to kill their prey.

**Commodity:** The boneblades are highly prized, especially by al-Malik nobles. The sanddweller shapes the blade out of a dead rados tail. The blade is too big to be used by a human, but many nobles buy such swords just for decoration. The price of such a remarkable object is usually 200-300 firebirds.

Another valued artifact is the desert scourge's heart. When properly prepared, it retains its bizarre glow, varying in color from light green to dark violet. These always bring at least 100 firebirds, though local Church leaders frown on such "gems."

## Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 12, Dex 6, End 10

**Mind:** Wits 2, Per 5, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Dod 7, Fht 6, Mel 7, Obs 5, Snk 6, Vig 8

**Movement:** Standard. The rados can burrow at half its running speed.

**Special:** Burrowing, Sensitive Smell, Noisebox (a character trying to determine if a sound is made by a rados needs to get at least one victory point on a Per + Observe roll).

**Attacks:**

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Claws	6	12	6
Boneblade	7	13	8

**Special Attacks:** The spiny bones on a boneblade make it exceptionally difficult to dislodge from its victim, and rados continue twisting it around in their foe for as long as they can (doing automatic damage every turn until it is removed or the rados is killed). Victims must make Str + Vigor tests to free themselves, suffering 4d DMG in the process.

**Armor:** Scales (ARM 4d)

**Vitality:** -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0

## d20 System Stats

**Large Beast**

**Hit Dice:** 4d10+12 (34 hp)

**Initiative:** +2 (Dex)

**Speed:** 50 ft., burrowing 25 ft.

**AC:** 15 (+2 Dex, +4 natural armor, -1 size)

**Attacks:** Claw +6 melee, Boneblade +6 melee

**Damage:** Claw 1d4+6, Boneblade d12+6

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.

**Special Attacks:** None

**Special Qualities:** Scent, Noisebox

**Saves:** Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +3

**Abilities:** Str 22, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10

**Skills:** Hide +8, Listen +8, Move Silently +8

**Feats:** Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (boneblade)

**Challenge Rating:** 3

**Treasure:** Boneblades, heart

**Alignment:** Always Neutral

**Advancement:** —

### COMBAT

Rados try to utilize surprise when they attack, and always try to end fights quickly. If fights take too long, they try to break off and burrow underground.

**Noisebox:** Determining if a sound is made by a rados is a DC 20 Listen roll.



# Red Sleeping Beauty Drone

**Other Names:** Beauty Bouncer

**Homeworld:** Unknown (space?)

**Present Distribution:** Unknown (space?)

**Type:** Unknown

**Role:** Unknown

**Size:** Man-sized, slightly smaller (?)

**Weight:** N/A (?)

**Habitat:** The only known habitat was the First Republic-era cryo-ship the *Red Sleeping Beauty*, found entering the Pandemonium system in 4770.

**Social Organization:** The drones appeared to form groups of maybe 5-10 each, living about the ship. Other creatures were found onboard, living in apparent ecological balance. The drones inhabited the corridors and apparently consumed the Red Sleeping Beauty Livestock (see entry) for food.

**Description:** Commander Roman Chresikov of the frigate *Fifth Avenger* wrote the following account after discovering the *Red Sleeping Beauty*:

The awful beasts were as black, shimmering globules, some nearly the size of a man, undulating and shrinking in the light from my electric torch, bouncing slowly about the walls and floors. My men called them "bouncers" or "beauty bouncers" — a rather sarcastic name indeed, considering how hideous they appeared. At full size, they were rather translucent and could bounce through the floors and walls if they chose, like malign spirits.

My engineer assured me that all phlogiston from the ship had been evacuated centuries before, but even through my suit, I could smell these monsters as they approached — an acrid smell of ozone, a biting metallic tang. It was only my faith in the Pancreator's blessing that I was able to make myself approach the beasts as they cringed from my light. Indeed, they seemed to coalesce and shrink with the play of the torch. They shrank to become black, tortured husks, looking like nothing so much as a dead chunk of astral debris. In this shrunken state, a sword or a slug thrower could make short work of them, smashing them to powder.

**Behavior:** Chresikov also related the fate of the ship's doctor, Echtr Fahr Decados:

We had sealed the *Red Sleeping Beauty* by this time. Echtr Fahr Decados had disappeared on the starship days earlier. At last, he

contacted us over the wireless. He said that when his torch had been extinguished, the beasts had come up to him in a docile fashion.

"They flowed over my body and I felt at last their welcome, their joy at discovering another living creature so far from their home. I tell you, Roman, the beasts are quite intelligent! They have some manipulative ability with their pseudopods, and they led me to food stores and remaining phlogiston stores that I could survive upon! It's still terrifically cold here, and they don't fully understand the concepts of energy — I've only maintained the heat in my suit from a cache of batteries I discovered myself.

"These beasts are merely drones. Laikas. The engines on the *Red Sleeping Beauty* have been converted to provide negative energy, the life support system converted to provide waves of cold instead of heat! Many holds are packed with quintessence, giving off repulsive anti-gravitons — perhaps to counter the gravitons of the *Red Sleeping Beauty* itself or the gravitons of the Pandemonium system's planets and star! Something far more intelligent overhauled this ship, Roman! Perhaps those creatures are too large or too delicate to man it, but someone did this work!

"Open the airlock quickly, Roman! My energy cells are running out! Their caresses have given me such dreams as I can barely comprehend. I have learned such tantalizing information from these entities about their home, about their masters. The spaces between the stars are so much more complex than we imagine, and my information will be invaluable! It will open a new epoch in human knowledge, Roman! Open the airlock and we can all share in the discoveries!"

I ordered our crew to latch a towline onto the *Red Sleeping Beauty*. We soared as quickly as possible toward the sun, then detached and swung aside, letting the *Red Sleeping Beauty* coast down into the burning depths, Echtr Fahr still raving over the wireless all the while about the dawning of a new age.

**Commodity:** None

## Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 5, Dex 5, End 6

**Mind:** Wits 3, Per 5, Tech 2

**Spirit:** Ext/Int 5/1, Pas/Calm 1/6, Fth/Ego 3/1

**Natural skills:** Chm 6, Dod 6, Fht 6, Imp 3, Mel 3, Obs 7, Sht 0, Snk 4, Vig 4

**Learned skills:** Individuals may have been taught simple starship operations.

**Size:** ML to XL

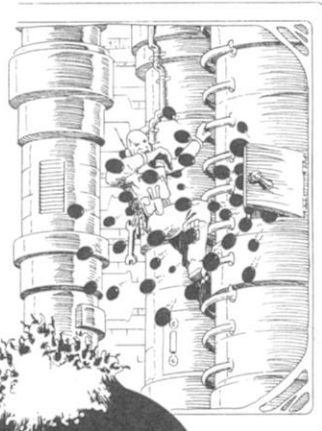
**Movement:** Bounce/hop 2 m

**Special:** Hallucinatory Touch. With a touch, a drone can communicate rudimentary thoughts and dreams. This is not an attack, and causes no damage, although the receiver must make a Wits + Vigor roll or her skills will suffer a -1 penalty for one hour due to distracting hallucinations. This is cumulative with each touch. However, a successful Wits + Charm or Impress (one roll per hour) allows one to convince the drone to stay away. The drone will (usually) obey. A controlled, occasional touch communication can then be maintained without the receiver suffering the skill penalty.

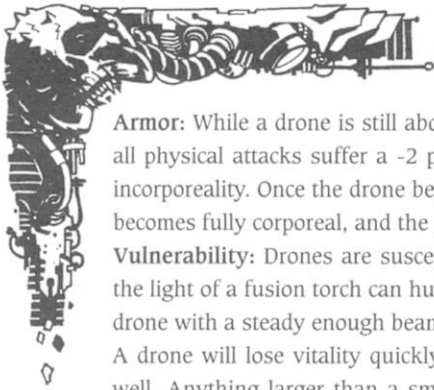
**Attacks:**

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Touch	5	11	none*

\* Hallucinatory Touch







**Armor:** While a drone is still above the negative levels of vitality, all physical attacks suffer a -2 penalty to hit, due to the drone's incorporeality. Once the drone begins to suffer wound penalties, it becomes fully corporeal, and the penalty no longer applies.

**Vulnerability:** Drones are susceptible to energy damage — even the light of a fusion torch can hurt them. Roll Dex + Shoot to hit a drone with a steady enough beam to deliver 1d of damage.

A drone will lose vitality quickly if it approaches a large gravity well. Anything larger than a small asteroid will give off enough gravitons to kill the creature if it comes any closer than a 100 diameters. Quintessence (i.e., matter that emits repulsive gravitons) can be used to protect the creatures, but unless an equal amount of quintessence is present, the larger mass will kill the drones.

**Vitality:**

ML: -8/-4/-2/-1/0/0/0/0/0

XL: -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0

**d20 System Stats**

**Medium Animal**

**Hit Dice:** 1d8 (4 hp)

**Initiative:** +1 (Dex)

**Speed:** Bounce/hop 7 ft.

**AC:** 11 (+1 Cha)

**Attacks:** Touch +1 melee (+1 Dex)

**Damage:** None

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Hallucinatory Touch

**Special Qualities:** Incorporeal (provisional)

**Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +2

**Abilities:** Str 13, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 8

**Skills:** Move Silently +3, Spot +3

**Challenge Rating:** 1/2

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Usually neutral

**Advancement:** 2 HD (Large)

**Hallucinatory Touch (Su):** With a touch, a drone can communicate rudimentary thoughts and dreams. This is a touch attack that causes no damage, although the receiver must make a Will save or suffer a -2 skill check penalty for one hour due to distracting hallucinations. This is cumulative with each touch. However, a successful Bluff or Intimidate check (one check per hour) allows one to convince the drone to stay away. The drone will (usually) obey. A controlled, occasional touch communication can then be maintained without the receiver suffering the skill check penalty.

**Incorporeal (Ex):** A drone is naturally incorporeal until it suffers a loss of half or more of its hit points, at which point it becomes corporeal.

**Red Sleeping Beauty Livestock**

**Other Names:** Farters

**Homeworld:** Unknown (space?)

**Present Distribution:** Unknown (space?)

**Type:** Unknown

**Role:** Unknown

**Size:** Small, squirrel-sized (?)

**Weight:** N/A (?)

**Habitat:** The only known habitat was the First Republic-era cryo-ship the *Red Sleeping Beauty*, found entering the Pandemonium system in 4770.

**Social Organization:** Livestock appeared to gather in groups of 25-50, living about the ship's ventilation system. They seem to be source of food for the Red Sleeping Beauty Drones (see entry).

**Description:** The frigate *Fifth Avenger's* doctor, Echtr Fahr Decados, wrote the following account after his ship discovered the *Red Sleeping Beauty* (this account was only recently brought to light, having been long proscribed by the Church):

The ventilation system of the ship contained small creatures, generally circular and black, ranging in size from 6 to 20 centimeters in diameter. Most were somewhat transparent. They appeared to be active and quick. Their excretions would act as jets for their motions. They often expelled half their mass in a quick motion, using the impulse to bounce away.

**Behavior:** Doctor Echtr Fahr Decados again:

The small creatures are a food stock, I am sure of it. They react and move in the manner of hunted animals. They can detect movement, although I cannot distinguish a sensory apparatus. As the *Red Sleeping Beauty* passed between the stars, it was commandeered somehow and the ship mechanically altered, and then re-inhabited. This ecosystem was designed to be self-perpetuating. The livestock beasts consume a sort of fungi that grows about the ship. The drones are too large to enter the ventilation system, but the livestock occasionally leave the system (searching for food, escaping overpopulation I expect; I would require more study to confirm this) and are exposed to the drones' attacks. Perhaps the drones' excretions feed the fungi — again, it is impossible to be certain without further study. There are many other creatures alive here — the *Red Sleeping Beauty* has become an entire ecosystem after its millennia in space. Creatures in the engines (which are too frigid now to approach, as they now generate negative energy), creatures in the electrical and pneumatic systems, creatures that somehow repair damaged parts of the ship — all existing in a vacuum. The experiences of this ship in the abyss it passed through are truly incredible.

**Commodity:** None

**Victory Point System Traits**

**Body:** Str 2, Dex 5, End 3

**Mind:** Wits 1, Per 3, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Chm 0, Dod 5, Fht 0, Imp 0, Mel 0, Obs 5, Sht 3, Snk 0, Vig 3

**Size:** S

**Movement:** Bounce/hop 2 m

**Attacks:**

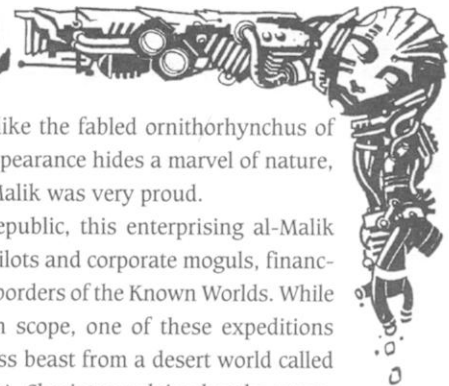
ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG			
Fart	5	8	1*	1/2	1	2

\* plus Blinding Expulsion

**Special Attacks:** Blinding Expulsion. Damage from an attack only occurs if the victim's face is hit (if the farter achieved three or more victory points), in which case the victim must make an End + Vigor roll or be blinded for one turn.

**Armor:** While a farter is still above the negative levels of vitality, all physical attacks suffer a -2 penalty to hit, due to the farter's incorporeality.





corporeality. Once the farter begins to suffer wound penalties, it becomes fully corporeal, and the penalty no longer applies.

**Vulnerability:** Farters are susceptible to energy damage — even the light of a fusion torch can hurt them. Roll Dex + Shoot to hit a drone with a steady enough beam to deliver 1d of damage.

A farter will lose vitality quickly if it approaches a large gravity well. Anything larger than a small asteroid will give off enough gravitons to kill the creature if it comes any closer than a 100 diameters. Quintessence (i.e., matter that emits repulsive gravitons) can be used to protect the creatures, but unless an equal amount of quintessence is present, the larger mass will kill the drones.

**Vitality:** -4/-2/0/0/0

## d20 System Stats

### Tiny Animal

**Hit Dice:** 1/4d8 (1 hp)

**Initiative:** +1 (Dex)

**Speed:** Bounce/hop 7 ft.

**AC:** 7 (-3 Cha)

**Attacks:** Fart +1 melee

**Damage:** Fart 1d2-1

**Face/Reach:** 2-1/2 ft. by 2-1/2 ft./2 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Blinding Expulsion

**Special Qualities:** Incorporeal (provisional)

**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +1

**Abilities:** Str 8, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 1, Wis 10, Cha 4

**Skills:** Move Silently +4, Spot +3

**Challenge Rating:** 1/4

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always neutral

**Advancement:** —

**Blinding Expulsion (Ex):** Damage from an attack only occurs if the victim's face is hit (if the farter achieved five levels above the victim's AC), in which case the victim must make a Fortitude save or be blinded for one turn.

**Incorporeal (Ex):** A farter is naturally incorporeal until it suffers a loss of half or more of its hit points, at which point it becomes corporeal.

## Regis

**Other Names:** Reginus Arwania Delepinus

**Homeworld:** Thorn (Lost World)

**Present Distribution:** The Regis is a unique, original specimen living on Leagueheim. If rumors are true, then a new colony is "secretly" kept on Criticorum.

**Type:** Animalia (mabilia, marsupial)

**Role:** Omnivore

**Size:** 60 cm (2 ft.)

**Weight:** 12 kg (6 lbs.)

**Habitat:** Desert

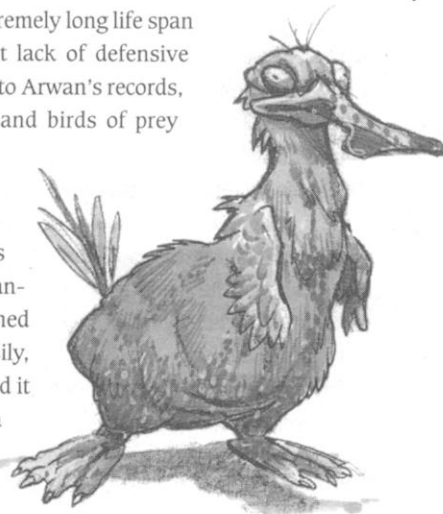
**Social Organization:** Colonies consist of two-dozen males with only one female.

**Description:** The Regis is an odd-looking animal resembling a cross between a duck and a pelican. With two duck-like feet, a round, white feather-covered body ending in a small plummet-like tail, and a vaguely stupid beaked head, Regis looks somewhat out of place in every environment. This oddity seems avian at first glance, but

is actually a marsupial, not unlike the fabled ornithorhynchus of Holy Terra. Yet, this deceitful appearance hides a marvel of nature, one of which Baron Arwan al-Malik was very proud.

During the late Second Republic, this enterprising al-Malik noble associated with intrepid pilots and corporate moguls, financing several expeditions past the borders of the Known Worlds. While more political than scientific in scope, one of these expeditions brought back a strange, harmless beast from a desert world called Thorn (past the Symbiot systems). Charioteers claim that the spaceship pilot named the creature after his vain, dumb commander who constantly shouted at his crew, accusing them of spoiling his chances to enter into history. Well, he got his wish.

The creature baffled scientists, who wondered at its ability to survive — and its extremely long life span — given its apparent lack of defensive systems. According to Arwan's records, aggressive reptiles and birds of prey many times its size populated the Regis's native planet. The scientists quickly found the answer. When frightened (which happens easily, as even trying to feed it sometimes causes a defensive reaction), it swells with air and releases



a cloud of noxious intestinal gas. At the same time, it flies away like a deflating balloon, using its atrophied wings to land safely a few meters away. The vapors emitted are so terrible that any being with a sense of smell must flee the pungent effluvia (or otherwise faint or be wracked with nausea).

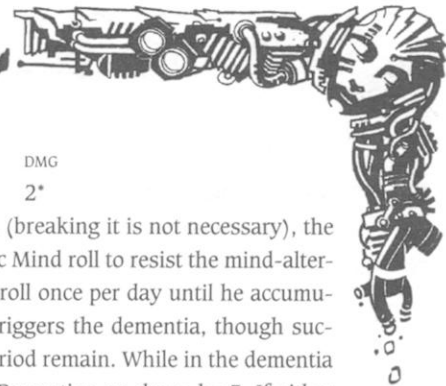
Also curious were its eating habits. While its preferred diet consisted of vegetables, the creature ate whatever comestible (or even non-comestible) offerings it received. Some experts speculated that its strange eating habits were necessary for the production of its defensive gas, but were baffled when, even when on a strict diet, Regis continued to fart terribly.

This amazing and quite unsavory ability ensured Regis a quick celebrity during the Second Republic. Amidst the billions of extant species in the Second Republic, Regis's gastrointestinal habits allowed him to spark the interest of a jaded pre-teen market. He became especially popular on Arwan's native planet of Criticorum. There he starred in "The Investigations of Regis," in which children could work alongside a cynical alien platypus private investigator. Dressed in a raincoat and dark hat, a tobacstic dangling from his beak, he conducted investigations against terrorists, corrupt priests and all the common scapegoats of the Second Republic. He farted his way to victory each episode.

Because this notoriety made Baron Arwan's fortune, the (somewhat decadent) al-Malik noble kept with the baptized specimen, turning the discovered world over to a corporation. He disappears from humanity's records shortly thereafter. However, occasional data crop up about secret experimentation conducted on cloned speci-



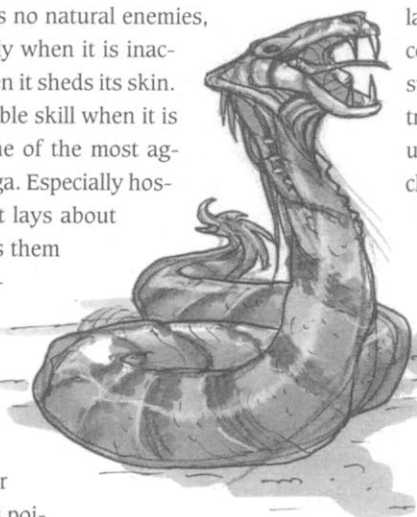




**Social Organization:** Solitary

**Description:** A red and violet-striped serpent, ruak stand out to even the most casual observers. Females tend to be thicker and darker colored.

**Behavior:** One of Kurga's most-prized exports, the ruakar is now more common in Hazat space than on its native homeworld. Though its strong poison means it has no natural enemies, the snake can be caught easily when it is inactive, especially at night or when it sheds its skin. Catching it requires considerable skill when it is active, since the ruakar is one of the most aggressive snakes native to Kurga. Especially hostile during nesting seasons, it lays about 20-30 eggs a year and guards them from a short distance, attacking anybody who approaches. Still not common, its numbers on Vera Cruz grow yearly.



**Commodity:** Apart from being very decorative, the ruakar is kept and bred mostly for its poison. First used on Hazat prisoners-of-war, freed prisoners brought this knowledge back with them. Ruakar poison is now used by Hazat agents or interrogators, but the knowledge and skills are likely to spread to other intelligence agencies. Rumor has it that a considerable shipment of ruakar recently arrived on Byzantium Secundus. Ruakar poison, either injected, ingested or even absorbed through the skin, leads to intense disorientation. It also creates an openness to suggestions, proposals and re-educational processes.

While other truth serums cannot touch a person's innermost beliefs and core personality, ruakar poison achieves such results that it can be considered the most effective of all truth serums. A Kurgan saying has it that a dose of ruakar poison can turn a warmonger into a pacifist and a monk into a materialist. Indeed, the snake itself is called "the most treacherous creature" because it makes its victims betray themselves. Kurgans call treacherous and false people "ruak" instead of snakes. Due to the rareness of the snake, a dose of poison costs between 50-200 fb, if sold at all. The disorientation lasts up to 2 weeks, but flashbacks occurring several years later are not unheard of. An overdose of ruakar poison leads to madness. Some obliettes hope to use the serum to heal serious mental afflictions. Still, in the wrong hands, the poison is a fearful weapon indeed.

Ruakar leather is sometimes used for scabbards or grips of poisoned daggers.

**Wild Gift:** Beastfriends can borrow the poison and heat sense abilities of cohort ruakar.

## Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 1, Dex 5, End 3

**Mind:** Wits 2, Per 5, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Dod 5, Fht 6, Obs 5, Snk 8, Vig 3

**Size:** S

**Movement:** 5 m

**Special:** Heat-sense (a ruakar can detect heat sources from up to 20 m away)

**Attacks:**

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Bite	6	11	2*

\* If any poison reaches the skin (breaking it is not necessary), the victim must make an Ego + Stoic Mind roll to resist the mind-altering poison. The character must roll once per day until he accumulates 8 successes. Any failure triggers the dementia, though successes accumulated over that period remain. While in the dementia state, the character's Wits and Perception go down by 3. If either trait goes to 0, the character becomes catatonic. The effect lasts until the player makes the roll. On a critical failure, reverse a character's Extrovert/Introvert and Passion/Calm. Thus if a character with a 7 Extrovert, 2 Introvert, 3 Passion and 5 Calm rolled a 20, he would have a 2 Extrovert, 7 Introvert, 5 Passion and 3 Calm until he next made the Ego + Stoic Mind roll. Gamemasters should feel free to assign other personality changes as appropriate.

**Vitality:** -4/-2/0/0/0

## d20 System Stats

**Tiny Animal**

**Hit Dice:** 1/4d8 (1 hp)

**Initiative:** +3 Dex

**Speed:** 15 ft., climb 15 ft., swim 15 ft.

**AC:** 15 (+2 size, +3 Dex)

**Attacks:** Bite +3 melee

**Damage:** 1d3

**Face/Reach:** 2 1/2 ft. by 2 1/2 ft./ 2 1/2 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Poison

**Special Qualities:** Heat-sensitive, lethargic, scent

**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +1

**Abilities:** Str 7, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2

**Skills:** Balance +11, Climb +12, Hide + 12, Listen +6, Spot +8

**Feats:** Weapon Finesse (bite)

**Challenge Rating:** 1/2

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Neutral

**Advancement:** —

### COMBAT

A ruakar strikes whenever it feels it or its eggs are threatened, and then it runs off. It does not stay to fight unless cornered, and even then, it will try to escape after delivering its poison.

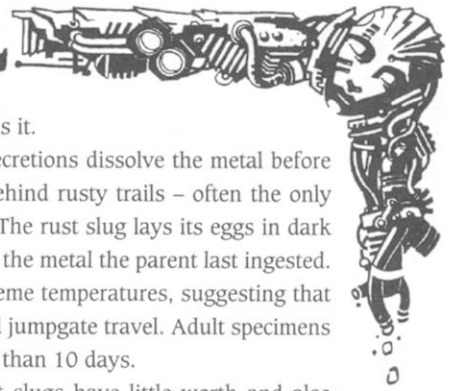
**Heat-sensitive (Ex):** A ruakar can detect heat sources up to 60 ft. away.

**Lethargic:** At night or when shedding, the ruakar has a Spot bonus of +0 and, once in combat, only takes partial actions for three turns.

**Poison:** A character hit by a ruakar must make a Will save (DC 25) or act as if confused by the confusion spell for 24 hours, at which point she can make the save again. Gamemasters should feel free to assign any other personality changes they feel appropriate.







**AC:** 20 (-4 size, +2 Dex, +12 natural)  
**Attacks:** Claw +35 melee, bite +35 melee, wing +35 melee, tail +35 melee  
**Damage:** Claw 2d8+15, bite 2d12+15, wing 1d12+15, tail 2d6+15  
**Face/Reach:** 20 ft. by 40 ft./10 ft.  
**Special Attacks:** Shriek, Snatch  
**Special Qualities:** None  
**Saves:** Fort +28, Ref +20, Will +21  
**Abilities:** Str 40, Dex 15, Con 29, Int 8, Wis 16, Cha 16  
**Skills:** Climb +6, Listen +12, Spot +20  
**Feats:** Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes  
**Challenge Rating:** 10  
**Treasure:** None  
**Alignment:** Neutral  
**Advancement:** 23-32 HD (Gargantuan), 33-60 HD (Colossal)

## COMBAT

Rukh's attack from the air, signaling their assault with a horrific shriek. It dives down to snatch up prey to feed on in its craggy nest. If defending its nest, mate, or young, it fights to the death.

**Shriek (Ex):** When the rukh gives full throat to its voice, the sheer amplitude of sonic vibrations through the air can cause damage to any object in close range. Any target within 30 ft. of the rukh's throat takes 2d8 damage; this amount decreases by half for every additional 15 ft. of distance from the rukh's throat. Energy shields work against this damage as usual, but physical armor is ignored, and rigid armor like steel or plastic may even be shattered if it is of an inferior quality.

**Snatch (Ex):** If the bird scores a claw hit against a creature of at least Small size (but no larger than Huge), it may grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If the rukh grabs hold, it may fly off with its prey and can bite each turn in lieu of a claw attack. It may drop its prey as a free action.

## Rust Slug

**Other Names:** Tech Bane, Kurgan Revenge  
**Homeworld:** Kurga  
**Present Distribution:** Spreading to Hazat space  
**Type:** Animalia (mollusca) (?)  
**Role:** Decomposer/reducer  
**Size:** 15 cm / 0.5 ft.  
**Weight:** 0.25 kg / 0.5 lbs.  
**Habitat:** Wherever there is metal/ore.  
**Social Organization:** Groups of 3-10  
**Description:** Rust slugs resemble Urthish slugs, their color depending on the main type of metal they ingest. A starving slug is transparent, making it difficult to spot on a metal surface.  
**Behavior:** Chainers and Engineers loathe these creatures more than any others. Rust slugs feed off any type of metal or ore, even alloys like ceramsteel or the rare pygmalium. During its life (which lasts about an Urthish year), it does little else but reproduce and feed. Only a well-maintained oil coating can protect metal from it. They can find any metal or ore in a vicinity of several kilometers and

then move unrelentingly towards it.

Once they reach it, their secretions dissolve the metal before the slug dissolves it, leaving behind rusty trails – often the only way to uncover their presence. The rust slug lays its eggs in dark places, the eggs' color matching the metal the parent last ingested. These eggs are resistant to extreme temperatures, suggesting that they can even survive space and jumpgate travel. Adult specimens die if deprived of food for more than 10 days.

