

SALT-SNEEZERS

[Scientific name, to be decided]

- ▶ Length: Hatchlings: up to 1m long, no sexual dimorphism
- ▶ Height: Females up to 6'; Males up to 5' 5"
- ▶ Classification: Mammal / reptile; merperson / dragon hybrid
- ▶ Differences between sexes: ♂ Smaller / slighter build; black body with colourful inner wings and fins ♀ Larger, dark grey with similar markings
- ▶ Life expectancy: 120 years without demonic intervention; immortal with
- ▶ Life cycle: 1-3 eggs laid every summer. Eggs hatch after 21 days. Hatchlings up to 5 years are amphibious
- ▶ Diet: Omnivorous, mainly fish, small birds and animals, and fruit and vegetables

The Salt-Sneezers are a species born of two demons, a nergigante and a mer-incubus. They are a simple civilisation confined to an island chain off the coast of Turkey, and their founding parents still live with them and act as deities.

This project is made purely for the fun of species development; the Salt-Sneezers do not appear in any stories or other works at the time of writing.



The name 'Salt-Sneezer' comes from the tendency of this species to expel excess salt from their diet through glands on their faces. Hatchlings start by sneezing a highly saline secretion but over time the gland develops so that it produces pure salt, which is expelled the same way.

Salt-sneezer hatchlings are easily mistaken for iguanas from a distance. The wings - in those that have them - are hard to see from a distance. This iguana-like appearance, like their salt-sneezing, was directly attributable to Lilith.

They are not particularly adept fliers, however they can gain a few meters of height by flapping. Usually Salt-Sneezers are more likely to climb and glide. They have soft bumps on their wings, which do not appear to have a purpose, and may simply be a byproduct

of their demonic heritage, as this species did not develop as a result of natural selection.

Salt-sneezers like to eat fish, seaweed, and fruits and vegetables from the land. They have tiny teeth that are ideal for catching fish.

Occasionally a Salt-Sneezer is born without wings. These individuals invariably have enlarged fins on their tails, and a larger lung capacity. They are always sent to the Southern caves where they live out their lives on the shore and in the caves there.

A level of variation exists between the winged and wingless Salt-Sneezers in the length of time they can hold their breaths under water. The wingless are better-adapted for aquatic living and can hold their breaths for up to an hour.

Salt-sneezers seek partners with bright colours on their inner wings, so individuals looking to attract a mate show off their wings as part of a courtship ritual. The ones with the brightest and richest colours are more likely to attract a partner. Courting pairs also like to impress each other by catching the biggest fish possible. Ultimately, Salt-Sneezers seek robust, strong, capable mates so this is their overall standard for 'beauty' or desirability.

As reptiles, the Salt-Sneezers also shed their skins on a semi-regular basis. A sneezer with old skin will turn dull and become prone to keeping still. Eventually they will journey to the Cave of New Skin where they can soak in hot spring water and loosen their skins.

Travellers / Trav'lers

Within the first 8 generations of Salt-Sneezers, Gene and Sam had another brood. The batch of babies from this brood were similar to the Salt-Sneezers but their colours were reversed: bright bodies and black inner-wings. They had an idea by then how best to care for their young and raised them directly for longer than they had for their original brood of Salt-Sneezers. They had also internalised behaving as guardian spirits of a sort, and this impacted on these new, brightly-coloured Salt-Sneezers.

When they eventually let them go and find their way in the world the colourful ones became travellers, wandering from one tribe to another and managing quite comfortably in the various wildernesses of the islands. When they came into contact with an existing tribe they would be seen with wonder. Their behaviour seemed a little more spiritual than that of the original Salt-Sneezers, and the originals came to refer to them as

Trav'lers - the word truncated as much as possible as a result of the Salt-Sneezers; overall preference for short words.

Medical Conditions

Salt intoxication

Salt-sneezers ingest a large quantity of salt as a result of their marine diet. For some Salt-Sneezers, the glands they use to excrete excess salt are not yet genetically stable, so not all of these creatures are capable of doing so. The result is toxic and has a fatal long-term consequence.

Many illnesses are assumed to be infectious, and the afflicted sneezer is encouraged to leave to prevent infection. However, as a colony they recognise and treat salt-intoxication differently, thanks to Sam's intervention early in their cultural development. Symptoms of salt-intoxicated Salt-Sneezers include no salt deposits on the afflicted's face, stronger thirst than usual, weakness, nausea, lack of appetite, confusion, and twitching muscles. If these symptoms are observed, the sick Salt-Sneezer is allowed to stay.

Despite their eager recognition of salt-intoxication, treatment is ineffective and those who are poor at expelling salt are likely to die.

