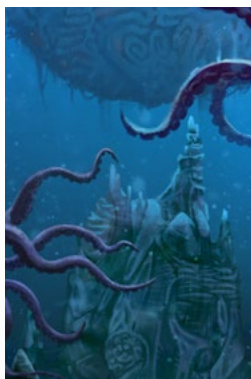


NUMENÉRA



THE OCTOPI OF THE NINTH WORLD

BY MONTE COOK



A BRIEF LOOK AT THE OCTOPUS



Octopi in the Ninth World, page 171

Credits

Writer/Designer
Monte Cook

Creative Director
Shanna Germain

Editor
Dennis Detwiler

Proofreader
Ray Vallese

Cover Artist
Jacob Atienza

Graphic Designer
Bear Weiter

Artists
Sam Cullum,
Dreamstime.com,
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WHY OCTOPI?

The moment I knew I truly understood the setting of the Ninth World (because it takes a while for a creator to truly understand their own creation—any creator who doesn't realize that probably hasn't yet reached that point) was when I wrote a simple bit of text for the *Numenera* corebook. That text read:

Many believe that the octopi bear little affection for humans. Hundreds of years ago, when the first human encountered them and was able to establish some kind of communication (thanks to a numenera device), the only response he got from the octopus was an enigmatic, "Oh. You're back."

That was the moment everything gelled, because right there, that little passage answers one of the more common questions asked of the setting: how could there still be humans, in their recognizable form, in a billion years? The answer: there couldn't. The humans of the Ninth World simply haven't occupied the Earth for that long. They've been gone. Many—perhaps even all—of the prior worlds were made up of nonhumans.

In a way, then, we learn that that common question—how can humans still be here?—isn't even the right question to be asking. Are the inhabitants of the Ninth World even the same species as 21st-century humans? Did humans evolve a second time? What's going on here? Time travel? Stasis? A really deep space voyage made as a round trip? Those are the real questions.

Secondly, we get a glimpse at the only known species that has remained constant during all that time. Here in the 21st century, we know that octopi are already extremely



Throughout this book, you'll see page references to various items accompanied by this symbol. These are page references to the *Numenera* corebook, where you can find additional details about that item, place, creature, or concept. It isn't necessary to look up the referenced items in the corebook, but doing so will provide useful information for character creation and gameplay.

old as a species. It's not hard to believe that they would be the one species left a billion years from now. They're intelligent, adaptable, and resilient. It's also easy to imagine that as all sorts of strange things happened on the surface, they stuck to the ocean deeps and stayed out of harm's way.

Of course, the octopi of the Ninth World aren't really the same as they are now. They have indeed evolved and adapted in strange ways. Although we know that today's octopi are tool users and builders, we see that in the Ninth World they've built cities and crafted technologies. What's more, they've mastered other species. Some have developed telepathic abilities. They are, in many respects, the true masters of all of the ocean, and that's the majority of the planet.

THE OCTOPI AND THEIR WORLD

The entirety of the world, to (most) octopi, is beneath the waves. The surface has little or no importance to them. Most rarely think



of it. A few of the curious or adventurous might seek to explore the surface world, a few of the ambitious or insane might want to colonize it, but most just simply do not care.

Underwater, the octopi are omnipresent and extremely powerful. Not because of physical might, but because of intelligence and organization. They're smarter than most sea creatures and their organization is vast. They develop their own impressive technologies. They manipulate creatures to act against other creatures, playing one off the other to get what they want in vast, almost incomprehensible machinations.

Many marine creatures, intelligent and not so intelligent, serve the octopuses. Of course, many—particularly the less intelligent ones—likely don't even know it. Creatures from fish to crustaceans to cephalopods are herded and manipulated by the octopodes into living their entire lives where and how the octopuses wish it. With time on their side, being essentially ageless beings ruling over a billion-year (or possibly longer) empire, they have likely engineered entire species by influencing the tide of evolution one way or another.

That does not mean, however, that octopi associate with other creatures. On the contrary, their manipulation and use of other species means that all other creatures are so far below them that none are worth interacting with. They pay attention to other creatures the way they might pay attention to the currents or subtle changes in temperature.