**Commodity:** Commercially, rust slugs have little worth and also pose a serious danger. Import, export, sale and even owning them is punishable by death in Hazat military jurisdiction, stifling any desire soldiers might have to keep them as souvenirs. What could

happen if the rust slug is, by error, chance or sabotage, brought to Stigmata, can easily be imagined. An Amalthean scholar recently proved that water used to cook a rust slug can help to heal some effects of malnourishment. This discovery has not met with much enthusiasm, however.

## Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 1, Dex 1, End 2

**Mind:** Wits 1, Per 2, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Dodge 1, Vigor 1

**Size:** S

**Movement:** Extremely slow

**Special Qualities:** Rust (over time, the slug can oxidize almost any metal. A single slug cannot rust more than a few grams of metal/day, but groups of them can cause real problems in no time), Detect Metal (a rust slug can detect any metals with 20m of it), Color Shift (a rust slug's color changes to match the natural and unpainted color of any metal it eats. If it has not eaten recently, it turns transparent)

**Vitality:** 0

## d20 System Stats

**Fine Animal**

**Hit Dice:** 1/8 d8 (1 hp)

**Initiative:** -4 (Dex)

**Speed:** 1 ft.

**AC:** 14 (-4 Dex, +8 size)

**Attacks:** None

**Damage:** None

**Face/Reach:** 0 ft. by 0 ft./0 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Rust, Detect Metal, Color Shift

**Saves:** Fort -4, Ref -4, Will -4

**Abilities:** Str 1, Dex 2, Con 2, Int 1, Wis 2, Cha 2

**Skills:** Hide + 10 (when on appropriate metal)

**Challenge Rating:** 0

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always Neutral

**Advancement:** —

## COMBAT

Rust slugs do not fight, and do not seem to be intelligent



enough to realize when they are under attack.

**Color Shift (Ex):** A rust slug's color changes to match the natural and unpainted color of any metal it eats. If it has not eaten recently, it turns transparent.

**Detect Metal (Ex):** A rust slug can detect any metals with 60 ft. of it

**Rust (Ex):** Over time, the slug can oxidize almost any metal. A single slug cannot rust more than a few grams of metal/day, but groups of them can cause real problems in no time. This does not happen in a few turns, however, and characters who notice it can take appropriate actions.

## Sand Boryena

**Homeworld:** Istakhr

**Present Distribution:** Only found on Istakhr

**Type:** Animalia (Chordata, Mammalia)

**Role:** Omnivore

**Size:** 2.5m (8 ft.)

**Weight:** 135 kg (300 lbs.)

**Habitat:** Chaparral

**Social Organization:** Packs of approximately five individuals

**Description:** Along the rocky foothills of Istakhr roam the Boryena, fearsome, toothy and carnivorous swine who gorge indiscriminately on the creatures around them. They prey upon wild animals that enter their domains, and most wildlife learn to give the boryena paths a wide berth.

Boryena have heavy, muscular bodies and long, powerful jaws for snapping up small animals. A set of tusks protrudes from their lower jaws and provides these beasts their brutish appearance. Massive shoulders and powerful haunches give boryenas the endurance they need to travel constantly through their territory. Their long legs end in sharp, hoof-like claws that can carve through dirt as easily as they do through flesh. Thick skin protects their faces as the beasts root among the sharp rocks for small animals, and massive grinding teeth allow the boryenas to dine on branches, bark and even bones. Nothing is beyond the palate of these beasts. They are the Pancreator's waste bins, scouring the shrubbery of all edible materials.

Boryenas travel in packs and closely bond with other members of the family group. When a boryena dies, its packmates do not eat it, instead leaving it where it lies, as if the troupe plans to pay respect to the bones every time they pass by on their route.

In spite of their constant foraging and browsing, the shrubs of the chaparral they inhabit are often lush and thick. The longer the place has been inhabited by boryenas, the thicker the vegetation. Boryena dung is the key to these patches of green among the otherwise bland landscape of Istakhr. The rich dung is full of nutrients useless to the boryenas but exactly what the thorny shrubs desire. As the beasts roam their territories, they deposit dung all through-

out the scrub, nourishing the plants. Often the plants grow so well that they form a canopy over the worn trails of the boryenas, growing just above the browsing height of the beasts.

The lushness of the vegetation produced by boryenas has caught the attention of farmers, though none dare try to capture boryenas for domestication. Stories about farmers who have attempted to tame the boryenas usually end with the death of the farmer, the devouring of the farmer's livestock and crops, and the terrorizing of a community by wild boryenas seeking their kidnapped brethren.

Travelers lost in the scrub of Istakhr are rarely seen again, devoured instead by a troupe of boryenas. Accounts of survivors who encountered boryenas usually take on the semblance of some barroom horror tale. Here is just such an account from one James Ketful, who travelled through the chaparral after becoming separated from his caravan.



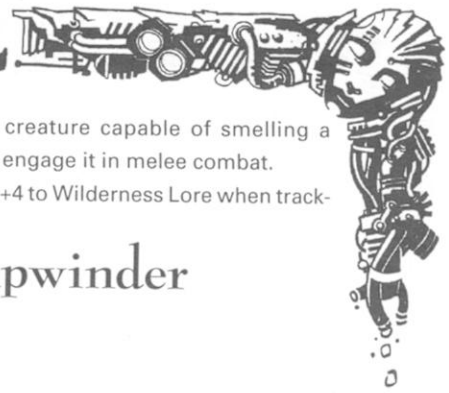
I found myself in a dim tunnel of vegetation. Green light shone through the leaves above me. It would have been a beautiful place, if not for the stench in the closed space. The dirt was soft compared to the dry dust further down the mountain slope, and the plants grew lush and thick along the sides, but the floor of the path was barren except for the occasional tiny sprout poking up. I followed this path in spite of the smell, for it was easier to stand the smell than the incessant shredding of my clothes by the thorny shrubs.

On my second day of travel I heard a continuous series of shuffling snorts some distance behind me. I quickened my pace and continued on my way, but the noises grew still louder. I paused and turned, and could see, some hundred and a half meters back down the trail, a string of enormous, pig-like beasts trotting along at a gait I saw would quickly overtake me. They all had their snouts pressed to the ground and were obviously following my own scent. I took one look at the fangs of the beasts and decided I didn't wish them to find their prey.

I took off at a sprint down the dirt path and burst into the open sunlight as the tunnel gave way to grassy ground with various large monoliths protruding from the ground. I took refuge by climbing the highest one I saw. None too soon had I reached the top for the beasts had been hot on my trail, alerted by my running. I had been unaware that they had closed the gap between us and would have caught me had I not climbed at the precise moment I did. I sat atop that rock for the rest of the day, with the merciless sun beating down on me from above and the five monster hogs circling the rock. At dusk they gave up and with a parting snap, continuing on their way.

**Behavior:** Boryena roam their territories in constant search for food. Their large bodies can hold large amounts of water, so dry areas with very little water can support these beasts. Their high metabolisms demand large quantities of food, however, and they devour any edible material. They travel constantly, rarely spending more





than a day in any given spot in their territory. Trotting in single file through the winding stone and brush pathways, their trails are often easy to follow, with a swath of chewed branches or overturned stones marking where a boryena was hungry. They always travel their territory in the same direction, and obstacles placed in their well-worn trails can disorient them.

Fights within the group are rare, as there is a strict hierarchy following the lead matriarch. When the pack manages to kill an animal, the matriarch dines first, and each individual dines in turn while the others guard the location. If a kill is large, they will remain until it is completely devoured, leaving nothing behind to mark that there was a slaughter there. They even consume the bones and teeth of their victims, grinding them down to powder with their enormous molars. When a human victim is taken, they will even devour the clothing, leaving only a few inedible items behind.

**Commodity:** No worth to be had from these creatures. The skin, though smelly, can be made into crude armor if one is lacking in personal defense.

### Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 6, Dex 5, End 6  
**Mind:** Wits 2, Per 6, Tech 0  
**Natural skills:** Dod 6, Fht 6, Obs 6, Vig 7  
**Learned skills:** Tracking 6  
**Movement:** 10 m  
**Special:** Strong Odor (Any creature capable of smelling a boryena suffers a -1 penalty to engage it in melee combat).

**Attacks:**

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Bite	6	13	5
Claw	5	13	4

**Armor:** Hide (ARM 2d)

**Vitality:** -10/-5/-3/-1/0/0/0/0/0

### d20 System Stats

**Medium Beast**

**Hit Dice:** 3d10+3 (20 hp)

**Initiative:** +0

**Speed:** Run 40 ft.

**AC:** 12 (+2 natural)

**Attacks:** Bite +4 melee, claw +2 melee

**Damage:** Bite 2d6+3, claw 1d4+3

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** None

**Special Qualities:** Scent, Thick Skin (+2 AC), Frightful Presence, Strong Odor

**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +1

**Abilities:** Str 16, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10

**Skills:** Listen +2, Spot +2, Wilderness Lore +4\*

**Feats:** Track

**Challenge Rating:** 2

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always Neutral

**Advancement:** —

#### COMBAT

Boryena attack and fight as a group. They only flee if the dominant male flees.

**Strong Odor (Ex):** Any creature capable of smelling a boryena suffers a -1 penalty to engage it in melee combat.

**Skills:** Boryenas receive a +4 to Wilderness Lore when tracking by scent.

## Scarlet Whipwinder

**Other Names:** Flashlash

**Homeworld:** Pyre or Nowhere

**Present Distribution:** Known Worlds

**Type:** Fungi

**Role:** Carnivore

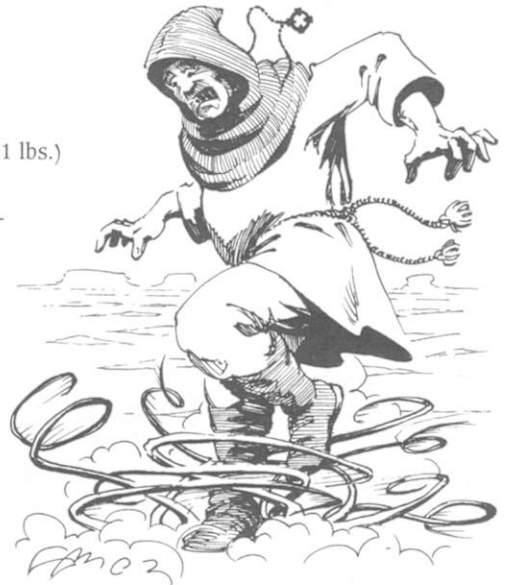
**Size:** 1 m (3 ft.)

**Weight:** 23 kg (51 lbs.)

**Habitat:** Desert.

**Social Organization:** None.

**Description:** Xenobotanical historians have long debated the origin of this carnivorous fungus, which is most numerous along the pilgrim roads of Pyre and No-



where, where it is regarded as one of the archetypal dangers the faithful must face in their ordeals. Whichever planet it originally evolved upon, the whipwinder spore had been tracked across the Known Worlds on the sandals of devout pilgrims by the time of the Second Republic. Republican defoliant technology eliminated the whipwinder spore in populous regions, but one still runs across remnant individuals, commonly known as "flashlashes," in the outlying rural areas of most worlds.

The scarlet whipwinder, so named for the hue it acquires upon maturity, grows just a few centimeters below the surface of the ground, in sand or loosely packed earth. Its upper face is a mass of tightly coiled ribbon-like tentacles that burst free and violently unwind whenever an appreciable weight is placed upon them. The edge of each tentacle is razor sharp, and all but the hardest objects within a one-meter radius of the whipwinder are shredded within seconds. Any moisture, such as blood, released by this action is then soaked up by the roots.

**Behavior:** The whipwinder is automatically triggered by weight and mindlessly attacks anything in range. When walking across loosely packed earth in an unfamiliar area, it is best to use a staff or pole to test the ground at least two paces ahead. Once triggered, it takes the fungal whipwinder over two hours to wind its tentacles up again.

**Commodity:** Despite the religious significance it has acquired along the pilgrim routes of Pyre and Nowhere, the scarlet whipwinder or flashlash is regarded as a dangerous pest everywhere else, to be dug up and destroyed whenever found. Some folk wisdom credits the core fungal mass with edibility, but Lord Erbian's has yet to hear anyone recommend its flavor.





## Victory Point System Traits

Body: Str 8, Dex 8, End 3  
 Mind: Wits 0, Per 1, Tech 0  
 Natural skills: Fht 10, Vig 5  
 Size: ML

Movement: None

Attacks: (STR bonus: +1)

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG	SHOTS
Unwind Tentacles	10	18	7	1 / 2 hours

Vitality: -8/-4/-2/-1/0/0/0

## d20 System Stats

**Small Plant**

**Hit Dice:** 1d8 (4 hp)

**Initiative:** +4 (Dex)

**Speed:** —

**AC:** 15 (+1 size, +4 Dex)

**Attacks:** Tentacles +6 melee

**Damage:** 1d12+4

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** None

**Special Qualities:** Pressure sense

**Saves:** Fort +0, Ref +4, Will -2

**Abilities:** Str 18, Dex 18, Con 10, Int —, Wis 6, Cha 1

**Skills:** Hide +14

**Challenge Rating:** 1

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Neutral

**Advancement:** —

### COMBAT

The whipwinder makes its one attack, and then can do nothing for two hours.

**Pressure Sense (Ex):** A whipwinder can detect any object walking above it.

## Scrup Monkey

**Other Names:** Sweet Tail, Eyes-Wide

**Homeworld:** Bannockburn

**Present Distribution:** Stigmata, Gwynneth, Cadiz, Severus, Cadavus, Malignatus, Manitou

**Type:** Animalia (chordata, mammalia, primata)

**Role:** Omnivore

**Size:** 1.22 m (4 ft.)

**Weight:** 11.34 kg (25 lbs.)

**Habitat:** Tropical rainforest

**Social Organization:** Colony (usually 16)

**Description:** Some scientists believe the scrup monkey, originally discovered on Bannockburn, to be a distant relation to the gannoks. These primates are best known for their wide, apparently lidless eyes, which they use to startle small lizards and birds into flight. That panicked flight generally ends in a quick grab by the scrup and a short trip into the monkey's mouth. I have no idea who discovered the monkey's other well-known attribute, but word of it dates back at least the Second Republic.

Several unique bacterial vectors have settled in the animal's intestinal tracts. Due to these intestinal flora, the end

result of digestion is edible to most humans, though not very nutritious. Tomas, who is usually the first to try such unique experiences, declared that the resulting taste was palatable, even enjoyable when the beasts ate from the Marlyana fruit tree. We are still preparing a more detailed biochemical analysis of the process.

To save the reader from the overly technical jargon of the report, I will summarize it as such: the animal's waste is edible. Though most civilized people find the thought of this disgusting, the Decados found it too amusing for words. They imported scrup monkeys on a number of their worlds, where they still serve as pets and occasional delicacies.

**Behavior:** Scrup monkeys are relatively placid, easily trained creatures who make acceptable, though dull, pets. Their diet consists primarily of fruit, supplemented by the occasional addition of a bird or lizard. Their most interesting feature, disgusting though it might be, is their edible waste, which takes on a sweet flavor when their diet is exclusively fruits. Decados have been known to bake it in imitation of Urthish fudge and serve it to unwary guests.

Scrup monkeys only become aggressive during the mating season in the spring, but this can be mitigated by neutering the animal before taking it in. On average, Scrup monkeys live for about 15 years in captivity, half of that in the wild.

**Commodity:** Scrup monkeys are occasionally used as pets on Bannockburn but are more commonly found as such in the Decados worlds. There they are shuttled back and forth between tending to their masters' needs and serving in the kitchen in their rather unique way. To be able to take advantage of their "ability," the monkeys must be imported from Bannockburn or injected with a synthetic (and thus expensive) version of their normal intestinal flora. It costs about 300 to 500 fb to own a useable scrup monkey.

**Wild Gift:** Beastfriends can borrow the dodge (Lightning Reflexes), bite and climb abilities of cohort scrup monkeys.

## Victory Point System Traits

Body: Str 2, Dex 8, End 3

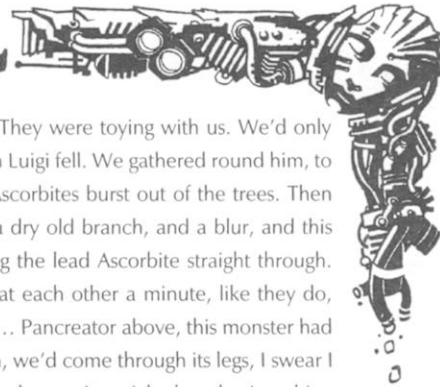
Mind: Wits 2, Per 6, Tech 0

Natural skills: Dod 8, Fht 3, Obs 6, Vig 6

Size: S

Movement: Standard





**Attacks:**

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Bite	2	11	2
Grapple	3	11	2

Vitality: -10/-5/-3/-1/0/0/0

**d20 System Stats**

**Small Animal**

**Hit Dice:** 1/2d8 (2 hp)

**Initiative:** +4

**Speed:** 50 ft.

**AC:** 14 (+4 from Dex)

**Attacks:** Bite +1 melee, Grapple +1 melee

**Damage:** Bite 1d3-1, Grapple 1d3-1

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** None

**Special Qualities:** None

**Saves:** Fort +1, Ref +4, Will -2

**Abilities:** Str 6, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 3, Wis 5, Cha 11

**Skills and Feats:** Balance +8, Climb +9, Hide +14, Move Silently +6, Spot +4, Weapon Finesse (Grapple, Bite), Lightning Reflexes.

**Challenge Rating:** 1/6

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always neutral

**Advancement:** —

**COMBAT**

Scrup monkeys are not aggressive and prefer flight to combat. If cornered, they fight as best they can, but try to escape at the first opportunity.

**Severan Angler**

**Other Names:** Old Man of the Jungle, Spear Horror

**Homeworld:** Severus

**Present Distribution:** Severus, Shaprut (a Severan angler is known to exist in Duke Shafridi Hasim al-Malik's menagerie there)

**Type:** Animalia (arthropoda, insecta)

**Role:** Secondary carnivore

**Size:** 6 m (20 ft.)

**Weight:** 500 kg (1100 lbs.)

**Habitat:** Tropical rainforest

**Social Organization:** Solitary. Severan anglers are monogamous. After mating, the male protects and feeds the female as her eggs form. Once they are laid (two eggs typically – sometimes three – that weigh up to 150 kg each), she devours her mate to regain her strength. She then protects the eggs until they hatch, at which point her offspring devours her.

**Description:** While the Ascorbites may be the dominant native species on Severus, they are not without their predators. The Severan Angler is one of these; indeed, Ascorbites are believed to be its only food. In appearance, it resembles a gigantic Urth stick insect, with some of the attributes of a striking mantis whose front mandibles are elongated into spear points with which it hunts.

**Behavior:** The Severan angler is a consummate hunter, as shown by the recordings of Giuseppe la Motta, Scraver technician:

The Ascorbites must have been chasing us for a good hour, back down the track from ... back down the track to our flitter. It was

worn good, the diggers, see. They were toying with us. We'd only got about half-way back when Luigi fell. We gathered round him, to protect him, see, when the Ascorbites burst out of the trees. Then there was this cracking, like a dry old branch, and a blur, and this thing jabbed down, skewering the lead Ascorbite straight through. The others, they just looked at each other a minute, like they do, then they ran. And this thing ... Pancreator above, this monster had been standing across our path, we'd come through its legs, I swear I hadn't seen it. It didn't even look at us, just picked up the Ascorbite, still twitching, and stalked off back into the jungle.

This testimony was later dismissed by Justice Ekaterina Makarov of Sevurus Munciple Court as "deeply flawed, and de-

signed to cover up la Motta's murder of an Ascorbite" yet the tale still stands. The angler is known, via other eyewitness reports and local custom, as a cunning hunter of almost supernatural patience.

It waits in ambush – camouflaged much as a stick insect by its stillness – for weeks on Ascorbite trails.

Despite its fearsome spear-mandibles, which usually kill at first strike, the angler is not known as a fighter. Indeed, sages believe a pack of Ascorbite warriors should be able to defeat one with ease. That they do not has stirred debate. Eskatonic Magus Leofric Attenborough (attached to the Academy Iteratta

Xenobiology dept) claims in his treatise "On Insects and Other Mega-Fauna" that "during their so-called learning phase, the Ascorbites are taught legend-songs detailing the place of every part of their natural order. The Angler takes on the aspect of a teacher God, pruning the weak and teaching the strong to be cunning."

**Commodity:** The spear mandibles of fallen Anglers are highly prized, being both strong and light. They have outperformed tungsten steel in several Muster benchmark tests. An angler spear (between 8-10 feet long) would cost as much as 300 fb, and even more to collectors off-world. Severan folk custom regards the angler as a totem of wisdom and patience, a reminder of one's place in the natural order and the vulnerability of all. Although its body is too thin to allow armor fashioned from its carapace, angler jewelry is much sought after as good luck charms. This is especially true amongst thieves, who claim it lends them the patience and cunning of the Old Man of the Jungle.

**Victory Point System Traits**

**Body:** Str 9, Dex 6, End 9

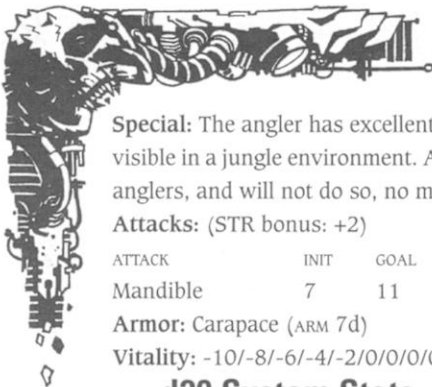
**Mind:** Wits 4, Per 12, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Dod 3, Fht 5, Obs 7, Snk 8, Vig 6

**Size:** G

**Movement:** 15 m





**Special:** The angler has excellent camouflage, being practically invisible in a jungle environment. Also, Ascorbites are loath to attack anglers, and will not do so, no matter the provocation.

**Attacks:** (STR bonus: +2)

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Mandible	7	11	10

**Armor:** Carapace (ARM 7d)

**Vitality:** -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0

### d20 System Stats

**Huge Beast**

**Hit Dice:** 5d8+20 (42 hp)

**Initiative:** +2 Dex

**Speed:** 50 ft.

**AC:** 21 (+2 Dex, -2 size, +11 natural)

**Attacks:** Mandible + 9 melee

**Damage:** 2d6 + 4

**Face/Reach:** 10 ft. by 20 ft./10 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Scent

**Saves:** Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +6

**Abilities:** Str 19, Dex 15, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 14

**Skills:** Hide +12, Listen +10, Spot +10

**Feats:** Alertness, Improved Critical (Mandible), Skill Focus (Hide)

**Challenge Rating:** 4

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Neutral

**Advancement:** None

#### COMBAT

The angler prefers to sit in ambush and attack unaware Ascorbite, usually catching them flat-footed. Its threat range is 18-20.

## Shriva (plural: Shrivai)

**Other Names:** Finger lizard (larvae), treeturner (adult)

**Homeworld:** Severus

**Present Distribution:** Emigrants took shrivai larvae with them, so herds of tamed shrivai exist on Ravenna and Stigmata.

**Type:** Animalia (reptilia)

**Role:** Herbivore

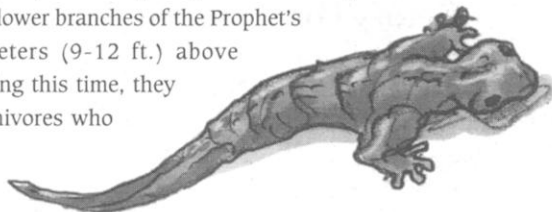
**Size:** Larvae: 0.25 m (10 inches), young adult: 3 m (10 ft.), adult: 6 m (20 ft.)

**Weight:** Larvae: 0.3 kg (0.6 lbs.), young adult: 80 kg (160 lbs.) adult: 400 kg (800 lbs.)

**Habitat:** Land dweller, tropical rainforest

**Social Organization:** During larval stage, the shriva remain solitary. In adulthood, herds number from about 20 to 50 individuals.

**Description:** After hatching from the egg, shriva look like long, light-brown snakes with rudimentary hands, like salamanders with thick, welted skin resembling the bark of the Prophet's tree. During cocoon stage, they look like giant green fruits hanging from the lower branches of the Prophet's tree, 3-4 meters (9-12 ft.) above ground. During this time, they fall prey carnivores who can not only reach the cocoon



but also resist the mild but horrible-tasting poison that covers the cocoons. Cocoons of the spotted sub-species also developed thorns to fend off carnivores.

As soon as shrivai hatch for the second time, they are grey-green, tusked, four-legged herbivores, their skin now even thicker and scaled. Irregular bone ridges protect the neck, flanks, stomach and throat against the many dangers of Severus. After hatching, they have not yet reached full adulthood, but they gain mass at a surprising speed, being fully grown two years after hatching. "Hungry as a herd of shrivai" is a common analogy in the Severan idiom.

Natives catch the young by setting up nets between trees where adult shrivai roam. Many Severan children have young shrivai for pets, but their need for food settles their fate during hard times. Locals know better than to shoot at the "fruits," as illustrated in an anecdote about a local folk heroine, the tracker Arabais. Arabais invited her Decados master to a competition of skills. Arabais missed her shot, of course, and the victor was in for a surprise of the crushing sort when he triggered a premature mass-hatching.

Grown shrivai make excellent draft animals. They also work at logging, where they uproot trees and stumps with their tusks, pull the logs out of the rainforest and feed on the young branches and leaves. Some eccentric nobles use shrivai as mounts, and a few even train them for war.

**Behavior:** After the hatching, young shrivai dash for the next Prophet trees, slithering up to their tops. There they remain, feeding on the young leaves. They soon become too heavy remain there, so they gradually move down towards the stronger branches - often the only thing that saves the afflicted tree from being devoured whole. When they reach a weight of about 80 kg (160 lbs.), they build their cocoons from half-digested bark, leaves and excrement.

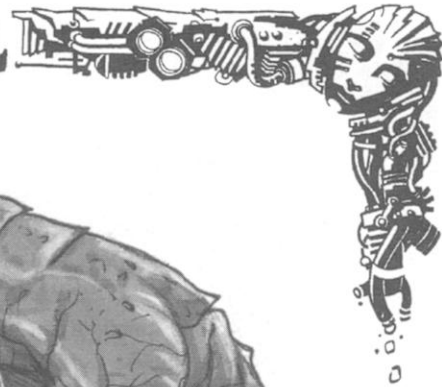
During the next two months, the shrivai develop their adult forms. Towards the end of the transformation, the cocoon starts to show indentions. The Severan natives know better than to pass under the cocoons now, since the hatching is due any moment. It starts with a low, moaning sound from one cocoon, answered by more moans that echo through the forest. All of a sudden, the cocoons split and the shrivai drop to earth from a height of 3-4 meters (9-12 feet). Herds form immediately after the hatching.

The herd is a coherent unit without complicated hierarchy. There are no leaders or solitary animals. If the herd is attacked, it splits into several smaller units, one of which fights the attacker or sacrifices itself, while the others dash off in various directions, leaving the eggs (if any) behind. Scholars of the Academia Interata have suggested a hive mind, which enables shrivai to sacrifice part of the herd just like snakes sacrifice part of their tails. This behavior has had a notable influence on Severan folks belief. In rural areas, St. Amalthea is often depicted riding a tamed shriva or with a shriva lying down at her feet.

Wild shrivai live about 10-15 years; tamed ones are reported to live 40-50 years.

**Commodity:** The larvae is used as a pet (a crest on Severus, 1 lb off-planet) or as a dried source of protein (1 kg/2 pounds a talon). Since they are viewed as a poor person's food, they are severely underrated in noble cuisine. Shriva larvae, cooked with cream and wildberries, is a common but very tasty dish. Members of the church often show their humility by eating dried shriva.





In Severan folk medicine, the shriva's skin is used to treat burns, their eyes against eye afflictions, and a talisman of their dried hands is worn to decrease the danger to fall off a tree. Other part of the shriva are popular with woodworkers. These talismans are common and native guides and trackers sell them for 1 talon, though they may charge obviously rich customers up to 5 firebirds.

Grown shrivai can be bought for 40-60 fbs, depending on age and experience of the animal. Breeding pairs cost as much as 150 fbs. The discrepancy in cost is due to the fact that shrivai require enormous amounts of Prophet's tree leaves to grow up, and few other planets have a suitable amount of this tree to sustain a herd of young shrivai. The shriva can only be tamed during larval stage.