Heatstroke

Salt-sneezers are part-reptile, part-mammal, with the proportion differing from one individual to the next. This means that some are ectothermic, some endothermic, and means that a lifestyle that suits one may not suit another.

Metabolic Bone Disease

This is a rare disease in the Salt-Sneezers. It is caused by a lack of calcium and/or exposure to sunlight, which the Salt-Sneezers get plenty of. In rare situations an individual may subsist entirely on food that is low in calcium and may stay in the shadows or in caves for too much of the time.

Infectious Stomatitis (Mouth Rot)

This condition is caused by an infection, usually by a combination of rotten food in the mouth and cuts and grazes on the gums. It would be more common than it is, but Sam ensured that it would be rare by introducing the Salt-Sneezers to oral hygiene: they

taught the sneezers how to ball up coconut husk and chew it like a chewable toothbrush.

Ticks

Ticks can cause infections and spread from one Salt-Sneezer to another, so prevention is key. Sam and Gene don't expect the Salt-Sneezers to be particularly interested in preventing ticks for their own sake so they created a system to make them do it.

Occasionally Gene will visit a settlement, unannounced. He holds himself like a king and makes clear that he expects to be made comfortable - and that he expects that those comforts should be ready for when he arrives. These comforts include a large basking area clear of vegetation (this sounds like good housekeeping but ensures that ticks have nowhere moist to hide, nor opportunity to bite a basking Salt-Sneezer), wide walk-ways through the settlement with no tatty grasses (to make sure the ticks have nowhere to hide close to where the Salt-Sneezers live; he has grouched more than once about the lack of gravel or sand on the ground. The sneezers were quick to introduce sand to their walkways after this), and any shade to be provided by woven panels (which are dry and too flat to be of interest to ticks). Any failures on the part of the tribes to provide these to a high level is treated as an insult to his welcome as a guest. This is enough to make the Salt-Sneezers perennially eager to be prepared, and keeps them almost entirely tick-free.

Low Fertility

Salt-sneezers have a high incidence of laying eggs that contain only albumen so are unable to hatch. Few enough contain a yolk and are fertile that the Salt-Sneezers' fertility is generally observed to be low.

Lilith is responsible for this. She was displeased to see that Sam and Gene had had babies and didn't want the new demon race to spread beyond the archipelago, so quietly controlled their fertility so that they neither overpopulated the chain, or died out completely.

Geographical Distribution

The Salt-Sneezers naturally prefer a warmer climate with access to the ocean or other saltwater environments. Given the choice they prefer to remain at sea-level, not liking higher altitudes.

A small population of them lives in and around an archipelago off the Turkish coast.

The archipelago is made up of a chain of extinct volcanoes. As a result some of the islands have good elevation, and stone is relatively common, as are caves.

Gene and Sam's Retreat

Once the population of Salt-Sneezers got big enough Sam and Gene decided that they needed a specific place to retreat to, to relax and just be Gene and Sam rather than Great Grandfather Dragon and Shiny Fin, and to discuss tricky elements of being the gods of a new race.

Their retreat is on the south end of the main island, high above sea level where the wingless Salt-Sneezers have no chance of seeing them. Even the winged ones, who might potentially climb or glide to a place where they could see the retreat, are unlikely ever to see it due to the taboo of invading the wingless' space.

Cave of New Skin

This is a cave, and inside is the place where hot spring water breaches the surface of the Earth. It is a moderately sacred place, partly due to its ceremonial nature - Salt-Sneezers use it as a place to soak when they're shedding their skins - and partly due to the fact the Sam can occasionally be found there, enjoying the waters. It is not unknown for them to be there when a Salt-Sneezer arrives, and for them to talk, relax together, and generally have an informal communion.

Green Waters

The shamans who receive a stone from Shiny Fin must return it as soon as possible, and this is where they do so. As a result, the Green Waters serve as a place of significance to both the winged and wingless.

For the winged, it is a special place for the shamen, described as above. It is seen by them as a place of honour, where they can give back the token that has been bestowed upon them by Shiny Fin.

For the wingless, who spend much of their time underwater, they see things somewhat differently. The ammonites that are thrown here form a pile, and occasionally, at irregular intervals, a new one comes splashing through the surface of the sea and drifts down to add itself to the pile. This happens nowhere else in the sea so the very specific location of all of these green, shimmering stones strikes them as anomalous.

Sam likes to visit this area sometimes and has been seen sleeping - or appearing to sleep, at least - on them. In truth Sam visits the pile to pick a few so that they can put them beside sleeping shamans; this is Sam's ammonite store. To the wingless, Shiny Fin's frequent presence there makes this strange location sacred.

