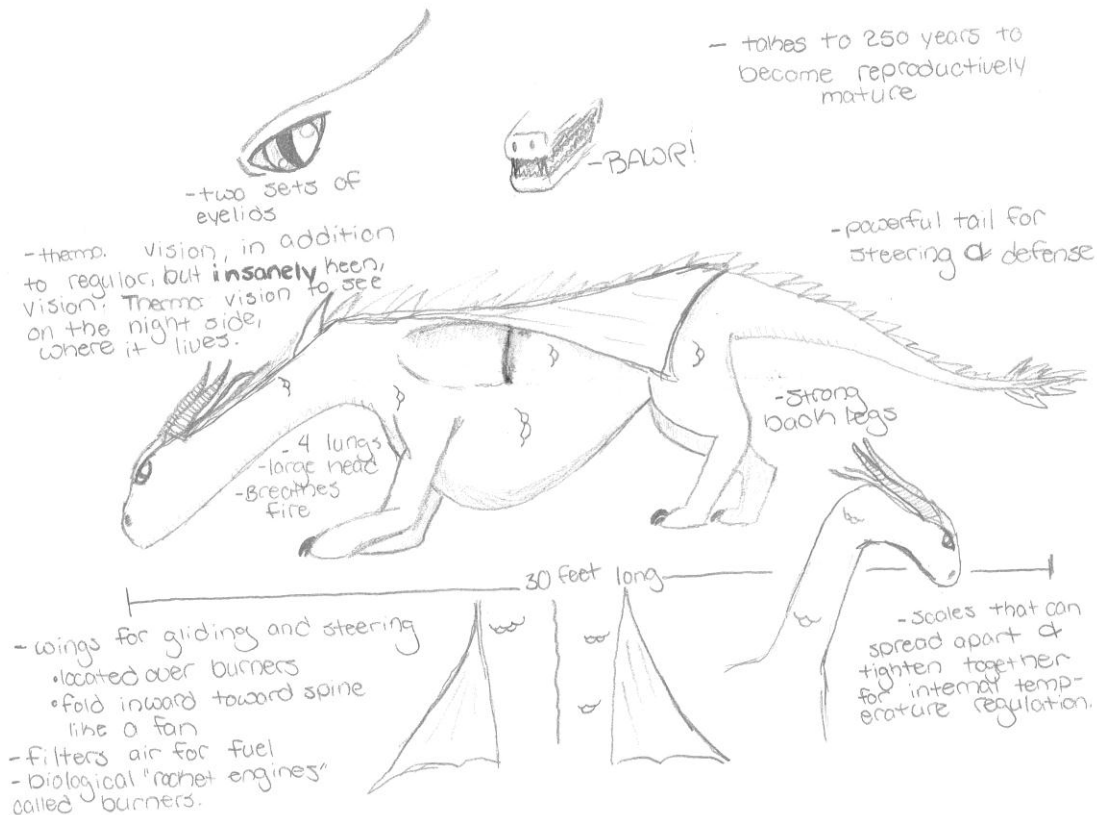


Ystal

Ystal is a water-filled, ring-shaped planet that orbits around a still core of magma. The magma within Ystal warms the planet, making the islands within the innermost portion of the planet the hottest locations and the islands towards the edge colder. All water – called Devata’s Band – on Ystal is palatable and the currents flow in one constant direction. A nearby star marks time for the peoples of Ystal, whose days and nights have different lengths depending on their location on the planet. Two main species – the Atoir and the Humans – exist relatively peacefully on Ystal, and have colonized different areas of the planet to suit their needs. The Atoir are the original natives of Ystal. Large, dragon-like creatures with bio-combustion “after-burners” on their backs make use of the naturally occurring particles in the air to power their flight. The Humans first came to Ystal from their Mother Planet and after a brief struggle with the Atoir, settled in different areas of the planet.

Above Ystal, past their atmosphere, exists a band of particles called the Ether. Little is known about the particles that make up this “realm of thought” except that they serve several purposes. They both power the Atoiri bio-combustion burners and provide a home for the gods of Ystal. These celestial beings are created by the thoughts of the masses, and can be controlled – at least partially – through continual, devoted thoughts of the religious. When individuals pass away in Ystal, they can either be absorbed into the being of the god they most resemble or stay as an imprint on the Ether (similar to a ghost). Although the Atoir and Humans alike worship the gods of the Ether, no two groups worship them in the same way. Each clan, tribe, or group has a different way of worshiping and a different representation of their gods although the gods are all essentially the same.



