

Cradle

A Campaign Setting for use with Worlds of Adventure/Dungeon World

By Kyle Thompson

Player Experience Goals

- Consequences to PCs actions across the game world
- Think about how they fit into the world (Defamiliarization)
- World traversal
- World building
- Think about the physical space of the world
- Factional interaction
- Character driven melodrama
- Opportunities for heroic battles (What is the scale?)

Touchstones

- Endless Legend (Really cool unorthodox factions, great mechanical integration, dust)
- Dynasty Warriors (Larger than life characters)
- 13th Age (Icons)
- Kaiju Fiction (MoHun, MMO games (Guild Wars 2))
- Xenoblade Chronicles 2 (Factions and Titans)
- Mega Man Legends (Megadungeon submerged beneath the waves)
- Final Fantasy XII (Politics, worldbuilding, unusual races)
- Friends at the Table (Melodrama and world building)

Topology:

Basic Setting Elements:

- Cradle: A worldship flying through the void
 - A world built by humans in the distant past
 - Contains vast ruins and places to explore beneath or on the Azure
 - The factions have different attitudes about the newly emerged areas
 - Aurora is mainly found beneath the Azure, comes from the Unsung Crucible
 - Normally had equal length of night and day created by the Cradle Mind, but has been getting erratic
 - The Cradle Mind is a lich whose phylactery is the Unsung Crucible
- Three flying islands above Cradle, shot through with giant crystals (each one has a different type)

- Zaffre: Smaller with lots of flying creatures
 - Factions:
 - The Soaring Grace (Have plazas built in the spaces between branches of the Tree of Ages)
 - Locations
 - The Tree of Ages: A giant maple tree shot through with gigantic veins of amber.
 - What makes its home in the branches of the Tree of Ages?
 - What lessons can found in the amber?
 - The Understory: Forests growing upon the roots of the Tree of Ages
 - What flying creatures disturb you at dawn?
 - What creatures prowl the night?
- Lavi: Desert island that's geologically unstable
 - Factions:
 - The Dedicated (Have built a giant tower out of a lake of lava)
 - Locations:
 - The Burning Shard: A giant mass of crystalline ruby, radiating heat
 - What molten creatures make it their home?
 - What have the Gatofolk made out of it?
 - The Emberous Meadows: Vast expanses of volcanic flowers covering the surface of Lavi
 - What grazes upon the flowers?
 - What are their colours and what are they used for?
- Glox: Swampy island that has emerged from the Azure, mutated because of its time in there
 - Factions:
 - The Vigilant Hundreds (Train in Umber pools they have constructed)
 - Locations:
 - The Malachite Reef: A coral-like formation of minerals that towers above the swamps of Glox
 - What do the sky-sharks of the reef avoid?
 - What do you see in the eruptions of Umber from its pores?
 - The Bloody Springs: A series of deep red hotsprings that bubble up from the swamps
 - Why do the people of Grox drink the water of the Bloody Springs?
 - What is attracted to their acrid vapours?
- Energetic phenomena created by malfunctioning of the ship's energy core (The Unsung Crucible)
 - Aurora: A brilliant vapour that accumulates along and below the Azure during the day

- People from the islands are collecting it for magic/industry/drugs
 - It attracts memories from the future (The horizons form out of it)
 - The distilled form is the main currency
- Umber: A fog of shadows that accumulates along and below the Azure at night
 - Attracted to strong emotions, dreams, and fantasies
 - It coalesces into shadow creatures who exist near the Azure
 - There is a prohibition on going to the Azure on important anniversaries because it will create a doppelganger out the Umber
 - The Umber can be protected against by still water
- The Azure: A fresh water ocean covering the top surface of Cradle
 - Eventide: Largest island in the Azure, used as an entrepot between the Cradle and the rest of the world
 - Lots of little islands connected to it
 - Trade happens here
 - Smaller kaiju are used to traverse the ocean from one side of the planetoid to the other
 - There is a barrier of still water that is maintained around the city to keep away the Umber
 - There is a temple built on boardwalks above a giant pool of water, all business about the Azure is conducted there for fear of attracting the Umber.
 - Smaller islands that emerge/submerge from the Azure according to mysterious operations of the ship systems
 - The Deep Blue ("The Deep"): The parts of the ship underneath the surface of the Azure