After Gene had established the tradition of blessing the winged Salt-Sneezers Sam took his cue and formed a similar tradition for the wingless, and this location - which they named Green Waters and which the wingless Salt-Sneezers began to refer to it too - was the location.

Position in Ecosystem

The archipelago on which these hybridised dragons live is rich with mice and other small rodents, and small to medium-sized birds such as seagulls, parrots, and sparrows. The Salt-Sneezers take these as food in addition to fish, seaweed, flatbreads, and fruit and vegetables.

History

This species has a very short history, with the species only being 7 or 8 generations long.

The species first came to be when Gene Taring, transformed a few years prior into a demonic nergigante, and Sam Fairway, an intersex demonic merperson, fell pregnant together. Gene had bought an archipelago off the Turkish coast and emigrated to it with Sam and a few ageing human contacts. He had set up his human contacts in the nearest fishing village to the island and settled on the island to live out his life together with Sam.

Sam laid a clutch of eggs which hatched into the very first Salt-Sneezers. They hatched, and Sam and Gene raised them to adulthood before sending them forth to settle wherever they wanted to on the archipelago.

Soon after this they discovered that these reptiles had had babies together, and the population began to expand from there.

Since then there have been 7 or 8 generations of them, although the population remains small due to their high likelihood of infertility.

Major Events

Lilith's Intervention

When Sam first laid their eggs they invoked Lilith for help; Lilith had been the demon who had transformed Sam in the first place, hence Sam's request to her specifically. Lilith heard the call but did not appear, believing that it would be better to let Sam and Gene find their way alone.

However she did intervene. She anticipated that the new race of demons would be a valuable addition to the overall demon community but would also be vulnerable to human intervention if the two races were ever to meet. Therefore she moulded the demon babies while they were still in their eggs so that when they hatched they would look like marine iguanas from a distance. She was responsible for them developing the salt-sneezing habit: a combination of a talent they would need to have and a call-back to Galapagos Iguanas, which she believed would help throw humans off the scent.

Over the coming years she continued to intervene without Gene and Sam's knowledge by adjusting the Salt-Sneezers' fertility so that they never became too crowded on the island chain nor died out completely. She also subtly influenced the superstitions on-shore to make sure that the island remained as undisturbed as possible.

The Day of Burning Rocks

During the earlier stages of the Salt-Sneezers' organisation into tribes, they became hostile towards one another, seeing each other as competition for food, water sources, and other materials.

The farmer tribe raided the settlement of another in search of more fertile ground to grow their crops, brandishing torches to frighten off the residents. They didn't intend to burn the place down but they did. By chance, the invaded settlement included furniture, including a slab of stone that served as a table. While many huts, windshields and other items burned, this didn't.

The settlement was peppered with other pieces of stone and rock too, some still in their natural forms, some used as furniture such as the table. In the aftermath of the fire, the Salt-Sneezers noticed that these stone items were intact, but incredibly hot. That is what earned this event their name.

The Day of Burning Rocks convinced Gene that he needed to intervene quickly and decisively. It was this event that led him to coordinate with Sam to unite the tribes, to install himself and Sam as the Salt-Sneezers' deities, and to hold court keeping them all friendly towards one another.

Big Earth Shake

The archipelago is occasionally shaken by earthquakes. One in particular occurred by sheer coincidence on the first night that the Salt-Sneezers ate fermented fruit en masse.

The whole population got drunk beyond all moderation. Gene and Sam saw this and, concerned that the sneezers would become a population of alcoholics, wondered what they should do. They had already begun to express their displeasure with the intention to encourage the sneezers to consider alcohol a treat for special occasions only - ceremonies, ideally - when an earthquake hit. They capitalised on it as a way of hitting home on their displeasure, and it worked: the Salt-Sneezers obeyed their wish for their imbibing of alcohol to be rare.

Any Other Historical Details

Example 1

[To be worked on]

Example 2
[To be worked on]

Example 3
[To be worked on]



[Introduction Needed]

Food

Bartering

The Salt-Sneezers are keen to barter goods and services with one another.

Farming

A supply of food appears on the island once per week, but the Salt-Sneezers supplement this by farming their own fish and produce to a limited extent.

External Provision

The original, demonic parents of this young species generated a local myth to encourage the population of the nearest fishing village to send a continuous supply of food to the island to encourage the monsters there to stay rather than raid the mainland.

This tradition continued through several generations of the Salt-Sneezers and still continues to this day. As a result, the Salt-Sneezers anticipate weekly cargos of fish, fruit, and vegetables. There is an established route that these boats go by, and that takes them around the north of the island; for this reason, the villagers don't know about the wingless Salt-Sneezers.