Magom, the Hot Continent

From their land-crawling machines, the Humans of Magom survey a large portion of desert land where very few creatures can survive aboveground. Their dark skin and dandelion fluff hair help the Magom tribes to combat the effects of the constant heat under which they live. These Humans have the best relationship with the flying Atoir and excel at the underground farming of mushrooms and roots. The capital of Magom is Jala, a city of domed buildings and relentless daylight. Jala is also a sporting center, offering its denizens some distraction from their hard, work-filled lives. The people of Magom are matriarchal and worship the Water, Balance, and Volcano gods above all others. They celebrate in festival cycles, but keep their religious training within the family unit as their religious tradition is largely oral due to their mobile nature.

Magom is home to three-foot long *sand crickets*, scavenging *omnivore bunnies*, tree-burrowing *bee-scorpions*, and *desert jellyfish* that camouflage themselves as grass to lure in unsuspecting prey.

Zamrud, the Jungle Region

Within Magom runs a strip of jungle and rainforest called Zamrud, where the native tribes live in tree dwellings to avoid the myriad of deadly animals on the forest floor. Their capital, Baridii, is set deep into the jungle. From Baridii, the people of Zamrud trade paper with the people of the other continents and regions. Their main form of entertainment is animal fighting, which can prove to be quite brutal considering the bloodthirsty beasts that thrive in this region. In their shamanistic culture, the women of

Zamrud are the healers and the men are the religious leaders. They have perfected the harvesting of medicinal herbs and substances from the abundant flora and fauna around them. The people of Zamrud also have extremely sophisticated textile-making skills.

Zamrud's native creatures include *bird-monkeys*, large underbrush *land-dwelling crustaceans*, *earless rabbits* which use tentacle appendages to lasso prey from trees, and *headless tortoises* with dorsal mouths and shells that play host to plants.

Krafna's Arc, the Cold Continent

The coldest region on Ystal, Krafna's Arc is a formidable place inhabited by Humans, built for withstanding the lowest temperatures. They are short and stocky with seal-like body hair to keep heat in. The tribes of Krafna's Arc tend to be militaristic and xenophobic, keeping to themselves and practicing their religion in close-knit circles. They worship the gods of War, Death, Hunting, and Wind. The Fertility Goddess is also important to them as they consider the bearing of children a high honor. The men often compete in extreme rites of passage including long, dangerous hunting trips into the snows and winds that make the easternmost section of Ystal uninhabitable by all but the Atoir. The people of Krafna's Arc favor information storing technology, tracking, and defense. This is not a place where comfort is a first priority.

Krafna's Arc is the home of the sled-shaped *ice crawler* which can bend and skate on its legs to attack prey. Domesticated *sheep* with yak-like fur, wild arctic *fox-rabbits*, *seal-whales*, and *swimming moose* also roam this land. Do not be fooled by the cuteness of the *yeti cactus*, which appears to be a harmless fuzz ball but when touched will release dagger spikes to impale its captor's hands.

Soorik and Sevrosca, the Middle Continents

The Humans of Soorik are ecologically prosperous as their region, seated in the middle portion of the planet, has the most forgiving climate. Although these Humans tend to be more prosperous and educated, wider class disparities exist in the Middle Continents. Separated into wealthy city-states governed by single-family dynasties, Soorik and Sevrosca are centers of trade, banking, and religion. In the capital of Soorik, Virtulis, a canal system connects all sectors of the portside city. A private army known for their opulent – some might say frivolous – uniforms guards the city. Virtulis lies in constant daylight. Sevrosca's capital, Beye, is a swampy vice-riddled city of continual twilight, lit by luminescent plants. The city's glow may fool some, but the citizens of Sevrosca know it to be a gambling center, where the gods hear less prayer and more tavern songs. Both Soorik and Sevrosca are regions of trade, as all items must pass through either realm before making it to the hot or cold poles.

The middle regions of Soorik and Sevrosca are less wild and therefore have fewer natural predators. The citizens do have to worry about *spider-bears*, though. These people also keep *teacup pigs* as pets.