

The Betta

"A body that actually made me want to move from Elysium to Progress! Now I am swimming in silk, my bright skin a cry of beauty against the cosmos!"
- Ren Song, *Skinthetic model and hedonic reviewer*



The Betta is a newly released morph from Skinthetic, aiming for the luxury market. The inspiration is *Betta splendens*, the Siamese fighting fish. The basic morph is sylph-like, but has long flowing "fins" extending from the arms, legs, spine and head. These colorful surfaces are fully innervated skin, equipped with chromatophores to shine in intense colors. Each morph is different, with individual colors, fin shapes and patterning. The skin is extremely soft and silken, occasionally with iridescent vellum hairs.

The Betta morph is not particularly *useful*, but that is not the point. It is sensual, beautiful, requires great care and compels a high price. It is the morph version of extremely high heels: it takes the right kind of person to look fabulous in them.

The most obvious drawback is that Bettas do not function well in high gravity; the fins will slouch and be in the way of walking. Bettas work best in microgravity where they can swim/fly/drift around freely. The large surface area also causes some temperature regulation problems: Bettas need warm surroundings or they will be chill (for aesthetic reasons the design team removed the pilomotor reflex too). This is even more important in water. Clothing obviously has to be cut in the right way for the morph, but if you can afford the morph then you likely already have a haute couture AI.

Implants: Basic Biomods, Basic Mesh Inserts, Clean Metabolism, Cortical Stack, Enhanced Pheromones, Chameleon skin (very limited; only allows aesthetic color changes)

Aptitude Maximum: 30

Durability: 30

Wound threshold: 6

Advantages: Striking looks (Level 2), Enhanced sense [Touch] (see below), Limber (level 1), +5 COO, +10 SAV, +5 WILL, +5 to an aptitude of the player's choice.

Disadvantages: Low pain tolerance, Frail (Level 1), Impractical (see below)

CP Cost: 40

Cost: Expensive (minimum 50,000)

Enhanced sense: Touch

Bettas have a vastly larger skin than normal morphs, and the skin is about as sensitive as the lips or fingertips. The morph has a significantly enlarged somatosensory cortex to accommodate it. Pleasant tactile stimulation can activate vast cortical areas and there is room for many intriguing sensual possibilities. The obvious downside is that the morph can just as easily feel pain or discomfort.

Impractical

The morph doesn't work well in normal gravity or when moving fast and carelessly. The character suffers -10 on any task in normal gravity and the striking looks advantage disappears; in fact, the character looks mildly sad or comical. The morph has an additional -20 modifier for fast, violent actions like running, Fray or certain dances. Still, if you can pull it off well, it will look *amazing!*