OCTOPUS HISTORY

No one knows the history of the octopi, and they aren't telling. What they do say is that they have always been as sophisticated and advanced as they are now. They have, in their own minds, no origin tale.

Even though the scale and scope of time involved makes it seem unlikely, the octopi have watched the evolution of other species. They have seen them come and go. They've watched as new civilizations have risen and fallen—reshaping the globe more than once with their knowledge—and for the most part, they've stayed well clear of all of them.

From their perspective, a new intelligent race evolves or arrives from elsewhere,

flourishes for a few million years, and then either leaves or dies out. In that time, the new creatures likely make quite a fuss—consuming natural resources, changing the environment, populating the land and the sea, inflicting incredible destruction in wars or raising up fantastic creations, and so on—but to the octopi, even ten million years is a short, temporary stint. Thus, octopuses have little to share about the prior worlds, even if they wanted to. To them, the worlds are fleeting. They are simply not worth noting. Some people believe that long ago, octopuses were solitary, nonsocial creatures that communicated through their skin's ability to shift colors. If true, that all ended when octopi evolved telepathic powers.

They still have the means of communicating subtly through changes in skin color and texture, but they do so rarely. They've never had a verbal language and their need to write is quite limited. Even today, among the most sophisticated octopuses, perhaps one in ten can read and write.

OCTOPUS OUTLOOK

There are many varieties of octopuses, but they share basic physical and personality traits. Most believe that their form has not changed drastically in the last billion and a half years. Generally speaking, octopuses are aloof to the point of xenophobia. They rarely willingly mix with other intelligent species (aquatic or otherwise). Interaction with non-octopodes seems to be a futile waste of time to most. It's like talking to a stone, or—perhaps more accurately—a spark from a fire before it winks out.

Even among their own kind, octopi are not the most social creatures. Each lives alone in its own small space and enjoys solitude. Procreation among octopi is discouraged because they are essentially immortal, so breeding risks overpopulation. Procreation is also a dangerous time for octopi, for ancient instincts encourage risky breeding behaviors that can kill an individual (male or female) that is not careful.

Only over hundreds of millions of years did they learn that true success and security needed at least a certain amount of cooperation. And that required leadership—and thus a queen.

The long view of time that the octopi possess is unprecedented, and is very likely impossible for a human to truly comprehend.

The plural of octopus can be octopi, octopuses, or octopodes.

Nilstones, page 6

The Queen of All Octopuses is the sovereign ruler of all octopuses. For more details, see Into the Deep, page 46.

The Bay of Peyclin is a deep and cold body of water that is home to an intelligent and aggressive species of octopus. For more details, see the Ninth World Guidebook, page 194.

Octopus, page 12

Her Majesty, Queen of All Octopuses: as standard octopus, except: level 10 in all regards; health 45; Armor 5; telepathic powers and level 10 nilstones grant telekinesis at long range, a mental blast (10 points of Intellect damage that ignores Armor) at long range, and three or four other abilities as needed



Draolis, page 148

Eldan Firth, page 171

The Coral Cathedral is the underwater palace of the Queen of All Octopuses. For more details, see Into the Deep, page 46.

Crophus: as standard octopus, except: Intellect-based tasks as level 8, all other tasks as level 6; health 35; Armor 3; telepathic powers and level 8 nilstones grant clairvoyance at an almost unlimited range; and two or three other abilities as needed

COMMUNICATION AND ORGANIZATION

Using their telepathy, enhanced with nilstones, octopi can relay messages across vast distances. This allows the Queen of All Octopuses to be kept abreast of activities happening literally on the other side of the planet. She is, thus, not only aware but at least in some ways involved in the actions of the seemingly rogue “nation” of octopi in the Bay of Peyclin. And of course, there are many such octopus nations and kingdoms beneath the waves, seemingly independent to one degree or another thanks to—if nothing else—vast distances separating them, but in truth all serve the queen.

It is odd to think of octopuses—being the aloof and solitary creatures that they are—as having any organization at all, let alone one that allows them to exert influence throughout all reaches of the undersea world. Because of this, their organization does not resemble anything in human culture. An individual octopus may not see or speak to another individual for hundreds of years. It is a loose confederacy at best. Still, all recognize the value of the queen and her court, for the order and stability that she provides makes life—in the long, long view—better, easier, and safer for all octopi.