Art

Dyes

Salt-sneezers know how to make dyes from various plants, and use this to beautify stone carvings. They also like to use them on themselves, enriching the colours inside their wings.

Cosmetics

Dark skin is seen as the beauty ideal among Salt-Sneezers, even females, who are naturally greyer than the males. For females who are growing paler with age than they would like, there is the option of using charcoal, which they rub into their skin to make it appear darker.

Two Circles

The Salt-Sneezers' two deities, Great Grandfather Dragon and Shiny Fin, are often represented by two circles. This is in reference to the sun and moon: the sun being a reference to the ferocity of a dragon, and the reflective, peaceful properties of the moon to Shiny Fin.

Music

The Salt-Sneezers have developed their own style of chanting. While the style is quite simple, it is not aggressive or loud, instead sounding soothing. It is often done by a tribe sitting around a fire, and the sound of Salt-Sneezer chanting over the crackle of a fire can be a memorable experience.

Aside from this, they have their own style for singing to hatchlings: they croon gently to them.

Overall their approach to music is to use it for ritualistic purposes, bringing the tribe together during more sociable times.

A morning chant serves to stir the sleepy, moderate the hyperactive, and to remind every tribes-dragon of the reverence they feel for their world.

Sandwork

The wingless Salt-Sneezers like to make temporary underwater artworks by blowing on the sand to create complex arrangements of ridges.

Festivals

Wind of Colour

A summer festival in which different colours of dye are thrown about. Dyes of specific colours are associated with particular tribes, and they barter with the dye-making tribe for a supply of it prior to the Wind of Colour. Then, on the night of the festivities, when all of the season's hatchlings have been born, they meet, eat, drink, chant, and make merry, throwing their dye at one another until they are all covered in one another's tribe colours.

It's a way of saying, "There's a bit of me in you!"

Moon of Red Stone

This event - festival seems too upbeat a word - occurs in honour of the Day of Burning Rocks, as a reminder that they must show tolerance to one another. Every tribe collects wood to contribute to a large fire that they burn, and stones are collected. If naturally occurring red stones can be found then they are brought to the event, and if not, stones are rubbed with a red dye.

Salt-sneezers gather for the burning of the sticks, and throw their stones onto the fire. This event occurs in autumn, and Great Grandfather Dragon is associated with it, given the autumnal tone of his scales.

Sport

Salt-sneezers are prone to being competitive and this leads them to try to outperform each other in various ways, such as biggest fish caught, or highest flight. Wingless Salt-Sneezers have been known to challenge fliers to see who can go the fastest. While strictly speaking the fliers can't fly - only glide - they can work up a surprisingly high speed if they want to.

Language

The Salt-Sneezers have language, but it is not particularly complex. Their sentences are generally simple and short, and they prefer simple, one-syllable words. Important words include: food, fish, fruit, sleep, sun, day, moon, night, buy, sell, health, sick, good, bad,

sad, mate, egg, young, big, small, soil, strength / strong, death, want, give, bring, stone, rock.

The word 'male' is single-syllable but 'female' is of course longer. This makes intuitive sense to the Salt-Sneezers given that their females are bigger.

For the winged Salt-Sneezers, the concept of the wind is important as it helps them to glide further. For the wingless, the currents are important, and dangerous rip-tides are considered to be water demons.

"It's all gone/there's none left" may be expressed as "No left" or "No there".

Basic Language Guide

"Hello" = "Sail" This word came from long ago, when Gene and Sam had their first generation of Salt-Sneezers. They sat on the beach, looking out over the sea, and a sailboat went by a few miles away. Either Sam or Gene pointed to it and said to their hatchlings, "Look! Sail!" and this was taken to be a greeting. The Salt-Sneezer babies remembered this, adopted it as their way of greeting one another, and it passed on down the generations.

"Goodbye" = "Sail" but they wave to each other, even if they're directly opposite one another.

"Nice to meet you" = The answer to this depends on who the greeting is for. A platonic friend will be greeted with "Warm scale". A lover or family member by "Warm heart". The closer to the core of the body the warmth is described as being, the more intense that friendship is considered to be. Rarely, though occasionally, it may be used for best friends. The "warm" here is a reference to emotional warmth, or the literal physical heating up that might come from the excitement of seeing a loved one.

"Please" = "Please"

"Thank you" = "Thank"

"You're welcome" = "Thank", as for thank you; the benefactor simply repeats the "Thank" back as an acknowledgement.

