

Tzitzimitl

The Star Demons

The peoples of Haven have lived in fear of these creatures for over a thousand years. I was almost eaten in one bite by a Couatl, nearly lost my senses to the last surviving Mind Virus, and came very close to being burned alive with the Unquenchable Fire, all to try to discover the secrets of the Star Demons. Here's what little I've learned...

— Natural Philosopher Marius Thane

Physical Appearance

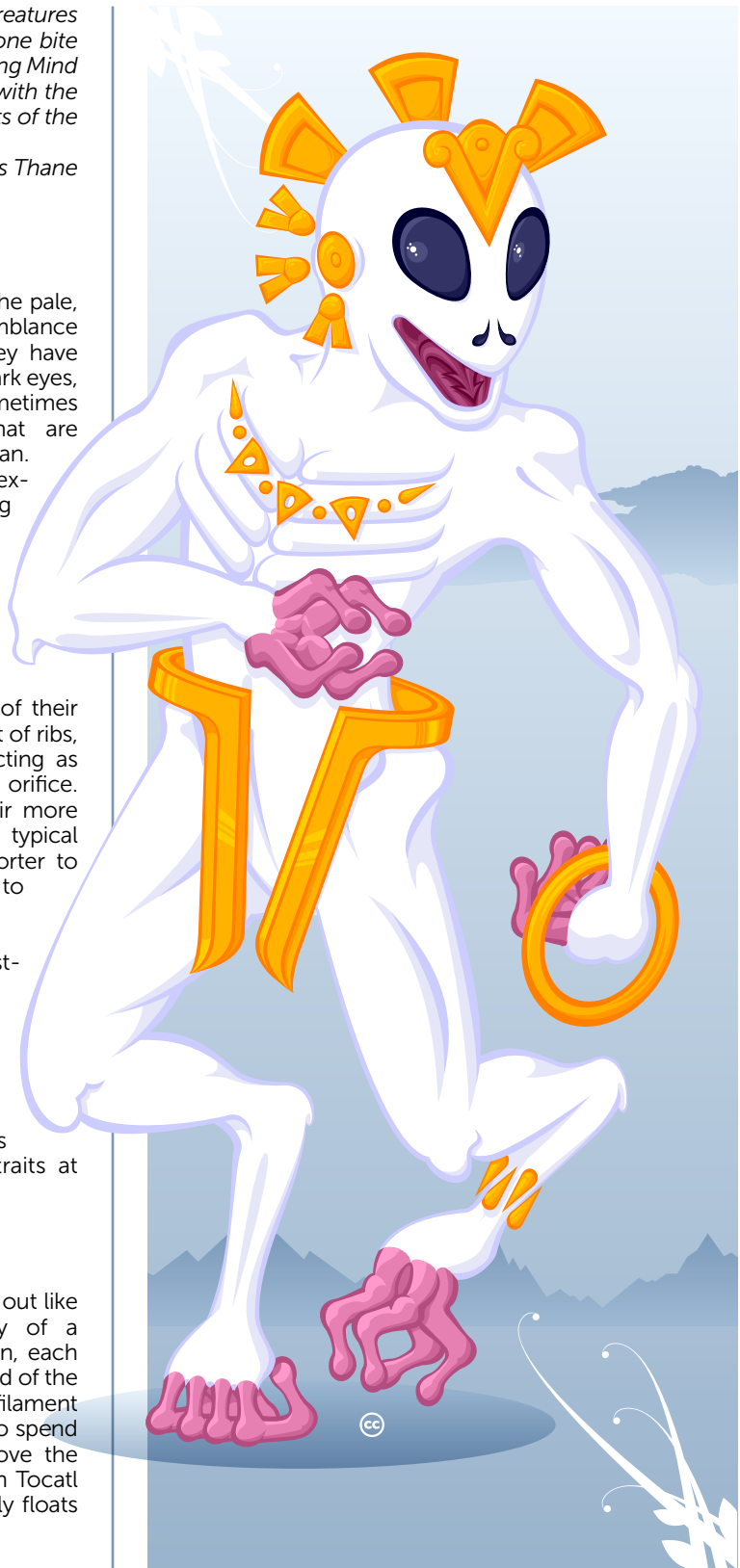
The most commonly encountered Tzitzimitl are the pale, skeletal Miquiztetl, who bear only a fleeting resemblance to legendary Tzitzimitl from Earth's Mexico. They have smooth, nearly featureless oval heads with large dark eyes, tiny nose-slits, and lipless mouths. Knobby, sometimes hook-like protrusions sprout from places that are analogous to elbows, knees, and ankles on a Human. Each of their four limbs end in four long, strong, flexible pink digits that can rotate like thumbs and cling to surfaces in the manner of geckos' foot pads. Miquiztetl can hang by one limb from a wall or ceiling, support their entire weight standing on one hand/foot, and use all their limbs equally well. Coiled inside each one's mouth is a meter-long barbed tongue with a tip that's hard enough to punch through stone and sticky enough to hold a human-sized creature. Located in the middle of their chest is a structure that resembles a prominent set of ribs, which might have another function, possibly acting as additional limbs or as a cover to another orifice. Depending on how one of them stands, in their more common contracted posture or fully erect, the typical Miquiztetl can be anywhere from one head shorter to three heads taller than a Human. They don't seem to have genders.