THE QUEEN'S COURT

The queen is aloof and arrogant in the extreme. She rarely speaks with anyone other than to give orders, but she receives vast amounts of information on a continual basis from all over the world. Her intellect is such that she can store and process all of that information. Rumors suggest that her brain is actually tied into an extradimensional biomechanical device that does data storage and processing. The Octopoidal Queen has a palace off the coast of Draolis, in the deep inlet called Eldan Firth. She travels extensively, however, and has many other residences. One such place is associated with the Coral Cathedral, but that's just one of many dozens located all across the world. Few octopuses know the locations of all of them.

In addition to the queen, there are five octopuses of note worth detailing.

Crophus: Crophus is as arrogant as the queen herself, and keeps his own council most of the time. He spends his days observing and gathering information regarding some of the other intelligent underwater creatures, like the skeane and the voraordun. He would like to see octopodes take a firmer hand in subjugating such species, so that—for example—no octopus was needed to serve as a guard or warrior. He would, if he could, see slave races perform such duties.

CROPHUS



NIELM

Niellm: Scheming and sinister, Niellm would secretly like to become queen herself one day. She spends much of her time in the queen's palace in Eldan Firth, attempting to garner secrets to use for herself. Still, she is outwardly friendly to the queen, and a useful advisor and informant. Of all current members of the court, she is the one most intrigued by the inhabitants of the surface and their use of the numenera. More than all others, she sees the strange but undeniable parallels between octopodes and humans in their ubiquity across and fragile mastery of their respective environments. However, she would not be nearly so generous as to suggest that humans are as intelligent or powerful as the octopi.

Yufrenics: Incredibly intelligent, even by the standards of his own kind, Yufrenics is bizarre, and perhaps mad. He works with all manner of technologies, and spends a great deal of time exploring other dimensions. The queen loves him and his insane creativity. He is, in turn, entirely loyal to her. Yufrenics himself provided the queen with her current array of nilstones and any other devices she might use. He has a vast network of deep sea laboratories thousands of miles west of the *Steadfast*, with resources and personnel that would rival those of an entire surface kingdom.

Erranamol: For an octopus, Erranamol is downright altruistic. While he fully supports his kind's manipulation of other species, he argues that it should be done for mutual benefit. Erranamol believes that the only way to truly advance his kind is to advance and aid others as well. An ecosystem that is safe and fruitful helps all species, he would argue. Most scoff at his long telepathic speeches on the topic, but the queen apparently finds him amusing.

Derrob: Fiercely loyal to the queen, Derrob is interested first and foremost in the advancement of her kind. She focuses much of her time and attention on octopus warriors, their skills, and their weaponry. She, and she alone on the court, would like to see her kind develop a more cohesive military. It is believed that she has strong ties to the octopuses of Peyclin Bay.

OCTOPUS TECHNOLOGY

People who encounter octopuses usually believe that they have inexplicable, mystical powers. Even those learned in the ways of the numenera note that octopuses do not usually wield recognizable devices of any kind. This is because octopus technology takes two forms, and neither presents itself as obvious devices using electricity with buttons or screens.

Niellm: as standard octopus, except: stealth and deception tasks as level 8, all other tasks as level 5; health 32; Armor 2; telepathic powers and level 8 nilstones grant clairvoyance, disguise, and invisibility powers; and two other abilities as needed

Erranamol: as standard octopus, except: Intellect-based tasks as level 7, all other tasks as level 5; health 32; telepathic powers and level 7 nilstones grant Armor 3 and two or three other abilities as needed

Derrob: as standard octopus, except: Intellect-based tasks as level 7; attacks, and all defense, in all other tasks as level 6; health 40; telepathic powers and level 8 nilstones grant a forceblast (9 points of damage), Armor 4, and two or three other (probably combat-related) abilities as needed

Yufrenics: as standard octopus, except: Intellect-based tasks as level 10, all other tasks as level 7; health 30; telepathic powers and level 8 nilstones grant Armor 4, and at least three or four other abilities as needed

Steadfast, page 136

YUFRENICS

DERROB

ERRANAMOL

BIOTECHNOLOGY

Through unknown means, octopuses shape and control living organisms like tools. The Coral Cathedral, for example, was formed by creating specific types of coral and controlling them to craft particular shapes and spaces. Another form of biotechnology arises from the octopuses' ability to alter themselves.

