

# TELEMAI

- 👣 **Weight:** Approx. 200kg
- 👣 **Height:** Approx. 2 metres
- 👣 **Classification:** Mammal
- 👣 **Life expectancy:** Approx. 175 years
- 👣 **Native planet:** Telemaia
- 👣 **Diet:** Omnivore



The Telemal is a species from the *Earth From An Alien Viewpoint*, *Be Careful For Whom You Wish For*, and *True Blue Alien* worlds. They are known for being narcissistic, and are disliked throughout much of the universe for spreading a virus that transforms the bipeds of other species into more Telemal.

[If you have a picture of your species, show it to me and tell me where to find the artist, and I'll seek their permission to make an icon for this lore bible to replace my logo.]

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## **Meta-Level**

[Description of this project. If you have a worldbuilding lore bible, move all meta-level information there.]

### **Moral Tone**

From a moral standpoint, the Telemai as a civilisation are stuck between the prevailing moral tone of the P.B.s, who wish it to be understood that they're superior to everybody else and that it is not okay to insult them or even hint at doing so, and that of the I.B.s, who are more inclined to wish for kindness, careful thought, and understanding.

### **Utopian / Dystopian Qualities**

The author designed the Telemai to be highly dystopian.

### **Supernatural**

[Clarification of whether there is a supernatural in this world.]

### **Magic**

Magic exists in the Telemais' universe, but most do not use it. It has obvious benefits for improving sporting performance but as this is considered cheating, most Telemai keep well clear.

# Physiology

Telemai are blue-skinned humanoids. By human standards they are tall and almost invariably have athletic builds.

## Appearance

Telemai are tall, bipedal, mammalian **[If we look at Telemaia's ecosystem then they may turn out not to have mammals per se, but I'll keep an eye open for the most suitable mammal-equivalent so they remain warm-blooded and live-bearing.]** creatures with well-defined musculature. They resemble humans except for their blue skin and yellow blood. There is no noticeable sexual dimorphism between males and females.

Telemai mature quickly and are considered capable of independent living by the time they're eight years old. **[Are they still small by this age or are they fully grown? Do their brains function like that of an adult (ie., can they be reliably rational?) or are they still childlike thinkers at the age of 5?] [Yeah, they'd be about 8 or so years old, if compared to a human.] [This doesn't quite answer my question. I've changed the age to eight years old, but are there essentially 8 year old children running around living independently, or are 8 year old Telemai adult-sized people who think and talk like adults?]**

## Intelligence

The Telemai are highly intelligent, although on a cultural level it is the vassals and Inherited Bloods who use and demonstrate their intelligence the most. They have their own language and can learn other languages when required. They are capable of undergoing training to use complex tools and machinery, and are space-capable.

## Reproduction

Their world population is low, as they have become in-bred to the point of being infertile and have not regained a higher world population since introducing their cloning strategy. To solve this problem they created a virus to transform other species into Telemai, and approximately one third of the population is made up of these individuals, who are known as "Inherited Blood" Telemai. However its impact on the body is drastic, so only fellow bipedals have a chance at surviving their infection.

Transformation is painful, enough so that some individuals have been known to have a psychotic break as a result. Dr. Stein is an example of this. The pain has been described as being an intense all-over ache.

All Telemai are either Pure Blood or Inherited Blood.

#### *Pure Blood*

Any Telemai that has always been a Telemai since its cloning or conception.

#### *Inherited Blood*

Any creature who became a Telemai after contracting the TGVM virus.

### **Common Medical Conditions**

The Telemai focus much of their culture and self-worth on achievement through sport. For this reason most are in excellent physical health. Diseases associated with a sedentary lifestyle are rare. However, sports injuries, injury through conflict, and mental health disorders are more common.

#### *Depression*

Widely experienced but rarely discussed in Telemai society, whether by Pure Bloods or Inherited Bloods. Pure Bloods are under pressure to perform, and those who do not excel are ignored, derided, or attacked. This is excruciating to the narcissistic Pure Bloods, for whom acknowledgement and admiration are key to their happiness. As depression is in itself open to ridicule in this culture, it is often expressed as rage rather than sadness or numbing out.

I.B.s are more likely to be emotionally honest with other I.B.s about their feelings of depression, as while they have the bodies of Telemai, they do not inherit its culture. If their own culture allows for the discussion of depression then they tend to discuss it between themselves. I.B.s have plenty to feel depressed about due to being shunned or attacked by other races, and being derided by Pure Bloods for not being Pure Blooded themselves.

#### *TGVM Virus*

TGVM (Telemaia Genetic Variation Mutative) is a highly transmissible, lab-created virus which the Telemai deliberately made and released into the universal community in order to prevent their extinction after they had rendered themselves infertile. This virus gradually replaces the host species' DNA so that the individual turns into a Telemai.

Affected people near the end of the transformation process are referred to as Inherited Blood Telemai.

The length of time the transformation takes varies from person to person. For one person it can take a month, and for another it might take far less. The infected individual experiences the following:

- ★ regression to a physically pre-pubertal state
- ★ breaking down of all bones and muscles not present in a Telemai body, and
- ★ rebuilding in the Telemai image.

The breaking down of bone and muscle is too traumatic for many bodies to handle and this is what usually kills the infected individual.

There are only two human individuals who have survived this process: Yvette Cullier and Dr. J Stein.

Very few species are capable of resisting the virus. Those that can include the Ris'War and the Mantiacy. As a rule of thumb, species that have a non-humanoid shape are usually more resilient against it.

The shape-shifting H.E.X. species is an interesting case. H.E.X. are not quite immune, but cannot be transformed into a Telemai due to their radically different physiology. With no skeletons or muscles, there is no suitable 'raw material' for the virus to break down and reassemble. Instead, the virus causes a generic sickness reaction in the H.E.X. and it may die as the virus tries to alter it. If a H.E.X. catches the virus while in the form of a bipedal being it may be transformed into an I.B. Telemai.

In addition to this, it is possible that if a H.E.X. were to catch the virus, then the virus would mutate to be able to transform H.E.X. bodies into I.B. Telemai. H.E.X. change their DNA when they transform, meaning that a H.E.X. that makes itself look like an I.B. is, in fact, an I.B. The results of this could be horrifying, perhaps even for the Telemai themselves.

### *Traumatic Injury*

The medical Telemai community lost their interest in medical knowledge beyond cloning after they perfected their cloning technology. Traumatic injuries such as amputations or paralysis are not unheard of, given the Telemai's sport-centric culture (see *The Games* below), but they do not have an interest in healing their wounded.

## Geographical Distribution

Telemai prefer the temperate areas of their planet, and most live along the coasts of these areas where the air tastes fresh and crisp. Most of the population live in small towns and cities along the temperate coasts of their home world. Most of these are further broken down into tribalistic settings.

You can find a map here. [\[Regional maps or different types of maps may be helpful. Try my partner, MikesMaps on Discord if you'd like a map made. You can check his gallery \[here.\]\(#\)\]](#)

### Countries, Cities, Towns, and Settlements

The Telemais' native planet, Telemaia, is considered highly desirable by many other civilisations throughout the universe. It has slightly higher gravity than Earth, which can make it a little uncomfortable for non-Telemai, and is the reason for their muscular builds.

#### *Air Composition*

Telemaia's atmosphere can feel thick to breathe, and its composition changes with the seasons. When the volcanoes are more active it becomes richer in carbon, and during the rainy season it becomes enriched with argon. This too can make Telemaia a harsh place to live for non-Telemai folk.