The next most common Tzitzimitl are the small, fist-sized Tocatl, who look like smooth, plump, simplified versions of Miquiztetl with underdeveloped flipper-like limbs.

Rarely seen are the Huëyimichin, who resemble massive, whale-sized versions of Earth's salamanders, with coloring, tongues, and rib-like structures similar to those of the Miquiztetl. Many have traits at **Magnitude 1** level and higher.

Life Cycle

Tzitzimitl are born live, by the hundreds, shooting out like bullets in Tocatl form from the dying body of a Huëyimichin. Immediately after this mass ejection, each one generates a long, golden filament from the end of the abdomen, and like a strand of spider silk, this filament carries away the young Tzitzimitl on the breeze, to spend childhood floating upside down, kilometers above the ground. After an unknown number of years, each Tocatl becomes wrapped in a golden cocoon and slowly floats back to the ground.



Example Miquiztetl NPC: Pöchtli

(5,535 Character Points)

B A S E W I P R Evil Rep HP SP
 Gr Ph Gr Ph Cm Gd Cm Gd Gr 110 32

Skills**Languages:** Tzitzihuatl**Powers****Entangling Attack:** Gr(+2)(15)**Sharp Attack:** Gr(+2)(15)**Extra Attacks:** +1

This Miquiztetl is not limited by anything akin to human "handedness", able to use every limb equally well, with a balance and speed that allows for one extra attack every turn. Pöchtli's meter-long tongue can shoot out to entangle a full-sized human in sticky saliva or break stones. That tongue, plus each elbow, knee, and ankle protrusion, are sharp enough to deliver edged attacks.

Climb: Gr(+2)(15)**Jump:** Wk(-2)(2)

This Miquiztetl can cling upside-down from glass-like surfaces by a single hand or foot, and make 40 m (120 ft) leaps from a standing start.

Protection from Cold: Ex(+4)(30)**Protection from Fire:** Ph(+5)(40)

Pöchtli is adapted to Antipode's extreme climate.

Magic: Gd(+1)(10)

This Miquiztetl follows the Path of **Eztli Otli**, in the magical tradition of Antipode. It only allows tapping The Source Within and The Source Purloined. Other features of this path include:

- **(+2)** bonus if a spell's source Source bleeds.
- **(-2)** penalty when casting while touching jade.

Pöchtli knows the following spells:

- **Sense Magic**
- **Sense Other Beings Capable of Fueling Spells**
- **Protection from Magic**
- **Protection from Energy Attacks**
- **Protection from Negative Energy**
- **Adapted to Vacuum**
- **Self-Sufficiency**
- **Regenerate**
- **Project Electricity**
- **Project Negative Energy**

Gear**Flying Razor Disc**

Price: — **(37 Character Points)**

- Material: **Gd(+1)(10)**, hardened Tzitzimitl saliva
- Range: **Wk(-2)(2)**, 40m (120ft)
- Damage: **Gd(+1)(10)**, sharp
- Shots: 1, returns like a boomerang

Many cocoons touch down on inhospitable terrain, and their passengers don't survive the critical six months it takes to grow in size so that a Miquiztetl can emerge. Tzitzimitl have never been observed to care for these cocoons, and generally ignore them. It is unknown how long Tzitzimitl exist in Miquiztetl form before feeling the urge to travel to a protected place and once again get wrapped inside a cocoon.

Presumably after decades of continuous growth inside this second cocoon, a Huëyimichin form will break out and fly away, never to touch the ground again. They are thought to live for hundreds of years. Very little is know about this final form, beyond the fact that Huëyimichin die from some sort of spontaneous combustion, self-immolating as they release a new generation of Tzitzimitl.