The shriva can be tamed like a horse, but it is very hard to overcome the herd instincts and stupidity of the animal, or to train it for anything more than carrying a rider. Exceptional beasts have mastered not only flight, charge and trample, but tusk-fight and more complicated maneuvers. Those command the royal price of about 300-400 fbs.

### Victory Point System Traits

#### Adult shriva

**Body:** Str: 15, Dex 8, End: 13

**Mind:** Wits 3, Per 6, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Dod 4, Fht 5, Snk 3, Vig 6

**Size:** G

**Movement:** 10 m

**Attacks:** (STR bonus: +4)

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Tusk	5	13	8

**Armor:** Scaled hide (ARM 3d)

**Vitality:** -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0

### d20 System Stats

#### Large Beast

**Hit Dice:** 5d8+15 (35 hp)

**Initiative:** +3 (Dex)

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**AC:** 15 (-1 size, +3 Dex, +3 natural)

**Attacks:** Tusks + 6 melee

**Damage:** Tusks 1d8+6

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** None

**Special Qualities:** None

**Saves:** Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +1

**Abilities:** Str 21, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 5

**Skills:** Listen +4, Spot +4

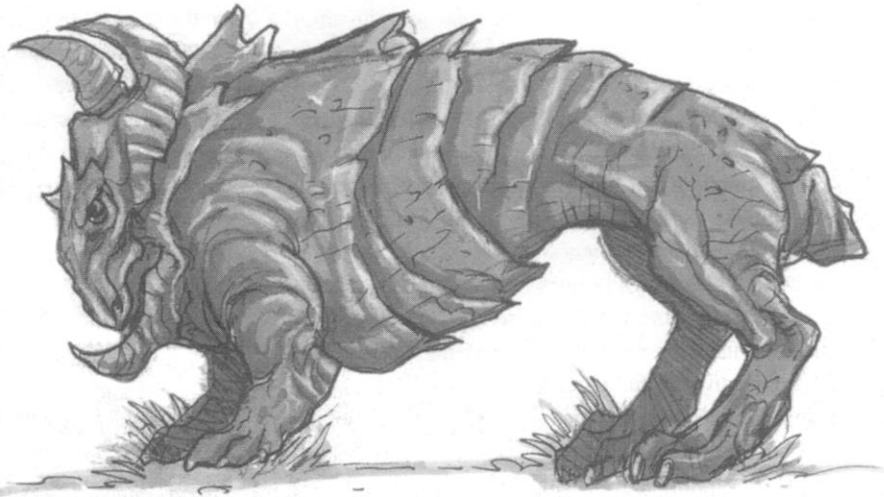
**Feats:** None

**Challenge Rating:** 2

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Neutral

**Advancement:** —



### COMBAT

When the herd is threatened, shrivai fight to the death.

## Silicon Consuming Bacteria 4a

**Homeworld:** Cadiz

**Present Distribution:** Byzantium Secundus, Malignatius, Criticorum, possibly other worlds targeted by the Decados military during the Emperor Wars

**Type:** Monera

**Role:** Decomposer

**Size:** Microscopic

**Weight:** Microscopic

**Habitat:** Silicate-containing soils in sub-arctic to tropical conditions. Any technological setting.

**Social Organization:** Colony. Most natural colonies are relatively small, no more than a few dozen centimeters (up to a foot) in diameter.

**Description:** SCB4a was one of the early creations of the late and unlamented biological warfare genius Dr. Charles Mocinego. He worked for House Decados through the Emperor Wars until he died in a laboratory accident on Cadiz in 4889, having, it is said, accidentally been exposed to one of his own unholy creations.

He designed SCB4a to cripple an adversary's technological infrastructure, assuming it was based on think machines with silicon chips. The Decados planned on using it by bio-bombing an area and then attacking with troops equipped with either low-tech weaponry or tech that did not depend on silicon chips. They field-tested it in a number of combats, meaning that areas where Decados forces fought during the early part of Emperor Wars maybe infected. This means that most of the Known Worlds may have some of these bacteria.

Unfortunately, SCB4a never really worked out as a weapon. Its effects proved highly unpredictable — sometimes even *enhancing* a device for a time — and it had a long latency period. That does not mean it's harmless, though, particularly to those with substantial cybernetic enhancements. If one waits long enough it *will* destroy think machines. I heard tale of a Decados noble, Sir Dmitri Andropov



Decados, who used SCB4a to attack a family member with an internal think machine. During the course of the infection, the alterations slowly drove her mad. Alas I cannot confirm the truth of it, though it would not at all surprise me.

According to Prof. Finistrus Gabriel of the Biological Institute on Leagueheim, SCB4a can survive in a natural environment because most soils contain a fair amount of silicon in the form of sand. It slowly breaks sand down to pure silicon, which it consumes in addition to organics it contacts. It does not derive sustenance from silicon, which instead comes from organic matter, but instead incorporates it into its bodily structure. A colony on a sandy beach can maintain itself or very slowly expand. If sufficient pure silicon is present, it can grow fairly quickly.

Pancreator aid us if this ever gets crossed with the unholy Symbiots! The damage this would cause in space, where life itself depends on think machines, is incalculable.

**Behavior:** SCB4a has no active behavior. Like any other bacteria, it lies dormant or else dies if it does not come into contact with its food source. It can lie dormant for many years in soil, however, as most soil has some silicon.

**Commodity:** SCB4a has no value to anyone except genetic engineers, Symbiot agents, or particularly violent anti-technology sects. To them, the value of a living colony is difficult to calculate, but it would be substantial.

### Victory Point System Traits

**Size:** Microscopic

**Special Attacks:** Base goal number for infection is 4 for a casual contact. Adjust appropriately for more fleeting or intimate contacts. For instance, handling some contaminated soil would be casual contact. Being near someone handling the soil would decrease the likelihood of infection by -2. Crawling around in contaminated soil would increase the likelihood of infection, substantially by +6 or more. Dusting someone or something with a purified form of the bacteria would require a Dex + Physick roll. More VP on this roll indicates more extensive sites of infection. Each week a device is infected with SCB4a, roll a D20 on the following table:

1-10: No effect.

11-13: +2 on goal for rolls with the device

14-16: Device works as if positively accenting by +3 all the time; permanent loss of quality -1 after infection is removed

17-18: Device works as if negatively accenting by -3 all the time; permanent loss of quality -2 after infection is removed

19: Device ceases to function entirely, though it can be repaired; permanent loss of quality -3 after infection is removed

20: Device ceases to function entirely; infected components are totally irreparable.

Each additional week a device is infected with SCB4a adds a cumulative +1 for rolls on the table, i.e., +1 on the second week, +2 on the third week, etc. The GM should keep all modifiers secret from the player.

Detecting SCB4a requires a Tech + Volt Redemption roll. 1 VP indicates something is wrong with the chip as the tech will note that the structure of the chip is altered and the surface pitted. 2 VP

indicates that the silicon is being corroded. 4 or more VP indicates that the chip is being eaten by a biological agent. Decontaminating SCB4a requires application of a biocide, such as a strong solvent, hard UV, or hard vacuum. It can be an extended task and succeeds when 5 VP are accumulated. Decontaminating particularly sensitive devices, such as cybernetic implants, is substantially more difficult.

### d20 System Stats

Silicon objects that are exposed to SCB4a must make a Fortitude roll (DC15) or roll on the above table once a week.

### Skell

**Other Names:** Wicked-Wing, Slaughter-Sniffer

**Homeworld:** Grail

**Present Distribution:** Grail, Cadavus, Bannockburn, Leminkainen, Hargard, Byzantium Secundus

**Type:** Animalia (chordata, aves)

**Role:** Decomposer/reducer

**Size:** 0.5 m (1.5 ft.)

**Weight:** .25 kg (.12 lbs)

**Habitat:** Temperate woodland

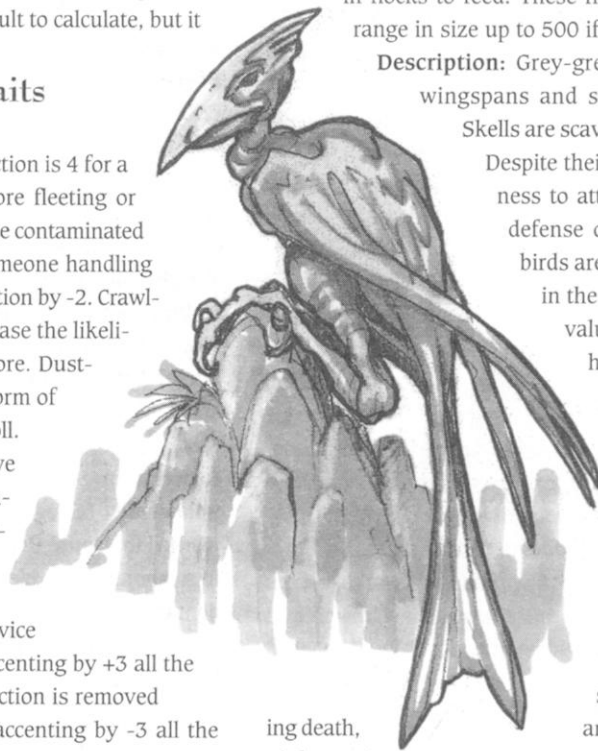
**Social Organization:** Solitary, though they often converge in flocks to feed. These flocks, known as slaughters, can range in size up to 500 if there is enough food.

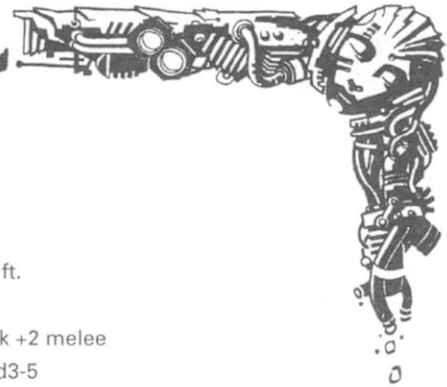
**Description:** Grey-green scavenger birds with large wingspans and somewhat ragged appearances. Skells are scavengers native to the planet Grail.

Despite their weakness and their unwillingness to attack healthy creatures except in defense of their young, the thin carrion birds are among the most feared animals in the Known Worlds. Though seen as valuable pets by the Etyri of their homeworld, Skells are uniformly hated by all law-abiding citizens of the Known Worlds and only prized by the most unscrupulous ruffians and rogues in the Empire.

The birds' dreadful reputation comes from the strange precognitive ability they have been known to display. They seem to be able to predict impending and often gather in areas where soon to take place. No matter how peaceful and calm the circumstances may seem, the arrival of a circling skell signifies that death, usually through violence, is sure to follow. Some believe that the skells cause the mayhem that always attends their arrival, but the Etyri say that the birds merely sense imminent deaths. This is corroborated by the fact that even when newly arrived skells are killed by peasant archers, as they nearly always are, deadly mishap still ensues.

One disturbing rumor is the manner in which the species supposedly spread to the other planets on which it is found. It is said that large numbers of skells stowed away on starships, risking starvation on the long journeys, to arrive en masse on the war-torn





planets of Cadavus, Bannockburn, Leminkainen, and even the barbarous Hargard. On all of these worlds they now apparently thrive on the constant fighting. This raises troubling questions about the scope of their precognitive ability, especially when coupled with recent unconfirmed reports of large increases in skull populations on Byzantium Secundus.

**Behavior:** Skells behave in most respects like ordinary scavenger birds save for their greater appetites, solitary natures and precognitive abilities. They tend to eat the remains of creatures that are human-sized or larger. They seem to be able to sense impending death well in advance at distances of many miles, for they will often travel for great distances and still arrive before any deaths have occurred. Once they have arrived on the scene, skells will fly in characteristic figure-eight circles until the prophesied deaths have occurred and they can feed. They usually appear a few hours before any deaths occur, but they can sometimes arrive as much as a week in advance.

Besides raising their young, skells only associate with each other when they converge on a meal, and so flocks of skells are called slaughters. The size of a slaughter of skells is usually proportional to the amount of deaths that will occur, and many small towns have been gripped with waves of panic to see, in the midst of an otherwise unremarkable day, the sky darkened by hundreds of skells circling in their telltale figure-eight patterns.

**Commodity:** Skells are shunned and hated by most Known Worlders, but there are some who prize them. The Etyri consider them to be reminders of their own ancient days and are thus rather fond of them. Though considered unholy by humans, a healthy skell can fetch anywhere from 100 to 500 fb, for if fitted with a homing beacon it can prove quite valuable. Skells are coveted by those humans who steal the possessions of the newly dead as well as by unscrupulous generals who attempt to use them to gain battlefield intelligence. Cautionary legends tell, however, of the foolish tyrant Baron Yuri Slava Decados. Baron Yuri, in trying to put down a rebellion in the forests of his fief on Cadavus, followed his pet skells hoping to find a few rebels to kill and instead walked into an ambush where he and his men were killed. His own pet skell apparently ate much of his corpse.

**Wild Gift:** Beastfriends can borrow the claws, bite or Death Scent abilities from cohort skells.

## Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 1, Dex 5, End 4

**Mind:** Wits 1, Per 6, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Chm 0, Dod 3, Fht 2, Imp 7, Mel 0, Obs 5, Sht 0, Snk 1, Vig 3

**Size:** S

**Movement:** Walking 1 m, flying 20 m

**Special:** Death Scent. A skell can detect impending death with a Perception + Observe roll. The range of this ability varies with the amount of deaths that are to take place, but it is usually within a few miles.

**Attacks:**

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Beak	1	7	2
Claws	2	7	2

**Vitality:** -4/-2/0/0/0/0

## d20 System Stats

**Tiny Animal**

**Hit Dice:** 1/2 d8 (2 hp)

**Initiative:** +2 (Dex)

**Speed:** Walking 3 ft., flying 60 ft.

**AC:** 14 (+2 size, +2 Dex)

**Attacks:** Claws +4 melee, Beak +2 melee

**Damage:** Claws 1d2-5, Beak 1d3-5

**Face/Reach:** 2 1/2 ft. x 2 1/2 ft./0 ft.

**Special Attacks:** —

**Special Qualities:** Death Scent

**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2

**Abilities:** Str 1, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 2, Wis 15, Cha 6

**Skills:** Listen +6, Spot +6

**Feats:** Weapon Finesse (beak, claws)

**Challenge Rating:** 1/6

**Treasure:** None (except what is found at the scene of their feeding)

**Alignment:** Always neutral

**Advancement:** —

### COMBAT

**Death Scent (Su):** A skell can detect impending death with a Listen check. The range of this ability varies with the amount of deaths that are to take place, but it is usually within a few miles.

## Tagalath

**Other Names:** Scraver's Delight

**Homeworld:** Cadavus

**Present Distribution:** Cadavus, Severus, Kish, Icon, Sutek, Aragon, Stigmata

**Type:** Animalia (chordata, reptilia)

**Role:** Secondary carnivore

**Size:** 4 m (12 ft.)

**Weight:** 135 kg (300 lbs)

**Habitat:** Tropical seasonal forest

**Social Organization:** Packs of up to 20

**Description:** A gray-skinned lizard with powerful hind legs, vicious clawed forelegs, long teeth and a razor-sharp bone scythe on the end of its powerful tail, the tagalath (plural: tagalathin) is a vicious and highly intelligent pack-hunting predator. Unfortunately for those who encounter them in the wild, tagalathin have a strange affinity for the energies emitted by most technologies. The creatures have the ability to home in on electromagnetic energies from up to almost half a mile away, and will descend on anything in the vicinity of these emissions with tremendous speed and savagery.

The tagalath originally preyed upon the ursinodus, a huge creature eventually hunted to extinction by humans, prized for its ability to generate bioelectricity. Tagalathin attacked ursinodi in carefully coordinated hunting packs, where the younger members would grapple the prey and the elders would slash at it with their vicious tails until the huge beast died. Since the extinction of the ursinodus, Tagalathin have become starved of their preferred prey, and focus instead on humans carrying functional technology. They may indeed believe the humans to be small ursinodi, as they seem to use their old tactics when hunting humans as well.



Though unruly and quite deadly, the tagalath possesses abilities too useful to give up entirely, and several of House Trusnikron's better trainers have discovered a method of taming the beast. Riding the creatures is a dicey proposition for any novice, as they are aggressive and fairly adept at using their tails as weapons, but with a suitably cruel bridle, it can be done. A number of nobles of many houses train themselves to do so, for the benefits of riding a tagalath are quite considerable. Despite their tremendous appetite and limited stamina when compared to a horse, tagalathin are surer-footed, faster in short bursts, and able to locate and track nearby electrical activity.

Tagalathin tend to congregate in areas with electromagnetic activity, which makes them attack cities fairly often. It also means that they tend to cluster around functioning technology in wilderness areas, leading to their nickname of Scraver's Delight. The nickname is one part truth, for the guild does often find it convenient when Second Republican facilities are marked out by populations of tagalathin, but it is an equal part irony, as packs of tagalathin are territorial and vicious enough to be a life-threatening danger to any expedition mounted to such sites. It is said that they can also sense the energies emitted by Annunaki artifacts and ruins, but there is far less concrete evidence for this.

**Behavior:** Tagalathin hunt in packs, sneaking up to within running distance of their foe and then pouncing like lightning. Although they have good eyesight, their poor senses of smell and hearing make this technique most effective upon prey who emit powerful electrical energies. Tagalathin can run at high speeds even on highly obstructed ground, stabilizing themselves with their powerful tails, so victims of a tagalath attack usually have little to no warning.



Once the tagalathin have reached their prey, the younger members of the pack grapple it with their forelimbs and, in some cases, tails. In grappling they still attempt to claw and bite the target, but their elders will do the real damage by whipping the targets with their powerful and razor-tipped tails. In this way a pack of tagalathin can constitute a real danger even to humans in fairly heavy armor.

If a lone tagalath is hunting, which is somewhat rare, it will almost always attempt to grapple the target first and then strike it with its tail. It seems that the tail-whipping attack is too unbalancing to the tagalath to be used unless the creature is firmly braced.

**Commodity:** A tamed and trained tagalath is worth 800 to 1000 fb, depending on its particular degree of discipline and sensitivity to electromagnetism. Tagalath-skin contains receptors that sense energy fields, and is thus useful to certain Engineers for research purposes. A good specimen could likely fetch 50 fb.

### Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 8, Dex 8, End 5

**Mind:** Wits 2, Per 6, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Chm 0, Dod 5, Fht 7, Imp 5, Mel 0, Obs 7, Sht 0, Snk 7, Vig 9

**Size:** H

**Movement:** 40 m

**Special:** Energy Sense. A tagalath can detect nearby electromagnetic energy with a Perception + Observe roll. The roll is at +1 for each piece of personal technology (shields, night vision goggles, blaster pistol) that is currently active, +2 for each piece of heavy personal technology (blaster rifles), and +3 for each active piece of semi-portable or vehicular technology. The technology can be sensed at ranges of 100 m (300 feet) per victory point on the roll.

**Attacks:** (STR bonus: +1d DMG)

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Grab*	6	15	2
Bite	7	15	3
Tail**	7	15	6

\*If successful, the tagalath rolls Dex + Fight plus VPs against the target's Strength + Vigor. If the tagalath wins, the target is grappled as per Martial Hold.

\*\*The target has +2 to dodge the tail attack unless grappled.

**Armor:** Leathery hide (ARM 4d)

**Vitality:** -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0/0/0

### d20 System Stats

**Huge (long) Beast**

**Hit Dice:** 5d8+5 (25 hp)

**Initiative:** +3 (Dex)

**Speed:** 120 ft.

**AC:** 15 (-2 size, +3 Dex, +2 natural)

**Attacks:** Grab +6 melee, Bite +3 melee, Tail +3 melee

**Damage:** Grab 1d6+1, Bite 1d8+1, Tail 1d10+1

**Face/Reach:** 10 ft. x 20 ft./10 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Improved Grab

**Special Qualities:** Energy Sense

**Saves:** Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +5

**Abilities:** Str 16, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 6

**Skills:** Jump +3, Listen +5, Move Silently +5, Spot +5

**Challenge Rating:** 5

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always neutral

**Advancement:** —

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, the tagalath must hit with a Grab attack. If it gets hold, it can hit with its tail or its bite.

**Energy Sense (Ex):** A tagalath can detect nearby electromagnetic energy with a Listen roll. The roll receives a +1 bonus for each piece of personal technology (shields, night vision goggles, blaster pistol) that is currently active, +2 for each piece

of heavy personal technology (blaster rifles), and +3 for each active piece of semi-portable or vehicular technology. The technology can be sensed at ranges of 100 m (300 feet) per five levels above DC 10 on the roll.

## T'ogh — The Wild Boar of Ungavorox

Dame Zunginjeet de Faza, in her delightfully informative *Memoirs of the Iberian Marches*, writes, "the wild boar has always been very important to my people, not only as food and material resource but as a wise teacher of survival techniques. While 'Brother T'ogh' may not always wish to share his ground with us, he has shared far more with us through the tales we tell of his strength, courage and cunning. Ungavorox has more distinct species of boar than any other world, or so I am told, and each one has an important lesson to impart, if not several...."

Ungavorox presented a monumental challenge to the exobiologists of the Second Republic, with its widely varied biomes and seemingly infinite biological diversity, but the t'ogh was especially perplexing. The three types shown here demonstrate why. Although each is an even-toed hoofed non-ruminant, clearly placing them in the order suidae, or pig family, one is a placental, one is a marsupial, and one is oviparous — an egg-layer. Were these all separate infra-classes of mammal, evolving from unrelated ancestral lines but sharing superficial traits by virtue of occupying similar ecological niches? Or, even more unlikely, had the pig family developed distinctly exclusive reproductive strategies later along the evolutionary timeline? Or had the Anunnaki been tampering with the lifeforms of this primitive world? If Republican science ever answered these questions, that answer was surely lost in the Fall.

### Shan T'ogh

**Other Names:** Little Brother

**Homeworld:** Ungavorox

**Present Distribution:** Known Worlds

**Type:** Animalia (mammalia, artiodactyla, suidae)

**Role:** Omnivore

**Size:** 1.6 m (5 ft.)

**Weight:** 250 kg (550 lbs.)

**Habitat:** Rainforest, grassland, temperate forest.

**Social Organization:** Family units (called "sounders") of anywhere from 12 to 60 members.

**Description:** The Shan t'ogh, or shanto beast, has been exported from Ungavorox in numbers as great as those of the Vorox themselves, and has been adapted to life with humans as no other indigenous lifeform of that planet could hope to be. Shanto herding has been a staple of peasant life on the Li Halan worlds since the Fall, and by the 45<sup>th</sup> century shanto were kept in most farming communities throughout the Known Worlds. The shanto is a true omnivore, able to ingest organic compounds that would prove indigestible or even toxic to most sentient life. For this reason, individual shanto may be allowed to roam free in many villages and small towns where they can subsist by consuming much of the trash that humanoids generate. Shanto pork, paradoxically enough, is not only

easily digestible by nearly every carnivore known, but is considered delicious by most races; some even credit it with curative properties. The Vorox claim that every part of the shanto beast has a use; in fact, they find this creature so useful their myths describe it as a gift from their racial father-figure. The bones of the shanto are dense and strong, and can be used for tools and weapons as well as raw material for sculpture and furniture-making. Shanto leather is tough, pliable and lightweight. Its blood is so resistant to the aggressive microbial life of its homeworld that it can be used as an antiseptic and will preserve any organic matter coated with it from decay.

The shanto beast is built about like an Urthish pig but stockier in its six legs, with a face closer to a warthog's. It has two stubby tusks used for both digging and defense. Its skin is thick but soft to the touch, and sparsely covered with stiff, bristly hair. Thick tufts of brightly colored fur adorn the



tips of its ears and tail, probably used for signaling to its family. Its most unusual feature is its extra pair of eyes, set just behind the ears where the skull joins the neck, allowing it to graze and dig for food while watching its own back for predators. Due to generations of domestication and selective breeding, the shanto found outside of Ungavorox are slightly smaller and more delicately boned, and the extra eyes have become vestigial, seldom capable of opening fully or seeing effectively. Successful herders sometimes import a wild shanto stud directly from Ungavorox to strengthen their bloodlines.

**Behavior:** While not as surly as most Ungavoroxian fauna, the shanto is nonetheless very territorial in its natural state, and will charge creatures of almost any size that encroach upon its space. It is also intelligent and has a good memory, enough to distinguish between different individuals of the same species, and to learn and remember the capabilities and limitations of most weapons or vehicles that it survives an encounter with. Domesticated herd shanto are not as clever or willful, being conditioned to life in the pen, but can be just as recklessly violent if sufficiently provoked. The territorial urge has been bred out of them, and they may even allow themselves to be handled by herdsman that they know personally. Those that are allowed to roam free around human dwellings tend to shy away from heavy traffic and generally patrol the gutters and trash-heaps after dark.

**Commodity:** The pork, blood, bone, hide, ears and eyeballs of a shanto are all valuable, especially among peasants who use them for folk cures.





**Wild Gift:** Beastfriends can borrow the Immunity, Omnidigestion, bite and leathery hide abilities from cohort shanto.

### Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 9, Dex 5, End 8

**Mind:** Wits 4, Per 7, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Dod 3, Fht 7, Imp 4, Obs 5, Snk 3, Vig 6

**Learned skills:** Survival 6

**Size:** H

**Movement:** 8 m

**Special:** Immunity (+4 End against toxins and disease); Omnidigestion (gain nourishment from anything, even inorganic matter)

**Attacks:** (STR bonus: +2)

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Bite	5	8	3
Charge	4	12	4 + 1 / 3m run
Gore	6	13	6
Kick	6	12	4
Trample	4	12	6

**Armor:** Leathery hide (ARM 3d)

**Vitality:** -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0

### d20 System Stats

**Large Beast**

**Hit Dice:** 5d8+20 (42 hp)

**Initiative:** +0

**Speed:** 25 ft.

**AC:** 15 (-1 size, +6 natural)

**Attacks:** Bite +10 melee, head butt +10 melee, gore +10 melee

**Damage:** Bite 1d6+5, head butt 1d8+5, gore 1d10+5

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Trample

**Special Qualities:** Improved Charge, Omnidigestion, Scent

**Saves:** Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +5

**Abilities:** Str 20, Dex 11, Con 18, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6

**Skills:** Listen +8, Spot +6

**Feats:** Great Fortitude, Improved Bull Rush

**Challenge Rating:** 3

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Neutral

**Advancement:** 6-8 HD (Large)

#### COMBAT

Shantos seek to knock down their foes and tear them to shreds. Not particularly fast, shanto have developed group tactics that enable the entire herd to survive attacks.

**Improved Charge (Ex):** A shanto does double Str damage on a charge.

**Omnidigestion (Ex):** A shanto can gain nourishment from anything, even inorganic matter.

**Trample (Ex):** When a shanto charges, it can make attacks against any prone foes in its path. Successful attacks deliver 1d8+5 damage.

## Chusha T'ogh

**Other Names:** Rutboar

**Homeworld:** Ungavorox

**Present Distribution:** Ungavorox, various undisclosed locations throughout the Known Worlds.

**Type:** Animalia (mammalia, marsupialia, suidae)

**Role:** Herbivore

**Size:** 1.8 m (6 ft.)

**Weight:** 200 kg (440 lbs.)

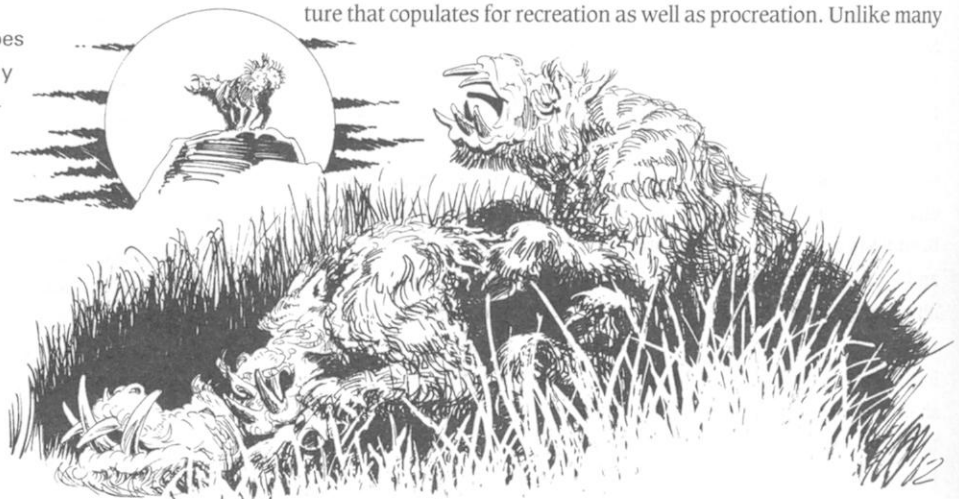
**Habitat:** Rainforest, grasslands.