"Excuse me" = There is no word for this; it is acceptable in Salt-Sneezer culture to simply nudge another individual out of the way, poke them, or whatever fits the occasion.

"I'm sorry" = "Bad heart", used to describe the bodily sensation of regret. However, the tone with which this is said, or other terms entirely, may be used instead depending on the severity of the transgression being apologised for.

"A little/few" = "Small/few".

"A lot/many" = "Much/many". Example: "Old stone. Much break" to describe a piece of stone riddled with fractures.

"I don't know" = Non-verbal, usually denoted with a head-tilt, a shrug, or whatever other piece of body language suits the situation.

"How much does it cost?" = This question rarely crops up for Salt-Sneezers given their system of bartering rather than use of currency. Their straightforward attitude towards life also makes them surprisingly assertive negotiators. Often a sneezer selling, say, fish, may be approached by another holding an armful of fruit, who will say, "Fin want fish. Here: four fruit".

"Can you help me?" = "Help?" This is normally all that is said, as a way to preface asking for the help that is needed.

"Where is/are...?" = Just "Where" is used along with the name of the sneezer, object, or place desired.

"Right/left" = They don't have a word for right and left. Instead all sneezers are taught how to locate North, and use the compass points as their directions. Attempting to teach a Salt-Sneezers the concept of right and left - which, after all, changes depending on the direction one faces - would likely lead to confusion.

"My name is..." = Introductions are given simply with just the name being given with a hand to their chest to denote that this is "my" name. Sometimes the name of the tribe is given.

"I come from..." = Again, the sentence itself is dispensed with, and the Salt-Sneezers simply mentions the island they're from.

"Glide" = "Fly". The word "fly", while not an accurate descriptor of the sneezers' airborne ability, is easier to say than "glide". In addition to this, Gene is a genuine flier so his time on the wing is described as flight, so the verb "to fly" has carried over to the sneezers. As a final nudge for the sneezers to substitute "fly" for "glide", Sam has always been proud of their babies and their ability to get off the ground, so they called what they saw "flight", not "gliding".

Overall, many of their emotion-related words are expressed as the equivalent bodily sensation, such as "warm scale" as shown above.

The occasional longer words makes its way into their language, but they generally reserve those only for when they are needed: water, grandfather and dragon (as in "Great Grandfather Dragon"), shiny (ditto for "Shiny Fin"), demon (this word earned its place in their language because of the presence of two demons watching over them, and who have influenced so much of their culture), and colour.

Aside from this, sometimes the Salt-Sneezers use words together such as hot-stone to describe a flat stone left on a fire to absorb heat, that can later be cooked on.

Quite often they revert to pointing or gesturing rather than speaking, and ready-made phrases are common: "You come, you come!"

Written Language

The Salt-Sneezers never learned to produce paper. However, they do occasionally carve a few letters, numbers, or words into stone. These words are called 'glyphs'.

Numbers

Salt-sneezers are not great mathematicians. However they still adhere to a decimal, not an octal, system - they have ten fingers on their hands due to both of the species' parents originally being humans. They don't generally like to count beyond ten however. As a rule, if they want to convey a number over ten they name two numbers that add up to the desired number, e.g., "two-seven" is fourteen.

Social Dynamics

These hybrids are socially-minded and like to form groups, usually based on their skill-sets. Their tendency to stick together means that most never venture past the main colony. Most of the Salt-Sneezers have wings and for them, group-forming by skill is the norm, but the few who don't form their own settlement.

The wingless Salt-Sneezers are the exception to this and prefer the southern beaches and cave systems.

Tribes

The Salt-Sneezers divided themselves into separate tribes early in their cultural development, based on the aspect of labour or skill they contributed. These included:

Cereal Farmers

Sam and Gene ensured that the Salt-Sneezers had the crops to grow, to feed themselves on cereals if need be. They also taught them how to make simple flatbreads. They are culturally well-integrated among the tribes, with everybody else coming to them on a regular basis to barter for flour.

Fruit Farmers

The fruit-farming tribe were the ones who started The Day of Burning Rocks. With that said, the other tribes still liked their fruit-farmer neighbours for the fact that they produced most of the only available sugar on the island in the form of ripe fruit.

This tribe became all the more important to the culture of the colony when they discovered that leaving well-ripened fruit out in the sun produces boozy fruit.

Seaweed Gatherers

The Salt-Sneezers enjoy a lot of seaweed as part of their diet; that is the reason for their tendency to expel salt. They live directly beside the sea for ease of gathering.

Dye Farmers

This tribe farms, hunts, and gathers a range of different items that can be processed into dyes. This includes colour beetles, which they breed, snails with shells that can be processed for dye, and various plant matter. These dyes are used for various ceremonial and festival uses.