Language

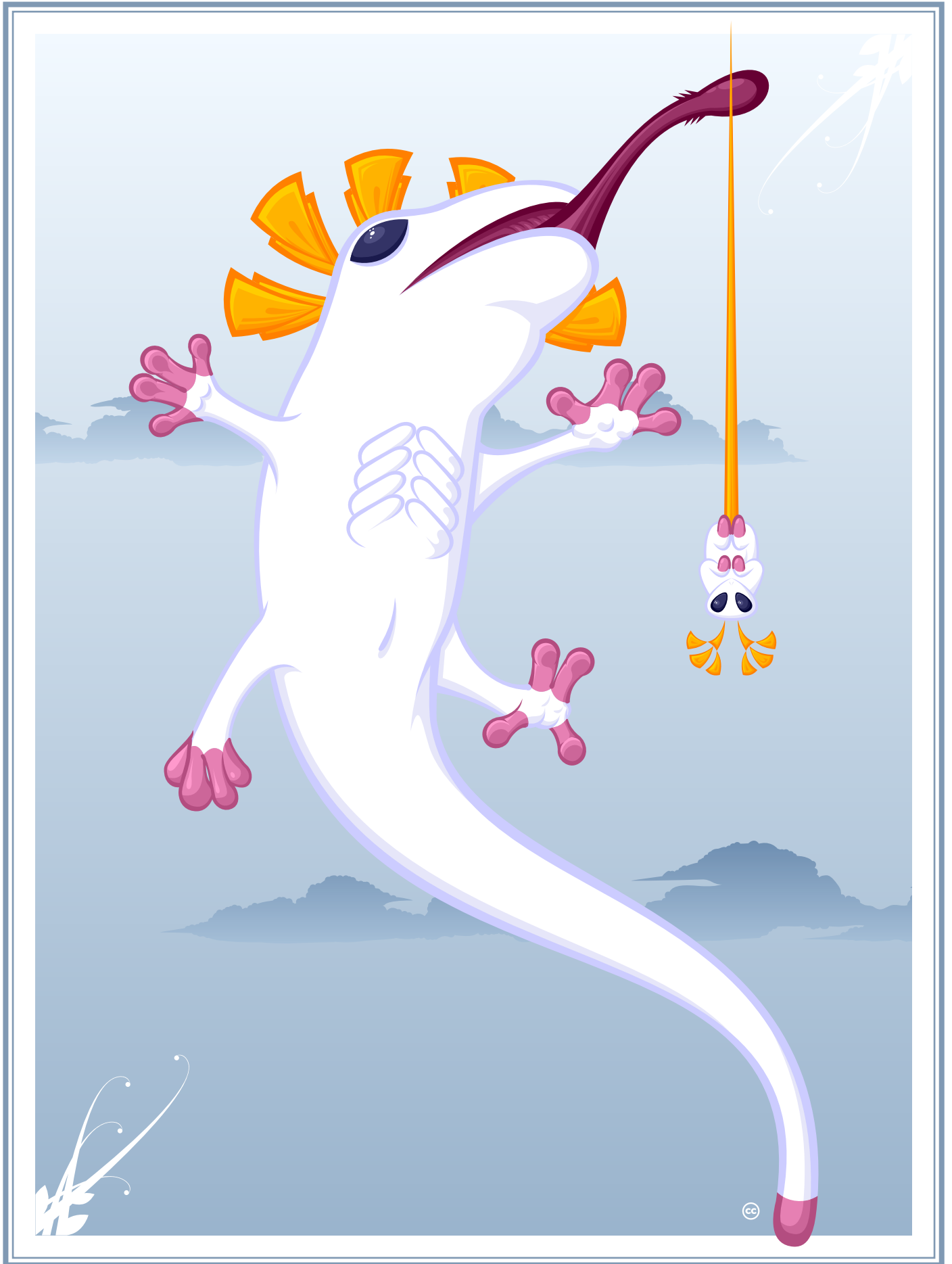
While it might be possible for someone from Haven to learn words and phrases in Tzitzihuatl, the language of the Tzitzimitl, comprehending their actual meaning would be difficult, because it makes extensive use of metaphor. For example, the phrase "You have made a scattering of jade" means that the person being addressed just said something precious; either because it was wise, elegant, important to hear, or all of the above. These metaphors extend to how Tzitzimitl organize their thoughts, such that any telepath from another species suffers a **(-3)** penalty when trying to read one of their minds.