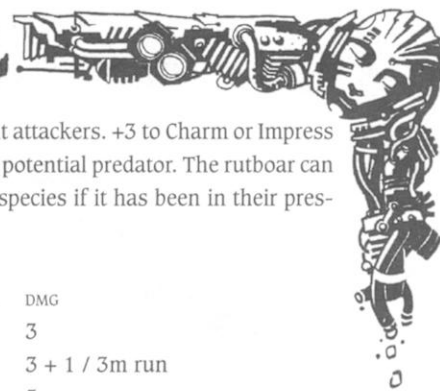
**Social Organization:** Small family units (called "sounders") of anywhere from 2 to 20 members.

**Description:** The chusha t'ogh, or rutboar, is six-legged like its cousins, with an ugly wrinkled face, flaring nostrils and a mouth full of tusks and fangs jutting out at odd angles. It is covered with soft brightly colored fur marked with striking patterns that seem to act more as a signal to potential mates than as camouflage. Its hooves have a shiny, almost manicured, appearance. Its face, belly and bulbous warty rump are free of fur and lined with small nodules that are extremely sensitive. Each nodule is packed with sensory nerves as well as a large pheromone-secreting gland capable of shooting its load several meters with pinpoint accuracy.

In addition to being a marsupial, a most interesting fact about the rutboar is that the entire species is hermaphroditic, possessing both male and female sexual characteristics. Some individuals may tend toward one gender or the other, but each is capable of both insemination and gestation. Two pairs of large teats sit far forward on the chest, giving the rutboar an almost humanoid-appearing cleavage when viewed directly from the front. Behind these, the marsupial pouch containing a pair of smaller teats opens to the rear; the birth canal beyond opens forward, almost directly into the pouch, thus eliminating the need for the newborn to climb into the pouch by itself. The rutboar's genitalia is overdeveloped with musculature that gives it prehensile capabilities, and is apparently able to adapt to intercourse with species other than its own. Furthermore, the rutboar is actually capable of impregnating itself, thus reproducing by parthenogenesis (or "virgin birth") when no breeding partner is available.

**Behavior:** The rutboar has one of the most notorious reputations of Ungavorox's wildlife, being the only known non-sentient creature that copulates for recreation as well as procreation. Unlike many





of that planet's other species, it gives birth to, at most, only two or three young at a time, and so compensates by being in a constant state of sexual heat all year long throughout its adult life. Its family groups are small, and members leave to join other groups on an almost annual basis.

It is said that the rutboar will attempt to couple with anything it can reach that does not kill it first, and this is not far from the truth. (Lord Erbian's is informed that there are in existence certain private clubs catering to perverse fetishes which keep a rutboar around for this very purpose.) Voroxian legend contains incidences of rutboar successfully mating with other orders of mammalia, and even reptilia and aves. H.T. Hausen, a celebrated explorer during the Second Republic, claimed to have once seen a chusha t'ogh piglet emerge as part of a vrongar litter, and speculated that a rutboar had somehow transferred a prematurely delivered infant to the expecting vrongar mother during some bizarre mating attempt. The feral Vorox who accompanied him claimed this "surrogate birthing" was not uncommon and reminded him of the respect paid to the chusha t'ogh in the rites associated with the "Great Vrongar Hunt." (The vrongar is a giant reptiloid ceratopsid which bears live young; a wealth of information on this species can be found in the *Vorox* volume of the *Alien Expeditions* series, which Lord Erbian's recommends as a supplement to this *Bestiary*.) While other Republican xenobiologists and natural philosophers of our own era rejected this notion of interspecies breeding as mythic exaggeration, certain aspects of the rutboar's genetic composition remain a mystery, and biochemical interactions with other species have been noted. Its pheromones, in particular, have an arousing effect on most other races that reproduce sexually, including sentients.

**Commodity:** Hedgewitches and matchmakers throughout the Known Worlds prize rutboar products as ingredients for love potions, and even guild scientists aver that certain glands have definite aphrodisiac properties. Rutboar milk is said to be the sweetest there is, and at one firebird per liter it better be. Tusks may sell for three to five firebirds whole, or one crest per gram in powdered form. Pheromone glands are had for a firebird apiece, provided they were not damaged or punctured when removed. Rutboar pelts are considered attractive furnishings for bridal beds and love-nests, fetching 10 or more firebirds. Genitalia, if properly trimmed and preserved, can cost anywhere from 50 to 100 fb depending on size and articulation. Outlaw geneticists may pay hundreds of firebirds for rutboar semen, ova and amniotica.

(Lord Erbian's readers should be warned that most rutboar products sold outside of Li Halan space are falsely advertised as such, and are usually harvested from common boars of other worlds.)

**Wild Gift:** Beastfriends can borrow the Pheromones, bite and leathery hide and thick fur abilities from cohort rutboars.

### Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 8, Dex 6, End 7

**Mind:** Wits 3, Per 6, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Chm 8, Dod 4, Fht 5, Imp 5, Obs 6, Snk 5, Vig 7

**Learned skills:** Survival 4

**Size:** H

**Movement:** 10 m

**Special:** Pheromones (The rutboar can emit a wave of sexual arousal

so powerful it can distract violent attackers. +3 to Charm or Impress rolls to ward off attack or calm a potential predator. The rutboar can only imitate the smells of alien species if it has been in their presence for at least a year.)

**Attacks:** (STR bonus: +1)

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Bite	3	7	3
Charge	2	11	3 + 1 / 3m run
Gore	4	12	5
Kick	4	11	3
Trample	2	11	6

**Armor:** Leathery hide and thick fur (ARM 3d)

**Vitality:** -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0

### d20 System Stats

**Large Beast**

**Hit Dice:** 4d8+12 (30 hp)

**Initiative:** +2 (Dex)

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**AC:** 15 (-1 size, +6 natural)

**Attacks:** Bite +8 melee, head butt +8 melee, gore +8 melee

**Damage:** Bite 1d6+4, head butt 1d8+4, gore 1d10+4

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Trample

**Special Qualities:** Improved Charge, Pheromones, Scent

**Saves:** Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +6

**Abilities:** Str 19, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 14

**Skills:** Listen +8, Spot +6

**Feats:** Improved Bull Rush

**Challenge Rating:** 3

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Neutral

**Advancement:** 5-6 HD (Large)

#### COMBAT

Rutboars seek to knock down their foes and tear them to shreds. Not particularly fast, rutboar have developed group tactics that enable the entire herd to survive attacks.

**Improved Charge (Ex):** A rutboar does double Str damage on a charge.

**Omnidigestion (Ex):** A rutboar can gain nourishment from anything, even inorganic matter.

**Pheromones (Ex):** Anyone trying to attack a rutboar has to make a Will save (DC 14).

**Trample (Ex):** When a shanto charges, it can make attacks against any prone foes in its path. Successful attacks deliver 1d8+4 damage.

## Jukar T'ogh

**Other Names:** Great Boar

**Homeworld:** Ungavorox

**Present Distribution:** Ungavorox

**Type:** Animalia (mammalia, monotremata, suidae)

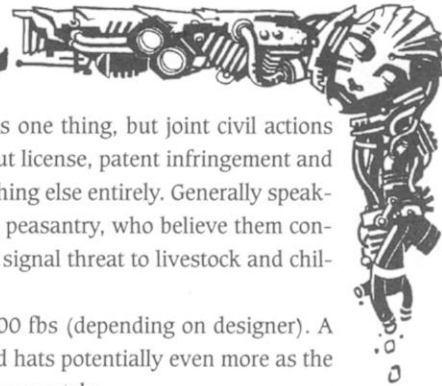
**Role:** Herbivore (plus insects, insect larvae and small animals on occasion)

**Size:** 5 m (16 ft.)

**Weight:** 3000 kg (6600 lbs.)







## Tethyan War Mink

**Homeworld:** Tethys

**Present Distribution:** During the second Republic, mink farms spread throughout the Known Worlds. Now mink is only farmed on Tethys, Bannockburn and Leagueheim. Reports of feral minks on Stigmata are unfortunately true (see below).

**Type:** Animalia (mammalia, rodentia)

**Role:** Carnivore

**Size:** 1 m (3 ft.)

**Weight:** 30-40kg (60-80 lbs.)

**Habitat:** Temperate woodlands and forests, lowland scrub, ranging to sub-arctic tundra.

**Social Organization:** Mink form monogamous families. The female stays with her kittens while the male hunts. Mink kept in captivity no longer form these relationships.

**Description:** Tethyan war minks are a crossbreed holdover from the Second Republic. A mixture of Urthish mink and a larger, more aggressive cousin species found on Tethys, they were gene-spliced and farmed millennia ago for their fur ... and fighting qualities. During the Fall, the strain escaped into the wild and has only recently been redomesticated. The war mink looks similar to native Urth mink, except that they are substantially larger. Indeed, feral mink have been known to kill children or the infirm. Their fur extremely luxurious and soft, as well as incredibly warm. Temperate mink have rich dark brown fur; the rarer arctic mink has fur of the purest white.

**Behavior:** The war mink is a ferocious carnivore. The feral strain even more so. Selective breeding has dissipated this urge, but the wild remains. This has led to their secondary purpose; it has become fashionable on League worlds to indulge in mink fights. These are highly illegal, as Reeve Advocate Leanna D'ascoigne explains:

It is not so much a matter of cruelty as one of economics. You do understand how much these creatures are worth, don't you?

It is said that once a Tethyan war mink takes a hold of its prey it will never let go, much like the Reeves.

**Commodity:** Mink fur is very popular. As a fashion accessory, mink fur hats and mink stoles – provided under sole license of D'ascoigne and Company Farriers, Tethys – are making quite a comeback. Aside from this, their fur is valued for more practical purposes.

The Emperor himself recently paid for a consignment of Tethyan mink fur gloves and hats to be sent to a detachment of the Phoenix Guard serving on Malignatius. An unfortunate side effect of this popularity was the abortive attempt to farm Tethyan mink on Stigmata. Merrills 5th Sapper Regiment managed to smuggle a consignment of mink through quarantine onto Stigmata. Unfortunately, they were attacked and scattered by Symbiot incursion shortly after setting up their farm. Or as Matthias Johannson, Sapper 1<sup>st</sup> Grade explains:

It's like the jungle came alive, just to free them bloody mink. I wished we'd never brought them.



A Symbiot-infested mink is one thing, but joint civil actions by the Reeves for trading without license, patent infringement and quarantine fracturing are something else entirely. Generally speaking, feral mink are hated by the peasantry, who believe them conduits of evil spirits, as well as a signal threat to livestock and children.

A mink stole costs up to 200 fbs (depending on designer). A set of war-wear mink gloves and hats potentially even more as the contracts need to be negotiated separately.

**Wild Gift:** Beastfriends can borrow the claws and scent abilities of cohort mink.

### Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 5, Dex 8, End 6

**Mind:** Wits 6, Per 5, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Dod 6, Fht 5, Obs 6, Snk 4, Vig 5

**Size:** ML

**Movement:** 12 m

**Special:** Tethyan War Mink have poor eyesight, but their excellent sense of smell compensates for this.

**Attacks:**

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Claw	3	13	1
Bite	5	13	3*

\* If a Tethyan War Mink inflicts three points of damage (after victory points and strength bonus) through armor it has clamped on and will not let go short of being bludgeoned to death. Its bite will not do any more damage once it is latched on, but each of its subsequent claw attacks is at +4 to hit, and the Mink can deliver four per turn (with no penalty) instead of two.

**Armor:** Fur (ARM 1d)

**Vitality:** -8/-4/-2/-1/0/0/0/0/0/0

### d20 System Stats

**Small Beast**

**Hit Dice:** 2d8+6 (15 hp)

**Initiative:** +3 (Dex)

**Speed:** 40 ft.

**AC:** 16 (+1 size, +3 Dex, +2 natural)





**Attacks:** 2/4 claws +5 melee, bite +5 melee  
**Damage:** Claw 1d4+1, bite 1d6+1  
**Face/Reach:** 2 1/2 ft. by 2 1/2 ft./ 2 1/2 ft.  
**Special Attacks:** Jaw Clamp  
**Special Qualities:** Scent  
**Saves:** Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +2  
**Abilities:** Str 12, Dex 17, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6  
**Skills:** Listen +8, Spot +8  
**Feats:** Weapon finesse (bite, claws)  
**Challenge Rating:** 2  
**Treasure:** None  
**Alignment:** Neutral  
**Advancement:** —

**COMBAT**

War minks seek to bite, clamp down, and then rake with all four claws. They do not stop until they or their prey can no longer move.

**Jaw Clamp (Ex):** Whenever a mink succeeds with a bite, its foe must make a Ref save (DC 15), or else the mink clamps on and can use all four claws from then on.

## Texpider

**Homeworld:** Probably Leagueheim  
**Present Distribution:** Possibly all  
**Type:** Technologia (techninsectia)  
**Role:** Ergivore (energy eater)  
**Size:** 10 cm (4 inches)  
**Weight:** 100 g (35 oz.)  
**Habitat:** Any structure with electrical systems  
**Social Organization:** Colony size depends on amount of energy available. A typical space freighter could have as many as 500 individuals feeding off the power supply.  
**Description:** From a personal report by Lady Sasha Trusnikron:

The taxpider is certainly an intriguing little beast to observe, and I was stunned to learn how much a machine can seem to live. During my travels, I visited Leagueheim to learn more about such types of artificial life.

My inquiries amongst the locals led me to a strange little Engineer named Anigavick. The Gannock engineer (he proudly proclaimed himself a "teknozoologist") welcomed me into his small, cramped shop. All manner of technological gadgetry and tools hung, leaned and balanced in every possible location in the shop. My simian host scurried deftly through the maze of machinery to the back of the shop and beckoned me to follow. I proceeded through the jumble much more slowly, careful not to disturb the rickety looking items.

He chatted with me incessantly about the news, the weather, and other such small things (I believe he was rather excited to have

someone interested in his field of study) and opened a small door leading to a darkened corridor. I followed the curious fellow inside, and he shut the door behind us, sealing the darkness. I could hear him scurry about in the darkness and pick up some things. I heard his return (smelling it first) and felt something thrust into my hands.

"Here y'are, put these on," he said exuberantly.

I hesitated, not certain what the device was. Anigavick seemed kind enough, if a bit eccentric, but I was not willing to trust someone I had just met. There are many stories about what devices built by Engineers can do to the unwary. He reassured me, saying he had built them himself and that they were simple goggles for seeing in the dark. I put them on slowly and, as promised, I could now see the empty corridor, cast though it was in an eerie green glow.

I gazed around the corridor with this eerie, probably proscribed, vision. The corridor was bare except for the door behind me, the hooks on the wall (presumably where Anigavick hung these contraptions), and a door at the end of the short corridor. For some reason, I was reminded of the airlocks on the ships of the Charioteers. I inquired about the marked difference between this corridor and the outer shop to Anigavick, whom I could see in front of me wearing another set of goggles. By the Saints, a Gannock looks frightening through these technical eyes.

"It's a sort of barrier to keep 'em inside, if they ever escape the workroom" he explained. "No energy here for 'em to feed on, so they'd be too weak to escape."

I did not understand at all what this meant, except that by "em" he meant the taxpiders we'd discussed and that the workroom was the room at the end of the hall. Sure enough, Anigavick

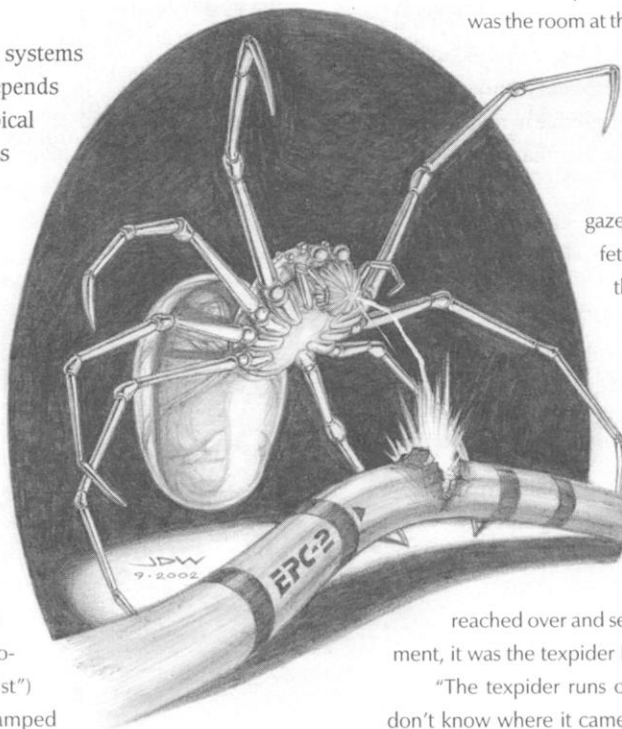
led me to the door and inside. It was just as dark as the corridor from which we'd just come. On a table lay about a dozen items I at first mistook for scraps of metal or spare parts. I continued to gaze about the small room while Anigavick fetched his necessary tools from a box on the floor.

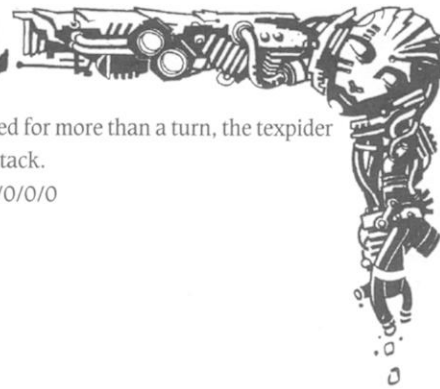
This room was also bare, except for some more tools hung on the walls, a bench and the worktable that stretched from wall to wall. Anigavick danced from the tool box to the bench, and I leaned over his shoulder to see what he had fetched. A small, hand-held fusion torch, some tweezers and a battery lay on the table before him. He

reached over and selected one of the "scraps." To my amazement, it was the taxpider I sought.

"The taxpider runs off energy. That's its food, so to speak. I don't know where it came from, but it is the technospecies I have studied the most. I'd reckon that they're Second Republic tech. I don't know why anyone would build them; they're really just pests. Probably some sort of sabotage operation between different corporations." This Gannock seemed overly knowledgeable about the heretical Second Republic.

"These little guys can adapt to almost any environment and can tap into its energy resources. Here, watch this." He grasped the flash





lamp and shone the light on the tiny robot lying on the table. The circle of light bathed the creature, and it slowly twitched before spreading its six legs and flipped off its back. Anigavick grasped one of my goggle's lenses and twisted it. I gasped as my vision zoomed towards the creature, magnifying it. I could now see the insect's metallic legs, and I could pick out details of the creature's joints. The main body was smooth and looked liquid in nature. I was about to ask about this skin when the creature convulsed and the liquid skin turned smooth and firm.

"It's just grown itself some solar collecting panels, adapting to the environment to get the maximum amount of energy out of the system as possible," Anigavick whispered. The creature seemed content to explore the circle of light, but when it reached the edge of the lit area, it stopped and changed direction. "Now watch."

Anigavick placed the battery in the circle of light, which he held perfectly steady with his tail. The creature immediately paused and a series of tiny appendages thrust through the skin. It waved these in insectoid fashion before scurrying over to the battery. It withdrew its antennae, and its skin turned liquid again. The creature grasped the battery, which was as large as itself, and swallowed it (which is probably the best way to describe the action). The texpider's body immediately conformed to the shape of the battery.

Anigavick reached quickly for the tweezers and grabbed the insect as it ran from the circle of light and across the table. He deftly removed the battery from the creature's insides with another set of tweezers and laid the immobilized creature back on the table, well away from the light.

"It is crucially important not to pick up the creature with one's bare hands," Anigavick explained. "The texpider will feel threatened and will thrust metal spines into yer hand to defend itself. It can also cause a nasty shock if yer not careful. These bugs adapt to anything. I remember once when I was on a freighter, the crew and I threw a few out the airlock. I watched them through the porthole and saw the little buggers grow rockets and fly back to the ship. They're incredible, I tell you!"

I left the shop and returned to the transport go home. There I wondered how many could be hiding on my transport, leeching from the fuel tanks and circuit breakers.

**Behavior:** Texpiders instinctively head towards the nearest sources of available energy, regardless of circumstances. They reproduce by collecting bits of electronics, metal and other resources in order to construct new individuals from the scraps. They are intelligent and can learn to avoid traps set to catch them. They can also spread the information they have learned among other members of the colony.  
**Commodity:** Engineers will pay exuberant amounts of money to get hold of undamaged texpiders, as they will most Second Republic tech.

### Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 1, Dex 6, End 3

**Mind:** Wits 4, Per 6, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Dod 8, Fht 4, Obs 7, Vig 3

**Movement:** A texpider moves at one-tenth the speed of a human

**Attacks:**

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Shock	4	10	3
Prick	4	10	1

**Special Attacks:** Shock. If touched for more than a turn, the texpider automatically hits with either attack.

**Vitality:** -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0

### d20 System Stats

**Fine Construct**

**Hit Dice:** 1d4 (2 hp)

**Initiative:** +2 (Dex)

**Speed:** 10ft

**AC:** 20 (+8 size, +2 Dex)

**Attacks:** Zap +2 melee, Prick +2 melee

**Damage:** Shock 1d6, Prick 1

**Special Attacks:** Shock. If touched for more than a turn, the texpider automatically hits with either attack.

**Face/Reach:** 1/2 ft. by 1/2 ft./0

**Special Attacks:** None

**Special Qualities:** Vermin

**Saves:** Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +0

**Abilities:** Str 1, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 2

**Skills:** Climb +10, Hide +20

**Feats:** None

**Challenge Rating:** 1

**Treasure:** Engineers and other such tech-crazed individuals will pay almost any price asked for undamaged texpiders. What they want the tin devils for is incomprehensible to those who are wise enough to steer clear of such technological evils.

**Alignment:** Always Neutral

**Advancement:** —

### COMBAT

Texpiders do not attack and always follow the same defensive pattern — shock and prick.

## Tuktuvak

**Homeworld:** Malignatius

**Present Distribution:** Rampart, Ungavorox

**Type:** Animalia (chordata, mammalia, artiodactyla)

**Role:** Herbivore

**Size:** 3 m (10 ft.)

**Weight:** 700 kg (1500 lbs.)

**Habitat:** Tundra, taiga, boreal forest

**Social Organization:** Herds can include hundreds of individuals.

**Description:** The tuktuvak is a term referring to a variety of native Malignatian herd animals ranging across the planet. These vary in coloration, size and horn shape, but basic skeletal features and anatomy are very similar between species. Interbreeding is possible in captivity, though such mules are unviable in the wild. Tuktuvak are large (the size of small brutes), quadrupedal and exclusively herbivorous. They are hoofed, but their hooves are flexible by internal musculature, such that the tuktuvak is able to navigate permafrost-ground and soft snow with equal skill by contracting or dilating their hooves. Their mouths and digestive systems are adapted to a diet of coniferous needles, with thick lips to prevent abrasions and a complex system of stomachs to manage the highly acidic content.

Humanity has hunted tuktuvak for centuries, and their smoked meat is a staple of the diet of rural communities on Malignatius. In addition, their hides provide clothes, their feces provide fuel, and



their pelts are a commercial export, made into robes valuable among the Li Halan gentry. However, their numbers suffered a serious blow due to a bio-engineered virus that wiped out entire herds, introduced by the Li Halan when the off-world market for tuktuvak pelts collapsed in the late Diaspora. Due to competition from alien animals introduced during the Second Republic, tuktuvak numbers never reached their pre-plague heights, save in the remote antarctic continent of New Tibet.

Despite centuries of effort, humanity never succeeded in domesticating the



tuktuvak; the species is simply too large and unafraid to heed human control. However, since the introduction of Vorox commandoes to Malignatius, it was discovered that the tuktuvak would respond to Vorox herdsman. As a result the Vorox communities in New Tibet have become herdsman to the tuktuvak with great success.

Tuktuvak have also been added to the destitute biodiversity of Rampart as part of the League's long-term campaign of ecological engineering. They have also been transplanted to Ungavorox's southern forests of Shenang with mixed results. The tuktuvak adapt to their new environment and food, but there are predators on Ungavorox that even the Vorox herdsman are helpless to guard against.

**Behavior:** Tuktuvak are largely passive creatures; the only aggressive behavior they display is during disputes over mating rights. Herds are composed of both males and females, but the largest and strongest male has the most mates. There is no distinct mating season, and the beasts are primarily diurnal. They have a strong herd instinct regardless of mating arrangements and defend each other against predators. Unlike many other herd animals, this does not always occur, especially if it is the most powerful male is attacked. They utterly ignore human-sized creatures unless they move too aggressively, in which case the herd is as likely to move away and adopt a defensive posture.

**Commodity:** Tuktuvak fur coats remain fashionable among the gentry of certain worlds, especially Midian, so that their pelts are marketable for a talon each. The other possible animal products (meat, fat) are limited to subsistence items for the rural populace.

## Victory Points System Traits

**Body:** Str 9, Dex 5, End 11

**Mind:** Wits 3, Per 4, Tech 0

**Natural Skills:** Dod 2, Fht 5, Obs 4, Vig 7

**Size:** G

**Movement:** 20 m

**Attacks:** (STR bonus: +2)

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Butt	4	11	6
Charge	2	10	6+ 1d/2m run

**Special Qualities:** Cold resistant (Tuktuvaks suffer no penalties for cold until below -40°C (-40°F). They suffer half movement penalties due to snow on the ground.), acute hearing (+2 perception checks when hearing is involved).

**Armor:** Thick fur (ARM 2d)

**Vitality:** -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0

## d20 System Stats

**Large Beast**

**Hit Dice:** 5d8+15 (37 hp)

**Initiative:** 0

**Speed:** 60 ft.

**AC:** 13 (-1 size, +4 natural)

**Attacks:** Butt +6 melee

**Special Attacks:** Improved Charge

**Damage:** Butt 1d8+6

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Cold resistant

**Saves:** Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +1

**Abilities:** Str 18, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 6

**Skills:** Listen +8, Spot +5

**Feats:** None

**Challenge Rating:** 2

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Neutral

**Advancement:** —

### COMBAT

Tuktuvaks rarely attack, but defend each other aggressively. They charge foes and engage them until another charges, at which point they break off the fight and prepare another charge.

**Cold Resistant:** Cold Resistance 5

**Improved Charge (Ex):** Tuktuvaks do double Str damage on charges

## Tumblemound

**Homeworld:** Pyre

**Present Distribution:** Pyre, Byzantium Secundus, Criticorum, Grail, Kordeth, Nowhere

**Type:** Fungi

**Role:** Decomposer

**Size:** Up to 3 m (10 ft.) in diameter.

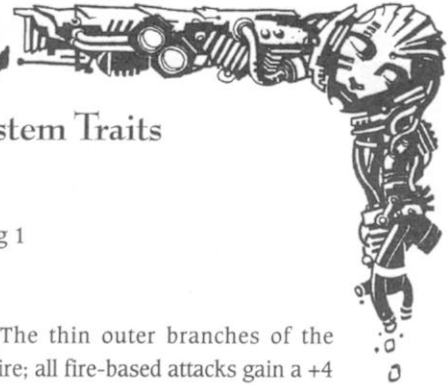
**Weight:** Up to 150 kg (330 lbs.)

**Habitat:** Desert.

**Social Organization:** None

**Description:** The tumblemound, found in the deserts of many worlds adjacent to Pyre, is a free-roaming carrion-eating fungus consist-





ing of a heavy central bulb-nucleus nestled within a bushy spherical nimbus of thin interlacing branches. These branches are each capable of slow, gentle movement, individually very weak but collectively strong enough to act as waves of tiny pseudopods propelling the tumbledound along its inexorable juggernaut-like roll. The tumbledound slowly scours the surface of the desert, the tiny cilia that line its branches picking up microscopic bits of organic detritus from each grain of sand it passes over, seeking out large carcasses it can pick clean.