They closely guard these secrets, but when they need to, an octopus might be able to use a subtle application of a specialized substance to gain the ability to fight better, swim faster, or do something even more dramatic. These alterations are usually temporary, basically making them seem like cyphers from a human perspective. However, they are difficult for nonhumans to use, as they are small capsules that must be broken, with a tiny bit of liquid inside that is designed to be absorbed through the skin. For a human to use a capsule, it must be placed in the eye and then broken so the liquid enters the body directly. This is painful.

Some of the biotechnological alterations are permanent, more or less. Over the millennia, these alterations have enhanced octopus brains, physiques, sizes, and ability. The creatures have, in a sense, taken control of their own evolution.

One secret that the octopodes guard particularly well is their virtual immortality. For all intents and purposes, they have arrested the very concept of aging, and they did so long ago. Although modern octopodes are still vulnerable to harm, barring violence, they do not die. The current queen, for example, is well over a million years old.

Niols: Niols are water sacs that allow octopi to breathe out of water and keep their flesh moist. Without a niol, an octopus can survive for only a few minutes out of the water. But so equipped, they can last for two to three hours.

ULTRATERRESTRIAL TECHNOLOGY

Long ago, octopuses broke down the barriers between universes. They explored these strange regions and eventually discovered a world called Ujehaar. The thing they found most significant about Ujehaar is a mineral called illavium. Through means mysterious, this material hosts nanoparticles that obey the

will of an octopus. The octopi have used it to create objects called nilstones, but non-octopi who have gotten their hands on illavium have been able to use it to create objects that heal damage, or add the mineral to existing objects so they heal existing damage.

Nilstones: Physical octopus technology uses what are called nilstones. Small objects of what look like mundane stone, the nilstones contain millions of ultraterrestrial nanoparticles receptive to octopus telepathy. Depending on the design, a nilstone can be used as a weapon, a tool, or even more fantastic things.

Spatial Expansion: Octopus technology sometimes incorporates an unknown means of expanding space. This is not so much an extradimensional space, nor does it create a "bigger on the inside than the outside" effect. Instead, the device literally creates more space. It expands the size of the universe on a minute scale. Instantly created atmosphere (or, much more likely, water) comes into being to fill the new space. If this technology is used near the ocean floor (or, in theory, on the ground on the surface), land also is created by the effect, as similar as possible to the original land at the point of activation. The device does not create living creatures or plants, nor any kind of organic material. Octopuses use this technology to instantly create cavelike homes within what were once tiny crevices in a small rock, or to turn a small cave into a much larger one. They use it as a weapon to create empty spaces inside the bodies of their enemies. They use it for defense to put space between themselves and a foe. Use of this technology over the last billion years or so has actually increased the size of Earth, although no one knows for sure how much.

Swim Portals: Octopuses have perfected the technology of instantaneous travel by harnessing transdimensional spatial warping. They call these "swim portals," and they are designed so that only octopi can use them. Most are hoops of illavium no larger than 2 feet (60 cm) across. By swimming through one narrow hoop and exiting from another, an octopus can cross vast distances. Swim portals help the queen rule what is very likely the largest empire on Earth.

The natural lifespan of an octopus is 15 to 20 years. Advances in self-engineering, however, have increased this to a virtually unlimited number of years, making octopi essentially immortal. This "gift" is bestowed upon octopuses on behalf of the queen by her representatives. It is one of the prime (but subtle) ways in which the queen maintains control over her kind. Octopi serve their monarch because she literally grants them everlasting life. Isolated "rogue" octopi who reject the queen's rule do not have this gift, but the draw of avoiding death is so compelling that they never last very long before returning to the fold, as it were. And of course, the stalwarts die in 15 to 20 years, which is but a blink of an eye in the way that immortal octopi look at time.