Habitat & Range

The Tzitzimitl are native to Antipode, broken cousin to the world of Haven. Their planet traces an extreme elliptical orbit around the pair of stars known as Prime and Minor, almost reaching the orbit of the star Sentinel, near the edge of this trinary system. Anything surviving on Antipode is accustomed to temperature extremes that would kill a typical native of Haven. This world has an atmosphere with multiple tiers of stacked jet streams moving in different directions, some of them reaching hurricane speeds. Beyond that, it regularly experiences massive quakes, violent volcanic activity, and regions of noticeably different gravity in and around the glowing red spider's web of kilometers-deep crevices which criss-cross Antipode's pearly-black surface.

Like Haven, this world is alive. Unlike Haven, any Shaman attempting to touch her consciousness through his dreams risks being overwhelmed by her fractured, pain-fueled, nightmare visions. If Antipode's mind could ever be interpreted through some analog to Haven's nine totems, any such facets of her consciousness would have long since transformed into twisted mockeries of themselves.

It's likely that the Tzitzimitl, or at least their servitors, now control and make a home on Ghost, Haven's sister world. On at least three occasions, different types of Tzitzimitl servitors have invaded Haven, and some of those invaders yet live. It is unknown whether any Tzitzimitl have ever reached Haven herself.



Arts & Sciences

Gear

Tzitzimtl don't build much beyond the golden ornaments that float around them. Called *xōchitl*, these are woven from the filaments that come out of their bodies, are shaped by their mouths, stiffened with saliva, and given other unknown treatments which cause them to hover in place over a particular body part. At a minimum, each Tzitzimtl sports a headdress of gold triangles. Most *xōchitl* are purely decorative, but some act as containers for machinery, while others are used as weapons, such as knives and flying razor rings.

One Tzitzimtl construction known to just about everyone on Haven is the star chariot. These vehicles resemble golden geodesic spheres when *Huēyimichin* spit them skyward at escape velocity. By the time one lands on another world, most of the gold has burned away to reveal a pitted iron ball, with a triangular hatch that opens to unleash its horrors. While these vehicles have no propulsion of their own, the dozens of triangles on their surfaces can lift, tilt, and flip over to show a dark side, reflecting or absorbing energy as needed to sail the solar winds. They are piloted on their one-way trips by creatures dubbed the "charioteers", trapped within jade spheres. Tzitzimtl finish off and activate star chariots, but their servitors may actually do the bulk of the work, bringing their own special abilities into the process.

Magic

All Tzitzimtl have the Magic power, first manifesting in the *Miquiztetl* form. They follow **Eztli Otlī**, a magical Path unique to their species, have few limits on their choice of Spells, but only have access to two Sources: The Source Within and The Source Purloined. Despite this, having a society where everyone can cast spells has led to the development of some powerful magical techniques, including the ability to perform team actions involving hundreds of mages.

Customs & Culture

At the beginning of the Age of Wonder, in an effort to get past the limitations of The Source Purloined, almost all of Tzitzimtl society joined together to use Antipode herself as the fuel for a spell meant to transform their lives. They wanted to be able to draw power from her at will, in the way they imagined it worked when Haven's Shamans used The Source Beyond. They were wrong. Having no experience with how that Source operates, the Tzitzimtl treated the great spell as just another draining, and ended up damaging Antipode so badly that the planet cracked. Their world has been slowly dying ever since.

As a result of this, the Tzitzimtl have engaged in ever more desperate attempts to secure a new home. After the fiasco which turned the lush world of Manita into the graveyard world of Ghost, they have been experimenting with ways of eradicating Haven's sentient life-forms in order to take their place, not just in the biosphere, but as extensions of Haven and her magic.

Bluffing Your Way Through Tzitzihuatl

The Tzitzihuatl language is simulated by linking together real Nahuatl words and giving them a few twists. For example, I've used "Tzitzimtl" to describe both individuals and groups, but this is not the case in actual Nahuatl. Players who speak Nahuatl will probably find that quite annoying to read, and should feel free use some other language for Tzitzihuatl, or even invent their own Tzitzihuatl words for stories set in Haven.

Servitors

Tzitzimtl have conquered every other intelligent species on Antipode. Many live their entire lives without even being acknowledged by their masters, but when a Tzitzimtl wants something, the nearest servitor must heed the the call. Service can be anything from spending a week constructing a star chariot component, to invading another planet, to dying while serving as fuel for a spell.

Sample Ontlacua (Devourer) Servitor

(9,031 Character Points)

These creatures were unleashed upon Haven in the Second War of the Falling Stars.