The tumbledound begins life as a cloud of airborne spores that seek out subterranean pockets of moisture and combine to form protomycileum, a seething organic mass from which grows the thick single stalk of the immature tumbledound fungus. Atop this is the cap that will become the bulb-nucleus of the mature fungus, sprouting a dense tangle of delicate branches that eventually fill out a one meter radius. At that point the stalk begins to die and the next strong wind pushes the tumbledound free. For the rest of its life it crawls along, mindlessly absorbing any organic matter it can reach; those fortunate enough to tumble across the not-yet-desiccated remains of a large animal (or even better, a living animal too disabled or unaware to move away or fight back) may grow twice as big. Republican xenobotanists determined that the tumbledound reproduced sexually like some other known fungi, and had five different sexes, each of which had to be contacted at some time during the mound's adult life before it could enter its reproductive phase where it puffs up and bursts, releasing airborne spores.

**Behavior:** The unintelligent tumbledound is incapable even of distinguishing between living and dead tissue, and will blindly attempt to engulf any living creature that does not fight it off. Stories are told among the pilgrimage caravans on Pyre's Burning Desert of pilgrims camped in the desert who were suffocated when a stray tumbledound rolled across their faces as they slept. While tumbledounds are considered useless pests whenever they appear on other worlds, on Pyre the Temple Avesti applauds their presence, along with the whipwinder — another indigenous fungal carnivore — as a "caution to the faithful."

**Commodity:** Tumbledounds are threats to human livestock and local ecology, and should be destroyed wherever they are found. Some desert survival experts claim that the bulb-nucleus of a larger specimen can contain enough moisture to be useful in emergency situations. Serfs have been known to use the delicate outermost branches for salads, after thoroughly boiling them.



## Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 4, Dex 7, End 3

**Mind:** Wits 0, Per 1, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Fht 2, Snk 8, Vig 1

**Size:** Large

**Movement:** 1 m

**Special:** Fire Susceptibility (The thin outer branches of the tumbledound can easily catch fire; all fire-based attacks gain a +4 bonus against a tumbledound, and even laser and blaster hits can ignite the tumbledound if it fails a Dex + Vigor roll.)

**Attacks:**

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Engulf	2	9	2

**Special Attacks:** Engulf (Dex + Fht, 2d DMG; this is the tumbledound's version of the Grapple attack, where the mound rolls forward and all its tiny branches try to grasp the target and pull it in toward the bulb-nucleus, pull it apart and ingest it. Because the tumbledound has such a light touch initially, it does not activate shields or synth-based polymer armors.)

**Vitality:** 0/0/0/0/0/0/0

## d20 System Stats

**Large Plant**

**Hit Dice:** 4d8 (18 hp)

**Initiative:** +2 (Dex)

**Speed:** 5 ft.

**AC:** 11 (-1 size, +2 Dex)

**Attacks:** Engulf touch +4 melee

**Damage:** Engulf touch +1d6

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** none

**Special Qualities:** Fire susceptibility

**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +1

**Abilities:** Str 10, Dex 14, Con 11, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 8

**Skills:** None

**Feats:** None

**Challenge Rating:** 1/2

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Neutral

**Advancement:** 5-10 HD (Huge)

### COMBAT

The tumbledound does not fight; if it meets any resistance, it just keeps tumbling.

### Fire Susceptibility

**(Ex):** Fire does double damage against the tumbledound unless it saves.





# Twerrin

**Other Names:** Sathra Squirrel  
**Homeworld:** Sutek  
**Present Distribution:** Byzantium Secundus, Criticorum, Leagueheim, Gwynneth, Sutek, Manitou  
**Type:** Animalia (chordata, mammalia)  
**Role:** Omnivore  
**Size:** 0.33 m (1 ft)  
**Weight:** 0.5 kg (1.1 lbs)  
**Habitat:** Temperate woodland, starships  
**Social Organization:** Packs of up to 15

**Description:** The Twerrin is a small, enigmatic squirrel-like creature with an arcane history. It is thought that the first twerrins discovered on Sutek were not naturally psychic, but all those encountered today are. Legends say that the first Sathraists loved these creatures, taking them as pets on board their starships and exposing them to so many unbuffered jumps that the creatures developed occult powers. Indeed, most believe that the twerrin are actually addicted to the Sathra effect themselves, as they often attempt to sabotage the Sathra dampers of ships that they stow away upon.



Despite their small size, twerrin are extremely capable and even dangerous. They have powerful telekinetic and electrokinetic abilities, and seem to have enough understanding of technology to wreak havoc if they choose. Indeed, packs of twerrin are actually incredibly dangerous foes, as they can use their psychic powers and their formidable intelligence to attack their foes with flying swords or guns while hiding away in secure vantage points. Many Hazat knights have been felled by the tiny twerrin turning their own swords against them, and while other houses may laugh, they certainly can't do a better job at controlling the creatures.

Needless to say, these creatures are despised by the Church, which considers keeping one, much less training it as a pet, to be heretical. Nonetheless, many psychics and would-be psychics defy the Inquisition and secretly train these animals to be their companions.

**Behavior:** Twerrin are not particularly nosy, but they do stay extremely alert for predators entering their territory, and they often use their psychic powers to attack if they feel at all threatened. In the wild, they will use sharp sticks and rocks to pelt their foes, but among humans they usually have their choice of more effective weapons. They do not seem to be able to use any heavy weapons with their occult arts, but they do understand melee weapons, pistols, and grenades.

In the wilderness, they make nests and gather nuts and berries, occasionally luring larger animals into occult traps. In cities or

on starships, they tend to eat garbage, though they have been known to psychically kill and devour any hull rats they come across as well. When upon a starship, a twerrin will very often attempt to find and disable the Sathra damper. Ships with unorthodox jumpdrive designs sometimes confound their attempts, but they seem able to locate the dampers on most standard models of ship, a fact that gives Church scholars very serious suspicions concerning the creatures. It is not known to what degree they actually understand the technology that they tamper with, but they are unquestionably effective saboteurs.

**Commodity:** Twerrin are officially illegal, though a black market exists for them in many cities with starports.

**Wild Gift:** Beastfriends can borrow the psychic abilities and bite of cohort twerrins.

## Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 2, Dex 5, End 2

**Mind:** Wits 5, Per 4, Tech 2

**Natural skills:** Chm 4, Dod 5, Fht 3, Imp 1, Mel 6\*, Obs 4, Sht 6\*, Snk 7, Vig 5

**Learned skills:** Focus 6\*, Volt Redemption 6\*

\*Only for use with psychic powers.

**Size:** S

**Movement:** 10 m

**Special:** A twerrin can use the equivalent of the FarHand powers Lifting Hand, Throwing Hand, Crushing Hand and Dueling Hand. Some mature twerrin have been known to also develop Vis Eye and Vis Drain. The characteristic used for the goal rolls of these powers is always Wits, though the skills remain the same.

**Wyrd:** 5

**Attacks:**

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG	RNG
Bite	3	8	1	-
Dueling Hand	6	12	*	-
Crushing Hand	3	9	3**	sight

\* As weapon

\*\* Ignores target's armor and shields

**Vitality:** -4/-2/0/0

## d20 System Stats

**Tiny Animal**

**Hit Dice:** 1d8 (4 hp)

**Initiative:** +1 (Dex)

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**AC:** 13 (+2 size, +1 Dex)

**Attacks:** Bite +2 melee

**Damage:** Bite 1d2-2

**Face/Reach:** 2 1/2 ft. x 2 1/2 ft./0 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Psychic Powers

**Special Qualities:** Psychic Powers

**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +2

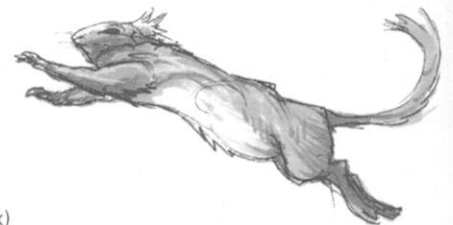
**Abilities:** Str 6, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 4, Wis 13, Cha 9

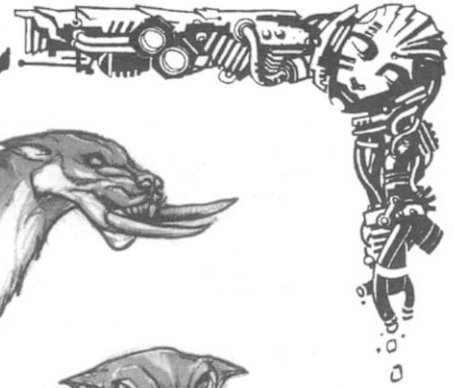
**Skills:** Hide +7, Move Silently +7

**Feats:** Weapon Finesse (bite)

**Challenge Rating:** 1

**Treasure:** None





**Alignment:** Always neutral

**Advancement:** —

**Psychic Powers (Sp):** Twerrin can develop a number of psychic powers, as follows: Lifting Hand +5, Kinetic Strike +5, Vis Eye +1 (only mature twerrin usually develop this power), Vis Flow +1 (only mature twerrin usually develop this power).

**Wyrd:** The average twerrin has 4 Wyrd points to spend on its psychic powers.

## Ulik

**Homeworld:** Malignatius

**Present Distribution:** Malignatius

**Type:** Animalia (chordata, mammalia, carnivora)

**Role:** Secondary carnivore

**Size:** 2.5 m (8 ft.)

**Weight:** 130 kg (300 lbs.)

**Habitat:** Forest and taiga

**Social Organization:** Solitary

**Description:** The ulik is a large, dangerous predator that roams the equatorial and midlatitudinal zones of Malignatius. It is semi-aquatic, with a long body and flattened tail for swimming, but it is far from clumsy on land. Its fur is thick and oily, insulated against cold water. It is an able digger, with flexible joints and ribcage. It has two long, thin tusks, which it uses for digging, attacking prey and settling territorial disputes. As a hunter, the ulik is extraordinarily quick and agile, and is able to kill prey much larger than itself. Skilled in stealth and ambush, it strikes to kill as quickly as possible, or to disable if necessary.

One of the ulik's primary natural food sources is the Malignatian tuktuvak, an animal badly depleted by humanity's colonization of its world. The ulik has adapted to feed on kwisheep and other livestock, as well as humans and even young Vorox. Efforts have periodically been made to wipe out this troublesome species, but it has always survived and multiplied. Smaller varieties of ulik have adapted to life in the cities of Malignatius, feeding on vermin and unprotected children.

**Behavior:** The ulik is unpredictable in its behavior; it has a tremendously variable metabolic rate depending on the present availability of food. As a result, the ulik is alternately hyperactive and aggressive or lethargic and shy. It is a territorial and antisocial animal at the best of times, and is useless as a pet or companion.

Uliks are mostly nocturnal, but in the long Malignatian diurnal cycle this means that they are sometimes awake during the days of daylight when food is available. They live 10-14 years, and reach adulthood at age 2. Females bear litters of 3-5 and care for their young for the first year of life. Males are not involved in child rearing.

**Commodity:** Powdered ulik tusks are used as an aphrodisiac, though the practice is nowhere near as common as it once was. Five firebirds per tusk (2 tusks per animal). Other than this, they are considered pests to be destroyed wherever encountered.



## Victory Points System Traits

**Body:** Str 7, Dex 9, End 5

**Mind:** Wits 4, Per 6, Tech 0

**Natural Skills:** Dod 8, Fht 9, Obs 6, Snk 8, Vig 8

**Size:** XL

**Movement:** 20 m run, 10 m swim

**Special Qualities:** Night vision (half penalties for darkness). Uliks suffer no penalties for cold until below -20°C (-4°F).

**Attacks:** (STR bonus: +1)

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Claw	9	18	3
Bite	8	18	4
Throat Bite	6	16	6
Crippling Bite	6	16	3*

**Special Attacks:** Crippling Bite (this bite specifically aims at an appendage, such as an arm or leg. Per point of damage inflicted the target receives a -1 penalty to all combat skills (in the case of a wounded arm) or movement (for a leg wound).

**Armor:** Think fur (ARM 1d)

**Vitality:** -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0/0/0

## d20 System Stats

**Large Beast**

**Hit Dice:** 4d8 + 8 (84 hp)

**Initiative:** +4 (Dex)

**Speed:** 40 ft., 20 ft. swim

**AC:** 15 (+4 from Dex, -1 size, +2 natural)

**Attacks:** Claw +6 melee, bite +8 melee

**Special Attacks:** Crippling Bite, Throat Bite

**Damage:** Claw 1d4+2, bite 1d6+2

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.

**Special Qualities:** Cold Resistance, Dark Vision, Scent

**Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +8, Will +2

**Abilities:** Str 15, Dex 19, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6

**Skills:** Escape Artist +7, Listen +8, Spot +6

**Feats:** Weapon Finesse (bite)

**Challenge Rating:** 2

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Neutral

**Advancement:** —



**COMBAT**

Ulik prefer to fight at night, and seek to cripple their enemies before killing them.

**Cold Resistance 5**

**Crippling Bite (Ex):** when the Ulik succeeds with a bite attack, the victim must make a Ref save (DC 15) or suffer either a crippling bit or a throat bite (GM's choice). The crippling bite specifically aims at an appendage, such as an arm or leg. Each attack causes a -1 penalty to all the victim's rolls until healed.

**Dark Vision:** 60 ft.

**Throat Bite (Ex):** This attack does an extra 1d6 damage.

## Un'ualla

**Homeworld:** Bannockburn

**Present Distribution:** None

**Type:** Animalia (chordata, reptilia)

**Role:** Carnivore

**Size:** 3.5 m (12 ft.)

**Weight:** 318 kg. (700 lbs.)

**Habitat:** Tropical swamp

**Social Organization:** Solitary or family group (2-5)

**Description:** The un'ualla is a large reptilian creature that resembles a cross between an Urthish crocodile and a hippopotamus in broad outlines. The

un'ualla is a large ponderous creature covered with a brownish-green leathery hide. It possesses four stubby legs with which it can move remarkably quickly on land, although the creature rarely leaves its watery home if it can avoid it. Unlike most reptiles, the un'ualla has only a vestigial tail, which it uses for steering in the water, but which otherwise provides no benefit to the creature. Instead, the beast relies on its toothy maw, filled with multiple rows of jagged teeth, to capture and devour its prey. The un'ualla's jaw is able to dislocate itself from the rest of its skull in order to facilitate the swallowing of prey whole.

The un'ualla plays an important part in Gannok mythology and legend. Several important Gannok heroes, such as Kobayanese and Makkareen, have notable encounters with these swamp creatures, whom they overcome with a combination of cunning and trickery. The sad fact is that, for many generations, un'ualla proved to be a great danger to any Gannok who lived near the waters where these creatures live. That such swamps held many staples of the Gannok diet — never mind delicacies — only encouraged daring members of the race to brave the un'ualla in their lair. Not all returned. Until very recently, it was not uncommon for young Gannok to die in the bellies of un'ualla, but it's become rarer, as elders discourage such foolishness as a relic of another time.

Since 4990, there have been disturbing reports of unusually large un'ualla in the swamps of Bannockburn. Proof of these mammoth creatures was obtained in 4994 when a team of League mercenaries entered a swamp to recover a downed spacecraft. Since then, other monstrous carcasses have been dragged out of the marshes as well. Brother Battle investigators believe that these huge un'ualla show signs of tampering by the Symbiots and point to

similar modifications made on worlds like Stigmata as evidence. Others aren't so certain of this explanation, but concede that something unusual is happening in the swamps of Bannockburn, which now give birth to colossal un'ualla the likes of which have never been seen before.

**Behavior:** The un'ualla is a very skilled predator, despite its large size and unwieldy girth. Because of its amphibian nature, it can hold its breath for up to two hours, during which time it can remain submerged in water or even mud. It need only keep its small eyes above the surface of its camouflage to see its target, which it attacks with great ferocity in the hope of swallowing it whole. If the un'ualla fails in its attempt, it often retreats back underwater rather than expose itself to danger. However, if cornered, the creature fights fiercely and often to the death.

Un'uallas are typically solitary creatures, but they form small family groups for short periods of time. Both genders look remarkably similar to one another, differing only in the darker brown color-



ing of the female. One to three offspring are born live six months after mating and grow rapidly, reaching full size within a year. Once the young have reached maturity, the mates go their separate ways. Although un'ualla have lifespans of over four decades, few mate more than once in a lifetime.

**Commodity:** The Gannok value un'ualla hides, which they cure into leather and wear as a sign of their race's triumph over yet another predator of their homeworld. An intact hide with minimal damage (the creature was killed in four or fewer blows) sells for up to 200 firebirds, while more fragmentary specimens sell for much less. Wearing un'ualla teeth as jewelry has recently become fashionable among the ladies of Bannockburn, who will pay up to five firebirds per tooth (a typical specimen may have as many as 60 teeth).

### Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 12, Dex 11, End 10

**Mind:** Wits 2, Per 3, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Fht 7, Snk 5, Vig 8

**Size:** G

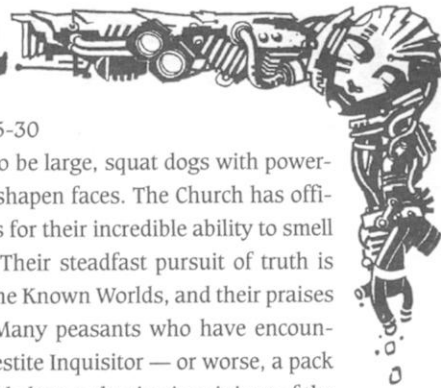
**Movement:** 9 m, swim 9 m

**Special:**

**Attacks:** (STR bonus: +3)

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Bite	7	18	7

**Special Attacks:** Swallow Whole. On a successful bite, the un'ualla can make a Str + Vigor roll to grapple the victim, suffering no multiple-action penalty. The following turn, it can attempt to swallow the victim whole with another Str + Vigor roll. If successful, the victim is in its gizzard and suffers 5d of acid damage each turn.



A swallowed victim can climb out of the gizzard with a successful grapple roll. This returns it to the un'ualla's maw where another grapple roll is needed to get free. A swallowed creature can cut its way out by using claws or a Small or Medium slashing weapon and can deal six or more points of damage (the gizzard has ARM 4d). Once the creature exits, muscular action closes the hole; another swallowed opponent must cut its own way out.

The un'ualla's stomach can hold one H, two XL, three L, five S, seven T or ten XS opponents.

**Armor:** Scaled Hide (ARM 8d)

**Vitality:** -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0

## d20 System Stats

**Huge Beast (aquatic)**

**Hit Dice:** 8d10+40 (84 hp)

**Initiative:** +1 Dex

**Speed:** 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

**AC:** 13 (-2 size, +1 Dex, +4 natural)

**Attacks:** Bite +14 melee

**Damage:** Bite 3d6+12

**Face/Reach:** 10 ft. by 10 ft./10 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Improved grab, swallow hole

**Saves:** Fort +11, Ref +7, Will +1

**Abilities:** Str 25, Dex 13, Con 20, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 8

**Skills:** Hide +10, Move Silently +4

**Challenge Rating:** 5

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always neutral

**Advancement:** 9-15 HD (Huge)

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, the un'ualla must hit with a successful bite against a creature of Large size or smaller. If it gets hold, it can swallow it whole in the following round.

**Swallow Whole (Ex):** An un'ualla can try to swallow a grabbed opponent of Large or smaller size by making a successful grapple check. Once inside its gizzard, the opponent takes 1d10 points of acid damage each round. A swallowed creature can climb out of the gizzard with a successful grapple check. This returns it to the un'ualla's maw where another grapple check is needed to get free. A swallowed creature can cut its way out by using claws or a Small or Tiny slashing weapon and can deal 15 points of damage to the gizzard (AC 14). Once the creature exits, muscular action closes the hole; another swallowed opponent must cut its own way out.

The un'ualla's stomach can hold one Large, two Medium-Size, three Small, five Tiny, seven Diminutive or ten Fine opponents.

## Verigrim

**Other Names:** Truth Hound

**Homeworld:** Midian

**Present Distribution:** Cadiz, Sutek, Gwynneth, Leminkainen, Icon, Rampart

**Type:** Animalia (chordata, mammalia)

**Role:** Carnivore

**Size:** 1.5 m (4.5 ft.)

**Weight:** 36 kg. (80 lbs.)

**Habitat:** Temperate woodland

**Social Organization:** Packs of 5-30

**Description:** Verigrims appear to be large, squat dogs with powerful front legs and strangely misshapen faces. The Church has officially decreed them holy animals for their incredible ability to smell lies and deception in humans. Their steadfast pursuit of truth is lauded in sermons throughout the Known Worlds, and their praises are included in many hymns. Many peasants who have encountered one on the leash of an Avestite Inquisitor — or worse, a pack of them in the wild — have slightly less enthusiastic opinions of the animals.

According to Church lore, verigrims were first created when Saint Lextius adopted a Midianite great mastiff and taught it the virtue of truthfulness. Certain al-Malik scholars privately differ with the accepted doctrine, pointing to evidence of certain Engineers being commissioned in secret by the Inquisition to modify the now-extinct Midianite great mastiff's remarkable sense of smell with Second Republican biopsychological triggers. With all due respect to our most learned Church fathers, the murderous behavior of the verigrims when they run feral is certainly easier to explain as a result of incomplete genetic engineering than as a consequence of Lextius' teachings.

The verigrim is huge and powerfully built, and instantly becomes enraged at any attempt to lie or use any kind of deceit, evasion, or trickery in its presence. When employed by the Inquisition, the animal is restrained by huge iron shackles to prevent it from tearing the liar limb from limb. Depending on the Inquisitor, these shackles are sometimes dispensed with. The huge animal has powerful jaws and can pounce with surprising speed and tremendous force. The verigrim has an incredible sense of smell, but one entirely attuned to deceit and trickery. It can follow for days the scent of someone whom it has smelled telling a lie, but it has no particular meta-canine ability to smell anything else. Its eyesight and hearing are both slightly above the average human range, and its night vision is particularly refined.

Verigrims are often seen with Avestite pilgrims or Inquisitors, and wild packs of them often roam in rural areas. It is said that many holy places in Li Halan space,



especially those in the wilderness, are guarded by packs of wild verigrims. At least one hermit has been confirmed to live among a huge pack of verigrims, and he makes no move to stop them from attacking those who lie to him.



**Behavior:** Verigrims are aggressive animals, but they can be disciplined by strong-willed handlers. In the wild, however, they are quite ferocious to those they smell lying. Verigrims live and hunt in large packs, and while they usually attack herbivores, they will track down and attack anything that they smell lying. Indeed, if wild verigrims encounter the scent of any falsehood that is less than a week old, the entire pack will take off in hot pursuit of the liar and will not rest until they have devoured him. This behavior makes it fairly dangerous to live in areas with large verigrim populations. The problem is compounded because their status as holy animals means that, technically, they are not to be harmed even in self-defense, and a few peasants have been punished by members of Temple Avesti for fending off a wild verigrim attack brought on by a minor equivocation the animals happened to stumble upon. Huge numbers of verigrims have been deliberately deposited on Decados worlds by elements within House Li Halan, and they constitute a fairly serious danger to the more rural citizenry.

**Commodity:** Due to their holy status, verigrims are not traded on the open market despite their obvious use if tamed, but they can occasionally be acquired from a black marketer or sympathetic Church official, in which case they will usually fetch from 100-300 fb.

**Wild Gift:** Beastfriends can borrow the Smell Lies and bite abilities of cohort verigrims.

### Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 8, Dex 6, End 7

**Mind:** Wits 2, Per 7, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Chm 0, Dod 3, Fht 8, Imp 4, Mel 0, Obs 6, Sht 0, Snk 3, Vig 8

**Learned skills:** Empathy 8, Tracking 3

**Size:** ML

**Movement:** 12 m

**Special:** Smell Lies. Verigrims have a +6 on Perception + Empathy rolls to detect lies, and a +10 on Perception + Tracking rolls to follow the scent of a liar.

**Attacks:** (STR bonus: +1d)

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Bite	8	14	4
Pounce*	9	14	5

\*Can only be performed when moving into combat with a running start.

**Armor:** Fur (ARM 1d)

**Vitality:** -8/-4/-2/-1/0/0/0/0/0/0

### d20 System Stats

**Medium Beast**

**Hit Dice:** 3d8+9 (21 hp)

**Initiative:** +2 (Dex)

**Speed:** 36 ft.

**AC:** 13 (+2 Dex, +1 natural)

**Attacks:** Bite +6 melee, Pounce +6 melee

**Damage:** Bite 1d6+3, Pounce 1d8+3

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. x 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** —

**Special Qualities:** Smell Lies

**Saves:** Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +4

**Abilities:** Str 17, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 5, Wis 13, Cha 9

**Skills:** Listen +7, Sense Motive +5, Spot +7, Wilderness Lore +7

**Challenge Rating:** 1

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always neutral

**Advancement:** —

**Smell Lies (Su):** The verigrim can make a Sense Motive check to detect lies. It can then make a Wilderness Lore check to track down the source of a scented lie.

## Vuann

**Other Name:** Obun riding crane

**Homeworld:** Velisamil

**Present Distribution:** Kordeth (wesha), Criticorum (all varieties), Aylon (all varieties), Khayyam (wesha, dal, krinsi), Irem (wesha, duo, krinsi), Tsuma (wesha)

**Type:** Animalia (chordata, aves)

**Role:** Omnivore

**Size:** 2-3 m (6.5-10 ft.) at the shoulder. Krinsis are the smallest, and muos are the largest.

**Weight:** 250-500 kg (550-1100 lbs.)

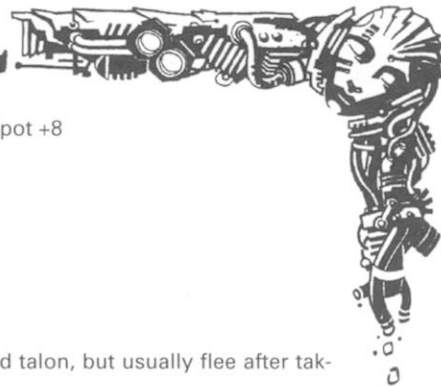
**Habitat:** Grassland

**Social Organization:** Herds of 20-100.

**Description:** Vuanns are tall, elegant flightless birds that serve as the predominant native riding animal on Velisamil, homeworld of the Obun. Vuanns have been tamed and bred by the Obun since before their recorded history began, and were transplanted to Kordeth with the Ukar. They spread with the Ukar to Aylon and Criticorum, and were popular on many worlds during the Second Republic, valued for their grace, speed and endurance. Hazat spies have even reported seeing vuanns in the Kurga Caliphate.

There are several varieties of vuann: the brightly colored *wesha* is bred for beauty and elegance on several planets. The sturdy *dal* is a beast of labor, and although not as widespread as the brute, it has an advantage in its lack of stench glands. The *muo* is a steed for battle, maintained by pagan Obun communities and on the surface Ukar of Aylon and Criticorum. The *krinsi* is the racing breed,





and is capable of short glides.

Vuanns can be fed with common straw feed but benefit from a supplementary diet of fish, which is a primary food source in the wild. Wild vuanns are found only on Velisamil itself; populations on other worlds are completely domesticated. Like most avians, vuanns lay eggs, but wild vuanns carry them with them as the herd travels. Both sexes have an indentation in the back where eggs (and humanoid riders) are carried. Young vuanns are capable of running within days of hatching, but cannot safely bear a rider for the first three years of life. Vuanns live eight years at most.

**Behavior:** Vuanns are extremely social, traveling in large herds in the wild and demonstrating fierce loyalty in the defense of their brethren. Domesticated, vuanns are intelligent and amiable creatures, able to quickly learn an owner's commands and riding manner. Unlike many other tame animals, a vuann is able to adapt to the loss of its master or a change in ownership; it can welcome a new owner and learn new commands throughout its life. Due to thousands of years of domestication by the Ur-Obun, vuanns respond most favorably to psychic powers, and as a result are strongly favored by Dervish cavalry units. During the Emperor Wars, both House Hawkwood and the Hazat fielded muo cavalry on the Obun front.

**Commodity:** Among most of the Known Worlds, the vuann is little more than a moderately useful oddity, but where the Ur-children are found, their faithful steeds are usually close behind. However, vuanns react poorly to arid conditions, and are limited in that respect. A cheap vuann can cost as little as 10 firebirds on Velisamil, but expensive breeds such as the wesha or a well-known krinsi racer can cost in the thousands.