OCTOPUS WEAPONRY AND DEFENSE

In melee, octopus warriors use harpoonlike weapons or grapple with their tentacles. That said, they rarely engage in melee. Most of their offensive and defensive capabilities are telepathically triggered nanotechnological devices of their creation. This means that only beings with some kind of telepathic or mental abilities, or those trained at harnessing the power of nanoparticles (such as many nanos), can activate these weapons.

Octopi warriors can affix devices called phlun to their mouths, envenoming their bite with a level 4 poison that inflicts 4 points of Speed damage (ignores Armor).

Rarely, a warrior wields a special underwater dart thrower that works just like one might on the surface, but fires easily through the water.

OCTOPUS ARTIFACTS

BOILING ROD

Level: 1d6 + 3

Form: Short baton with a glowing red nodule at one tip

Effect: Inflicts points of damage equal to the artifact's level on anyone touched by the tip. Use of a boiling rod underwater (which is most of the time) creates a cloud of steamy bubbles that obscure vision like fog. They persist for one round after each use.

Depletion: 1 in 1d20

BURSTER

Level: 1d6 + 4

Form: Pair of synth spheres with a curved handle

Effect: Affects a target within short range, causing a terrible rent to burst in its flesh. Against a nonliving target, the burster likewise tears matter apart, expanding the space between the existing portions. The potential victim makes a Might defense roll. On a success, nothing occurs. On a failure, the victim sustains damage equal to the artifact's level.

Depletion: 1 in 1d20

POLAR TOUCH

Level: 1d6 + 3

Form: Long pike with a softly glowing nodule at the tip rather than a sharp point

Effect: The tip of this long melee weapon drastically and immediately lowers the temperature of whatever it touches. A target struck by this weapon suffers points of damage equal to the artifact's level. Use of a polar touch underwater (which is most of the time) also freezes the water around the target. Characters who fail a Might defense roll are hindered for one round, which increases the difficulty of all physical actions by one step.

Depletion: 1 in 1d20

OCTOPUS CYPHERS

SAFE DISTANCE

Level: 1d6 + 2

Usable: A cube about 1.5 inches (4 cm) to a side, made of utterly ordinary stone

Effect: The space between the user and an adjacent target increases to a long distance. The device literally "stretches" space to accomplish this—or to put it another way, the device expands space. This is a permanent change.

TRANSPPOSITION

Level: 1d6

Usable: A cube about 1.5 inches (4 cm) to a side, made of utterly ordinary stone

Effect: The user and one object or creature within long range switch places in space.

All octopi spend at least a portion of their lives in an alternate universe, seemingly comprised entirely of liquid, that they call the Roil. For additional information on the Roil, see Into the Deep, page 52.



THE BAY OF PEYCLIN

The Bay of Peyclin is home to a very intelligent and aggressive nation of octopi. The waters of the bay are very deep and cold, and the octopi are at home in these dark depths, as well as in the shallows near the shores. They have communities and underwater fortresses in both places. These octopi want to establish a foothold on dry land, but the initial step that is required—creating a structure that could be filled with water to enable them to survive—proves difficult.

In the meantime, to explore dry land, the octopi use devices called niols to let them breathe and keep their flesh moist. Still, they move slowly and awkwardly on land.

To deal with this issue, the Peyclin octopi have engineered a creature called an apricari. This construct has almost no brain of its own, but instead has a place for an octopus to fulfill that role. Essentially, the octopus drives the apricari like a living vehicle, moving about on dry land. The apricari recycles water, so the octopus within can survive indefinitely.

Unlike most of their kind, the Peyclin octopi raid ships and sometimes small coastal villages.

The ocean floor in this area holds as many numenera-filled ruins as can be found on dry land—perhaps more. The octopuses explore and sometimes inhabit these places.

UNDERWATER LOCALES

The Scuttling City: An interconnected network of spheres made of coral, glass, stone, metal, and synth, the Scuttling City moves along the ocean floor by means of mechanical tentacles on the underside of each sphere, although at any given time, only about half the spheres are close enough to the floor to use them. The spheres shift and move, so the city is always changing in configuration. The octopi use it as a center for numenera research and craftwork of all kinds.