#### *Seasons*

Telemaia has 12 seasons. These are very different from our own seasons as they are caused by the gases that pass through the atmosphere. and include:

1. **Volcano Season:** a time of heightened volcanic activity. Telemaia orbits around one of a pair of suns. When it passes between them their gravity pulls it at the same exact strength on both sides. **[So there are times when Telemaia is in daylight on all sides! I bet that'll show up in their culture.]** This pulls at the planet's magma, which in turn moves its tectonic plates, which leads to the volcanic activity. While each volcano erupts with its own particular mix of gases, carbon dioxide, sulfur dioxide, hydrogen, carbon monoxide, methane, and

hydrogen sulfide are the most common. **[I bet there are more valuable volcanoes that produce rarer gases, that the Telemai fight over. Reckon so? While the gases I listed are the most common gases to come from volcanoes on Earth, trace gases also come from them, so the potential range here is huge.]**

[[The seasons would have to do with the patterns of when the gasses are passing through the atmosphere and being swirled together. Because it's heavily dependent on the gasses in the atmosphere they can't fully say it's this season since it fluctuates.] **[Ah, okay! Do you have any other seasons in mind? I'm wondering if they're likely to get: hydrogen sulfide season, which may be a good 'mental tuning/balancing' time or Telemai as "Hydrogen sulfide has emerged as an important 'gasotransmitter' that regulates several bodily systems including: the cardiovascular, digestive, immune, hormonal, and nervous systems." ~ <https://www.alexmanos.co.uk/hydrogen-sulfide/>**

Then there's nitric oxide, which promotes blood flow:  
<https://www.britannica.com/science/nitric-oxide>

I'll stop there but there are a few reactive gases that could be fun to play with, here!  
Here's a decent list of them:

<https://support.calgaz.com/hc/en-us/articles/115006582948-List-of-Reactive-and-Non-Reactive-Gases> ]

**[I'm going to have to read up on these]**

# **Infrastructure**

[Introduction needed.]

## **Architecture**

As with so many parts of their culture, Telemai believe in going all out to be the biggest and best, and this extends to their construction habits. They favour architecture with an appearance of strength, and robust details such as thick walls and visible supports. Telamai-made buildings are designed to last and are often big enough to accommodate entire communities.

## **Education**

Most other civilisations consider the Telemais' approach to education as something of a joke, as they are perceived as shallow, vain and competitive. The Telemai do not help themselves in this regard as they have little time for the notion of subtlety, and the closest they have to a standard education is the series of audio recordings played to clones. These educate them until they are aged 5, at which time they are left to fend for themselves.

Despite this however, the Telemai are well educated. Historically the Vassals were the ones who accumulated knowledge, and they did this largely to validate their existence to the Telemai and to try to combat the trend the Telemai were following to become severely inbred. Overall, those who feel unable to compete physically are more likely to develop their intellect.

## **Energy Sources and Usage**

There is little to say that's notable about the Telemais' energy usage. They are space-capable with the energy demands that this entails.

## **Healthcare and Medicine**

The Telemai took an active interest in medical science up until the past approx. 300 years. After this, they began to focus exclusively on the science of cloning, and lost interest in their broader medical knowledge. In time they ultimately lost it completely.

### *Limb Reattachment*

The Telemai are slightly more advanced than the human race in this area of medical science and lack the knowledge required to reattach nerves. If a Telemai is seriously injured in The Games and requires an amputation or becomes paralysed, then usually this signals the end of their sporting career and they must find something else to do with their lives.

### *Prosthetics*

Pure Bloods do not like the concept of prosthetic limbs. They are aware that prosthetics can be made that look like natural limbs and can even provide an athlete with a competitive advantage, which means that the officials of a game would be unable to tell whether any of the competitors were cheating.

On an individual level, quite a few Telemai like the idea of prosthetics as a means of compensating for long-term injuries and as a way to improve their performance in their daily tasks. It is mostly I.B.s who feel more favourable towards prosthetics.

Overall, prosthetics are something of a hot-button issue. Realistic-looking prosthetics have the potential to help a Telemai avoid the stigma of long-term injury, but being discovered to wear a prosthetic comes with its own stigma.

## **Sanitation**

Telemai standards of sanitation are unremarkable.

## **Travel / Transport**

The cultural obsession the Pure Blood Telemai have for competition means that they perform a certain amount of posturing when it comes to 'lesser' tasks such as distribution of foods and other goods. Pure Bloods like for outsiders to believe that every Telemai family is responsible for growing and caring for their own food. In fact, these tasks are often delegated to Inherited Blood Telemai who are less likely to protest

having to do these tasks because most are unwilling to join in with the PBs' competitive culture.

## **Position in Ecosystem**

The Telemai are a dominant species; as a species are strong and intelligent enough that they no longer have any predators. It would take a fearsome animal indeed to fight a Telemai and win. Furthermore, they notably lack cooperative relationships with other species of Telemaia. **[Since they're omnivorous, can I guess that they have a predator-prey relationship with some species, though? If so I'm guessing they have a few herd-animal species that they like to eat. Reckon they'd have a bird or two (ie., their own type of chicken or turkey)? This might be something I could do some ghostwriting for to figure out what their food species would be.]**

### **Bacteria, Viruses, and Other Pathogens**

The Telemaia Genetic Variation Mutative virus was designed to resist alteration. For example, if an infected Telemai was hit with radiation intense enough to cause cellular damage in a human, they would be unaffected as their cells would replace themselves with perfect, new copies of themselves. For this reason Telemai are mostly incapable of developing cancer. The downside of this is that the Telemai have become unable to adapt to any new disease that can harm them.

## **Technology**

The Telemai as an overall species are space-capable but retain a certain conservative attitude. This dual attitude is in part due to the two-tier social system in which the Pure Bloods who earn high scores in The Games maintain control and favour a more primal approach, while the lower-scorers recognise the need for progress and quietly work on this in the background.

Inherited Bloods may involve themselves in all of this in order to find a place in Telemai society; some bring new knowledge into the civilisation due to being born in a completely different civilisation, and the vassals generally like to incorporate whatever the I.B.s are willing and able to teach them. There is a proviso to this: the I.B. must present the idea as if it was that of a Pure Blood in order for it to be accepted.

### **Technological Age**

This species is in their space age.

### **Agriculture**

Food production isn't glamorous enough for esteemed Pure Bloods to spend their time on. Instead, Inherited Bloods and vassals do this work. The only time Pure Bloods get involved is in the high-level positions where they can negotiate the buying and selling of foods, and even then they usually have a vassal in attendance to do the less glamorous or enjoyable side of the job.

### **Industrial Status**

[Notes on whether or not the species / culture has achieved mass-production yet.]

## **The Sciences**

The main focus for the Telemai in terms of the sciences is genetics.

## History

The Telemai have generally kept to themselves, to a large degree due to their odiousness to other civilisations. Much of their focus has been on optimisation of their race, which has led to a number of side-effects: the formation of different strata of society and their genetic homogenisation.

### Evolution / Genesis

Historically, primitive Telemai felt threatened by other bipedal species so they aggressively wiped them out. This led to them becoming the only bipedal creature on their planet.

Telemai are subject to a level of convergent evolution with humans, but originally evolved from fish. It is this evolutionary background that makes the Telemai so flexible in their ability to tolerate breathing a variable atmosphere. To this end they have gills inside their throats. Their throats and lungs do the majority of their breathing and cleaning/warming of the air they breathe. When they breathe oxygen they like to take in a lot of it, so it is possible for them to find the air on Earth quite lacking.

### Timeline

*Eugenics Programme* **[How many years prior to the current day did this occur?] [I've never really specified the ages of the Telemai] [I can avoid doing so, give arbitrary ages, or wait for you to come up with ages. I'll leave that up to you.]**

During a relatively early stage of their history the Telemai began a eugenics programme to perfect their race - with perfection measured by their ability to create the best possible warrior by raising the average level of stamina, intelligence level, and other parameters.

This began simply enough with warriors testing their strength by winning fights with other warriors. Some clans developed better genes for this than others and began to dominate in these trials.

Other clans noticed this and decided to focus their attention on outsmarting the strongest warriors.

In time, this culture of competition developed into an institution of competitive games which were eventually consolidated by His High Majesty Struns. **[I was under the impression that The Games were founded after inbreeding reached a crisis point. Can I double check that with you?]** This was initiated by Candoria, one of the more intelligent vassals under Struns' employ, who asked him, "Why waste valuable breeding stock by putting them to war? If we have them prove themselves through competition they will survive and prove themselves."

This idea was initially intended to lead Struns to compete and be killed, thereby granting Candoria her freedom, greater power, or some other resource that she could use. However, in time the institution of The Games grew to cover for the damage that the Telemai had done to themselves through inbreeding to prevent them from killing each other and reducing their population even further in a cultural atmosphere in which their birth rate had already plummeted, and to encourage the remaining Telemai to seek physical perfection and avoid any further degradation in their genome. **[No wonder the HEX freak them out so much - they recreate the Telemais' genome like it's nothing.]**

Intelligence became an integral part of the games.