B A S E W I P R Rep HP SP
Gd Gd Fa Fa Wk Wk Gd Dr Dr 114 15

Powers

Armor: Wo(+7)(100)

Edged Attacks: M1 \ Ph

Ontlacua Servitors are armored in overlapping crystalline plates, and have digging claws with gemstone-hard edges.

IR Sight: Gd(+1)(10)

Sense Magnetic Fields: Wo(+7)(100)

Devourers only see the infrared portion of the spectrum, mostly navigating underground by detecting changes in the magnetic fields of nearby planets and stars.

Speed: Gd(+1)(10)

Ontlacua can burrow their elephant-sized bodies through the ground faster than horses can run, but above ground, don't move any faster than Humans (**Fantastic** limitation).

Adapted to Vacuum: Ex(+4)(30)

Protection from Cold: Ex(+4)(30)

Protection from Fire: Ph(+5)(40)

Protection from Corrosives: Fa(+6)(60)

Protection from Disease: Fa(+6)(60)

Protection from Poison: Fa(+6)(60)

Devourers have survived the worst conditions on three planets, eating just about anything that crosses their path. They can consume thousands of times their own body weight in a day, processing what they devour with almost complete efficiency.

Sample Cocoliztli (Mind Shrike) Servitor

(2,534 Character Points)

These creatures were unleashed upon Haven in the Third War of the Falling Stars, as carriers of the Mind Virus.

B	A	S	E	W	I	P	R	Evil Rep	HP	SP
Wk	Wk	Wk	Wk	Ex	Ex	Ex	Ex	Dr	8	120

Powers**Astral Body: Gd(+1)(10)**

Cocoliztli Servitors are beings of pure thought who infect the minds of other living beings, with a preference for people. On their own, they cannot affect the physical world. Mind Shrikes cannot be hurt by physical weapons nor blocked by physical barriers, but they can be hurt by mental attacks and blocked by Mental Armor.

Telepathy: Ou(+3)(20)

A Cocoliztli can reach into the minds of any creatures within 400 m (1,200 ft), and has several mental abilities:

- Mental Armor: **Gr**
- Mental Blast: **Ou**
- Mental Overload: **Ou**

Mind Virus: Ex(+4)(30)

Someone in telepathic contact with a Mind Shrike, who then fails a Willpower check against an **Extraordinary** mental attack, will be under that Servitor's control, and her eyes will give off a softly glowing aura shaped like a pair of spread wings. In a day, she will host a new-born Cocoliztli that has all the traits and powers of the original, and that aura will glow like a fire. The Host gets **Ex** Strength, Endurance, and Speed boosts. Stunning or knocking a Mind Shrike unconscious through telepathic attacks will free anyone under its control —except for a host. Freeing a host requires killing the Servitor with a weapon that can affect astral creatures. If that isn't possible, destroying the body of the host, when the Cocoliztli has nowhere else to go, kills them both.

Sample Tleyo (Fire-Starters) Servitor

(2,859 Character Points)

These creatures were unleashed upon Haven in the Fourth War of the Falling Stars, and brought with them the Unquenchable Fire.

B	A	S	E	W	I	P	R	Evil Rep	HP	SP
Wk	Wk	Wk	Wk	Wk	Wk	Wk	Wk	Dr	Dr	8 7

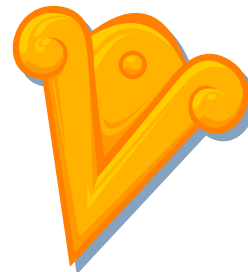
Powers**Body of Fire: Ph(+5)(40)****Protection from Fire: Wo(+7)(100)****Protection from Cold: Wo(+7)(100)****Protection from Water: Wo(+7)(100)**

Tleyo Servitors are fist-sized, beetle-like creatures that spit out a sticky, flammable liquid which they regularly brush across their bodies. When snapped together, Fire-Starters mandibles generate enough sparks to light up the liquid and create the infamous multicolored flames of the Unquenchable Fire. They somehow produce more flammable liquid than a creature a thousand times their size could even contain. These Servitors are unaffected by any flames short of a volcano's, and their own flames cannot be put out with water. In addition, they can —

- Project Fire: **Ex**
Spit flammable liquid up to 600 m (1,800 ft) away.

Jump: Fa(+6)(60)

Tleyo can jump 1,200 m (3,600 ft) in a single bound.



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This should go without saying, but this work is a supplement to a *game*, **Ten Thousand Worlds**, and is meant to make a rainy afternoon more enjoyable for you and a few friends. This game requires you to use your imagination. If you have trouble telling the difference between fantasy and reality, then this game is probably not for you.