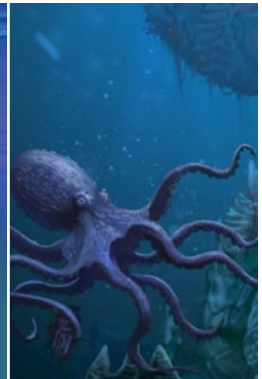
The Crystal Garden: A collection of natural crystals, ranging from gigantic shards at least 50 feet (15 m) long to tiny slivers, lie scattered in a massive jumble in the middle of the bay. The octopi tend a collection of bioluminescent fish here, and the lights play in strange and amazing colors, particularly for those who wear special goggles developed by the octopi that transform the colors and lights into a mind-expanding experience. Participating in this experience may be the closest the octopi of the bay get to a religious ceremony.

Guhaquah: Made entirely of coral and stone, with a single metal sphere at its center, Guhaquah is the throne city of the octopi. The octopi are ruled by a council of eight individuals that meld into a single fugue entity when together, wielding an array of powerful psychic abilities.

The interior of the sphere is filled with air, but it is also free of gravity. The octopi are extremely adept at maneuvering in a gravityless environment, doing so as easily as they move through the water.



OCTOPUS PLAYER CHARACTERS



In a campaign where underwater exploration will be common, an octopus player character (PC) might work well. Obviously, the deeps are the octopi's native environment, and they can maneuver easily and survive the dangers there better than a human. As is the case with a visitant or other nonhumans, a PC wishing to play an octopus should take the Octopus descriptor.

OCTOPUS (DESCRIPTOR)

You are an eight-armed cephalopod. While you are strong for your size, you are relatively small and weak compared to, say, a human. You move easily through the water and can use a natural camouflage to hide. Your body is surprisingly malleable, allowing you to move through very tight spaces. Your senses are sharp, particularly your sense of touch, which is so sensitive that you can detect movement around you in the water.

Octopodes are often arrogant and aloof, feared and misunderstood by most other creatures.

Agile: +2 to your Speed Pool.

Intelligent: +2 to your Intellect Pool.

Fragile and Weak: -2 to your Might Pool.

Skill: You are trained in swimming, climbing, and contortion.

Skill: You are trained in perception while in the water.

Ink: While underwater, you can fill an immediate radius with dark ink that blocks vision. The ink dissipates within one minute. Your ability to do this is restored after you take a 10-hour rest.

Limited Telepathy: You can speak telepathically with any other octopus within short range.

Inability: You don't work well with non-octopi. When dealing with such creatures, the difficulty of pleasant social interaction is increased by one step.

Inability: You have a sensitive, relatively delicate system. The difficulty of Might defense rolls is increased by one step.

Inability: Your innate telepathy makes you receptive to mental attacks. The difficulty of Intellect defense rolls is increased by one step.

Dry Land Limitations: You move only an immediate distance on dry land, and cannot jump. You have a weakness in both Might and Speed. You cannot survive longer than an hour out of the water.

Initial Link to the Starting Adventure:

From the following list of options, choose how you became involved in the first adventure.

1. These surface dwellers would be lost without you while they're underwater.
2. One of the other PCs saved your life, and you grudgingly want to repay this debt.
3. The other PCs know something you want to know.
4. You have your own agenda, but the other PCs were headed in the same direction.

WIELDS A NILSTONE (FOCUS)

Octopuses use ultradimensional technologies to obtain small stones called nilstones. Activated by octopus telepathy, these tiny devices grant great nanite-based powers to a wielder that masters their use. Traditionally, only octopuses can use nilstones, but it might be possible for a

In a campaign where the PCs will spend most of their time on the surface, an octopus PC could be mounted within an apricari.

Apricari, page 11

A weakness is the opposite of Edge. All expenditures from the Pool of the related stat increase by 1.

rare specimen from another species to utilize them, assuming they have inherent telepathic abilities.

Most of those who wield nilstones are nanos or jacks, but glaives could certainly use many of their combat-related abilities as well.

Connection: Choose one of the following.

1. Pick one other PC. This PC seems to covet your nilstone. You keep it out of their reach whenever possible.
2. Pick one other PC. Your nilstone shudders and shakes when they are next to you. You have no idea why.
3. Pick one other PC. When using your True Telepathy power, you can contact them telepathically within a mile range.
4. Pick one other PC. No matter what you do, you cannot communicate with them telepathically.