Initially they leveraged the results of The Games by only allowing the most exceptional individuals to clone themselves. Individuals not permitted to do so were initially prevented from doing so by being murdered. **[While I can see the Telemai being this brutal, wouldn't it just be easier for them to do this by declining to sell them the necessary materials to perform a clone?] [The cloning I envisioned is in a chamber/location that is central to the families so there would be multiple levels to keep others from claiming the "prize" of passing down your genes.] [So that would mean they're guarded, if I understand right? I'm still not quite clear where the murder comes in - unless you mean that anybody who's not on the "guest list" who approaches the facility is murdered, not just turned away?]** Later, when the vassal class was founded, the sentence was reduced to castration.

On a similar note, the individual on whom the TGVM virus is based is the winner of the last Games.

#### *Poor Health Due to Inbreeding*

Eventually, after 100-200 generations of inbreeding, the Telemai inbred so much that they began to experience the following problems:

- ★ spontaneous abortion, stillbirth, and early infant death, with affected mothers often having the same results from one pregnancy to the next
- ★ premature birth, with infants born underweight and undersized
- ★ various physical deformities
- ★ genetically-inherited diseases including blindness, hearing loss, neonatal diabetes, malformed limbs, sexual development disorders, schizophrenia, congenital heart disease, and a host of other effects
- ★ sterility, when the inbreeding got too intense

After this, the Telemai shifted to two other forms of reproduction: cloning, which produced Pure Blood Telemai, and individuals who carried and transmitted a virus to convert other species into Telemai, which were thereafter called Inherited Blood Telemai.

### Historically Significant People

The dramatic history of the Telemai means that a few significant people can be named from their history books.

#### *Candoria*

Female Telemai vassal who achieved notoriety when she (rather underhandedly, it is believed) slipped the idea of The Games into her lord's ear. Her initial goal was to simply get her lord killed in these games, but this backfired. She ended up being in charge of the games and slowly shaped them over time into an institution core to the culture of the Telemai.

#### *Dr. Jacob/Jasmine Stein*

A microbiologist/geneticist from the *Be Careful For Whom You Wish For* **[Quick question and I'm sure I asked this before, but there are two 'for's in that title. Is that definitely how you want it?] [I actually think I drop the one of the fors.] [Which one?]** story, who worked on a "super serum" program for a team of rogue shadow-agents in the US government. Through an accident, they discovered that the TGVM virus could be used to change a person's gender, so they tested it on themselves.

Their research lab was situated on Earth in the Roaring Forties, and was as cold, isolated, and military/research-centric as can be imagined.

Dr. Stein had always wanted to transition to female. Stein's father had made it clear during their earlier life that he didn't want a 'sissy' son and had forbidden Stein to transition via the existing medical means of the day.

This, plus a major disagreement with their partner, left Stein isolated, and Stein focussed on their school work. They graduated early and used their excellent grades to enter college. Distancing themselves from their family did little to ease Stein's personal discomfort: Stein loathed their physical appearance and had difficulty accepting that other people liked them, so distanced themselves from any potential new friendships. This contributed to Stein's isolation.

Stein was approached by the agency while still in college, and the agency agreed to pay Stein's college fees on the condition that Stein work for them. Given Stein's isolation, they found it easy to agree to this offer.

The research base Stein worked at was a military depot on route to the Antarctic, so it doubled as a re-supply spot for commercial ships. The intense cold meant that most people at the base stayed indoors and wore as many warm layers as they could, which meant that most peoples' uniforms weren't on display. Stein couldn't be sure who was working for what agency but assumed that most of them worked for the CIA.

This was where Stein met their first true love: Charles. Stein called him Chuck, and the pair bonded closely. Despite this, Stein kept their desire to transition to themselves.

Stein also met Yvette (see below) at the base. Yvette conducted tests on Stein as part of the agency's side of the deal, and sometimes Stein got to read some of Yvette's paperwork. This was where Stein first learned of the TGVM virus, and while much of it was redacted, their training helped them to deduce what the virus was: a virus with the potential to rebuild the body, almost from scratch.

Stein secured a sample of the virus with the agency's agreement and conducted their own experiments, and by trial and error succeeded in changing a rat's sex. After this, Stein turned a mouse they'd named "Minnie" into "Mickey".

This was excellent news for Stein in particular, but they understood that if they were to reveal these two successes to the agency then the virus would be deemed a success and likely secured out of Stein's reach, so they falsely recorded it as a failure and stored a sample of the virus for a while until the agency's focus appeared to have shifted elsewhere.

When Stein was sure enough that nobody was paying attention to their professional work they began to work with the virus again, adjusting it to work on the human genome and experimenting on themselves.

The transition was a success, but Stein hadn't anticipated the pain. They tried to go about their business and disguise the burning and aching that the virus caused. This pain was so extreme that Stein had a trauma response and developed a new facet to their personality to cope with it.

As a result of the transition, not only did Stein become female but also regressed to 9 years old. This unexpected complication was impossible for Stein to hide from the agency, who decided that a youth serum was worth having, and they removed Stein's records from their computer systems to allow them to work with/experiment on Stein to their hearts' content. They also assigned Chuck as Stein's caretaker.

As a further side-effect to this version of the virus, Stein had lost several other aspects of their personality, including those which drove their academic brilliance: mostly their tendency to focus deeply on tasks and desire for perfection. Stein's age-regression and personality change strained Stein and Chuck's relationship. Meanwhile, the agency tested Stein every day to try to discover how the changes had happened.

9 years passed and Stein aged again. They hadn't become a true Telemai **[and I'm guessing they weren't infectious as nobody else seems to have become I.B. Telemai in this story?]** **[Initially it was mutated into a gender swap virus, but I haven't decided if I wanted to keep that.]** **[I'll wait for you to confirm that before I change anything or remove this comment.]** and they redeveloped their personality. Their core personality was secretive, analytical, and distrustful. Their alternative personality, the one in which they were given a more traditional upbringing from Chuck, was more relaxed and trusting.

During this time Chuck's interpretation of their relationship had changed. Rather than seeing Stein as his partner, he'd started seeing her as his daughter. He found Stein's new personality distressing.

Stein's colleagues at the agency also found these 9 years distressing as they found themselves experimenting with relatively little contextual information. Pre-transition Stein had understood the virus better than anybody, but her transition had robbed her of most of her understanding of it.

All of this put Stein in an impossible position: she knew they would never let her go, but if she succeeded in refining the formula to the point where it could be used in a military setting then the world as she knew it would end: ageing politicians could regain their youth (and with it, extra years in which they could work). Political opponents could undo one another's personalities to rid them of their principles.

Eventually Stein escaped - or rather, believed that she escaped - and was observed from a distance by the government agency called B.A.D. (see *Zalielith* profile for further information) in order to ensure that if any outbreak occurred it could be contained before it spread too far.

*Pandia*

Scientist Telemai who first identified that eugenics alone would not save the Telemai, and that manipulation of their genetic code would be more likely to succeed. It was Pandia who designed the TGVM virus.

### *His High Majesty Struns*

The leader who listened to the vassal Candoria to introduce The Games, a system that would allow him to determine who was the “best” Telemai.

### *Yvette Cullier*

A former French Army officer who turned into a Telemai as a result of an illegal experiment involving the TGVM virus. Currently works for the Detention and Diplomacy departments of B.A.D (the Bureau of Alien Detection/Detention/Diplomacy/Destruction; see *Zalielith* profile for further information) as a bodyguard and the first line of defence against the Osirians for her charges.

## **Nations Founded**

**[I think you're working on the Telemai world with Mike, aren't you? I'll keep this section open until you do, if you do. Alternatively, do you have any country or other regional names I can write about here?] [Not yet, but soon] [All good! I'll keep this note here until you're both ready.]**

## **Wars and Alliances**

The natural competitiveness of the Telemai led them to have inter-clan wars on a regular basis. This became a more serious problem as their fertility reduced as a result of their inbreeding, and eventually The Games were invented as a way to peacefully satisfy the Telemais' desire to prove themselves.