### Victory Points System Traits

#### Wesha

**Body:** Str 6, Dex 5, End 6

**Mind:** Wits 3, Per 5, Tech 0

**Natural Skills:** Dod 4, Fht 4, Obs 4, Snk 3, Vig 4

**Size:** H

**Movement:** 18 m

**Special:** Exceptionally keen vision (+2 Perception using sight), wing-assisted leaps of up to 10 meters.

**Attacks:** (STR bonus: +1)

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Beak	4	9	4
Talons	3	9	5

**Vitality:** -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0

### d20 System Stats

#### Huge Beast

**Hit Dice:** 3d8 + 6 (19 hp)

**Initiative:** +1 (Dex)

**Speed:** 40 ft., leaps up to 30 ft.

**AC:** 10 (+1 Dex, -1 size)

**Attacks:** Beak + 1 melee, talon + 1 melee

**Damage:** Beak 1d6+1, talon 1d8+1

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.

**Special Qualities:** None

**Saves:** Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +2

**Abilities:** Str 13, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 4

**Skills:** Jump + 20, Listen +4, Spot +8

**Feats:** None

**Challenge Rating:** 1

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Neutral

**Advancement:** —

#### COMBAT

Vuanns fight with beak and talon, but usually flee after taking any damage.

## Vulpanthrope

**Other Names:** Fever Ghoul, Aethelstan's Folly

**Homeworld:** Leminkainen

**Present Distribution:** Leminkainen, Bannockburn, Gwynneth, Rampart, Vera Cruz, Hargard

**Type:** Changed (animalized)

**Role:** Secondary carnivore

**Size:** 2 m (6 ft.)

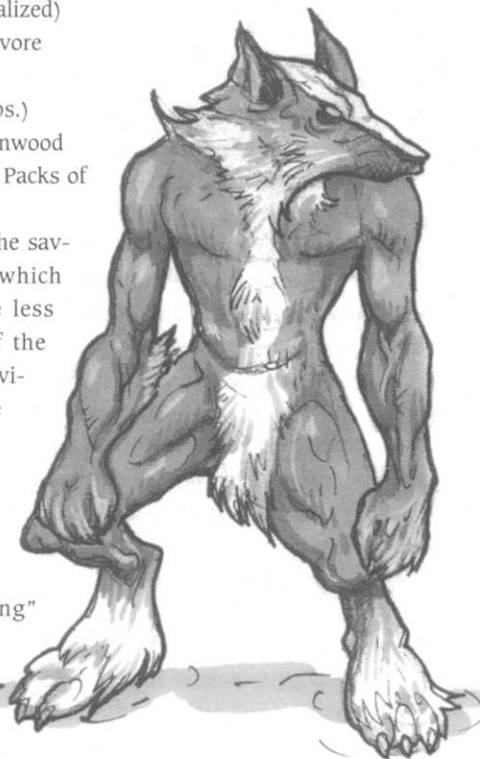
**Weight:** 63 kg (140 lbs.)

**Habitat:** Tropical thornwood

**Social Organization:** Packs of 7 to 40

**Description:** Surely the savage vulpanthropes which plague many of the less populous corners of the Known Worlds are evidence of the wise stance our Church fathers take towards the creation of Changed monstrosities. In 4526, the Vuldrok "King" Froljir's attacks upon Leminkainen had overwhelmed Hawkwood defenses and placed barbarians in control of most of the planet. Many brave Hawkwoods, however, fought on in isolated pockets of resistance, among them Count Aethelstan Fenris Hawkwood. Count Aethelstan, who had always behaved similarly enough to his barbarian foes to be popular at court, embarked upon a rash and ill-considered venture against the counsel of his priest. He revived a genetic engineering plant upon the lands he still controlled, and created a race of Changed to plague the Vuldrok invaders. The creatures, an unholy amalgam of fox and man boosted by steroidal wizardry, served their purpose well enough, but quickly proved impossible to control and most savage and degenerate in their ways.

Though the vulpanthropes were designed to be as intelligent as humans and obedient to Hawkwood commands, they quickly degenerated into cunning but unthinking brutes, capable of using weapons and communicating but not reasoning. Now, spread through the Known Worlds by foolish lords who took packs of them as soldiers, they are a constant menace that threatens many forests



and rural areas. Worse, Count Aethelstan's attempt to immunize them from the biological weapons the Vuldrok used backfired, making them breeding grounds for especially virulent diseases to which they are immune but humans are susceptible. Vulpanthropes are habitual carriers of many deadly plagues, including the Red Shakes and Lucan's Fever, and they are synonymous with contagion and plague in much peasant folklore.

Vulpanthropes look like thin humans, but with a covering of mottled red-brown fur, huge fox ears, large yellow eyes which allow them to see in the dark, a modest snout, and fangs and claws far sharper and longer than those possessed by any Leminkainen fox. They are tailless and move on two legs, but with a stooped, loping gait. Almost all of them are infected with Lucan's Fever, which induces a somewhat mangy pattern of hair loss in them, but causes swift death in humans. In stressful situations, vulpanthropes will enter a berserk mode, attacking savagely and with little thought to their safety. This is believed to have been intended by Count Aethelstan, who saw them as excellent suicide troops.

**Behavior:** Vulpanthropes are quite fertile, and have large litters of young that mature, age, and die very quickly. The entire maximum lifespan of a vulpanthrope was designed to be a mere 10 years in order to keep their numbers in control, but apparently the count miscalculated here, as they have been known to live to 20, explaining in part why their numbers increase so rapidly. They communicate with each other in a complicated system of yips and howls, and they are extremely social, rarely found living alone.

Vulpanthrope packs are nomadic, constantly seeking to expand and hunt in greater and greater areas. They eat any game — from humans and smaller in size — and have insatiable appetites, as required by their hyperactive metabolisms. They are able to digest rotten meat, and often eat the dead when it proves less obtrusive than hunting. Nonetheless, vulpanthropes encountering a community of humans will nearly invariably raid it at night in lightning-fast strikes executed with incredible precision and timing. If the vulpanthropes are driven off, or if they assess the community to be too large to assault, they will leave, breed until they have created many new packs, and then return and assault the settlement with more of them. They will always steal human weapons and shields, which they are able to recognize and use, if they can. On occasion they have raided guardhouses simply to acquire the weapons for further assaults, but they are not intelligent enough to know where to find weapons if the weapons are not prominently on display.

Recently, some vulpanthropes have taken to stealthily wounding humans in their sleep in order to infect them with their contagious diseases. Whether this suggests that some human has found out a way to control them, or that some of them have somehow acquired greater intelligence, is unclear. Neither prospect is entirely pleasant to contemplate.

**Commodity:** Some dastards will pay up to 150 fb for a litter of vulpanthrope young, which they will release to breed in the lands of their rivals, though this is strictly prohibited by the Church. Additionally, if a way were found to reactivate the dormant glands that rendered vulpanthropes obedient to human commands, that knowledge might fetch up to 1000 fb.

## Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 6, Dex 9, End 5

**Mind:** Wits 2, Per 6, Tech 2

**Natural skills:** Chm 0, Dod 6, Fht 7, Imp 4, Mel 6, Obs 6, Sht 6, Snk 9, Vig 9

**Size:** XL (average)

**Movement:** 13 m

**Special:** Vulpanthropes can see in the dark, so long as there is at least some light available. Vulpanthropes can enter a berserk state, in which they become immune to wound penalties, always take three actions a turn and receive a +3 to Strength and Dexterity. In the berserk state, however, a vulpanthrope's roll for any defensive action cannot be higher than its Wits + Dodge. Vulpanthropes enter their berserk state whenever they are cornered or otherwise unable to escape a hostile encounter.

Vulpanthropes carry plague. Anyone in prolonged close contact with a vulpanthrope, or anyone wounded by a vulpanthrope's claws or teeth, must make an End + Vigor or Stoic Body roll or catch a disease, unless she has been immunized. The disease typically incubates for one to three days before the initial symptoms start to show. The effects of such a disease are at the GM's discretion, but the most common, Lucan's Fever, does 4d DMG to the victim's Endurance and 2d DMG to his Strength; if either trait drops below 1, the victim dies.

**Attacks:** (STR bonus: +1d DMG)

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Claws	7	16	3
Melee Weapon	6	15	As weapon
Ranged Weapon	6	15	As weapon

**Armor:** Fur (ARM 1d)

**Vitality:** -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0

## d20 System Stats

**Medium Beast**

**Hit Dice:** 4d8 +4 (20 hp)

**Initiative:** +4 (Dex)

**Speed:** 39 ft.

**AC:** 15 (+4 Dex, +1 natural)

**Attacks:** Claws +7 melee

**Damage:** Claws 1d6+3

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. x 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Weaponry

**Special Qualities:** Spread Disease

**Saves:** Fort +7, Ref +10, Will +4

**Abilities:** Str 16, Dex 19, Con 13, Int 5, Wis 13, Cha 7

**Skills:** Hide +9, Listen +7, Move Silently +9, Spot +7

**Challenge Rating:** 4

**Treasure:** None

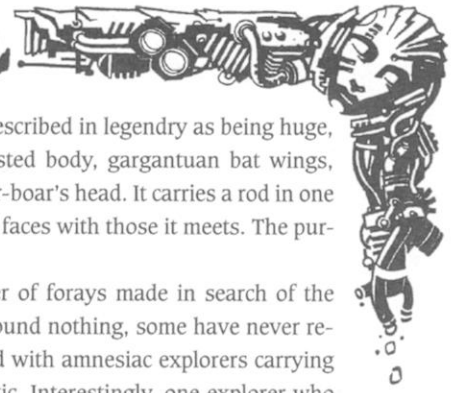
**Alignment:** Usually neutral

**Advancement:** —

**Weaponry (Ex):** Vulpanthropes can wield human melee weapons and guns. Assume a +4 melee attack bonus and a +5 ranged attack bonus.

**Spread Disease (Ex):** Vulpanthropes carry diseases. Anyone who is injured by a vulpanthrope bite must contend with the disease, chosen by GM, but usually Lucan's Fever. *Type:* Injury; *DC:* 11; *Incubation:* 1d3 days; *Damage:* 1d6 Con, 1d3 Str.





## The Walking Gargoyle

**Other Names:** The Remnant

**Homeworld:** Bannockburn

**Present Distribution:** Bannockburn

**Type:** Cryptoxenological

**Role:** Unknown

**Size:** 6 m (18 ft.)

**Weight:** 2 metric tons (2.2 tons)

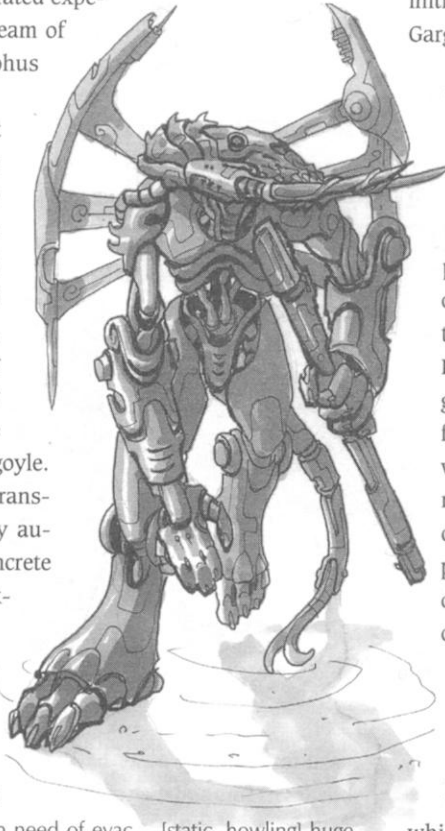
**Habitat:** Subarctic taiga

**Social Organization:** Solitary

**Description:** In the craggy moors of southerly Dunlothian upon the planet of Bannockburn there is rumored to be a Gargoyle that has become animate and which now roams the land for unfathomable purposes. Legends of such a creature date back to the days following Vladimir's assassination, but they were largely disregarded as folk superstition until the ill-fated expedition of the well-equipped team of Engineers led by Crafter Josephus Archer.

The Engineer contingent was sent in 4721 to uncover a potential Second Republic research station, but on the way their navigational and communication equipment began to fail. The expedition, lost and unable to radio for help, wandered the moors for days, and at some point made contact with the Walking Gargoyle. The sole fragmentary burst transmission that was received by authorities is the single most concrete piece of evidence about the existence of the creature:

If anyone can hear this ... [static] meter off the chart, flitter won't power up, everything malfunctioning... [static] had a hostile encounter, in need of evac... [static, howling] huge, made of some kind of stone, but moves like lightning [static] bat wings, a huge rod in one hand, and its face, it had the kagor-boar tusks, red eyes, elongated boar face. It howls like the wind here [static, howling] Guns seem to have no effect... blasters won't fire <howling> There it is, I'm aiming the particle beam projector at it — its face has changed. It doesn't have the tusks any more, it's Josephus' face! It's got Josephus' face now, and it's just silent, something else is howling. Where's the howling? Holy Pancreator, have mercy... It's Josephus! Josephus has its face! Josephus has the tusks and the face and is howling like it did! Amalthea have mercy, have mercy on him... It's silent, looking for me with Josephus' eyes... [static] It sees me! [garbled] Particle beam projector malfunctioning... [garbled] OH MANTIUS IT'S STARING INTO ME! MANTIUS PROTECT — [garbled, howling, static] [system failure]



The Walking Gargoyle is described in legendry as being huge, with a hulking and barrel-chested body, gargantuan bat wings, clawed hands, and tusked kagor-boar's head. It carries a rod in one hand, and can somehow switch faces with those it meets. The purpose behind this is unclear.

There have been a number of forays made in search of the Walking Gargoyle. Most have found nothing, some have never returned, and some have returned with amnesiac explorers carrying recording equipment full of static. Interestingly, one explorer who sought the Walking Gargoyle and returned an amnesiac came back with a strangely shaped stone made entirely of extremely high-quality crystal. This is in line with legends that say the Walking Gargoyle grants strange and powerful gifts to certain people, though the crystal's purpose eludes all the Eskatonics who have studied it, and has driven at least one of them mad. One insane hesychast who has now acquired a fairly substantial cult following may have initiated his strange religion after an encounter with the Walking Gargoyle.

It is generally believed that the Anunnaki did not intend the Walking Gargoyle to become mobile, but that some calamity or mishap caused it to move as it does. Some believe it contains the ghost of a dead Anunnaki, others posit that it is simply a malfunctioning piece of Ur technology. Some say that the Gargoyle is possessed by a demon of some sort, and other whisper that it was animated by a Vuldrok runecaster. Given the creature's elusiveness and near-invulnerability to most conventional weaponry, humanity may never know for certain.

**Behavior:** The Walking Gargoyle has been said to grant strange gifts to some people, to cause others to go mad, and to trade faces with others, rendering them unable to do anything but wander aimlessly while howling through inhuman lips. Some reports indicate that it imposes geases on those who it sees, compelling them to do strange and inexplicable acts. Most reports agree that it does not kill those who do not attack it, but it does often cripple people in bizarre ways without provocation. It does not seem to need to eat, but some have reported seeing it stationary and unmoving, indicating that it might need to sleep or hibernate.

**Commodity:** Any gift the Gargoyle might give would be worth 300 fb or more just for its origin, and a gift that was actually useful would be worth far more. If the Gargoyle could be "killed," which is far from certain, its body would be worth more than firebirds. If delivered to a noble house or the Empire, it would likely result in a title and a substantial grant of land, such as an earldom. If given to the Church, it would probably result in a Patriarchal indulgence and might conceivably lead to beatification.

### Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 24, Dex 13, End 20

**Mind:** Wits 13, Per 13, Tech 10

**Spirit:** Ext 3/Int 7, Pas 6/Calm 4, Fth 3/Ego 7

**Natural skills:** Chm 3, Dod 6, Fht 9, Imp 8, Mel 9, Obs 8, Sht 3, Snk 6, Vig 8

**Learned skills:** Lore (Occult) 9, Stoic Mind 10

**Size:** I

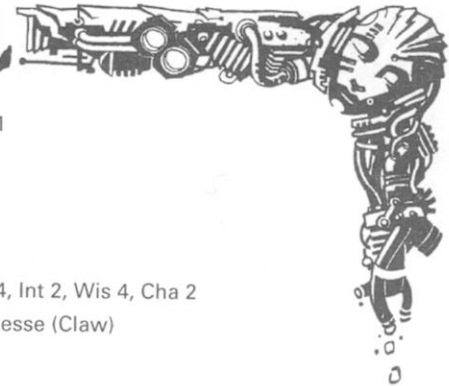
**Movement:** Walking 15m, flying 30m

**Special:** Interferes with nearby technology — roll its Tech + Im-









tures up to four times their size. This temper only increases with age (warp rats rarely live beyond 8 years) and results in a final seizure as the fungus devouring their brain explodes out from their head to start the cycle anew.

**Commodity:** According to the trader with whom I spoke, eating the meat of a warp rat temporarily grants the devourer the same fungal protection. Somehow, enzymes within the flesh of the warp rat provide a good growing medium for the fungus. Such protection rarely lasts more than a week and long-time users of this effect suffer from the same temper and premature death as the warp rats. Despite his reassurances that I would be fine with just a taste, I decided not to test his hypothesis at the time and simply took his story on good faith.

**Wild Gift:** Beastfriends can borrow the disorient attack and fur armor of cohort warp rats.

### Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 2, Dex 3, End 4

**Mind:** Wits 2, Per 4, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Dod 4, Fht 3, Obs 4, Snk 3, Vigor 3

**Size:** ML

**Movement:** Standard

**Special:** By consuming the fresh meat of a warp rat and rubbing yourself with its pelt, you may gain the Disorient attack (see below) beginning three days after the meal and ending a week after the initial fungal infection. Repeated uses of this effect by consuming more meat will drain 1 point of End per use. Once a character exhausts all his End is exhausted, the disease becomes fatal, inflicting 2 points of Vitality in damage per day until the victim is dead.

**Attacks:**

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Claw	3	6	3
Bite	3	6	4

**Special Attacks:** When startled, the warp rat bristles its fur and then shakes vigorously. The resulting cloud has the following effect:

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Disorient	3	6	1*

\*The cloud effects a 3-meter radius. Unless victims of this attack succeed in End + Vigor rolls, they suffer extreme hallucinations that cause a -8 to Per and a -3 to Wits for up to 30 minutes after exposure. If a person is in contact with the warp rat at the time, he may inhale a lungful of spores (roll Calm + Vigor to see if this happens). On a failed roll, the victim inhales spores themselves, and they attempt to take root in his lungs. This causes 1 point of damage per turn until the character succeeds in an End + Vigor roll, and his body destroys the spores. Proper precautions can block both this effect and the disorientation.

**Armor:** Fur (ARM 1d)

**Vitality:** -4/-2/-1/0/0/0

### d20 System Stats

**Small Animal**

**Hit Dice:** 1d8+2 (6 hp)

**Initiative:** +1 (Dex)

**Speed:** 40 ft

**AC:** 14 (+1 Dex, +1 size, +2 natural)

**Attacks:** Bite +2 Melee, Claw +2 Melee

**Damage:** Bite 1d4, Claw 1d3+1

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Spores

**Special Qualities:** None

**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +1, Will -3

**Abilities:** Str 5, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 4, Cha 2

**Skills and Feats:** Weapon Finesse (Claw)

**Challenge Rating:** 1

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always neutral.

**Advancement:** —

#### COMBAT

Warp rats always begin combat by shaking up a spore cloud. After their foes cease to be a threat, the warp rat might wander off, but will usually attack its victim for a while just out of spite.

**Spores (Ex):** When in a spore cloud, the character must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or suffer effects similar to the Confusion spell. If the character is within five feet of the rat when the cloud fills the air, she must make a Fortitude save (DC 15). If she fails, then she suffers 1d4 damage per turn until she makes the roll.

## Water-Dragon

**Other Names:** Simmonsiaticus Tubiformis

**Homeworld:** Sutek

**Present Distribution:** Sutek, Istakhr and rare private menageries

**Type:** Animalia (coelenterata, scyphozoa)

**Role:** Decomposer/reducer

**Size:** 5 m (16 ft.)

**Weight:** 1000 kg (2200 lbs.)

**Habitat:** Abyssal ravines.

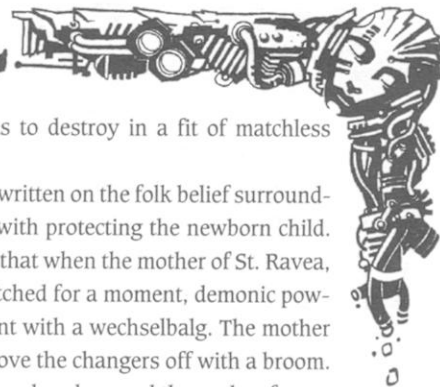
**Social Organization:** N/A

**Description:** In its natural habitat, the fissures at the bottom of Sutek's great World Sea, the water-dragon (simmonsiaticus tubiformis) is a sleek silvery ribbon darting in and out of the cracks in the ocean floor. In pitch darkness and crushing pressure, it lives by snatching primitive microbes out of crevices with a "tongue" that shoots out as far as the length of the water-dragon's body. Sometime during the First Republic, much of the water-dragon's food source was killed off when a disreputable zaibatsu illegally dumped toxic waste in the deep sea. The water-dragon population was decimated, but some survivors migrated to the upper levels of the ocean, finding new prey along the continental shelf and even occasionally feeding on larger animals it found in coastal waters. During the Second Republic, the water-dragon was declared an endangered species; terraforming engines were used to clean up its deep-sea habitat and selected specimens were reintroduced into its original environment.

Changing biomes resulted in a simple but drastic change in the water-dragon's appearance. A colonial organism comparable to the common jellyfish, the water-dragon normally has a long tubelike body tapering toward the rear and trailing off in delicate curling tentacles. Like the jellyfish, its body tissues are translucent, with all the interior organ-colonies clearly visible in brightly tinted hues. Lining its long slim body are rows of faintly phosphorescent blisters that are sensitive to heat and vibrations. Three sets of broad ribbed appendages resembling fins or wings also line the body, en-







**Treasure:** None  
**Alignment:** Neutral  
**Advance-ment:** 13-18HD (Huge)

**COMBAT**

Water-dragons just want to eat. If they meet strong resistance, they retreat, but they may come back for seconds.



**Digestive Juices**

**(Ex):** As long as either its tongue or tentacles are in contact with its victim, the victim takes an additional 1d6 damage per turn.

**Heat Susceptibility (Ex):** The water-dragon must make a Will save (DC 15) or do whatever it can to avoid the heat source.

**Wechselbalg**

**Other Names:** Church: *infantes suppositi*, Vuldrok: bytlingur, changeling child, Decados: odmina, Graceful Tongue: child of the abyss, cuckoo

**Homeworld:** Unknown

**Present Distribution:** Known Worlds

**Type:** Legendary, presumed demonic (Fifth Qlippoth)

**Role:** Unknown

**Size:** Like a human child (baby to 8-year-old child)

**Weight:** Like a human child (baby to about 8-year-old child)

**Habitat:** Wherever humans live.

**Social Organization:** Solitary, although there has been the rare occasion of Wechselbalg twins. It is presumed that they are a race in service of the Void between the stars, but no groups or cultural achievements have been found. In addition, the question remains of whether the wechselbalg also take non-human forms.

**Description:** According to folk belief, demonic powers steal newborn children and replace them with their own offspring, the wechselbalg. Supposed to be created by an unholy union of human and demon, the wechselbalg appears in the form of a child of whatever human race the unfortunate "parents" are from. Wechselbalgs are likely to replace boys or girls. They look mishappen, often crippled, with abnormally large heads and crooked limbs. There are rare cases reported of the wechselbalg being born beautiful – these are thought to be the offspring of a celestial power and a human.

**Behavior:** A wechselbalg shows its true monstrosity by several signs: the child does not grow, or grows too fast, its skin is wrinkled like a very old person's, it will not speak, it will not learn to walk, it will devour more food than a group of adults, it will scream all day and night, it will suck dry several wetnurses, sometimes killing them by drinking not only the milk, but the blood, too, and more, even fouler, practices. A wechselbalg eats anything, from wood to rotting meat, frogs, mice and other vermin. Notorious for an incredibly bad temper, the wechselbalg appears to be stupid, weak and phlegmatic, but if tricked or fought, it reveals its truly formidable

strength and cunning. It attacks to destroy in a fit of matchless rage.

**Commodity:** There are volumes written on the folk belief surrounding the wechselbalg. Most deal with protecting the newborn child. A legend from Gwynneth claims that when the mother of St. Ravea, a local saint, left her child unwatched for a moment, demonic powers tried to replace the to-be-saint with a wechselbalg. The mother interrupted the exchange and drove the changers off with a broom. Since then, St. Ravea's medals are placed around the necks of newborn children to protect them from being exchanged.

A piece of iron, often a knife or a pair of scissors, is also used to fend off whatever force is responsible for the exchange. If a wechselbalg has been identified, it is usually tickled so hard it laughs, thereby attracting its natural mother. She can then be forced to return the human child with the use of iron, salt, fire or threatening the wechselbalg with death by fire. Wechselbalgs are believed to know the secret of immortality, which they may impart if tricked. This has, however, not been confirmed and it must be stated clearly that the Inquisition interprets such as dealings with demonic forces.

**Victory Point System Traits**

**Body:** Str 1-10, Dex 1-10, End 1-10

**Mind:** Wits 1-10, Per 1-10, Tech 0

**Spirit:** Ext 8 Int 1, Pas 10 Calm 0, Fth 0 Ego 15

**Natural skills:** Chm 3, Dod 1-10, Fht 1-10, Imp 3, Mel 0, Obs 1-10, Sht 0, Snk 1-10, Vig 1-10

**Learned skills:** Varies

**Size:** MS-ML

**Movement:** Crawl 1-10 m

**Special:** Alter self (A wechselbalg takes on the general appearance of the child it replaces)

**Attacks:**

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Bite	3	6	3

**Vitality:** -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0 (for an infant; ranges to 10 for a stronger one)

**d20 System Stats**

**Small Outsider**

**Hit Dice:** 1d8 (4 hp)

**Initiative:** 0

**Speed:** 30 ft.

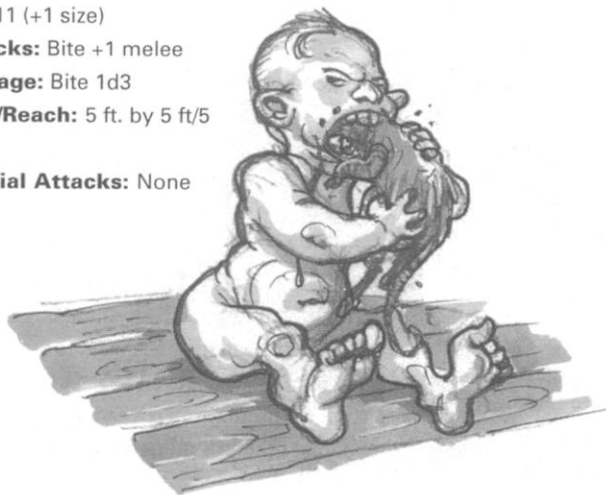
**AC:** 11 (+1 size)

**Attacks:** Bite +1 melee

**Damage:** Bite 1d3

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft/5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** None



**Special Qualities:** Alter Self

**Saves:** Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0

**Abilities:** Str 9, Dex 9, Con 9, Int 9, Wis 9, Cha 9

**Skills:** Bluff +10, Disguise +10, Listen +6, Sense Motive +6, Spot +4

**Feats:** None

**Challenge Rating:** 1

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Chaotic Evil

**Advancement:** —

#### COMBAT

Wechselbalgs rarely fight, preferring to cry and beg for help from others.

**Alter Self (Ex):** A wechselbalg can assume any child's shape, though they usually take an infants. The wechselbalg can stay in this form indefinitely or leave it as a standard action. Assuming a new form is also a standard action.