Additional Equipment: You possess a nilstone. This ultraterrestrial object taps into your inherent mental abilities and grants you the powers detailed below. Without the nilstone, you cannot use any of the abilities granted by this focus, so guard it well. If you lose your nilstone, you can attempt to gain a new one at the Coral Cathedral.

Minor Effect Suggestion: Your natural telepathy gives you a few details about what an opponent or nearby bystander is thinking.

Major Effect Suggestion: A foe in combat is stunned by your telepathic might, losing their next action.

Tier 1: True Telepathy (1 Intellect point). You extend your natural telepathy so that it has long range, and allows you to communicate with any intelligent being for up to ten minutes. Action to initiate.

Tier 2: Psychokinesis (2 Intellect points). You can exert force on objects within short range.

Once activated, your power has an effective Might Pool of 10, a Might Edge of 1, and an Effort of 2 (approximately equal to the strength of a fit, capable, adult human), and you can use it to move objects, push against objects, and so on. For example, you could lift and pull a light object anywhere within range to yourself or move a heavy object (like a piece of furniture) about 10 feet (3 m). This power lacks the fine control to wield a weapon or move objects with much speed, so in most situations, it's not a means of attack. You can't use this ability on your own body. The power lasts for one hour or until its Might Pool is depleted, whichever comes first. Action.

Tier 3: Forceblast (3 Intellect points). You launch an attack of pure psychokinetic force at a target within long range, inflicting 6 points of damage. Action.

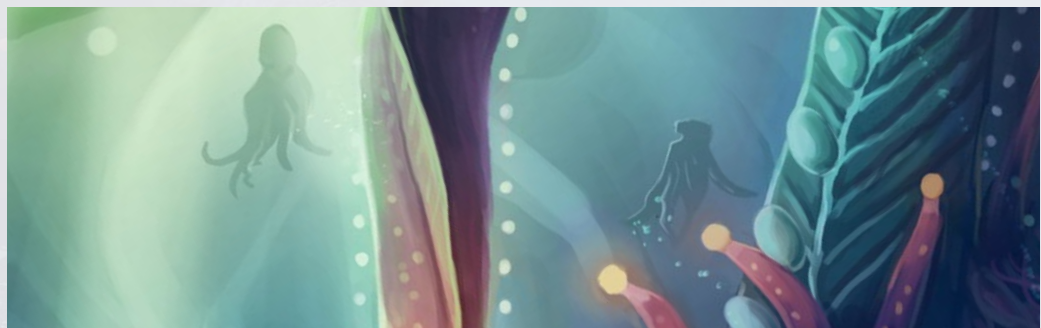
Tier 4: Clairvoyance (4 Intellect points). You can see a location familiar to you within 10 miles (16 km) as if you were there. You can rotate your field of vision but you cannot move your point of view. This lasts as long as you concentrate (taking no other actions). Action.

Minor Kinetic Shield. You surround yourself with a telekinetic force field. You gain +1 to Armor. Enabler.

Tier 5: Multitasking (5 Intellect points). You use your complex sensory organs and the neural network that runs through your arms, enhanced with the power of your nilstone, to take two additional actions in the round in which you use this ability.

Tier 6: Greater Kinetic Shield. Your telekinetic force field now offers +3 to Armor rather than +1. Enabler.

Coral Cathedral, Into the Deep, page 46



APRICARI

4 (12)

Below the dark waves lie deeper breeding pits where octopi forge living things the way humans might forge a tool or a sword. Apricari are some of the most successful spawn from these pits, brought to the surface in shining white egg-sacs and released on the shore.

Octopi of the Peyclin Bay (and perhaps elsewhere) engineer these biomechanical beasts so they can operate on dry land. The apricari are somewhat like mounts and somewhat like vehicles. Octopi crawl inside the beasts—for octopi can seep through extremely small spaces—and control them from within. Left alone, an apricari is as docile as a herd animal, and likely far stupider.

Motive: Subservient to an octopus

Environment: Near the shore

Health: 15

Damage Inflicted: 4 points

Armor: 1

Movement: Short

Modifications: Perception as level 3, Might defense as level 5.