### **Alliances**

The Telemai do not have any strong alliances with other races, however they do have a handful of trading treaties that they honour grudgingly.

Their grudging attitude stems from their belief that their race is superior to any other. As far as they are concerned, any civilisation with which they trade is honoured to be trading with the paragon of perfection that is the Telemai, but that the other civilisation usually lacks the proper reverence that the Telemai feel they deserve. Therefore the

other civilisation approaches trade with the Telemai with the expectation that the trade will involve equal effort on both sides, while the Telemai expect that any trading will be at their convenience and not that of the other civilization.

This has a predictably erosive impact on the goodwill that other civilisations feel towards the Telemai, and trading usually only goes ahead as a result of the efforts of the lower-ranking Telemai accompanying the figurehead individual, and the scarcity of the resources they sell. See *Business* for further details.

### **Trade Routes Established**

The relationships between the Telemai and other civilisations are rather sour, so there are few trade routes. Telemai who live off-world tend to be low in number so do not generate strong trade routes. **[It feels like you could add more here to clarify who the Telemai sell their rare gases to or where they buy the chemicals necessary for cloning from, but I also gather you may not have that part of your worldbuilding done or enough interest to write it. Let me know either way and I'll write something up here to tie up this loose end.]** **[Telemai would trade with those who have a need for their specific gas. Like technically earth has a shortage on helium. So the vassals would do research on places that are low on particular chemicals that are abundant on their planet and send a representative to negotiate a deal. Telemai always viewing themselves as superior wouldn't normally be the type to engage in this, so there would mostly be vassals or even robots to do this.]** **[I was mainly thinking it may be worth clarifying who they're selling to. Clearly the vassals are doing the work of creating and strengthening these trades, gases may be consumable and therefore require repeat sales, coveted trade routes may be something of a status symbol, and the law of 20/80 says that whatever happens, the Telemai will end up with a small hardcore of dedicated buyers. Any thoughts which civilisations they're selling to?]**

**[Some Telemai, those who don't engage in trade, would still ingrain themselves in the local sports culture.]** **[Is that related to trade routes? I'm not quite sure I see how.]**

### **Disasters**

Given the overall opinion non-Telemai have of this species, it's surprising they haven't invited more severe measures. However, they are either tolerated or avoided depending on the species, meaning that they have avoided outright extermination or war.

*Infertility*

At a certain point in their history, the Telemai inbred to the point of becoming infertile. While it is still possible for a pair of Telemai to conceive naturally it's so unlikely that they have switched their reproduction method to that of cloning and of enforced gene therapy via a virus.

### **Discoveries**

While the Telemai have made their share of discoveries, usually these are by the less aggressive individuals who are more prone to reflection and considering their surroundings.

### **Inventions**

Overall, the Telemai are inventive enough to have developed many advanced technologies, but usually it is the individuals who cannot compete in sport who do the work of developing new technologies.

#### *A.I.*

Telemai have developed artificial intelligence, and can and do emotionally bond with them. A.I.s can be programmed not to be bull-headed or arrogant, which means that the Telemai who uses one as a companion does not feel challenged by it. A.I.s can also give out compliments more frequently than biologicals are prone to doing, so they can be made to make a Telemai feel important.

However, A.I.s are incapable of truly loving their Telemai companion, so as such they are generally distrusted as emotional support systems. This is compounded by the general lack of emotional intelligence P.B. Telemai have. They are more popular among I.B.s. Aside from this, different robots are given different designs with some looking cuddlier, more aesthetically pleasing, or less threatening than others. The ones that are more pleasing for one reason or another are generally more popular.

Overall, the Telemai do not trust highly advanced technology such as AI computers or inorganic life, mainly because it often lacks a survival instinct, which the Telemai themselves value highly.

#### *Genetic Manipulation*

The Telemai took an interest in this as soon as their level of knowledge and technological advancement allowed it. They had already taken an interest in improving their DNA overall via a eugenics programme. Genetic research offered them new avenues by which to improve their species.

At first this seemed to the Telemai to merely be a useful tool, but at a certain point in their history, their eugenics programme became counter-productive as they noticed that their more recent offspring were scoring lower for intelligence. There were also fewer Telemai being born due to the species' shrinking genetic diversity. The Telemai decided to switch from eugenics to genetic manipulation to achieve the creation of new individuals without the negative side-effects that inbreeding had begun to have.

### **Changes in Standards of Living**

This profile largely focuses on the Telemai in their most recent few years, and there is little focus on changes in standards of living within that short span of time.

### **Slavery**

Telemai society isn't supported by a workforce of slaves *per se*, but they do have a hierarchy that allows a more esteemed class to delegate the less desirable work to others. Those others are called vassals.

#### *Vassals*

"Vassal" is the term used for Telemai who were considered unworthy to breed. Initially they were Pure Bloods who failed to fit society's standards of perfection, but in more modern times the Vassal demographic has mostly shifted to Inherited Bloods, with only a few P.B.s left.

When the breeding system that excluded Vassals from the gene pool was first installed, they were angry and did all they could to spite their rulers. However, soon after the role was created a number of them realised that the tasks delegated to them were important and gave them power of their own: they were tasked to create the Games, and they used this to influence the Telemai civilization in their own way.

### **Social Movements**

Telemai culture is defined by perfection - who is the best of the best. This leads to cruelty and neglect towards Telemai who fail to reach the expected level of perfection,

which in turn leads to social movements by marginalised groups to ensure their safety, or protect or improve their quality of life.

### *Arbitrary Differences Between Different Walks of Life*

Telemai are prone to 'othering' people, whether they're non-Telemai, or whether they're Telemai from different walks of life. If there is any conceivable excuse to see another individual as different, they will generally take it, and class them as either superior or inferior.

### *Inherited Blood Telemai*

An I.B. Telemai is difficult to distinguish from a P.B. one purely by their physical appearance; it is usually their behaviour that gives them away. I.B invariably have different cultural norms such as giving in during disputes, holding doors open for others, and other small, placatory gestures and social niceties.

A few I.Bs hide their heritage by mimicking the haughty, narcissistic behaviour of P.B.s, and if they put on a convincing enough act then they can absolutely get by without being detected. Tribal initiations are still likely to root them out however, although again, it is not impossible for an I.B to research their tribe of choice well enough to answer the questions to the tribe's satisfaction.

### *Injury or Incapacitation*

A Telemai who becomes unable to participate in the Games, either through injury or other circumstance, is seen as the lowest of the low - even more so than Inherited Blood Telemai. If a Pure Blood Telemai becomes permanently unable to take part in the games they have a high likelihood of suicide, as they are unlikely to be skilled at anything else so cannot gain a sense of self-worth from any other activity.

Suicide is a common option for such Telemai as most would be unwilling to take the time to learn a non-sporting skill as no non-sporting skill could ever give them the opportunity for 'greatness'.

### *Top Tier of Telemai Perfection*

The Telemai place such importance on being the very best, whether at a physical or a mental pursuit, that those who out-compete all the competition take pride of place in society. This is a prestigious position and these Telemai accept it with pride.

Top Tier individuals live a life of luxury, are publicly acknowledged as the best sportsperson in that particular sport, and become the benchmark against which other aspiring sportspeople are judged in that sport. They are treated like royalty by other Telemai - at least until somebody else takes their place.

## Culture

To sum the Telemai up briefly, they are action-orientated, disinclined towards quiet reflection, competitive, and self-absorbed.

### Art

Overall, the Telemai do not take a great interest in art. There are exceptions, however. They like to demonstrate perfection and for this reason, tend to be more interested in mastering a medium than enjoying the merits of the medium in its own right.

As Telemai are not generally inclined to sit still and concentrate, their preferred media are song and the spoken word. Those who like to make something visual prefer media that can be made quickly: pencils, coal or chalk, and other such drawing media. They hate to leave anything half-done.