Factions

The Meeters

- Rules Eventide
- Not adventurers, middlemen
- Allies: Gracious Tutors, Vigilant Hundreds
- Enemies: One Path

The Gracious Tutors

- Care for the kaiju used to travel through the sky and ocean
- Involved in transportation
- Share time between Cradle and Eventide
- Allies: Meeters, Reverent
- Enemies: Dedicated, Vigilant Hundreds

The Dedicated

- Want to learn about crystalmancy and earth shaping from the Cradle
- Save the island of Lavi
- Endangering kaiju with their experiments
- Allies: Soaring Grace, Vigilant Hundreds
- Enemies: One Path, Gracious Tutors

The One Path

- Destroy the islands to force everyone to move to the Cradle
- Believe this is destiny
- They have made their base in the Deep Blue
- Allies: None
- Enemies: Dedicated, Soaring Grace, Reverent

The Soaring Grace

- Believe Cradle is collapsing
- Save people there from disaster escaping to other worlds
- Based on Zaffre
- Allies: Dedicated
- Enemies: One Path, Vigilant Hundreds, Meeters

The Vigilant Hundreds

- Provide protection
- Use kaiju for warfare
- Incite conflict to create business
- Based on Glox
- Allies: Meeters, Dedicated
- Enemies: Soaring Grace, Gracious Tutors

Icons:

Genevex of The Gracious Tutors (They/Them)

- A kaiju created to take care of other kaiju
- Have taken to teaching other people to care for the kaiju because Genevex is dying
- Agenda: To pass on their legacy
- Drive: To sustain
- Bond (ally): Recall respects the importance of legacies, I will help her bring together her people

- Bond (enemy): Curiosity would endanger us all to remake something already broken, she must cease her reckless research.

Curiosity of the Dedicated (She/Her)

- She is a gatofolk who was inspired to shift from simply building to rebuilding whole worlds
- Founded the Dedicated to save Lavi after the collapse of the city of Scratchpost
- Agenda: To save Lavi with geoengineering
- Drive: To remake
- Bond (Ally): Swiftclaw is a visionary, but he would have us leap too far too fast.
- Bond (Enemy): Auger and I are both fighting to save the world, I will show him that my home can be remade instead of abandoned.

Recall of the Meeters (She/They)

- A horizontal who was motivated to organize the meeters because she wants to gather as many horizontals as possible from the Azure
- Trading in memories because she wants to clarify her own
- Has a memory of world peace
- Agenda: To understand the future
- Drive: To gather
- Bond: Wonder cannot decide between chaos and stability, but they can be counted on to defend Eventide.
- Bond: Auger has forgotten all the beauty of the sky and should be reminded of what it holds.

Auger of the One Path (He/Him)

- A horizontal with a memory of cataclysm destroying civilization on the islands
- He believes that collective will can change the future
- Fighting to move all peoples to the Cradle, destroy the sky islands to change the outcome he saw
- Agenda: Force migration to the Cradle
- Drive: To inspire action
- Bond: Recall has seen peace in her memories, but I cannot believe in it after what I have seen
- Bond: Swiftclaw tells his own story, much like I would. We can find common ground.

Swiftclaw of the Soaring Grace (He/Him)

- A brilliant young awoken
- Studied the history of this world and is convinced that the Cradle was just created to preserve the planetoids until people would be ready to escape to another system.