Weavers

The weavers are capable of making various items that can be useful in home-making and the completion of different tasks done by other Salt-Sneezers. They can make screens, shelves, nets, and twine.

Healers

The healers are a well-regarded tribe, considering the Salt-Sneezers' tendency towards tribalism. It's generally understood by all of the tribes that if relief of symptoms is needed, they can provide it. Medicine is low-tech and relatively unreliable on the archipelago so the healers specialise in rituals, remedies, and inducing the placebo effect.

They also tend to be the ones orphans are brought to, if the tribe or parents are unknown.

Fish-catchers

There are two groups who specialise in fishing on the archipelago: the wingless, and a coastal winged tribe who are capable of receiving the fish when Shiny Fin leads the wingless to herd a shoal their way.

Fire-starters

The fire-starters are the best-travelled of the Salt-Sneezers: every other tribe has an ongoing deal with them for a fire-starter to visit their tribe in the afternoon and light them a fire. The fire-starter then picks up whatever has been bartered for and returns to his or her tribe.

Gene and Sam find this very helpful, as fire-starters tend to chat with the tribes they visit. This makes them excellent tools for cascading new information. For this reason Sam favours the fire-starter tribe as much as they can when selecting shamans with whom to communicate via dreams.

Blade-makers

This tribe make hand-axes and other blades, always from stone (the Salt-Sneezers don't have the benefit of metal-working),

Handling of Differences/Bigotry

Like many civilizations, the Salt-Sneezers had an innate tendency towards tribalism. As they developed skills they began to form separate settlements, and those settlements might have become hostile towards one another if Gene hadn't intervened.

Gene conversed with each settlement and encouraged them to see one another not as threats for the at-times limited resources of the archipelago, but as friends. He and Sam worked together in this way, keeping an ear open for the latest news about how each settlement regarded the others, and intervening again whenever necessary to keep them being friendly to their neighbours.

Example 2

[To be worked on]

Example 3

[To be worked on]

Other Cultural Details

Time-keeping

Salt-sneezers are not too particular about time-keeping. They note the days but nothing more specific than this.

Death and Funerals

Death is not viewed with dread as it is in many terrestrial cultures. Instead Gene and Sam work on culturing, and maintaining, the idea that as a spiritual people, death only brings the Salt-Sneezers closer to their deities.

The Salt-Sneezers almost invariably cremate their dead. As this would raise suspicion on the mainland (people on the mainland would see smoke rising into the air) Gene and Sam have long-since insisted that cremations are done at night, when the smoke cannot be seen.

Gene and Sam have prohibited burial funerals, or disposal of bodies at sea, to ensure that the bodies of the Salt-Sneezers are not discovered by outsiders, and to prevent bodies from affecting the soil of the archipelago's islands.

Politics

[Introduction Needed]

Wars

Example 1

[We can add in the Day of Burning Rocks]

Example 2

[To be worked on]

Example 3

[To be worked on]

Alliances

Example 1

[To be worked on]

Example 2
[To be worked on]

Example 3
[To be worked on]

Religion

The Salt-Sneezers have a coming-of-age rite of passage that involves their two gods, Great Grandfather Dragon and Shiny Fin.

Great Grandfather Dragon

Gene, the nergigante father of the Salt-Sneezer species, is an immortal demon. He has seen multiple generations of the Salt-Sneezers grow to adulthood. As the culture began to develop for separate groups he knew, from his political days, that they were likely to develop hostility towards one another, so he cultured himself as somebody to listen to. And so began the folk story, almost religion in fact, of Great Grandfather Dragon. Soon, every Salt-Sneezer knew that it was the done thing to listen to Great Grandfather Dragon.

For Gene, it was just an easy way to set himself up to intervene whenever necessary.

Whenever a new batch of winged youngsters reach adulthood, the parents of said winged youngsters 'invoke' Gene - that is, they put out offerings to entice him out. Gene takes the bait and plays his part as the benevolent godlike figure, accepts the offerings, and blesses the youngsters.

This is done by touching his forehead to theirs and whispering a few words to them quietly enough that only they can hear.

Shiny Fin

Similarly, Sam found their way into the archipelago's mythology despite still being alive and well. While Gene was busy uniting the winged tribes, Sam went to comfort the wingless Salt-Sneezers in the southern caves to make sure they didn't feel forsaken.

"The Words for the Young" or "Great Grandfather Dragon / Shiny Fin's Blessing"
The words that Gene, as Great Grandfather Dragon, and Sam, as Shiny Fin, say to the youngsters who are coming of age are carefully planned by the pair of them.