#### *Neurosis around Imperfection*

Telemai do not tolerate imperfection well, so artists tend to appear to be unproductive as they destroy any imperfect creations. It is not uncommon for a piece of art to go through thousands of 'revisions' like this before the final product is unveiled, and even this is rare, given that Telemai culture is about action and results; creating the perfect piece of art often takes too long to be considered worthwhile. With this said, Inherited Bloods and vassals are far more prone to making art than are Pure Bloods. I.B.s who have knowledge of the popular arts in their native culture may use their knowledge to generate worth to their Pure Blood kin.

The nature of art and its tendency to be hard to assess in terms of 'perfect' or 'imperfect' brings out the neurotic side of Telemai, and a single Telemai artist may spend an entire lifetime creating, destroying, and recreating a single piece of art.

The few pieces of art that do exist are considered important to the community however, as are considered a statement as to the individual's pursuit of perfection.

#### *Perfection*

The desire to create the perfect Telemai is so culturally ingrained that it is often introjected as a desirable value from birth, and appears to have been incorporated as a behavioural tendency into their DNA. It could be said that the development of Telemai flesh into the perfect Telemai is their favourite artistic medium and goal.

### **Clothing**

Overall, Telemai prefer form over function: the clothing of the privileged Pure Bloods is extravagant.

This changes when they enter The Games, and vassals tend to wear more practical, less extravagant clothing throughout the year. I.B.s wear either practical Telemai clothes and blend in with the vassals, or wear clothing from their culture of origin.

### **Food**

#### *Bitter Foods*

In a similar vein to coffee (below), Telemai enjoy bitter foods: dark chocolate, cauliflower and other brassicas, and lemon being examples. They tend to be particularly amused by lemons, given the level of genetic mutation by unnatural selection that brought them into existence.

Bitter roots are a delicacy for the Telemai. Their taste for bitter flavours may be responsible for a preference for coffee among Telemai who have visited Earth.

#### *Carbs and Fats*

Telemai, especially those who take part in The Games (so this would be mostly Pure Bloods) are very deliberate, sometimes even disciplined, in which of these they eat and in what amounts. Athleticism requires fuel, and depending on the physique or performance a specific Telemai wants to achieve they will pick their energy source accordingly.

#### *Coffee*

Telemai who have visited Earth tend to enjoy coffee, once they discover it.

### **Language**

The Telemai have their own language, called "Telemaia". They are also capable of learning other languages if and when required, and their viral method of reproducing means that many Inherited Blood Telemai start off speaking a veritable Babel of other languages.

### *Telemaia*

Telemaia is the official language of the Telemai, and almost all Pure Bloods are monolingualists. It is rare to find one who bothers to learn a second language, especially if it would be helpful to other races; the reasoning for this is that learning a second language may be something to brag about, but it takes effort and is often not interesting enough, for long enough, for a Pure Blood to become fluent. To learn a second language specifically to help somebody else out would be to mark oneself out as a "mug" - something no self-respecting Pure Blood wants.

Vassals, on the other hand, find learning a second language to be helpful, and are usually much more humble about it. It comes in most helpful when talking with Inherited Bloods. In order to help out I.Bs, vassals tend to teach them Telemaia so that the I.B. in question can communicate with Pure Bloods.

### *Other Languages*

Inherited Blood Telemai speak their own languages. **[Note to self to add further info here if there are implications for the I.B.s.]**

Telemai physicality allows for the speaking of most languages that require vocal chords, and they are capable of using sign-languages.

### *Naming Convention*

*[What is the Telemais' naming convention? How do they come up with names? I'm thinking here that for a society this advanced and obsessed with lineage, it seems odd that there is no apparent surname to track family lines. Unless that information is either written into the individuals singular name or given in another format, such as a tattoo?] [I'm still working on the naming scheme for Telemai, most of the stories I've dealt with are with Yvette and Stein who were human to start.] [I'll keep this note in place as a reminder that we'll want to check this out. Thanks for answering!]*

Inherited Bloods tend to keep their original name.

Pure Blood clones are given a name made up of their parent(s)' names, to make a new and distinct name. With that said, Pure Bloods with a title worth being proud of will often refer to themselves just by their title. **[What titles would you say exist? As Pure Bloods don't seem to value education, I'm guessing Doctor, Professor, and titles like that are interesting, unless they often give out honorary titles. Mrs. and Ms. wouldn't exist as Telemai don't marry, leaving Mr., Miss, and Mx. which are hardly an**

achievement as everybody will be one of these. I imagine military, spiritual, or aristocratic titles are more the thing?]

### Religion, Faith, and Spirituality

The Telemai used to have a religion of hero-worship, which centred around the worship of those who were “better” than themselves. This in turn meant that their idols changed frequently.

In more modern times they have given this up in favour of striving for god-like perfection themselves, so modern Telemai practise self-worship. Most of this is impossible for an outsider observer to see, as it involves the individual’s attitude towards themselves. What can be seen is extreme narcissism: vengeful anger at being made to look imperfect, and a preoccupation with image both physical and social.

Despite this change in spiritual focus, a few names from the old times of hero-worship are still occasionally referred to. **[I’ll keep a note here for now in case you want to come up with any names.]** Conversely, old Telemai who are not held in high esteem may be referred to as “XYZ the Lesser”.

#### *Acts of Worship*

As Telemai worship themselves, acts of worship include such rituals as:

- ★ Deep skin cleansing
- ★ Ice masks
- ★ Massages
- ★ Mud baths
- ★ Wraps

#### *After-Life*

The Telemai consider the after-life to be a place where games are perpetually played, where the dead test one another and have large-scale parties to celebrate these games - until the party is over when the testing once again continues.

#### *The Games*

The Games is the nearest the Telemai have to a religious event.

## Personal Celebrations

Telemai competitiveness and the social (and sometimes physical) brutality that accompanies it means that sentimental personal special events such as christenings/naming ceremonies, matrimony, or funerals are either unlikely, or approached rather differently to the way humans handle them. **[I'm not entirely convinced of this as you said that Telemai do have friendships and they can be very close.**

**Speaking of which, I mentioned christenings so I wonder if there's any kind of welcoming they do for new youngsters? The whole 5-years-in-a-vat thing made it sound like they unceremoniously get pulled out of the artificial womb at the age of 5 and are more or less shoved out the door with nothing. Are they not at least given some sort of starter package or somewhere to live?**

**Also, Telemai don't 'do' birthdays by any chance,, do they? What about coming of age, or celebrations at the end of The Games for new status/points gained?**

**All of the above seems more applicable to the Pure Bloods, so I imagine Inherited Bloods derive their own celebrations from their own cultures. Therefore, are they more likely to celebrate birthdays, have some sort of informal wedding process, that sort of thing?] [I.B. would have whatever their culture/planet had. But really for P.B. the only celebrations they would have is when they win at something. Like getting a new contract, beating a rival, so on and so forth. And they don't shove the new youngins out into that tough world, they would want to train them and make sure they're as good as the one who came before.] [So are the youngsters grown in batches so that they're all the same age and can all be greeted at around the same time? I think you said somewhere that ones who are faulty in some way - genetically inferior - are killed. Since this is a narcissistic race I'm wondering what the parent/s feel about having a mini-me running around? Narc parents tend to be very love/hate about their kids while others may be indifferent.**

**Do some of those Telemai parents come to see their clone emerge? I imagine that tends to end badly as these aren't infants being pulled out of the womb, they're 5 year olds who already have their own will, which narcs tend not to like, so I can see delight turning into rage, perhaps within seconds, perhaps within days. It would be safer for the children not to meet their parents and adverse reactions to their clones may be common, but these clones are also the parents' property, so how would you like to play this?]**

### *Funerals*

A funeral for a Telemai is a proud event, with the family carrying the body to the place where it will be disposed of. The dead Telemai's body is dissolved using a goo that breaks down the body while keeping the deceased's DNA intact. This DNA is then used for the basis to make a new Telemai if the individual was important enough to society.

**[Since important Telemai also seem to be the ones more likely to clone themselves, is there any special esteem given to ones made at the end of their parent's life, as opposed to older co-clones made during their life?] [I'm not sure I fully understand this question] [What I mean is, important Telemai may have made clones earlier in life. Then, if they're important enough, when they're melted down and their DNA saved, another clone is made so that that Telemai can effectively live on (although as I understand it they won't have their parent's memories, they'll just be genetically the same person). Since there's an older clone and a younger clone, is the older one acknowledged in all of this? Is a final clone made at all if there's an older one?]** If they are not, then the individual is praised by society and their records are 'sealed'.

