

# **An Explanation on Kittybirgs**

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*A short rambling on my created species, the Kittybirgs. (unfinished and unrevised)*

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# 1 - Kittybirgs

## An Explanation on the Kittybirgs

The most extraordinary thing about science fiction is that there's always the ability to do strange things that make absolutely no sense.

So saying, the Kittybirgs are the perfect example of this.

Small feline-like beings, the Kittybirgs are the product of my obsession with cats. The first Kittybirg probably came about shortly after I got my first cat, Mousie. Mousie is a black and white "mutt", and a runt, to boot. She has a distinct white mane, large, poofy tail, and short fur on her feet, giving the impression of forever wearing knickerbockers and boots. All of these things can easily be identified in the Kittybirgs.

The set standard for a Kittybirg is variable, but most are small in stature. They average between three and four feet tall. In their own universe, they are in exact human proportion to their surroundings. Their entire world is smaller, and the laws of physics apply accordingly. Most, too, have wings. Though there is a known but slightly uncommon genetic mutation for them to be born wingless. Isolated populations of Kittybirgs can easily come to be completely wingless in 10 generations, due to the fact that wingless Kittybirgs are known to lay more eggs as a way to "make up" for the genetic fault. But the trait has not yet taken over the general population, as wingless individuals are seen as handicapped. In normal Kittybirgs, the wings are never large enough to fly with, and their only practical purpose is gliding. Kittybirgs prefer hilly terrain, and practice a sort of downhill air-skiing as they descend the slopes. Upon reaching the top of a hill, they simply leap off and use air currents to coast down. Since they're forever descending, they don't hit the ground. Kittybirgs cannot glider over flat terrain, and cannot soar.

Unlike most bipedal anthros, Kittybirgs live in a network of tunnels whose entrance lays at the top of the highest hill. The tunnels are started with only one main chamber, but can expand to hundreds as the colony grows. Their blunt, spaded fingers are used for digging, and the hard, almost insect-shell-like feathers on the tops of their wing-wrists can be used to bash and break rocks. They crawl on their hands and knees to dig, and inside the dark tunnels, Kittybirgs are completely blind. Instead of using their eyes, Kittybirgs rely on the stiff whiskers at the front of their mouths and just before their ears to feel for sides of a tunnel. Short peeps reveal the density of the dirt in front of them, a sort of primitive echolocation. It also lets them know if another tunnel lay directly ahead, avoiding deadly collapses. Tunnels open into individual chambers, ventallated by drill-shafts. These are long, thin holes to the surface to let in air and let out smoke from the fires. Two Kittybirgs each find a straight branch or tree limb and bite it until it's smooth. Then, one on the surface and one in the chamber, they each "drill" the poles into the dirt, using the ecolocation to allow both to meet at a set point. A watery clay is poured down the hole while the poles are still there. The wooden poles absorb the water, but not the clay, and once dry, they are removed. What's left is a self-contained pipe of clay that won't collapse. The chambers are also the only place besides the surface that a Kittybirg finds light. They try to avoid being caught in the tunnels as much as possible, as they are very reliant of sight to form bonds. Many Kittybirgs gather in the chambers at mealtimes to talk, gossip, discuss their day, or tell stories.

Stories of Kittybirg legend are called "sagas". They usually center around one hero figure, and follow him or her through their entire life. A shorter story, centering on many characters throughout a single event, is called a "onething". One of the most famous sagas in Kittybirg culture is of Hek, the Servant. A long time ago, before the Kittybirgs were free across the hills and mountains, they were all servants to the Greater. The Greater were ones of terrible power, who held tiny boxes that shot javalins and could kill with a word. Hek was a young servant in a Greater's household, and watched as, one by one, his Greater sold his family to others in the village. He asked his Greater, "Will you sell me as well, so that I may be with my family?" The Greater laughed and said, "Yes. But I will not sell you to be with your family. I will not sell you to anyone in the village who possesses your kin." Hek was distraught -- what could he do? When it came time for his sale, Hek had a plan. He told his family to cause trouble with their own Greater, give them reason to rid themselves of the troublesome Servants. And so when Hek's Greater went to present his Servant at the auction, he could find no buyer. Each time he thought he found one, he discovered that one of Hek's family had changed hands to counter it. Angry, the Greater roared at Hek, "You have done this! I will get rid of you, and I will not let you be with your kin!" Hek considered this. "Master," he said, "There is one who lives in the forest. His face is old and brown, and his fingers touch the ground for his slouching. Give me to him. For he will die soon, and when he does, I will be honor-bound to die with him. Then you will be rid of me." His Greater considered this, and asked Hek to take him to the old man. Sure enough, deep within the forest, there was a face barely visible through the ivy. It didn't move as they approached. "Old man!" The Greater called out, "Take this Servant with my blessing, for he has brought me nothing but trouble!" And then, to Hek, "Go to him. He is your master now, and you will do as he tells you." As soon as the Greater left, Hek climbed up the tall ivy and pulled it away from the face. It was no face at all, but the gnarly trunk of an old tree. The tree was bent for its weight, and its branches all touched the ground. But it was not dying, far from it. Its bark had peeled away to reveal its new life. Green leaves mixed with green ivy. And a soft scent of fruit wafted through the air. Hek climbed up and pulled a fruit from its branches, chewing thoughtfully. He had freed himself, but what of his family? Within a month, he had them all play the same trick on their Greater. With the village gone of Servants, the Greater turned on one-another, fighting and killing. The Kittybirgs, led by Hek, escaped to the hills, and dug holes to hide in as the Greater passed them over in a great migration. The Greater, it's said, ran into the sea and were trapped in the surf by another Kittybirg, Keg, years later. Hek led the Kittybirds in their colony for years, having many adventures as a Kittybirg is wont to do. He died in a battle with a giant hawk, and was honored in the traditional way of Kittybirgs, and burnt in a pyre.

The climate that the Kittybirgs live in is quite mild, with long summers and short winters. There are other colonies that live in differing areas with different seasonal changes, but for the most part, they never face temperature extremes. As stated before, Kittybirgs are most comfortable living on hills. Solid ground is a hinderance, as it provides no opportunity for gliding and escape. Most Kittybirg colonies are built on the side of a hill that runs up alongside a cliff-face or mountain range, providing protection from one side and a steep drop-off on the other. Most predators find running on a slanted or downhill plane hard, and refuse to hunt there. Hawks and eagles, however, are quite keen on picking off young Kittybirgs that stray too far from the colony. The mountainous regions are fairly devoid of trees, though a forest usually borders the clearing that lay at the bottom. Adventurous Kittybirgs will try their hand at hunting in the forests if the food supply drops too low, but these areas are avoided for safety's sake. There are rumours in some circles, however, of a group of specialized Kittybirgs that have learned to flap and live like birds in the forests, picking small mammals off trees like hawks and screeching like owls in the moonlight. But no self-respecting Kittybirg would say that it's true.