



T A R A S C A

The Tarasca was a very powerful medieval dragon. It is remembered as an enormous being, with six short legs similar to those of a bear, an ox body, a tortoise shell and a stinging tail. His head resembled that of a lion, and he always showed a terrible expression.

The Tarasca plagued the entire Mediterranean coast of France, especially a village whose King had repeatedly tried to defend himself against it. Not even her entire army was capable of defeating it, and the creature returned again and again to plunder the villages, eat the cattle, and kill the villagers.

A woman, Santa Marta, managed to charm the Tarasca with her Christian prayers, and so the creature was domesticated, and returned to the city led by the saint. However, the inhabitants, terrified, attacked Tarasca and killed it, without defending itself. Repented and converted to Christianity by the miracle of Santa Marta, the inhabitants of the village changed the name of their village, which today is still called Tarascón.





Tarasca is a creature originating from **OCCITANIA**  
Current population: 15.000.000



The Occitania territory occupies the entire south of present-day France. Populated by different cultures in antiquity (especially Ibero-Aquitan, but also Celts, also called Gauls, Ligurians, Greeks and others), it was Romanized and the Latin culture and language marked its future. When the Roman Empire collapsed, Occitania retained little Celtic and Germanic influence, and soon the first and most important evolution of Latin culture flourished there. Its splendour took place between the 11th and 13th centuries. Although it

lacks a unified central power, the constellation of Occitan lordships exerted a great political and above all cultural influence throughout southern Europe. Its language became the vehicular language of the south of the continent, and was enriched by troubadour literature, the first expression written in a language descending from Latin.

Occitania was the main home of the Cathars, a heretical doctrine that advocated that the material world is the work of the devil and postulated asceticism. With great popular following and protected by the Occitan nobility, the Cathars rose with an enormous power in this territory. Pope Innocent III declared the Cathars heretics, and initiated the first crusade against Christians in history. The King of France, Philip II, seized the opportunity to invade Occitania, defeating in 1213. Since then, Occitan sovereignty disintegrated, as each lordship became a dependency of the French crown.

The Occitan culture remained vigorous for centuries, until the French Revolution of 1789 marked the beginning of the construction of a centralized State where non-French languages and cultures were cornered. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the vindication of one's own culture took different forms, both cultural and political, but failed to counter French hegemony. Today in all of Occitania there are only a little less than 2 million speakers of the language, which is considered 'endangered' by UNESCO.