The measurement for 'importance' in this context is highly contested. It is proven via scores kept on the individual which are subjected to a final check for cheating, and an official committee reviews these to determine whether the individual is worthy of being cloned. This review process begins prior to their death, and a sample of their DNA is kept after death until the review concludes, when it is either used or disposed of. The number of Telemai who pass the review and are cloned is low - around one third are cloned this way.

Telemai who die in a place where their bodies cannot be retrieved are mourned as those who could not be carried by their family to the after-life, and to their further greatness.

### *Weddings*

Telemai don't marry.

## **Public Festivals**

The Telemaian tendency towards the pursuit of perfection and of comparison with one another makes togetherness difficult at times. It is generally competition that brings them together, and for this reason, their festivals tend to focus on sporting events.

The Games are by far the most prominent of these events, but small local festivals are also common. However, these are designed not to risk injury for those wishing to enter The Games.

### *The Games*

The Telemai have a month-long festival known to those who live outside of Telemaia as, "The Games". They function much like the Olympics on Earth, although in addition to physical sports they also include competitive shows of intelligence. Every Telemai on the planet is allowed to take part, and every Telemai is expected to compete in at least one of the games.

There is a Childrens' Games, and technically there is a version of The Games for those with permanent injuries (and the very few Telemai with congenital abnormalities who were not killed at birth for whatever reason), although no self-respecting Telemai would involve themselves in it. A few more humble ones do, as do those who never got to take part in The Games so cannot have their performance compared pre- and post-injury.

The Games are built upon "no combat" conditions and are overseen by an impartial committee made up of individuals with no loyalties towards the competitors.

The winners of these games are noted as having won under the specific conditions of their game, and the losers are noted as having lost (although the specific game they lost at is not noted).

Winners who are discovered to have cheated are struck from the record, and the losers against which they lost are awarded the same glory as a winner (ie., it is noted on their record). The most common form of cheating is bribery, closely followed by gathering intel on their competitors and/or using this information to sabotage their training.

Being labelled as a cheat is much more serious than missing out on the prestige of winning. Those with the "cheat" label are reviled by the rest of society and can risk injury or death from any member of the community. [\[How is information on who cheated spread?\]](#)

Every few years the nature of the games changes so that no single Telemai has an advantage.

## **Sport**

Competitive sports are central to Telemai culture, as this is how they assess the value of each individual. They prefer sports with re-match systems via quarter-finals, semi-finals and finals, so that only one winner is ultimately left.

The Telemais' focus on sports is one of the main reasons they dislike magic. Magic can be used to augment performance, which they consider cheating.

### *Cheating / Honour*

Telemai are notoriously focused on the concept of honour, at least in the realm of sport, and are known for their refusal to cheat. The occasional one still does, and if they are discovered to have done so, are struck from the records. If this happens then they are forced to leave the planet.

The longer-term implications of this are more serious than the pain of the cold shoulder of banishment: the disgraced Telemai must find a new society to live in, which may be difficult to do given the Telemais' reputation for aggression, snobbery, and of carrying contagious disease among other species. Usually they'll take an easier option and go into bounty hunter work or similar work which allows them to earn a living while living a nomadic lifestyle.

Some other civilizations take a similarly serious approach to sports, so this can be a way for a disgraced Telemai to find a place of belonging. This is often not an ideal solution however, as this often requires a level of skill and comfort at functioning in groups, and Telemai are generally poor at this. Their poor track record may also prevent them from finding a place in such a culture: after all, they are only seeking belonging in new sports-orientated culture because they were banished from their own.

The other option is for them to attempt to redeem themselves in Telemai society. This requires a feat so extraordinary it would feature in the major headlines (or the Telemai's equivalent of this). However, this is hard to achieve at the best of times, and a disgraced Telemai would have politics to contend with too: their poor reputation would cast doubt over their achievement, and discussion about them and their deeds may become heated if they have supporters who refuse to believe that they cheated in the first place. Ultimately it's easier for such a Telemai to withdraw from public view, leave the planet, and make a life elsewhere.

### *The Unlicensed Games*

The Games isn't the only sporting event on Telemai; it's the official one, but there are also the Unlicensed Games.

The Unlicensed Games were established by a group of outsiders who were also speculators for the valuable gas market for the entertainment of this rich and powerful

group. Involved companies made bets with each other on the Unlicensed Games, until these underground games became an institution in their own right.

Unlike with the official Games where the focus is on competition, the Unlicensed Games are designed around entertainment. That isn't to say that the Telemai who compete aren't fiercely competitive, for they still are, but as the Unlicensed Games are illegal it is unwise to admit to having taken part. If the law-enforcers on Telemai learned where the Unlicensed Games' offices were, or identified specific participants, they would use this information to shut down the entire Unlicensed Games.

Popular games include:

- ★ trap mazes / obstacle courses
- ★ gladiator type events
- ★ fighting living animals / tug o' wars to pull a strong animal into the centre of a ring

and other, similar games. New ideas are welcomed, and the more exotic and unique the event, the more the crowd enjoy it. The nature of these games means that serious injuries are more likely than in the official Games.

As the Unlicensed Games are not licensed or under the administrative control of the official Games, they are not subject to the same rigorous processes to keep them balanced.

### **Social Dynamics**

The Pure Bloods' snobbishness in their pursuit of perfection, plus the disdain with which non-Telemai see them, create a number of schisms in their civilization.

#### *Ashenti*

Telemai are recognised by the Ashenti (read the *Zalielith* profile's entry on these for further information) for their genetic perfection. They admire the Telemai from afar, and if the Telemai are aware of their existence at all they are believed to be fairy tales.

#### *TGVM Clones*

The virus clones other, bipedal races into new Telemai, and as they are clones, they are necessarily all based on a particular individual. Every year, a new version of the virus is created, usually improved or adjusted by the vassals in charge of the project. When it is released, a new genetic template is included. The ultimate prize in The Games is to become the model for the most recent template. Many Pure Blooded Telemai desire this "honour", and the idea is marketed aggressively to them.

This leads to a situation in which different clones can recognise one another as belonging to a given generation. As old versions of the virus cannot be edited, a strain of every version of the virus since its creation exist somewhere in the universe. **[I wonder what the model thinks of their clones, and whether they try to stake any claim to them? What do you think?]**

### *Elderly Telemai*

When a Pure Blood Telemai becomes too old to compete any more and expect to win, they tend to relive their glory days. For this reason, resources are set up for aged Telemai to revel in the past. While the Telemai ordinarily disdain those who cannot keep up, the elderly tend to have many exciting stories, and their tendency towards narcissism means that they tend to keep their stories short and compelling. Stories of glory, crushing defeats, and other great achievements are common.

### *Identification Through Sport*

Individual Telemai tend to have personal preferences for the type of sport they like, such as foot-racing. Usually they prefer to associate with others who are enthusiastic about the same type of sport.

The Telemai understand that not everybody can win. However, if a Telemai loses or falls behind in a game competition too early then this can bring shame upon themselves and their entire family. Officially, honour killings do not happen in these situations. Unofficially, accidents have been known to happen.

### *Ostracism of Inherited Bloods*

Inherited Blood Telemai become contagious after transforming, just like a Pure Blood would be. Other species are aware of this, so I.B.s are usually either condemned to live life in a hazmat suit to avoid contaminating their environments or anyone else of their species, or they move to Telemaia in an attempt to find a life there.

When the I.B.s get to Telemaia they usually find that they cannot join any of the existing tribes, but in more recent years an outcast tribe has begun to form.

Inherited Blood Telemai do not tend to mesh well culturally with Pure Blood Telemai, as they are made up of a variety of other species and tend not to be as obsessed with perfection as the Pure Bloods. As a result of this, I.B.s can be maligned and shunned, which leads them to create their own subcultures. Many different I.B. subcultures exist.

The coexistence between the Inherited Bloods and the Pure Bloods could be described as peaceful, but is subject to disputes from time to time. When this happens the UGPG (United Galactic Protection Guild) intervenes and acts as an overseeing body to the planet. The Pure Blood Telemai do not like this intervention as they feel that they are superior to non-Telemai, but they accept it. See *Military and Law* for further details about this.