- Wants to take all people away from the Cradle and get ready to leave
- Agenda: To leave this world for another
- Drive: To persuade
- Bond: Curiosity has an inventor's spirit, but she her talents are wasted trying to save Lavi
- Bond: Wonder is complacent, I will show them experiences they cannot imagine.

Wonder of The Vigilant Hundreds (They/Them)

- A huge coralis who incites chaos and conflict to bring new experiences into being
- When they first emerged from the ocean on to Eventide their first experience was witnessing a conflict and this inspired them to become a great warleader
- Agenda: To maintain the balance of power
- Drive: To settle conflicts with force
- Bond: Curiosity and I are both chasing after something new, I will protect her from those who do not understand.
- Bond: Genevex would have us live in a world created by the dead.

Races:

Gatofolk

- Cats possessed by the Idea of Artifice (inherited from humans)
- Used cat magic to build the first bipeders (power armor they can pilot to do the sort of work you need strength and opposable thumbs to do)
- Obsessed with building towering structures (so they can climb them) with plenty of windows (they can nap under) and cubby holes to jump in.
- Cats use their bipeders to go under the Azure

Horizinals

- Ghosts of a future age appearing in their distant past
- Coalesce out of Aurora on the Azure.
- Maybe conditioned by something out of time?
- "Grow up" by becoming more definite in their personality and clarity of memory
- "Grow out" of identity by becoming actual reality instead of supernatural substance (The memory coincides with real time)
- Their memories provide prophecies of the future.

Coralis

- Synthetic creatures that were created by humans in the distant past to deal with oceanic ecosystem problems in the Azure
- Each of them are an ecosystem of biological and mechanical aspects

- Integrate parts of the world into themselves because they are given psychotropic experiences by doing so
- Driven by a desire for experience and sensation
 - Like sensates from Planescape
 - This drove them to other ecosystems and interaction with other peoples
- They are oriented around Limoges, the Gardener Aquatic
 - Giant biomechanical sea dragon
 - Produced by them and return to them when they die?
 - Deep blue plates cover its surface

Awoken

- Feathered lizardfolk who rode the great gravity wind to Cradle from beyond
- Go into a torpor to do interstellar travel and have ages long dreams
- Have a caste of scribes who record the dreams of their travels
- Their elders met some humans before travelling
- Their dream records are enormously popular as entertainment
- Known for storytelling and oration
- They're here to help people make sense of what Cradle is
- Lead by a brilliant feathered elder avian named Starwing

Shardfolk

- Crab-like creatures that have evolved in the crystalline computing cores that were built by the humans
- They gained sentience through contact with the crystal memories
- Grew themselves tall lithe bodies out of thought-crystal to explore the world
- Each of them goes out into the world with a function to fulfill
- Very focused
- Individualistic

Player Agenda

- Explore the world's secrets
- Be Bold, Take Risks
- Cherish friends, confront rivals

The Azure Locations

Surface locations

Eventide

Turquoise Atoll

A long thin strip of sand emerging out of the Azure. In its centre stand clusters of craggy turquoise that attract all kinds of wildlife. In the atoll's waters travellers have reported seeing silt mirages that some believe are conjured by the interplay of aurora and umber.

- Connects to: Aeromancy Station by way of hatches found at the foot of the crystals.
- What do you see in the mirage?
- How does it dance?

Azureheart Rock

A huge rocky structure emerging from the Azure, encrusted with formations of pyrite that gleam in the daylight sun. This huge mass was once an observation superstructure that watched over the upper surface of Cradle, but it has been rendered almost unrecognizable by the Azure's waters. Hundreds of penguins fish from the rock while holding lively conversations, and are quite annoyed that The Vigilant Hundreds have set up a fortress on top of it.

- Connects to: Observation Tower and Market Deck
- What type of giant beast has coiled itself around the Rock?
- Who is trying to sell off the pyrite?

