



Inspiration for the character design of *Squids Odyssey*

Audrey Leprince

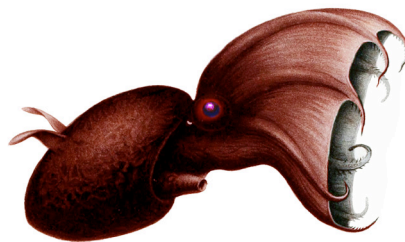
The Game Bakers, Montpellier, France.

Email: audrey@thegamebakers.com

Squids Odyssey is a role-playing game by French studio The Game Bakers. It is the latest entry in the *Squids* franchise, released in 2014 for Nintendo 3DS and WiiU, and more recently, in 2018 for PC and Nintendo Switch.

The fun fact about our *Squids* games is that we were actually all fascinated by octo-

puses and cephalopods in general long before we created the game. We even almost named our game studio "Happy Squids"... It was when we were working on the game mechanics and looking for some characters that could be "stretchable" on an iPhone screen that we thought about "tentacles"¹. Then we knew it was a perfect fit! We started designing our little heroes inspired by



Clint was inspired on the vampire squid (*Vampyroteuthis infernalis*), a very unique deep-sea species. Source: Wikimedia Commons (C. Chun, 1910: Die Cephalopoden, II. Teil).

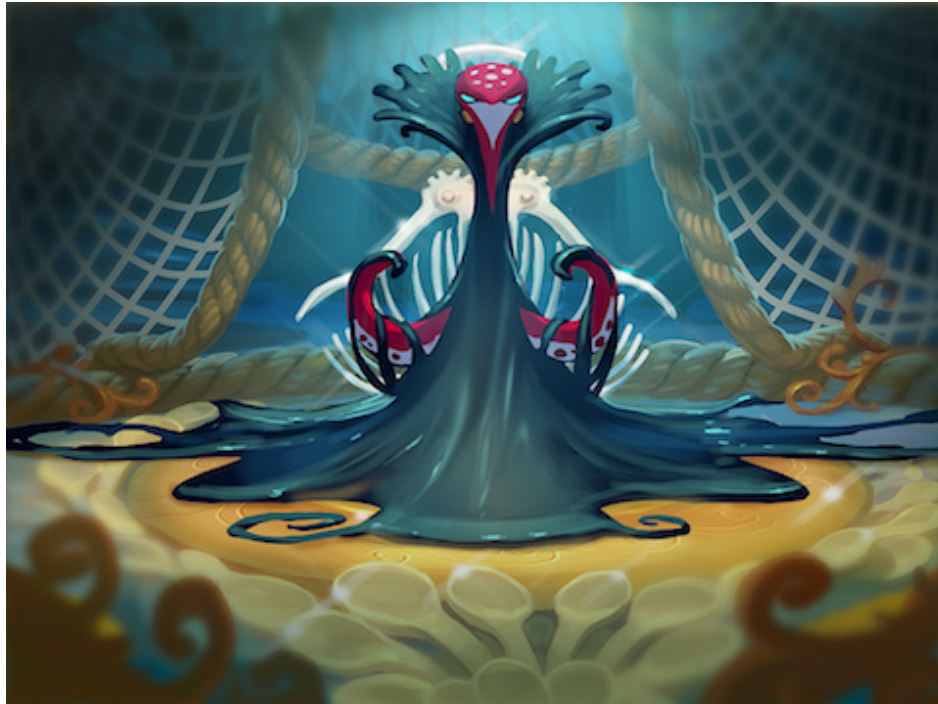
¹ Squids and cuttlefish have 8 arms and 2 tentacles. Octopuses have 8 arms and no tentacles.

real octopuses, squids and other cephalopods.

We did a lot of research to get inspiration on shapes and colors, but of course there is also a lot of redesign in cartoon style so sometimes it might be hard to see the direct reference. But you can still recognize a few: for instance, Clint was inspired on the vampire squid. Baron, the bad guy in the story, is inspired by a more regular octopus.

We also looked at shrimps and crabs² for the enemies. The big boss of the first game is a coconut crab, while a basic enemy you meet in the game is a hermit crab. You can tell the influences directly from the designs.

We took inspiration from other real underwater fauna and flora for the environment design. Even their habitations or their helmets are inspired by things you can find on the bottom of the sea. And in the com-



Baron was inspired on a more classic octopus, such as the common octopus (*Octopus vulgaris*) – yes, the name says it all. Source: Wikimedia Commons (A. Salo, 2007).

² Shrimps, crabs and lobsters are crustaceans and belong to the Phylum Arthropoda, alongside insects and arachnids. They are not related to cephalopods, which belong in the Phylum Mollusca alongside snails and clams.



Design variations of the crustacean enemies.



Coconut crabs (*Birgus latro*) live on coastal areas around the Indian and Pacific Oceans. They are the largest land-dwelling arthropods and may weigh up to 4 kg. Despite their name, coconuts are not a significant portion of their diet. Source: Wikimedia Commons (fearlessRich, 2006).



Hermit crabs belong to the superfamily Paguroidea, which counts with over 1,000 species. They typically inhabit a snail shell, using it for protection. This one is called blueband hermit crab (*Pagurus samuelis*) and lives along the Pacific coast of North America. Source: Wikimedia Commons (Stemonitis, 2011).

ic book, we extended the character design to fish; for instance, one of the characters was inspired on a swordfish. In our game, squids and turtles actually cooperate, even though this might not be the case in real life.

For simplification, our little characters only have 4 arms. It's funny that we've been told by some members of our Japanese audience – experts in octopuses and squids – that our little heroes did not look enough like these animals!

ABOUT THE TEAM

The Game Bakers is an indie game studio founded by **Emeric Thoa** and **Audrey Leprince**, and based in Montpellier, France. Besides the *Squids* franchise, they are also responsible for the acclaimed *Furi* and the upcoming *Haven*.



Cooperation (mutualism) between squids and turtle. Although uncommon, some sea turtles are known to eat squids!