## Sexuality and Romance

Telemai are technically infertile so are unable to breed via sexual reproduction. Instead they use cloning or rely on their gene virus.

### *Cloning*

After the Telemai became infertile they began to clone themselves in laboratories in order to avoid extinction.

Cloned Telemai are grown in artificial wombs and played audio recordings of information to educate them. Once the clone is around five years old it is released into the world to survive by itself.

Cloning is tightly controlled and monitored to ensure that only sanctioned clones can go ahead, and for this reason, many Telemai never get cloned. This is due to their desire for genetic perfection, but also for more practical reasons: the chemicals required to create a clone are not available on Telemai and must be imported from off-world.

It is possible for a Telemai to accept a process of artificial insemination, but this is uncommon, particularly because this isn't a medical process the Telemai are well-practised in. The process doesn't work on I.B.s as the transformation process sterilises them.

The most successful Telemai may have up to 5 clones.

The Telemai use the term 'born' even for Pure Blood as the cloning process lacks transparency. It only requires one individual, but usually a mother and a father approach to have a child made. **[Since Telemai don't get married, and consent is pretty much a take-it-or-leave-it concept, why are two would-be parents common enough for this to be routine? Is it that sexual reproduction used to be the usual (hence two parents would be involved) and the cultural belief of two parents being the norm has continued despite cloning not needing them? It feels so much to me that Telemai society is hugely individualistic, so the idea of producing your very own clone, alone, who would basically be entirely mini-you, would be more appealing than making a baby with someone else. Unless, like narcissistic couples on Earth, they truly feel that a baby will somehow improve things, make the perfect family for others to admire, or that making someone who's a combination of themselves and their significant other would be the best idea since sliced bread. What would you say?]** The vassals who administer the cloning process allow the 'parents' to believe that their offspring will contain both of their genes, when in truth they analyse the genes of both participants and clone the more genetically perfect of the two.

### *Consent*

Pure Blooded Telemat do not have a concept of consent. This is because their cultural programming in which a superior Telemat gets to proclaim its dominion over others is almost universally considered the norm. Arguing would be considered to upset the natural order of how Telemat conduct themselves so is considered a disruptive act, not an autonomous one. A female Telemat who successfully fights off an unwanted suitor would be expressing that her territory does not belong to the encroaching male and as such would be asserting her own dominance.

This attitude towards sexual partners can be highly offensive to other civilizations who believe that this leads to a lot of sexual violence among the Telemat; stalking and rape are common in Telemat culture. Telemat who have proved themselves tend to see themselves as above the law.

Learn more about the law as it pertains to stalking and sexual violence in the *Military and Law* section.

### *Gene Virus (TGVM)*

The TGVM virus creates Inherited Blood Telemat. Read more about it in the *Medical Illnesses* section.

### *Marriage*

Telemat do not have a concept of marriage.

### *Romance*

Telemat are capable of forming romantic attachments to one another, and can be polyamorous. It is not unusual to see a Telemat with five or six partners who they care about deeply. Within these groups, they can develop sexual relationships, and come to see one another as family and friends, and these bonds become important to the Telemat. Despite this, romantic relationships tend to rely on the involved parties showing off an idealised version of themselves, and a few slip-ups being tolerated, but true emotional vulnerability is unlikely to be accepted. Sadness and fear are stigmatised in Telemat society, and this is no less true in romantic relationships.

It is worth mentioning that the group relationships Telemat have are polyamorous, and are not harems. The women make just as many choices about who they want to have sex with as the males who announce themselves to be the superior choice. As having sex is not for breeding for this race, this has no direct impact on who produces offspring

either via the virus or by having themselves cloned, but a sense of possessiveness, conquest, and victory is rich in Telemai sexuality.

In a sense, this is seen as old fashioned, and some Pure Bloods might describe it as charming. The presence of the I.B.s and vassals dilute this approach to sexuality, so this polyamorous behaviour is generally seen in pockets of Pure Bloods rather than everywhere.

### *Sexuality*

In the past, when the Telemai relied purely on eugenics, they used to attract partners by emphasising their individual greatness. Since they became infertile this tendency has ceased. As such, many Pure Bloods self-identify as “meritosexuals”- those who are attracted to others due to the desired person’s merits, physically and in their attitudes.

The Telemai are also aware of the impact that sexual activity can have on performance. Males may abstain for a while before certain types of sporting activities to keep their hormone levels high to keep their performances as strong as possible, while some women will deliberately have more sex prior to some matches to raise their hormone levels and enhance their performance.

This leaves the question of sex for pleasure. Telemai can and do enjoy sex for its own sake and many see sex as the basic goal of a relationship.

## **Child-Rearing**

The Telemais’ strange reproductive strategy means that many Telemai do not get parented. Clones are nurtured after a fashion, although most civilised species would consider the nurturing they receive inadequate; Infected Bloods may or may not have been nurtured according to the traditions of their species-of-birth but must find a supportive I.B. community in order to adjust to living as a Telemai within a Telemaian society.

### *Clones*

Clones are grown in isolation, in a cloning chamber (sometimes called an ‘artificial womb’), until they reach the approximate age of five years old. Then they are removed from the chamber to complete their maturing process. During their five years growing in the artificial womb they are put through audio training programmes that allow them to

listen and learn. This includes learning their first language. This is believed to boost their intelligence and give them a head-start.

It is not uncommon for a Telemaian clone of childhood age to be murdered for being inferior (usually for having a deformity), either by another Telemai child or the parent. A clone may also be killed due to becoming unwanted due to a change in the donor's circumstances. Children deemed to be inferior who succeed in killing children deemed superior are seen as having proved themselves with their wits.

At the age of 15 the cloned child will enter a 'proving' stage. During this period they are tested against the standards of the previous generation: if they don't meet or exceed the speed or other criteria that the previous generation met, then they are barred from breeding and are relegated to working on non-game activities such as administration; these individuals are called vassals.

In the current day, the Telemai are approaching a topping-out of this process where their bodies cannot improve any further.

#### *Focus on Activity Over Thinking and Feeling*

Telemai children are raised in a competitive environment from the start, with both implicit and explicit messages that being active is more important than thinking or noticing their feelings.

With that said, the Telemai attach less of a stigma to thinking than to feeling, as intelligence is useful in certain sports activities and doesn't make a Telemai look 'soft'. Note that thinking is only viewed in a positive light so long as it leads to decisive action. Thinking as an end in itself, such as philosophy, does not yield such a positive reaction and is therefore stigmatised.

To say that emotion is never acceptable is not entirely true: certain emotions such as anger (which is an excellent motivator for action) and joy (which is an appropriate emotion to feel when a Telemai wins a competition, and is not an emotion that is generally considered necessary to 'fix') are considered acceptable, but not sadness or fear. This leads to a predictable issue throughout the population where grief is not processed appropriately and is instead expressed through rage or vengeance (both subsets of anger), and Telemai who 'chicken out' are considered weak.

#### *Inherited Blood Telemai*

I.B. Telemai are not welcomed into the Pure Blood Telemai community, certainly not in a spirit of generosity. They may try to join a P.B. tribe and in order to do so they must prove themselves worthy by taking part in at least one ritual, the exact nature of which depends on the tribe they are trying to enter. However, the rituals are invariably deliberately designed to set I.B. Telemai up for failure, usually by asking them questions about the local Telemai culture that they couldn't possibly know without already being part of a tribe.

In more recent times this has led to a situation where enough outcasts have been rejected from Pure Blood Telemai society to be able to form a clan of their own. These are early days for the Inherited Blood tribes, but it seems likely that they will be more accepting of other outcasts.

## Politics

Other species generally distrust the Telemai intensely on account of their attitude towards eugenics and the impact of their efforts to use eugenics to further their own species. Among these results is the TGVM virus, which the Telemai spread to most life-forms they meet.

### Economic System

[Brief description of capitalist, socialist, or other economic system leaning in this species or culture.]

See [Economy](#) for further details.