Sam is an incubus, which allows them to dream-walk. The pair of them keep an eye on their respective colonies of Salt-Sneezers. When one is approaching the age where they will soon be presented to Gene or Sam, Sam focuses on their dreams. This gives Sam an insight into the Salt-Sneezer's hopes, fears, dreams, and other preoccupations. They report back to Gene and the pair confer about what to say to the youngster during their coming-of-age blessing. When they have come up with something inspiring, comforting, or otherwise needed in that youngster's life, they are ready for the blessing and wait for the Salt-Sneezers to prepare their coming-of-age ritual.

The Sun and Moon

These two celestial bodies have a particular resonance for the Salt-Sneezers. For them, each represents their two deities. The sun for their fierce Great Grandfather Dragon, and the bright, shining moon for Shiny Fin.

Law

The Salt-Sneezers refer to their penal system as "make-right" as it's all about making everything all right again.

Imprisonment

Salt-sneezers who run afoul of the colony's few and vaguely-considered laws (theft, arson, etc.) and who are judged to be guilty as a result of a shaman's dreams, will be imprisoned.

They have only two or three prison cells per tribe, which are made by the weavers, and which consist of nothing more than screens made of palm leaves, woven together to create a four-walled room with a simple door.

A prison sentence is based on an honour system: while it is very easy to break out of prison, to be put into prison is to be expected to stay put. A prisoner is released when it is deemed that they have spent long enough there, and given Sam's attitude towards such things (and about the Salt-Sneezers in general), prison sentences tend to be short and more closely resemble an elaborate 'time-out'.

Rebuilding

Salt-sneezers who destroy property, anything from vandalism to arson, are ordered to remake or rebuild whatever they destroyed. Often this requires supervision by a relevant tribes-dragon.

Banishment for a Week

It is rare for the Salt-Sneezers to do anything more serious (such as assault and battery, and murder is even rarer to the point of non-existence). If something as serious as assault happens, the aggressor is banished for a week.

Any sneezer who commits manslaughter is generally given the benefit of the doubt, partly due to the small population size - it's usually easy to piece together what happened, and partly due to the familial nature of their culture. Such situations are seen as tragic accidents.

Miscellaneous Political Details

Example 1

[To be worked on]

Example 2

[To be worked on]

Example 3

[To be worked on]



[Introduction Needed]

Money / Trading System

The Salt-Sneezers' trading system relies entirely on bartering. Here is the list of common products and services on the archipelago and their value.

Flour

Made by the cereal farmer tribe and bought by everyone to make flatbreads which are eaten every day. A single measurement of flour is the amount that fills half a coconut

shell - the Salt-Sneezers have quite a lot of those lying around. This is considered to be enough to feed a sneezer for one day.

1 cup of flour = [\[To be discussed\]](#)

Fruit

The fruit farmers offer a range of products, including fresh fruit, dried fruit, and fermented. It's generally considered more of a luxury than flour, and fruit is highly prized for its sugar content. Dried fruits are enjoyed in winter, and fruits are deliberately fermented for ceremonies.

1 cup of fresh fruit = [\[To be discussed\]](#)

1 cup of dried fruit (esp. berries) = [\[To be discussed\]](#)

1 cup of fermented fruit pulp = [\[To be discussed\]](#)

Dye

Dyes are strictly for festivals and beauty, so are considered luxuries. Dyes include insect-based red dyes, plant-based yellow dyes, and indigo.

1 cup red dye = [\[To be discussed\]](#)

1 cup yellow dye = [\[To be discussed\]](#)

1 cup blue dye = [\[To be discussed\]](#)

Weaving

The weavers produce all sorts of 'domestic' items - shelves, screens, roofs, and surfaces, out of plant material. These items are generally valued as one cup's worth of a few items.

1 panel = [\[To be discussed\]](#)

Hinge together 2 panels = [\[To be discussed\]](#)

Healing

The healers have a different system: they don't charge for their services, but all the other tribes offer them regular gifts or make goodwill donations. It's generally known that it isn't impossible for something to happen to a Salt-Sneezers at any given time, and they want to know that the healers will look after them. Every sneezer knows of someone who hurt themselves, failed to sneeze salt efficiently, or any other of a range of afflictions.

Fish

[To be discussed]

Major Businesses

Example 1

[To be worked on]

Example 2

[To be worked on]

Example 3

[To be worked on]

Education

Education is distinctly informal, with one generation teaching the next, and usually only what they consider to be practical. Their practical skills - fruit-farming, roofing, fire-starting, etc. - form the basis of separate settlements within the overall colony.