## Whip-Tailed Dragon-Fly

**Other Names:** Protozygoptera Hausenticus

**Homeworld:** Ungavorox

**Present Distribution:** Ungavorox, Manitou, Severus, Bannockburn

**Type:** Animalia (arthropoda, insecta, odonata)

**Role:** Carnivore

**Size:** 5 m (16 ft.)

**Weight:** 130 kg (286 lbs.)

**Habitat:** Tropical rainforest, swamp, wetlands.

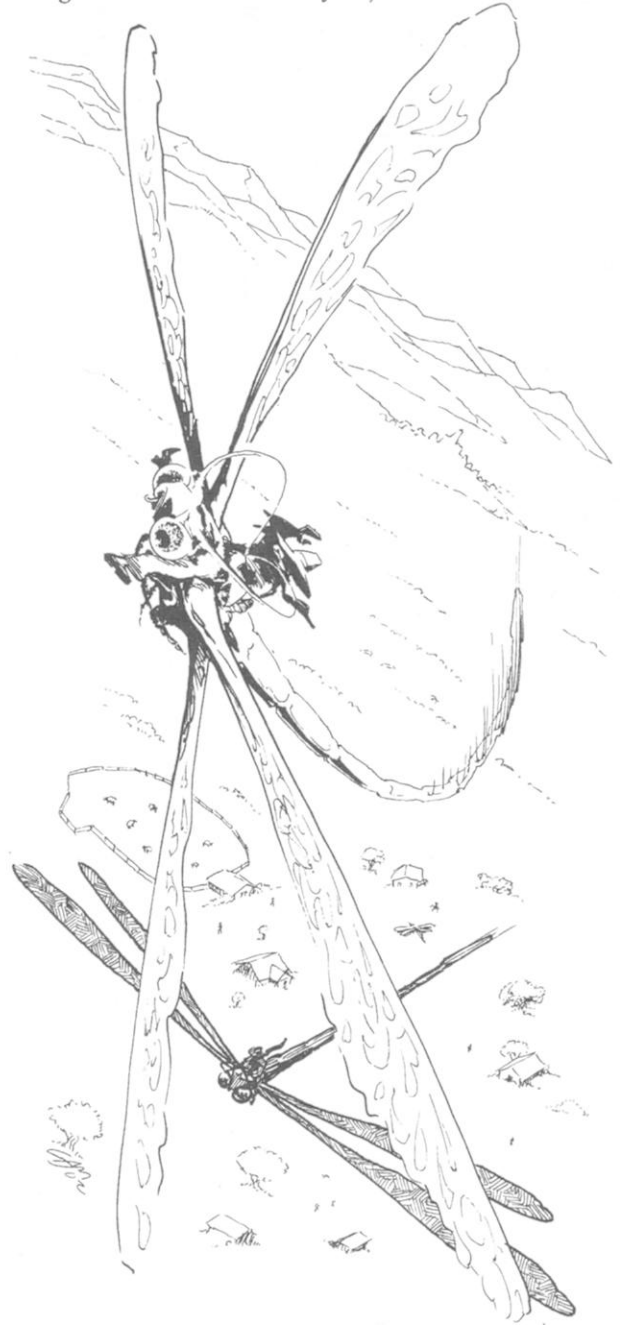
**Social Organization:** Mating pairs.

**Description:** The giant whip-tailed dragon-fly, or protozygoptera, is one of the few primitive insects of the Vorox home planet to be domesticated and exported for useful purposes. Built like the smaller dragonflies common to many worlds, protozygoptera has a 10-meter wingspan and feeds on macrobes and vermin found around large bodies of stagnant water. Deep greens and blues predominate in its coloration, with accents of orange, red and violet marking certain breeds. It lays its eggs in water, and its larvae are aquatic for over a week until they mature. Mated pairs are very territorial about their breeding pools, and spend their entire adult life (usually about three months) breeding and raising their young.

Thanks to its size, the whip-tailed dragon-fly is strong enough to carry a full-grown human equal to its own weight in flight, provided the rider sits forward enough to allow the insect's wings a full range of movement. While the whip-tail lacks the power, speed or stamina of larger airborne mounts like the urroc, it is able to execute precision maneuvers, take off from and land on any sort of terrain, and can, with some slight difficulty, hover. While their use is not widespread, whip-tails have been bred on planets with an abundance of dense jungle and swampy lands, where they are employed for short-range individual transport by farmers and herds-men.

**Behavior:** The whip-tail dragon-fly is even-tempered and non-aggressive, preferring to run from a fight with anything larger than a dog. When its breeding pool is threatened, however, the dragon-fly may become quite daring in its defense, even to the degree of suicidal dive-bombing. Individual protozygoptera cannot be trained or "broken" as with other higher orders of riding-beast; the instinct to

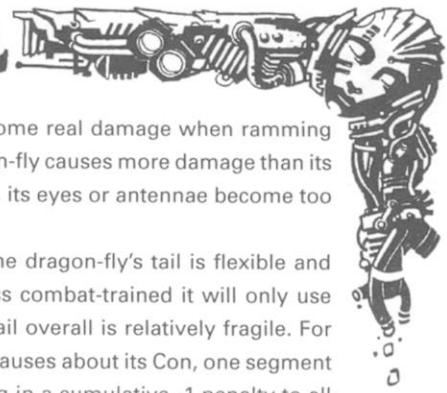
bear a human's weight and respond to command signals must be bred into a family line over several generations. (Fortunately this process does not take as long as it sounds due to the protozygoptera's short lifespan and quick breeding cycle, which can go through four or five generations in one Urthish year.)



**Commodity:** Although valued as a specialized mount, the whip-tailed dragon-fly cannot be bred without a large tract of wetlands and is thus seldom found outside of Manitou, Severus and Bannockburn. On these worlds a riding-quality protozygoptera can be bought for 4000 fb. It costs twice that amount to have one shipped to another system, but giant dragon-flies rarely survive longer than two or three jumps.

The wings of the whip-tailed dragon-fly have a distinct iridescent quality; preserved laminated wings are sold at 5 fb apiece for making fans or picture windows.





## Victory Point System

**Body:** Str 11, Dex 5, End 7  
**Mind:** Wits 1, Per 8, Tech 0  
**Natural skills:** Dod 6, Fht 4, Obs 7, Snk 4, Vig 5  
**Size:** H  
**Movement:** Fly 20 m, walk 6 m  
**Attacks:** (STR bonus: +3)

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Bite	1	9	3
Claw	4	9	2
Ram	1	9	8 + 1 / 3 m flight
Whip-tail Strike	2	8	5

**Special Attacks:** Ram (Dex + Fht, -3 INIT, 8d DMG +1d DMG per 3 meters of straight flight; the dragon-fly's carapace between its eyes and mouth is hard enough to do some real damage when ramming face first. If the dragon-fly takes more damage than its End from doing this maneuver, its eyes or antennae become too injured for it to fly properly.)

Whip-tail Strike (Dex + Fht, -2 INIT, 5d DMG; the dragon-fly's tail is flexible and hardened on the tip, but unless combat-trained it will only use this as a last resort since the tail overall is relatively fragile. For every two points of damage above its End rating, one segment of the tail is damaged, resulting in a cumulative -1 penalty for its own Fly rolls and its rider's Ride rolls. The tail has a total of 11 segments.)

**Armor:** Carapace (ARM 4d)  
**Vitality:** -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0

### d20 System Stats

**Large Beast**  
**Hit Dice:** 4d8+4 (20 hp)  
**Initiative:** 0  
**Speed:** 20 ft., fly 65 ft. (good)  
**AC:** 17 (-1 size, +8 natural)  
**Attacks:** Bite +7 melee, claw +7 melee, ram +7 melee, tail +7 melee  
**Damage:** Bite 1d4+3, claw 1d3+3, ram 1d12+6, tail 1d10+3  
**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.  
**Special Attacks:** Ram, Whip-tail Strike  
**Special Qualities:** Improved Charge  
**Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +2  
**Abilities:** Str 16, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 6  
**Skills:** Listen +8, Spot +8  
**Feats:** None  
**Challenge Rating:** 2  
**Treasure:** None  
**Alignment:** Neutral  
**Advancement:** —

#### COMBAT

The dragon-fly usually runs from a fight. If it cannot, it charges, flies back up, and charges again. If it has no room to charge, it bites and claws as best it can, all the while looking for a way out.

**Improved Charge:** Dragon-flies do double Str damage on charges.

**Ram (Ex):** The dragon-fly's carapace between its eyes and

mouth is hard enough to do some real damage when ramming face first. However, if the dragon-fly causes more damage than its Con from doing this maneuver, its eyes or antennae become too injured for it to fly properly.

**Whip-tail Strike (Ex):** The dragon-fly's tail is flexible and hardened on the tip, but unless combat-trained it will only use this as a last resort since the tail overall is relatively fragile. For every two points of damage it causes about its Con, one segment of the tail is damaged, resulting in a cumulative -1 penalty to all combat rolls and its rider's Ride rolls. The tail has a total of 11 segments.)

## Zad-jang

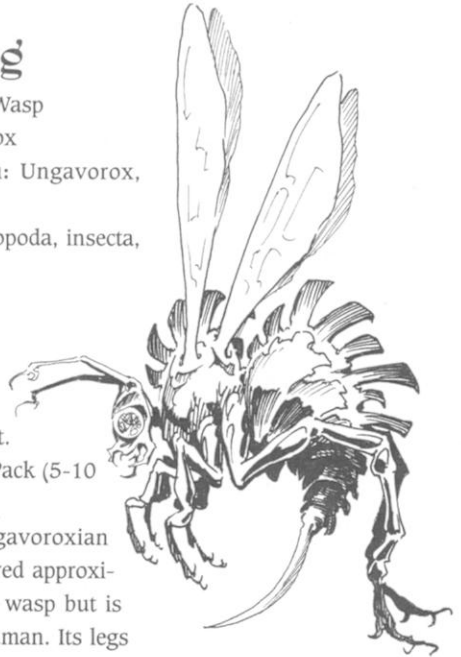
**Other Names:** Horse-Wasp  
**Homeworld:** Ungavorox  
**Present Distribution:** Ungavorox, Severus, Istakhr  
**Type:** Animalia (arthropoda, insecta, hymenoptera)  
**Role:** Carnivore  
**Size:** 1.7 m (5 ft)  
**Weight:** 30 kg. (72 lbs.)  
**Habitat:** Tropical forest.  
**Social Organization:** Pack (5-10 members)

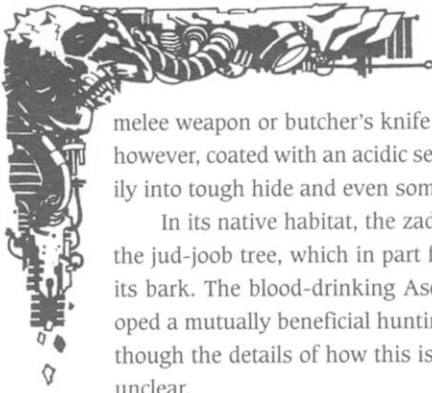
**Description:** The Ungavoroxian horse-wasp is configured approximately like a common wasp but is nearly the size of a human. Its legs are longer and thicker, ending in triple-hooked claws. Its abdomen is more articulated, allowing it to use its scimitar-like stinger with surprising agility. With its 2.5 meter wingspan, it is a swift and powerful flier, harrying much larger and stronger prey in a terrifying manner.

Originating on the home planet of the Vorox, the zad-jang has managed to migrate offworld thanks to the shortsightedness of humans. The Decados tried to use it as a weapon on Severus, hoping that the carnivorous horse-wasp would prove troublesome for the Ascorbites in their native jungles. Unfortunately, the insectoid blood-drinkers instead seem to have domesticated the beast and now use it for hunting the way humans use trained dogs. Recently, zad-jang nests have been found in the high vaulted chambers of some of Istakhr's great buildings, and some blame the creatures for the disappearances of children in the world's poor quarters. Authorities suspect that these specimens escaped from the menagerie of Baron Alajandro al-Malik.

**Behavior:** The zad-jang prefers its meat dessicated, and to this end will butcher its prey and leave the carcass open to dry out before it feeds. Smaller prey is stored in or near the nest, while larger prey is left where it fell, with the pack standing guard over the body to drive off scavengers. Bone, sinew and fat may also be removed from the carcass for use as nest-building material, while some large organs are used as incubators in which to lay eggs.

The horse-wasp's stinger is not poisonous, which is highly unusual for an Ungavoroxian species, and is deployed more like a





melee weapon or butcher's knife than a conventional stinger. It is, however, coated with an acidic secretion that enables it to slice easily into tough hide and even some man-made types of armor.

In its native habitat, the zad-jang is most frequently found in the jud-job tree, which in part feeds by absorbing blood through its bark. The blood-drinking Ascorbites also seem to have developed a mutually beneficial hunting pattern with their new pets, although the details of how this is worked out in practice are as yet unclear.

**Commodity:** The zad-jang produces nothing of commercial value, although the feral Vorox and Ascorbites sometimes use its stinger as a knife.

(The staff of Lord Erbian's would like to thank Baron Alajandro al-Malik for his assistance in compiling this entry.)

### Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 6, Dex 8, End 4

**Mind:** Wits 2, Per 5, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Dod 7, Fht 8, Imp 5, Obs 4, Snk 2, Vig 4, Fly 7

**Size:** XL

**Movement:** Fly 18 m

**Special:** 360-Degree Vision

**Attacks:** (STR bonus: +1)

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Stinger	8	16	5

**Special Attacks:** Acid-Coated Stinger (Wounds from a horse-wasp stinger takes twice as long to heal due to molecular tissue damage. This acid also affects certain types of armor. Cloth and leather armor loses one die for every 10 points of stinger damage that it blocks; metal armor loses one die for every 25 points blocked. Synthsilk and stiffsynth are not affected.)

**Armor:** Carapace (ARM 3d)

**Vitality:** -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0

### d20 System Stats

**Small Beast**

**Hit Dice:** 3d8 (12 hp)

**Initiative:** +4 (Dex)

**Speed:** Fly 60 ft. (average)

**AC:** 20 (+1 size, +4 Dex, +5 natural)

**Attacks:** Stinger +8 melee

**Damage:** 1d10+1

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Acid-Coated Stinger

**Special Qualities:** 360-Degree Vision

**Saves:** Fort +2 Ref +6, Will +1

**Abilities:** Str 12, Dex 18, Con 11, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 6

**Skills:** Listen +8, Spot +14

**Feats:** Weapon Finesse (stinger)

**Challenge Rating:** 2

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** neutral

**Advancement:** —

#### COMBAT

Horse-wasps sting and fly away.

**360-Degree Vision:** Horse-wasps can see all around at once.

**Acid-Coated Stinger (Ex):** Wounds from a horse-wasp

stinger takes twice as long to heal due to molecular tissue damage. This acid also affects certain types of armor, causing 1d12+2 damage to all but stiffsynth and synthsilk.

## Zat-Jat

**Other Names:** Dart Lizard

**Homeworld:** Ungavorox

**Present Distribution:** Ungavorox, Cadavus, Criticorum, Leagueheim

**Type:** Animalia (reptilia, squamata)

**Role:** Carnivore

**Size:** 2 m (6 ft.)

**Weight:** 20 kg (44 lbs.)

**Habitat:** Tropical rainforest, urban decay.

**Social Organization:** Solitary

**Description:** With its 10 legs and prehensile tail, the zat-jat or dart lizard is extremely fast and can cling to any surface except polished plasteel. Its most distinctive feature is its three-meter long tongue, which it can shoot from its mouth with blinding speed. The tongue's tip is a hardened point barbed like a harpoon; with this the dart lizard spears its prey — generally rodents, insects and other smaller lizards — and reels the carcass back to its eagerly awaiting mouth. If the harpoon-tip gets stuck in some hard surface and will not come loose, it can be detached from the tongue without serious trauma. The dart lizard must then find easier prey for the week it takes for the tip to regrow.

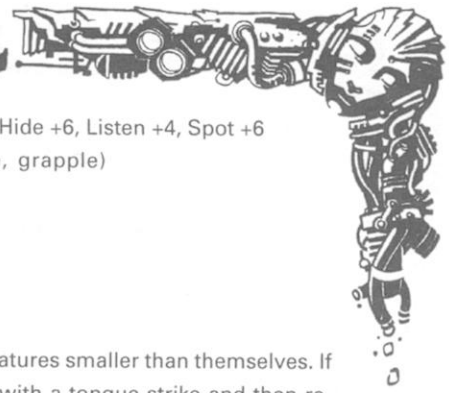
**Behavior:** The zat-jat keeps to itself, avoiding larger animals by staying in shadows, corners and narrow enclosed spaces unless stalking prey. The zat-jat automatically targets any moving object



small enough to eat, but will only attack a larger animal if cornered and threatened. When forced to battle larger creatures, the dart lizard instinctively aims for obvious vulnerable spots like the face, throat, underbelly and groin.

Some time after the Fall, someone tried to breed dart lizards for space travel in order to curb the hull rat population; the tough, aggressive hull rats proved too much trouble for the comparatively





delicate lizards, but not before a sufficient number of breeding pairs had migrated to some of the most oft-visited worlds and established themselves around junkyards, garbage dumps and abandoned tenements in large cities. Their presence is tolerated by the poor, as they keep vermin in check.

**Commodity:** The dart lizard is of little interest even to collectors of exotic animals, but poor neighborhoods with rodent infestation problems may pay as much as 10 firebirds for one.

**Wild Gift:** Beastfriends can borrow the Tongue Strike, Sticky Feet and bite abilities of cohort zat-jats.

### Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 4, Dex 12, End 2

**Mind:** Wits 2, Per 7, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Dod 6, Fht 5, Obs 8, Sht 7, Snk 6, Vig 8

**Size:** MS

**Movement:** 18 m

**Special:** Prehensile Tail (as Extra Limb); Sticky Feet (the dart lizard can climb at its regular movement rate up any surface except polished plasteel.)

**Attacks:**

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Bite	3	13	1
Grapple	3	17	1 / turn

**Special Attacks:** Tongue Strike (Dex + Sht, 2d DMG; The dart lizard's tongue is one and a half times the length of its entire body, three meters long, and is expelled from the back of the throat by a blast of air from the lungs. The tongue's tip has backswept barbs that do an additional die of damage if pulled straight out.)

**Armor:** Scales (ARM 1d)

**Vitality:** -6/-3/-1/0/0

### d20 System Stats

**Small Beast**

**Hit Dice:** 1d8+1 (5 hp)

**Initiative:** +3 (Dex)

**Speed:** 60 ft.

**AC:** 16 (+1 size, +3 Dex, +2 natural)

**Attacks:** Bite +4 melee, grapple +4 melee, tongue +4 missile

**Damage:** Bite 1d4-2, grapple 1d4-2, tongue 1d6

**Face/Reach:** 2 1/2 ft. by 2 1/2 ft./ 2 1/2 ft.

**Special Attacks:**

Tongue Strike

**Special**

**Qualities:**

Prehensile

Tail, Sticky

Feet

**Saves:**

Fort +1,

Ref +4,

Will +1

**Abilities:**

Str 6, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 4

**Skills:** Balance +8, Climb +10, Hide +6, Listen +4, Spot +6

**Feats:** Weapon finesse (bite, grapple)

**Challenge Rating:** 1

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Neutral

**Advancement:** —

### COMBAT

Dart lizards only attack creatures smaller than themselves. If attacked, however, they begin with a tongue strike and then revert to their claws. They use their speed and sticky feet to retreat at the first opportunity.

**Prehensile Tail:** Dart lizards can use their tails as an extra arm and hand

**Sticky Feet (Ex):** Dart lizard can climb without penalties up any surface except polished plasteel.

**Tongue Strike (Ex):** The dart lizard's tongue is one and a half times the length of its entire body, three meters long, and is expelled from the back of the throat by a blast of air from the lungs. The tongue's tip has backswept barbs that do an additional 1d3 damage if pulled straight out.)

## Zlexong

**Other Names:** Piranha Bee

**Homeworld:** Ungavorox

**Present Distribution:** Ungavorox, all Decados and Li Halan worlds.

**Type:** Animalia (arthropoda, insecta, hymenoptera)

**Role:** Herbivore

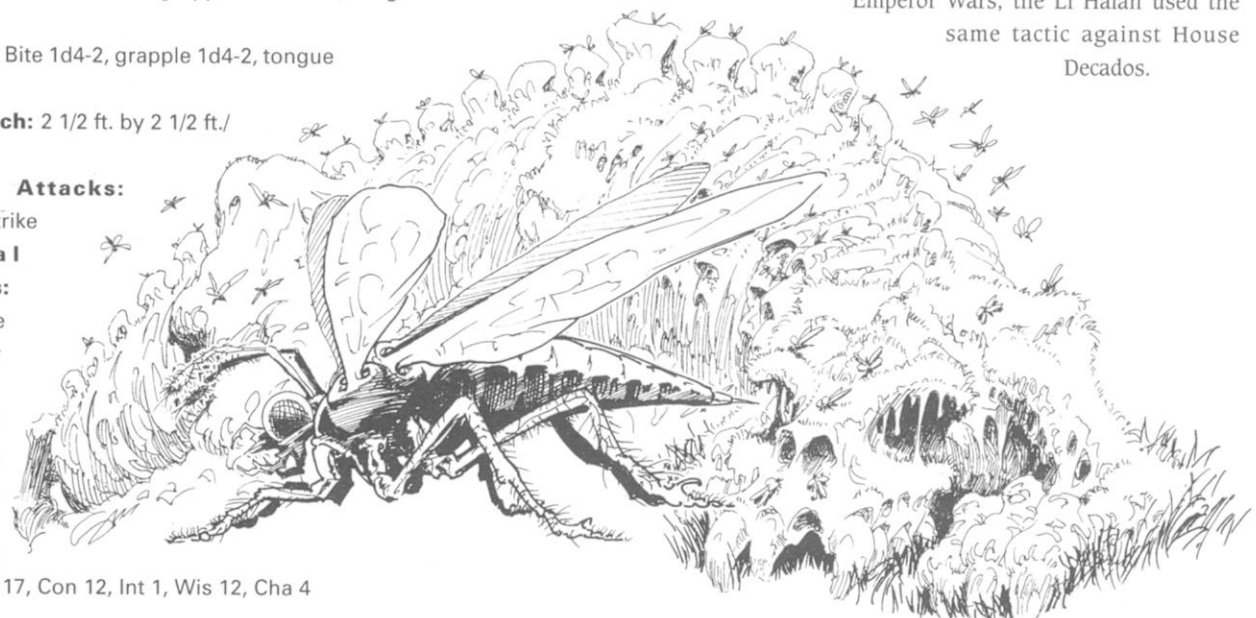
**Size:** 0.1 m (4 in.)

**Weight:** 0.05 kg (1.75 oz.)

**Habitat:** All tropical and temperate zones.

**Social Organization:** Hive (300-700 members)

**Description:** Similar in shape to Urthish bees but somewhat larger (and much faster), the zlexong has bluish-purple coloration, more developed and articulated mandibles and a slightly larger stinger. The zlexong spread to most of the Li Halan worlds in the first few centuries after the Fall, when Vorox malcontents hid their eggs in the straw bedding of exported shanto. During the Emperor Wars, the Li Halan used the same tactic against House Decados.





**Behavior:** Xenologists say the piranha bee is misnamed, since it is herbivorous and does not actually consume the flesh of other animals, but this fact is not apparent to laypersons who have witnessed its grisly swarming procedure. The zlexong builds its hive in the carcass of a large animal, using all the various tissues of the body as construction material. In order to ensure a solid structure and a plentiful supply of materials, a zlexong swarm may chase a much larger predator off its kill, and ward off scavengers, before the body is picked clean. At least this is how it normally happens on Ungavorox, a world where an enormous fresh carcass is never far away. On other worlds, where the cycle of life and death turns at a more leisurely pace, corpses of suitable mass are fewer and less frequently found. When swarming season hits (anywhere from 3-12 years, depending on the planet), the frenzied zlexong may blindly commence their work on any warm body that wanders too close to their territory. The strongest and fastest head straight for any orifice and soft exposed tissue they can find.

**Commodity:** Zlexong honey is indigestible to all but the zlexong. Zlexong wax smells strongly of rotting meat. The only commercial use for the piranha bee is as an instrument of bioterrorism. Piranha bee wranglers charge anywhere from 500 to 1000 fb per job for their services.

### Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 0.5, Dex 12, End 1

**Mind:** Wits 0, Per 4, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Dod 8, Fht 6, Obs 5, Snk 4

**Learned skills:** Tracking 3

**Size:** XS

**Movement:** Fly 14 m

**Special:** Musk Intolerance (Many herd-beasts on their native world, such as the vrongar, emit a strong musk that the zlexong cannot stand and will avoid even the faintest whiff of. Brute musk has the same effect. Only a handful of Gjarti shamans are aware of this fact.)

**Attacks:**

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Sting	4	18	2*
Bite	2	14	1

\* Stun damage only.

**Special Attacks:** Sting (Dex + Fht, -2 INIT, 2d DMG; The sting of the zlexong is relatively benign, as Ungavoroxian fauna goes, being toxin affecting the central nervous system for only a short period of time, resulting in stun damage rather than structural injury. The individual bee loses its stinger and dies, just like Urthish bees.)

**Vitality:** 0

### d20 System Stats

**Fine Beast**

**Hit Dice:** 1/4d8-5 (1 hp)

**Initiative:** +4 (Dex)

**Speed:** 45 ft.

**AC:** 22 (+8 size, +4 Dex)

**Attacks:** Bite +4 melee, Stinger +4 melee

**Damage:** Bite 1d4-5, Stinger 1d6-5

**Face/Reach:** 0

**Special Attacks:** Sting

**Special Qualities:** None

**Saves:** Fort +0, Ref +4, Will +0

**Abilities:** Str 1, Dex 19, Con 1, Int 1, Wis 10, Cha 1

**Skills:** Listen +4, Spot +4

**Feats:** Weapon Finesse (bite, stinger)

**Challenge Rating:** 1/6

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Neutral

**Advancement:** —

#### COMBAT

If attacking, the bees use their mandibles. If being attacked or the hive is threatened, they plunge their stingers into their foe and die.

**Stinger (Ex):** The bee's foe must make a Fort save (DC 12) or suffer an additional 1d6 of subdual damage.

## Zumox

**Other Names:** Axe-beak

**Homeworld:** Ungavorox

**Present Distribution:** Believed extinct

**Type:** Cryptoxenological (believed to be animalia (chordata, aves))

**Role:** Secondary carnivore

**Size:** 2.5 m (8 ft.)

**Weight:** 100 kg (220 lbs.)

**Habitat:** Mountainous terrain.

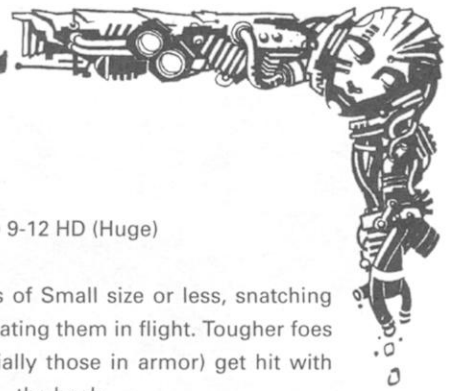
**Social Organization:** Solitary

**Description:** During the Second Republic, xenoarcheologists identified the mythic "Uncle Zumox" with the remains of a large primitive avian found in the mountains north of Ungavorox's equatorial rainforest. This frightening creature stood as tall as an adult Vorox when upright, and could spread its wings nearly 10 meters across. Its claws were large and strong enough to grasp and crush a Vorox skull with ease. Most hideous of all was its thick heavy skull, dominated by an extremely hard beak with a tall vertical edge exactly like the head of an axe or hatchet. The legs, spine and exceptionally muscular neck were all configured to lever the head forward with great force, not unlike a woodpecker.

**Behavior:** Voroxian mythology personifies "Uncle Zumox" as an interplanetary menace that stole moons and bombarded the land with meteors in vengeance for long-forgotten insults. The zumox-bird is generally believed to be extinct, although the feral Vorox still speak of it in the present tense; this is attributed to a convergence of ancestral memory and mythological convention. Much of Ungavorox has remained unmapped and unexplored since the Republican era, however, and large unidentified avians are sometimes reported in the seldom-traveled northern latitudes.

The zumox lived in the highest crags and peaks of the most desolate mountain chains. There it fed upon the strange wa-chala, or mountain whelk, by cracking open the shell with its axe-beak. Occasionally, say the Vorox, it would cross the jungle to hunt the armored vrongar of the southern plains. Returning with an engorged belly, the zumox was forced to rest in the jungle, punching through the uppermost canopies until it could find branches that would support its weight. This brought it into conflict with the Vorox and other denizens of the middle canopies, where its deadly beak wrought untold carnage and frequently destroyed whole sections of the surrounding growth.





**Commodity:** The zumox produced nothing of value, but the Vorox — especially feral tribes — prize its skull as a ceremonial symbol of power, and sometimes even as a literal utilitarian axe-head.