### Government / Leadership Style

The Telemai are generally very conservative in their outlook. They are slow to adopt new ideas or to embrace change. They are led by a “might means right” form of authoritarianism. Stronger individuals or tribes have more political power.

#### *Choosing a Leader*

They used to qualify ‘the best’ by who was the fastest runner, demonstrated the best endurance, or other physical qualifiers. Although many individuals’ opinions have changed about what makes an important qualifier for ‘best’, many Telemai hold on to the glory days.

In the modern day, the process is similar but more complex. The Games are adjusted each year to allow Telemai with different skills to have the opportunity to win - sometimes endurance, sometimes intelligence, sometimes strength. Telemai running for leadership must enter The Games for multiple years. An average result is taken from their results, and the strongest overall performer takes the leadership role.

Outsiders tend to believe that the Telemai are prone to in-fighting. The Telemai themselves do indeed have frequent disagreements as an overall culture about which sportsfolk are the best to lead, but the criteria tends to change from one year to the next, and the reasons for this can be hard for outsiders to spot. For example, one year they may consider their runners to be the ‘best’ sportsfolk and defer to the judgement of

their best runner. Another year a different sport may be chosen, with its top-tier performer becoming the leader.

The constant change of favoured sport meant that tribes with the talent for different sports were constantly lobbying and fighting one another, and this is why other species consider the Telemai terrible in-fighters.

### **Military and Law**

The UGPG uses robots to observe the Telemai remotely and maintain peace with them. However, Pure Blood Telemai do not trust these robots. This distrust was anticipated by the UGPG, so at the beginning of this project they introduced the robots gradually and with care, and increased the robots' authority in Telemai society in small increments. As a result, they successfully maintained peace during the robots' integration and continue to maintain peace in the current day, and the robots appear to have the support of the more authoritative individuals within Telemai society. However, Pure Blood Telemai remain proud enough to continue resent any interference by 'lower' races in their culture.

The only reason this system is tolerated by the Pure Bloods is through the boiling frog principle: they have tolerated many small changes in this system to bring it to where it is in the current day, that they never would have accepted if imposed on them in one big step. Despite this, their tolerance of the robots is grudging. **[I'm actually thinking here that narcissists love playing Cops and Robbers, and they may rather enjoy finding ways to run rings around the robots. It's hard to do and they'll likely fail as robots think differently to biologicals, and I've no doubt that the vassals and I.B.s will happily throw Pure Bloods under the bus if they see an opportunity to anonymously point a robot in the direction of an erring Pure Blood. Want me to include that here?]**

The I.B. are happier with the presence of the robots than the P.B.s as the bots' overall impact is to make life, which is often hard for the I.B.s, easier.

The laws that the robots enforce generally focus on maintaining a standardised schedule for many activities, which the I.B. appreciate due to the Telamaian seasons making life somewhat chaotic. This grants the I.B.s and vassals a level of safety in which they aren't required to spend extended amounts of time outdoors during Telemai's more dangerous seasons. The P.B.s would have them continue to work regardless of the risk, if not for this rule. They also enforce the use of a standardised currency and pricing structure for commercial goods.

Mostly however, the laws seek to limit in-fighting, which is common among the P.B.s who are quick to take offence at any slight, real or perceived.

### *Sexual Violence and Stalking*

Telemaian law has a concept of self-defence, which can be used to prevent stalking and sexual violence. However, it is hard to enforce, mostly on account of these acts fitting into Telemaian dominance culture. Usually the victim takes action by themselves.

The victim may fight back in order to become dominant over their attacker, and if they win, they may do anything from claim the attacker for themselves as a sexual partner, or castrate, or even kill them.

If any Pure Blood visits a non-Telemai influenced world and tries doing this, they tend to be imprisoned. They are likely to be imprisoned in solitary confinement anyway in order to prevent the spread of the TGVM virus. **[Since the Pure Bloods clearly don't see stalking and rape as wrong I imagine they wouldn't appreciate one of their own being locked away in solitary confinement on a far-away world. Has this led to any diplomatic incidents?]** This may be influenced by the reason for the Pure Blood being on that planet in the first place. Usually they are either disgraced and were forced to leave, or are a bounty hunter.

The UGPC robots intervene in these circumstances wherever possible - usually if they are close enough to a violation of this law when it occurs to register that it has taken place - and this is usually fairly effective, as the robots are hard to destroy and easy to replace.

## **Propaganda**

**[Introduction needed.]**

# \$ Economy \$

[Introduction needed.]

## Currency

During the earlier stages of Telemai history, trading happened via a bartering system. Two Telemai would attempt to outwit each other, and the winner got to set the price that the losing family would have to pay.

This is a way for Telemai to earn extra prestige, as bartering against a successful sportsperson - especially if the trader gets the better deal, and especially so if they got it by tricking the other - is seen as an achievement in itself. It indicates a keen intellect, and the successful trader may become known as one who is business-savvy. This reputation can encourage further trades from others.

Nothing prevents the winner from setting disproportionate claims for consideration, aside from the knowledge that by doing so they may encourage others to make disproportionate claims against them. This keeps the considerations reasonable.

Since the Telemai began trading with other civilisations off-planet, they have taken to seeing their rare gases as units of measurement for a financial system. Trading this resource did not work well under a bartering trade system, so this was when the Telemai began to use a currency. This was mostly driven by the IBs, and the most conservative or outlying PB tribes still refuse to use currency.

## Business

Officially, there are no Telemai-owned businesses. **[They would need to have in order to have trade routes. Who are the other civilisations buying from if not Telemai businesses?]**

**[Also, I've noticed that we have two conflicting stories here. Do the UGPC allow the Telemai to run businesses or not? I'm guessing the answer is that they don't allow on-planet/off-planet trade, or that the no-trading rule is relatively recent. What do you**

**say?] [UGPC do their best to make sure Telemai do not get off the planet, because it takes very little to transfer the virus. And the last thing the UGPC wants is to have the universe become genetically Telemai. So they keep them, as best as possible, on the planet. The folks who cheated and need to get off planet would sign on with the traders and the like to “skirt” UGPC regulations.] [On-planet, off-planet trade would facilitate the Telemai rare gases industry, and I’m thinking that allowing them to trade off-planet would give the Telemai an incentive to remain where they are. They’re reaching out to other planets but usually only to sell to them and to feel important to them. It also creates an incentive to either visit those other planets or have a delegate visit them on Telemaia, so this whole situation may put the cat among the pigeons. Unless their vanity is stoked along the lines of “you’re too important to risk even a single one of you coming to another planet. Let’s send someone to you/do this whole thing via video link”. It may not always work, and perhaps things can just go wrong with trades where a Telemai insists on sending one of their own out, but that may diffuse any feeling in the Pure Bloods of being trapped. I’ve no doubt that I.B.s and some vassals being more aware of what’s up and finding ways to comply. Your thoughts?]**

The reason for this is that the Telemai tend to allow their vanity to interfere with business negotiations, particularly high-profile ones: if the trade is likely to receive a lot of attention (such as trading with an off-world civilization) then they will appoint a figurehead to act as the Telemais’ representative, and a negotiator who may be less physically impressive to do the actual work. Other civilisations, and the UGPC themselves, dislike working in this way, and many civilisations choose not to accept trades with the Telemai for this exact reason. A few still accept a trade however.

The UGPG monitor the Telemais’ trading to ensure that trading remains fair.

#### *Labour Unions for Food*

Labour unions manage the production and distribution of food. This is another area in which one Telemai acts as figurehead while another does the work. **[I’ll come back and check on this as I understood the agricultural efforts on Telemaia to be small-scale, with farms only providing for individual families.]**

#### *Rare Gases*

Telemaia is a rich source of rare gases that the Telemai trade with off-planet civilisations for materials they cannot manufacture. The existence of this lucrative resource may have led to ugly military action by other civilizations to claim it for themselves if not for the Telemais’ terrifying reputation.

Mining and collection of these gases is handled by off-worlders, and the Telemais' only major contribution to the mining projects is to have granted the mining permission required.

*The Games*

The Games are organised by "Vassals": Telemai who are not permitted to breed.

## Credits

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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](mailto:hello@thecharacterconsultancy.co.uk) and I will be happy to help you!

~Hayley, The Character Consultancy