Example 2

[To be worked on]

Example 3

[To be worked on]

Medicine

Modern medicine is unavailable on the archipelago so instead, the Salt-Sneezers rely on a mixture of folk remedies and bedside manner.

Coconuts

Coconuts are a good overall remedy for a variety of conditions: they're full of electrolytes, anti-bacterial, anti-viral, anti-fungal, anti-parasitic, and full of magnesium

and potassium. For these reasons they overall have a medicinal effect on some conditions so have passed into the Salt-Sneezers' limited lexicon of medicines.

Placebo Effect

Gene and Sam encourage the use of the placebo effect wherever they can, although they themselves do not usually get involved with medical matters.

Shamans

Overall Gene and Sam like to keep a distance from the Salt-Sneezers to help preserve their deity-like status, and to make the impact of their interventions that much more, well, impactful. However, they also need to intervene (sometimes over issues that don't seem terribly spiritual) to help the Salt-Sneezers survive, given their relatively low intelligence, small population, and limited resources.

Sam likes to solve this problem by communicating with Salt-Sneezers in their sleep. Some Salt-Sneezers are more coherent dreamers than others, so Sam likes to elect a 'good' dreamer with whom they can easily work. These coherent dreamers will effectively become the tribes' shamans, so a selection process and ritual are in order.

Sam selects a handful of the best dreamers and picks one to serve as their shaman. When they have picked one they alert the others who didn't get the role in dreams, telling each of them to go forth and make it be known that a shaman for (whichever tribe) has been elected. This can spread across tribes so that a coherent dreamer from, say, the roofer tribe may dream about the election of the shaman for the fishing tribe. This has two positive effects on the overall colony: it helps to unify the different tribes by encouraging them to bring each other good news, and it gives Sam the freedom to work with only the best dreamers.

Wherever possible Sam picks a member of the Fire-starter tribe as shaman. This is because of the tendency of the fire-starters to travel to the other tribes, which means they are efficient spreaders of information.

Death and Funerals

Death is not viewed with dread as it is in many terrestrial cultures. Instead Gene and Sam work on culturing, and maintaining, the idea that as a spiritual people, death only brings the Salt-Sneezers closer to their deities.

The Salt-Sneezers almost invariably cremate their dead. As this would raise suspicion on the mainland (people on the mainland would see smoke rising into the air) Gene and Sam have long-since insisted that cremations are done at night, when the smoke cannot be seen.

Gene and Sam have prohibited burial funerals, or disposal of bodies at sea, to ensure that the bodies of the Salt-Sneezers are not discovered by outsiders, and to prevent bodies from affecting the soil of the archipelago's islands.

Construction

Wood/Bushcraft

Construction, where the Salt-Sneezers do it themselves as opposed to living in caves, is basic. Over the generations they have taught themselves to make roofs and screens by weaving palm leaves,

Example 2

[To be worked on]

Example 3

[To be worked on]

Distribution of Goods

Shiny Fin's Stones

There is an occupational hazard involved with Sam's dream-walking, and that is that a Salt-Sneezer may organically have a dream that happens to involve Shiny Fin without Sam having walked in the dream. Sam devised a solution to this.

Whenever Sam genuinely dream-walks in a Salt-Sneezer's dream, they leave a pebble of ammolite beside the dreamer's bed. They chose ammolite as the best stone for the job because it is mostly green, and green stones do not naturally occur in Turkey so it is impossible for the Salt-Sneezers to find any themselves on the archipelago. Sam ordered a big bag of them from a tumblestones web site during the early stages of their and Gene's life on the island.

To ensure that the stones are not retained, circulated among the population, and used to 'prove' fake appearances by Sam, any time a stone is given to a Salt-Sneezer, it is expected back.

Sam established a ceremonial place where ammolites can be returned to them once a dream has been reported to the rest of the population. This place was a section of the sea free of currents that might pull any ammolites away so that they all conveniently fall to the sea floor only a dozen or so meters beneath the surface. This place has spiritual significance for the wingless as well as the winged and is referred to by both as Green Waters, thanks to Sam.

Salt-sneezers who fail to return the stones are seen as dishonouring Shiny Fin.

Example 2

[To be worked on]

Example 3

[To be worked on]

Other Details of Economy

Example 1

[To be worked on]

Example 2

[To be worked on]

Example 3

[To be worked on]

Credits

The Salt-Sneezers, Great Grandfather Dragon, and Shiny Fin are © [Mirath](#)

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Want to upgrade to an Infographic or video, or expand your setting into a worldbuilding project? Email me on hello@thecharacterconsultancy.co.uk and I will be happy to help you!

~Hayley, The Character Consultancy