Combat: Slow and clumsy, apricari operate as though designed by creatures unfamiliar with moving on dry land—because they were. Still, in combat they have a mouth full of sharp teeth and sharp hooves as well. More important, they are usually controlled by crafty and devious octopi.

A bit like an octopus, an apricari can spray a stream of black ink at any target within short range. The octopi devised this ability as a means of escape, but it had a wholly unexpected (but not unwelcome) result. The ink affects humans in a strange way: a target sprayed who fails an Intellect defense roll suffers 6 points of Intellect damage and suddenly hates the one thing they value most. It might be wealth, food, a loved one, success, violence, beauty, or anything else. This effect lasts until all 6 lost Intellect points are restored. Once affected by the ink, humans become immune to the effect thereafter. Apricari do not see well. It is up to the octopus in control to use its (excellent) vision to guide them.

Interaction: Either apricari are controlled by an octopus and have no ability to interact, or they are near-mindless animals that are almost too stupid to be frightened by danger or enticed by food.

Use: Apricari were developed by octopi just recently, and their use is still experimental and exploratory. One day, however, an entire invasion of apricari-mounted octopi might thunder into human coastal lands.

Loot: Within the workings of an apricari are 1d6 cyphers and one or two oddities.

Well before an encounter with apricari, GMs should ask players what their characters value most.

Cyphers, page 278

GM Intrusion: *The apricari not only bites the character but tramples her as well, inflicting an additional 4 points of damage, knocking her prone, and trapping her beneath the beast.*



OCTOPUS

3 (12)

If the seas have a ruler, it is the octopus. Their billion-year empire spans the entirety of all seas, and their queen rules over all of it. They are, however, xenophobic and aloof, preferring to keep to themselves. Thus, many people call them the “quiet empire.”

Octopuses vary in size, color, and, to some degree, shape. For the most part, they all have eight extremely flexible limbs, a surprisingly malleable body, two sophisticated eyes, and a beaklike mouth. They can change their color and, to a large extent, their shape to appear as a rock, a fish, or some other creature. They perceive not just with their eyes but, in a limited way, with all their skin. They think not only with the brain in their head but also with the distributed neural network that runs throughout their limbs.

Octopuses are extremely intelligent, often possessing mental powers a human would deem supernatural. Thanks to their advancement in various sciences, they are also virtually immortal.

Motive: Hungers for flesh and solitude

Environment: Anywhere in the ocean

Health: 15

Damage Inflicted: 4 points

Movement: Long underwater

Modifications: Stealth as level 5; all defense, perception, knowledge, and Intellect-based tasks as level 4.

Combat: All octopi can use camouflage to help them hide. They can attack with their beak, but if they must fight, most use weapons such as short spears. All octopi can emit a cloud of ink in the water that blocks vision in an immediate area. Many octopuses carry a [nilstone](#) that lets them extend their telepathy into something that can affect the physical realm. Nilstone powers might include:

- Psychokinesis (uses their own strength, but at long range)
- Forceblast (at long range, inflicting 4 points of damage)
- Clairvoyance (can see something occurring up to 10 miles [16 km] away)
- Kinetic shield (Armor 3)

In addition, octopi have specialized [weaponry](#) (often nilstone based) that they can wield.

Interaction: All octopuses can communicate telepathically with each other, and about one in five can communicate in a similar fashion with other creatures—although they rarely do so. Language does not seem to be a barrier in this form of communication, although sometimes octopi lie and pretend that it is, mostly when they do not want communication to happen.

Use: A lone octopus knows the secret of how to get into an underwater installation, but getting him to talk to the PCs at all is difficult enough—and getting him to give up the valuable information may require diplomacy, trade, a favor, or serious intimidation.

Loot: A few octopuses will carry 1d6 + 4 [abadis](#).

Nilstone, page 6

Octopus weaponry, page 7

An abadis is a pearlescent lozenge about the size of a nut, traded for value like shins. For more details, see Into the Deep, page 13.

GM Intrusion: The octopus produces a small substance that it absorbs through its skin to fully restore its health, double its speed, or double its melee damage. These latter effects last at least an hour.