## Victory Point System Traits

**Body:** Str 10, Dex 5, End 7

**Mind:** Wits 2, Per 7, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Dod 3, Fht 6, Imp 8, Obs 6, Vig 5, Fly 5

**Size:** H

**Movement:** Fly 30 m

**Attacks:** (STR bonus: +2)

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Claw	6	11	5
Axe-beak Strike	4	12	9

**Challenge Rating:** 2

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Neutral

**Advancement:** 7-8 HD (Large) 9-12 HD (Huge)

### COMBAT

Uncle Zumox prefers foes of Small size or less, snatching them up with their claws and eating them in flight. Tougher foes (especially those in armor) get hit with the beak.



**Special Attacks:** Axe-beak Strike (As with the martial maneuver Head-Butt: -2 INIT, +1 GOAL. Because the zumox is specially evolved to use this technique, it does not take damage that exceeds its Endurance.)

**Armor:** Heavy Feather (ARM 1d)

**Vitality:** -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0/0

## d20 System Stats

**Large Beast**

**Hit Dice:** 6d8+18 (42 hp)

**Initiative:** +1 (Dex)

**Speed:** 20 ft., fly 100 ft. (average)

**AC:** 13 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +3 natural)

**Attacks:** Claw +10 melee, beak + 10 melee

**Damage:** Claw d8+6, beak 210+6

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

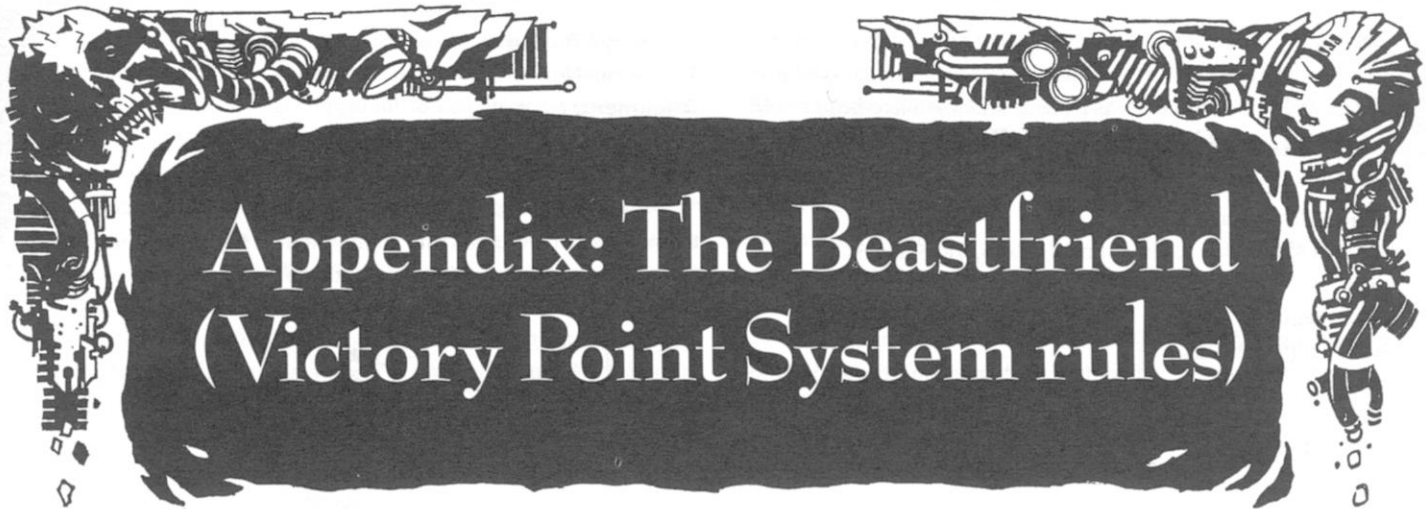
**Special Attacks:** None

**Special Qualities:** None

**Saves:** Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +5

**Abilities:** Str 22, Dex 12, Con 17, Int 4, Wis 14, Cha 10

**Skills:** Listen +8, Spot +12



# Appendix: The Beastfriend (Victory Point System rules)

From *Lord Erbian's*:

Certain clergy members have become concerned of late about a new form of potential heresy: *sophia animalia*, or the love of animals (or animal wisdom) over one's fellow sentients. While this is not considered a heresy as yet, it may be soon declared heterodox by certain bishops of the Orthodoxy.

The recent scrutiny of this obscure topic is due to the newly discovered phenomenon of what the Vuldrok barbarians call "the beastfriend," a person with a seemingly supernatural sympathy with animals. The Gjarti-worshipping Vuldrok respect such people, for they are believed to experience a certain form of Grace from Nature, gifted with power by the spirits or the natural world — to anger a beastfriend is also to anger the spirits, which brings bad luck.

The Church has no official position on such natural empathy, although the Orthodox bishops suspect it, fearing it may draw spiritual contemplation away from the stars and towards more earthly, less luminous, concerns.

Although there is no interstellar tradition concerning the so-called beastfriends in the Known Worlds, Bishop Adolphus has embarked on a scholarly survey of past figures associated with animals, suspecting that they shared the same rapport as their Vuldrok counterparts but went unnoticed in the non-pagan Known Worlds. A few backwoods communities on certain worlds recognize a seemingly similar phenomenon by various other names: "animal-folk" or "werekin." Such people — usually hermits, woodsmen or woodswives — are said to speak to animals, and learn from them the secrets of nature. Some are seen to travel with an animal, a peculiar or alien creature that might otherwise hide from humans — or try to eat them.

Bishop Adolphus has put forth the claim that Saint Ven Lohji, the Ur-Obun disciple of the Prophet, was a beastfriend, as was the legendary Saint Mynah of Grail. He thus recommends that the Church open its arms and heart to such persons that exhibit similar sympathy as did these saints, for they clearly reside in the Pancreator's light.

Other bishops, however, perhaps fearful of some of the creatures known to travel with Beastfriends, recommend forcing any beastfriend to become Penitent, as the Church does with psychics. The issue is undecided as yet, although those who view the Beastfriends favorably are in the majority — for now.

While beastfriends are known among the Vuldrok, they are practically unheard of in the Known Worlds. They do, however, exist even there, but are not often recognized as such, for peasants and inquisitors are a superstitious lot, liable to condemn such witchery without fully understanding it. Hence, Known Worlds Beastfriends tend to travel under other guises, as guildsmembers or freemen, labeling their unique companions as "trained pets" rather than the wild but loyal beasts they are.

Most Beastfriends live simple lives in deep wildernesses, usually known to fellows of their race as recluses or hermits. Some, however, brave the dangers of space travel to find fortune among the stars, taking their animal cohorts with them. Indeed, rarely is a Beastfriend ever separated from his animal cohort.

Members of any race can become Beastfriends. Ur-Obun, usually those who still practice the native religion of Bintaru, are especially accepting of them, as are Vorox, who respect anyone who can tame a wild beast.

## Animal Cohorts

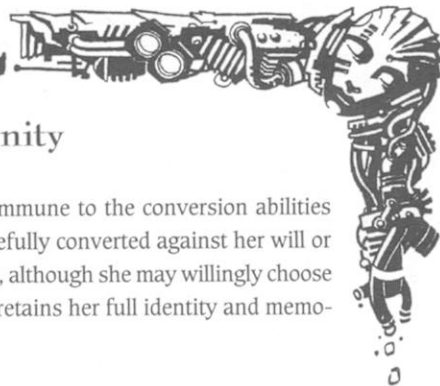
Beastfriends bond with a single animal, usually one that has peculiar or unique abilities, such as the uncanny luck of the malador phantom or the psychic tracking sense of the zargat. As their bond deepens over time, they gain supernatural abilities to communicate with or borrow characteristics from their cohorts. Powerful Beastfriends can even assume the shapes of animals.

## Beastfriend Powers

A beastfriend's special powers are part of Gjartin magic (described in *Fading Suns Players Companion*). Hence, beastfriends must gain levels in the occult characteristic Sympathy (the Gjartin equivalent of Theurgy). However, unlike Gjartin shamans, they must follow a specific path, learning their powers in a set order from level one to level nine, as with psychic powers.

Beastfriends do not normally suffer Antipathy, the Gjartin version of Hubris. They can use their Synergy levels to learn Gjarti rites, but once they take up such study, they become susceptible to Antipathy even when using their beastfriend powers.





## Life Sense

(Level 1, Perception + Observe, sensory, temporary, 1W)

The beastfriend can detect the presence of animal life (including people but not plants). To do so, she must gain at least one victory point (three or more successes). Weakened, wounded, hibernating or dying beings are harder to sense (three or more v.p.). Dead bodies cannot be sensed. Discriminating lifeforms, however, is not so easy. A Wits + Lore (Nature) roll may be required to distinguish the lifeforce of a swarm of bees from the small shazzle hiding in the undergrowth.

## Animal Cohort

(Level 2)

The beastfriend gains an animal cohort, an empathically bonded animal with whom she can easily communicate. This creature must be chosen from the approved list (see sidebar). Until she gains the 3<sup>rd</sup>-level Communion ability, she must speak to the animal to communicate with it. It will understand general commands from her even if it is not trained to know them. It will never attack her (unless coerced to do so by an occult power, although it gets a roll to resist — see the particular animal's traits) and will attempt to save her from harm. It behaves well around those she indicates as friends, but is not necessarily friendly to them.

The beastfriend gains a +2 bonus to any Charm, Xeno-Empathy or Lore rolls attempted with animals of the same species as her cohort.

## Communion

(Level 3, Extrovert + Charm or Xeno-Empathy, 1 km, prolonged, 1W)

The beastfriend's bond with her cohort deepens, allowing her to impart unvoiced telepathic commands to it. The range for this communication can be increased by spending Wyrd points, as with a psychic power. Once this power has been activated, it is a free action to send a telepathic command.

In addition, a Beastfriend can lend two different abilities to her cohort within the power's range — breathing and Vitality restoration. If the animal is trapped in an airless environment, she can breathe for it. If it suffers negative Vitality levels, she can expend one of her own Vitality to restore it to one level (she does not have to wound herself; she simply marks off the point). It takes only one action to restore Vitality, but it requires concentration to breathe for the cohort, during which time no combat actions can be taken. There is no Wyrd point cost, nor is any skill roll necessary. (Note: The cohort cannot lend its breathing or Vitality restoration until the beastfriend has gained the 5<sup>th</sup>-level Wild Gift ability.)

## Wild Sense

(Level 4, Perception + Charm or Xeno-Empathy, 1 km, prolonged, 1W)

The Beastfriend gains the ability to see, hear and feel her cohort's sensory perceptions. The cohort must be within range (which can be extended with Wyrd points). Once activated, it is a free action to sense the cohort's perceptions.

## Premonition

(Level 4, Extrovert + Observe, sensory, temporary, 1W)

As the 4<sup>th</sup>-level Sixth Sense psychic power.

## Symbiosis Immunity

(Level 5)

The Beastfriend becomes immune to the conversion abilities of Symbiots. She cannot be forcefully converted against her will or tricked into accepting conversion, although she may willingly choose to become a Symbiot. If so, she retains her full identity and memories.

## Wild Gift

(Level 5, Endurance + Charm or Xeno-Empathy, 1 km, prolonged, 1W +1 per extra trait borrowed)

The beastfriend gains the ability to borrow a trait from her animal cohort, such as scent, nightvision, stealthiness, natural weaponry, etc. She cannot borrow a trait her cohort does not possess. The beastfriend must spend one Wyrd point plus one per extra trait borrowed.

Also at this level, the animal cohort can breathe for the Beastfriend and restore Vitality, as described in Communion, above.

## Venom Immunity

(Level 6)

The beastfriend becomes immune to organic poisons and toxins, including the deadly poison of the Ungavoroxian Grackle Fox. This does not include mineral poisons or gases.

## Wild Mind

(Level 6, Extrovert + Charm or Xeno-Empathy, sight, 1W)

The beastfriend gains the ability to command other animals to do her bidding. As with Communion, commands can be conveyed telepathically, although the Beastfriend must see the animals he wishes to command (he may use Wild Sense for this). Animals cannot resist this order unless they are psychically or theurgically protected (or are another beastfriend's cohorts), in which case they get resistance rolls.

When issuing a Wild Mind command, the beastfriend can take no other action that turn. She must spend one Wyrd point to issue a new command. The effect of each command lasts until the commanded animal has executed it (or tried to the best of its ability to do so). She can affect up to two creatures per level of Synergy she possesses.

## Wild Cry

(Level 7, Extrovert + Charm or Xeno-Empathy, 1 km, 1W)

The beastfriend can summon animals from the region to her aid. The range is the same as her Communion ability. She can call up to 15 small-sized creatures or one immense-sized creatures. She can instead summon a combination of creatures of various sizes, using the following formula:

MS = 2 small creatures

L = 3 small creatures

ML = 5 small creatures

XL = 7 small creatures

H = 9 small creatures

G = 12 small creatures

I = 15 small creatures

With each higher level of Synergy, she can call a single creature of the next largest size (gargantuan at level 8, monumental at level 9) or add three creatures of small size.



The victory points gained on the activation roll determine the animals' attitudes: One victory point makes them neutral (they will defend the beastfriend but not initiate attacks for her), two makes them friendly (they will perform simple tasks for her), while three makes them loyal (they will attack for the beastfriend). Some animal types (predators, malign alien beasts) may be considered initially unfriendly or even hostile; unless won over to at least friendly (two v.p.), they will not respond to the call.

Those answering the call travel at their top speeds, arriving within 1d6 turns per three meters away they were when the cry goes out. (The GM can determine the initial distances for each creature by rolling a d20 and multiplying the result by 50 — on a result of "1", roll over but don't multiply the result.) The GM should devise encounter charts for different regions and biomes, providing random samplings of local fauna that can respond to the call.

The effect lasts for one hour plus one per Beastfriend level, after which time the creatures will run away unless one additional Wyrd point is spent every hour afterwards.

### Cohort Body

(Level 8, Endurance + Vigor, self, 2W)

The beastfriend gains the ability to shapeshift into the form of her animal cohort, gaining all the abilities of that creature (including extraordinary ones). Shapeshifting is a full-round action requiring the expenditure of two Wyrd points. The new shape lasts until the beastfriend chooses to revert to her normal shape.

### Wild Body

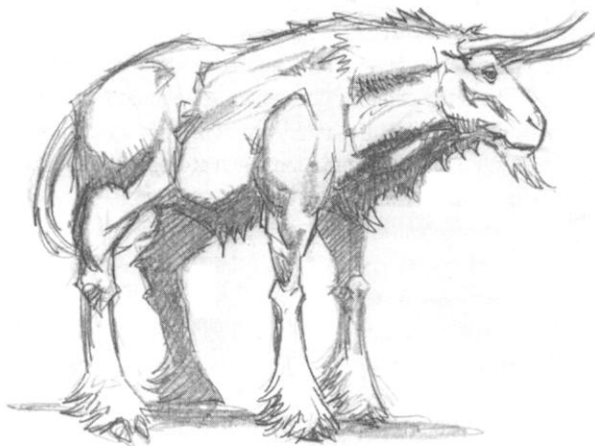
(Level 9, Endurance + Vigor, self, 2W)

The beastfriend may shapeshift into any animal form.

## Animal Cohorts

These animals can all serve as cohorts. Other creatures in the Stellar Bestiary may also cohorts; they are marked with a special section called "Wild Gift," denoting which abilities a beastfriend can borrow from that cohort.

*Chervin*: A blend between a goat-analog and horse-analog, the Chervin is native to Hira. It is considered to be a light warhorse. (See **Weird Places** for traits.)



## Animal Cohort Basics

Animal cohorts have the following special considerations:

*Experience*: Every time a beastfriend gains an experience point, her cohort also gains experience points equal to one half that amount (round up).

*Sentience*: An animal cohort begins with a special animal sentience — it has one level in each Spirit characteristic. As its bond with its beastfriend grows, it can develop greater sentience — it can spend experience to gain higher levels of its Spirit characteristics.

In addition, cohorts can spend experience to learn the Focus or Stoic Mind skill, for the purpose of resisting occult powers.

*Occult Resistance*: Cohorts resist occult powers with their Wits characteristic + Focus or Stoic Mind skills. They gain a special +4 bonus to their goals. If a cohort's Faith or Ego characteristic is higher than its Wits, it may substitute that characteristic instead.

### Losing a Cohort

Beastfriends are intimately tied to their animal cohorts, emotionally becoming as one creature. The loss of a cohort can leave a Beastfriend despondent, levying a -2 penalty on all attacks, skill rolls, etc. This does not often last too long, however, for the beastfriend is tied to life and cannot help but go on living. Eventually, a new cohort will come to her, attracted by her need, and offer itself for adoption. This could be a sibling or offspring of the lost cohort, or an entirely new creature. It will appear after the loss of the first cohort within a number of days equal to 30 the result of a d20 roll multiplied by five. Once a new cohort is adopted, the penalties go away. (Note: This arrival is not supernatural; a cohort cannot travel between the stars to reach its new beastfriend. It could, however, be part of a traveling circus troupe or other similar animal transport group.)

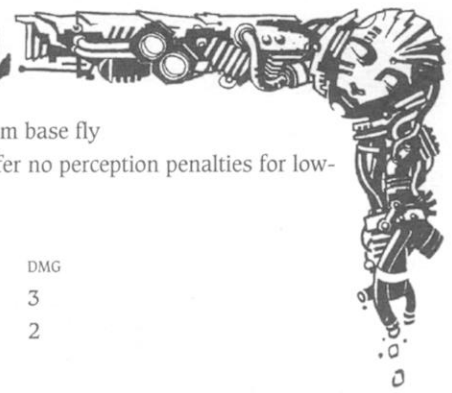
A second cohort has half the experience of its predecessor.



*Doggoth*: A doglike creature bred to sit fat and content at a noble's table — and to suddenly leap at enemies with hidden bundles of muscle. (See **Sinners & Saints** for traits.)

*Evik*: A hawklike bird native to Grail, with beautiful plumage, deadly claws and keen eyesight. (See below for traits.)





*Feshaal*: A Severan snake. It is poisonous and has camouflage scales. (See below for traits.)

*Gurdvulf*: Once thought extinct, this wolflike animal native to Byzantium Secundus has been rediscovered in Vuldrok space on the worlds of Wolf's Lament. A few have made their way back by to the Known Worlds as favored pets of Vuldrok pirates. They have strong tracking and combat skills. (See below for traits.)

*Malador Phantom*: Native to Pentateuch, these unusual animals were spread throughout the Known Worlds by the Merchant League. They look like white-furred monkeys with blue faces and two pairs of red eyes. The Eskatonic Order considers them somewhat holy. Phantoms seem to experience uncanny luck and can learn simple sign language. (See **Sinners & Saints** for traits.)

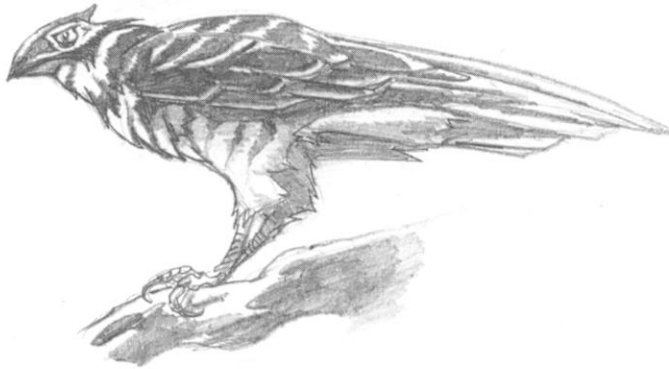
*Shazzle*: A raccoon/minklike animal (pictured on the shoulder of the lady at the beginning of this chapter). They can be trained to pick locks, open lids and turn knobs. Once native to Aragon, they were spread across the Known Worlds during the Second Republic as pets. (See below for traits.)

*Skerra Cat*: A large green tiger, genetically bred from Urthish tiger stock on Aylon, but spread to other al-Malik worlds. They are good hunters. (See below for traits.)

*Zargat*: A batlike animal native to Pandemonium, the Zargat was once believed extinct — until the Cataclysms revealed that they were just hiding. It is practically blind; instead of sonar, it possesses a psychic tracking ability to sense obstacles and prey (usually insects). (See below for traits.)

## Evik

Native to Grail, the beautifully plumed evik is a masterful raptor. Its incredibly sharp claws deliver more damage than most birds its size. What's more, its expert eyesight makes it a deadly predator in day or night. Evik are well respected by Etyri, the native sentients of Grail, who see them as distant cousins and representatives of swift and vigilant justice.



Evik feathers bring about 10 firebirds on the open market. However, it takes an Evik at least a month to grow back plucked feathers, and they cannot grow back clipped or plucked pin feathers (necessary for flight).

**Wild Gift:** Beastfriends can borrow the claws, bite or low-light vision abilities from cohort eviks.

**Body:** Str 3, Dex 7, End 5

**Mind:** Wits 6, Per 6, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Chm 3, Dod 8, Fht 3, Imp 3, Obs 7, Snk 6 (9 in flight), Vig 3

**Size:** S

**Movement:** 3 m base walk, 24 m base fly

**Special:** Low-Light Vision (suffer no perception penalties for low-light conditions)

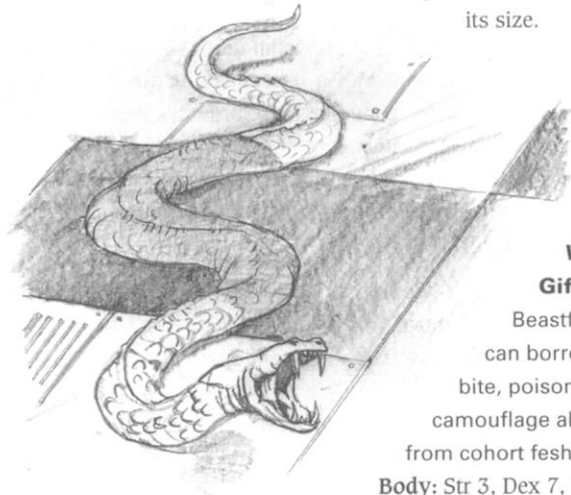
**Attacks:**

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Claws	3	10	3
Bite	2	10	2

**Vitality:** -4/-2/0/0/0/0/0

## Feshaal

One of the strange animals native to Severus, the feshaal is a long snake with glistening, slick scales that can mimic the colors of its surroundings. This amazing ability makes it a prized pet for certain Decados nobles. Like many natives of Severus, the feshaal's bite is especially sharp and its teeth tough, enabling it to pierce the armored hides of many Severan animals. Hence, its bite deals more damage than other serpents its size.



### Wild Gift:

Beastfriends can borrow the bite, poison and camouflage abilities from cohort feshaal.

**Body:** Str 3, Dex 7, End 4

**Mind:** Wits 4, Per 4, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Chm 1, Dod 5, Fht 5, Imp 3, Obs 6, Snk 6, Vig 3

**Size:** L

**Movement:** 8 m base run/climb/swim

**Special:** Camouflage (change the color and appearance of scales to match surroundings: +7 Sneak when hiding), Scent

**Attacks:**

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Bite*	5	13	3

\* **Poison:** If any damage is inflicted, make an End + Vigor roll or suffer 6d damage to Endurance characteristic (heals at rate of one level per day).

**Armor:** Scales (ARM 3d)

**Vitality:** -9/-6/-3/-1/0/0/0

## Gurdvulf

Once thought extinct, this wolf-like animal, native to Byzantium Secundus, has been rediscovered in Vuldrok space on the worlds of Wolf's Lament. A few have made their way back by to the Known Worlds as favored pets of Vuldrok pirates.

**Wild Gift:** Beastfriends can borrow the bite, trip, Sensitive Smell and tracking abilities from cohort gurdvulfs.

**Body:** Str 6, Dex 7, End 8

**Mind:** Wits 2, Per 5, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Chm 1, Dod 3, Fht 5, Imp 4, Obs 5, Snk 6, Vig 5



Learned skills: Survival 5, Tracking 5  
 Size: XL  
 Movement: 15 m base run  
 Special: Sensitive Smell (+4 Tracking when following scents)



Attacks: (STR bonus: +1)

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Bite	4	12	5
Trip*	3	12	Victim falls

\* If the gurdvulf succeeds with a bite attack, it can make a trip attack with no multiple-action penalty. Gurdvulf's gain a +1 goal bonus to attack downed opponents.

Armor: Fur (ARM 1d)

Vitality: -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0/0/0

### Shazzle

A raccoon/mink-like animal. Once native to Aragon, they were spread across the Known Worlds during the Second Republic as pets. Cute with sleek fur, their antics and pranks are well known, creating many catch phrases: "Cute as a curled-up shazzle," "silly as a slinking shazzle," and "annoying as an Aragon rat."

**Wild Gift:** Beastfriends can borrow the bite and scent abilities or the Superb Balance bonus from cohort shazzles.

Body: Str 3, Dex 9, End 3

Mind: Wits 3, Per 5, Tech 0

Natural skills: Chm 3, Dod 3, Fht 3, Imp 2, Obs 5, Snk 7, Vig 6

Size: MS



Movement: 12 m base run

Special: Knack (Shazzles are especially easy to train. They can even be taught the Lockpicking and Sleight of Hand skills. A shazzle's maximum levels are equal to its Wits score or it's Beastfriend's Synergy level, whichever is higher. Shazzle cohorts can spend experience to raise these skills. Shazzles can use their Sleight of Hand skill to untie someone's bonds), Scent, Superb Balance (+4 Vigor bonus to maintain balance)

Attacks:

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Bite	2	12	3

Vitality: -8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0

### Skerra

Skeera were genetically bred from tigers on Isakhr by the al-Malik. Their grace and strength — along with their red or green coats — are legendary in many songs and sagas of that noble family. The stats below are for a red Skeera, smaller than their more well-known green counterparts.

**Wild Gift:** Beastfriends can borrow the bite, claw, pounce, Low-Light Vision and Scent abilities from cohort skeeras.

Body: Str 7, Dex 9, End 6

Mind: Wits 2, Per 3, Tech 0

Natural skills: Chm 1, Dod 4, Fht 5, Imp 5, Obs 6, Snk 6, Vig 7

Learned skills: Tracking 3

Size: XL

Movement: 12 m base run, 6 m base climb

Special: Low-Light Vision (suffer no perception penalties for low-light conditions), Scent

Attacks: (STR bonus: +1)

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Claw	5	15	5
Bite	4	15	6
Charge	2	15	4+ 1d DMG/3 m run
Grapple	3	15	3

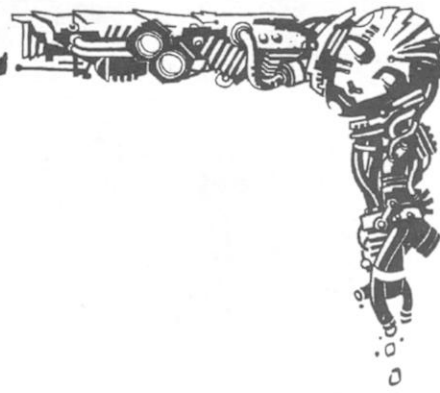


Special Attacks: Pounce (if a Skeera performs a successful charge at a target, it can make a claw or bite attack with no multiple-action penalty), Rake (a Skeera that makes a successful grapple attack can make a claw with no multiple-action penalty)

Armor: Fur (ARM 1d)

Vitality: -10/-8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0/0/0/0





## Zargat

A bat-like animal native to Pandemonium, the Zargat was once believed extinct — until the Cataclysms revealed that they were just hiding. Practically blind, instead of sonar, they possess a psychic tracking ability to sense obstacles and prey (insects).

**Wild Gift:** Beastfriends can borrow the psychic sonar ability from cohort zargat.

**Body:** Str 2, Dex 10, End 3

**Mind:** Wits 2, Per 3, Tech 0

**Natural skills:** Chm 1, Dod 3, Fht 3, Imp 2, Obs 6, Snk 5, Vig 4

**Size:** MS

**Movement:** 1 m base run, 12 m base fly

**Special:** Psychic Sonar (Zargat can psychically locate living creatures and objects within 40 meters (or Wits x10, whichever is higher). Despite the name, this ability isn't actually like sonar except that it provides only basic clues



about the things sensed — shapes, motion, speed. No fine details can be discerned. This works in all conditions — darkness, rain, sleet, snow, etc — with no penalties. Beastfriends who borrow this quality — or cohort zargat who develop Wits scores of 5 or higher — can make Per + Observe rolls to discern some details: Is that a sword or a club in that person's hand?)

**Attacks:**

ATTACK	INIT	GOAL	DMG
Bite	2	13	2

**Vitality:** -8/-6/-4/-2/0/0/0



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