The Spire

A tall thin tower barely visible from a distance, it is amazing that the waters have not toppled it. At night it glows with eerie energy and when sky islands float near it, couples gather to watch its colours from a distance. During the day it can be "safely" scaled using ladders and stairs on its exterior. The Spire is actually the top of a tower of luxury apartments that can be accessed through service entrances, but not without considerable danger of falling into the waters below.

- Connects to: Manorial Towers
- What happens to those who touch the Spire at night?
- How can the Spire be found during the day?
- Teenaged Gatofolk climb it to show off

Great Ha'kashun

Just don't call him an island. This giant tortoise was for the longest time the only island visible in the Azure and is somewhat disappointed to have company. There are large emeralds growing on his shell, and Genevex often visits to keep him company. Ha'kashun's movements across the

Azure create Aurora winds that enterprising individuals try to chase with large collecting kites. This is quite dangerous. If you ask him kindly, he will tell you he grew up in the Deep Blue, and was once very small. He does not take well to flying kaiju perching on his back, so approaching him by sea is best.

Deep locations

Upper Levels

Aeromancy Station

- Was meant for weather control, now inhabited by perfumed air elementals who have broken their bonds.
- Denizens: Air elementals, air mephits, Shardfolk
- Rooms: Control Room, Break Room, Library, Engine Room
- Notable treasure: A general map of Cradle. Quartz crystals containing air magic, A book of meteorology
- Factions: Dedicated, Soaring Grace

Observation Tower

- Umber clouds in the stairwells
- Tour guide golems, will answer simple questions
- Two feuding beholders live here
- Plaques on the observation deck detailing what the surface of Cradle used to look like
- Gift shops on the lower levels
- Memorabilia: Great Ha'kashun plushie, Human sized clothing
- Bottom floor exits are collapsed, but access through sahuagin controlled maintenance tunnels to Market Deck is possible.
- Factions: One Path (Trying to claim this area as a base), Vigilant Hundreds (Trying to secure their fortress on top)

Market Deck

- Main shopping concourse inhabited by Vudhir, a covetous copper dragon who grew up in the pet shop
- Sample toys: Shardfolk block toys
- Spend Aurora to summon merchant spirits here
- Imp gang and Kobold gang are fighting over the food court
- Connects to: Cargo hold

Manorial Towers

- Inhabited by shadow echoes of the former wealthy inhabitants
- Recall has sent Meeters here to try to collect memories from the echoes
- Luxury items can be found here but extracting is very difficult

- The echoes of this area are manipulated by a lesser djinn who was formerly the events planner (“I must attend the ball!” etc.)

Plaza

- Where ship members used to hold public events
- Has been taken over by the One Path recently, used as their base
- The One Path was exiled from Eventide
- Drove out a behemoth from here into the ballrooms
- The One Path is trying to get access to the laboratories below in order to find a way to destroy the sky islands
- Have built complex waterworks around the Plaza to keep out the Umber

Lower Levels

Cargo Hold

- Huge clouds of umber on the floor, so has to be traversed by jumping between giant shelves
- Flocks of gargoyles live among the shelves, will trade dream/memory crystals for memorabilia from the Observation Tower gift shop
- Giant Fenris Wolf patrols the ground (used to be the guard dog, mutated by the Umber)

Botanic Gardens

- Hopelessly flooded
- Kelp treant lives here

Stasis Hold

- Systems have gone haywire
- Inhabited by various human undead

Laboratories

Engine Room

- Location of the Unsung Crucible

Moves

Travel the Skies

When you travel atop a flying beast, declare your destination and who will commune with your mount. The selected rider rolls +CHA. On a 7+ choose 1 from the list below. On a 10+ choose two.

- You are not accosted by a hostile faction

- An extra long day clears the umber at your destination
- You make a discovery, the GM will describe it or ask for your help
- The aurora grants you a helpful memory about your destination
- Someone of your choosing must Keep Company with someone else (their choice).

Drop a Name

- When you Seek Out a member of a faction, add +Bonds with their Icon.